



Texas Certified Peer Specialist Program
Policy and Procedure Manual
Effective January 20, 2010

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What is Peer Support?	1
What is a Certified Peer Specialist?	1
Program Administration	2
Program Authority	2
Program Contact Information	2
Application Process.....	3
Qualifications for Acceptance to Training.....	3
Steps in Application Process	3
Priority System	4
Pre-requisites	4
Training Program	4
Testing.....	5
Continuing Education and Re-Certification.....	5
Grandfather Provision and Reciprocity.....	6
Grandfathering.....	6
Reciprocity	6
Advanced Training and Certifications	6
Guiding Principles and Code of Ethics.....	7
Guiding Principles for Peer Specialists	7
Code of Ethics	7
Rules of Conduct	8
Applicability.....	8
Professional Standards.....	8
Unlawful Conduct	9
Sexual Misconduct	9
Fraud Related Conduct	10
Safety and Welfare.....	11
Records Management.....	12

Assisting Unlicensed Practice.....	12
Cooperation With Via Hope	12
Complaints and Sanctions.....	13
Employment.....	13
Workplace Etiquette	13
Job Description Components	14
CPS Communications	14
Medicaid Guidelines	14
Appendices.....	16
Appendix A - Written Application for Training	16
Appendix B – Current Course Outline.....	16
Appendix C – Grandfathering/Reciprocity Application.....	16
Appendix D - Training Schedule for 2010	16
Appendix E – Certified Peer Specialist Complaint Form	16
Appendix F – Certified Peer Specialist Complaint Response	16
Appendix G – Job Description Components	17

Introduction

What is Peer Support?

“Peer support” is the term commonly used to refer to all of the activities that peer specialists perform. In a workplace setting, peer support helps consumers develop skills for coping with and managing psychiatric symptoms. It provides an opportunity for consumers to support each other in developing skills and strategies to progress in their recovery. However, peer support is more than a set of peer specialist activities. True peer support is the exchange of help; receiving as well as giving. A peer specialist furthers his or her own recovery through helping a fellow peer. Peer support is characterized by the absence of any power relationship. Both peers are equals, regardless of the particular role they are playing. This concept sometimes becomes difficult to maintain when one peer is acting in a paid position and has prescribed responsibilities as an employee. However, it is useful to maintain this perspective.

Peer Support necessarily involves face-to-face contact with one or more consumers. If a peer specialist is assigned job tasks that do not involve working with peers, he or she is not providing peer support. The activities conducted by a certified peer specialist should be related to the consumer’s individualized treatment plan.

What is a Certified Peer Specialist?

Under the current Texas Administrative Code, a Peer Provider (i.e. Peer Specialist) must:

- Have received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate;
- Have at least one cumulative year of receiving mental health services for a disorder that is treated in the target population for Texas; and
- Be under the direct clinical supervision of a Licensed Professional of the Healing Arts (LPHA)

In addition, a Certified Peer Specialist (or provider) is an individual who:

- Is currently in recovery from their disorder;
- Has received specialized training on how to work with other peers in furthering their recovery; and
- Has demonstrated competencies in one or more of several defined areas.

In addition to basic certification as a Peer Specialist, individuals may take additional training in areas of specialization and receive endorsements that indicate they have developed a recognized level of competence in that specialized area. A list of endorsement areas is found in another section of this manual.

Certified Peer Specialists may work in any organizational setting – public or private mental health, criminal justice, education, or youth corrections for example.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Program Administration

Program Authority

Via Hope Texas Mental Health Resource is a program funded by a grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) as part of Texas' Mental Health Transformation project. It is a training and technical assistance resource for consumers, family members, youth consumers, and professionals. Via Hope was created to further the transformation goal of making the mental health system more consumer-driven.

Via Hope is authorized by DSHS to administer a statewide training and certification program for Peer Specialists.

There are no limits on the activities an employer may request a Peer Specialist to perform. However, if the employer is a Medicaid provider and wants to bill Medicaid for the peer support services provided by a Peer Specialist, the Texas Medicaid rules must be followed.

The Texas Medicaid Program currently has a Rehabilitation Option in effect. Rules were published in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 419, Subchapter L. establishing the qualifications and allowable activities of Peer Providers under the Medicaid Program. A policy letter issued by the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) in August, 2007, stated that to be eligible for Medicaid reimbursement, peer supports must be provided by a certified peer specialist, as defined by the State. Peer Specialists certified by Via Hope meet that standard.

Under the rules in Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 419, Subchapter L, Peer Providers may provide:

- Medication training and support services to an adult;
- Psychosocial rehabilitation including
 - independent living services,
 - coordination services,
 - employment related services, and
 - housing related services,
- Skills training and development services;
- Day programs for acute needs

Program Contact Information

Via Hope is a grant program administered by Mental Health America of Texas (MHAT) and its' subcontractor, National Alliance on Mental Illness of Texas (NAMI TX). To contact Via Hope:



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Via Hope Texas Mental Health Resource
Attention: Peer Certification
c/o Mental Health America of Texas
1210 San Antonio Street, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78701

Phone: 512-454-3706 x200

Email: Info@Viahope.org

Website: viahope.org

Application Process

Qualifications for Acceptance to Training

To be accepted as a candidate for certified Peer Specialist training, individuals must meet all of the following qualifications:

- Applicants are consumers of mental health services with a desire to self disclose as persons living with a mental illness in order to demonstrate the reality of recovery.
- Applicants are at least 18 years old
- Applicants have their High School Diploma or have their GED.
- Applicants are comfortable in their recovery and able to manage their own wellness.

Steps in Application Process

Applicants must complete the written application in Appendix A. Applications must be completed by hand in pen or pencil. Computer printed applications are not accepted. The application form is found on the Via Hope website at viahope.org.

Applications must be received by the deadline for the next available class and must be completed in their entirety. Incomplete or illegible applications are returned to the applicant. Applications are submitted by mail or fax to:

Certified Peer Specialist Training
Via Hope Texas Mental Health Resource
c/o Mental Health America of Texas
1210 San Antonio Street, Suite 200
Austin, TX 78701

Fax: 1-512-454-3725.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Applicants must also participate in an interview process, either in person or by phone. Applicants are called by phone to schedule the interview. The purpose of the interview is to obtain a sense of the applicant's interpersonal skills (verbal communication and interaction with others during a discussion) and determine if the individual's skills are developed enough to become an effective certified peer specialist.

The two step application process, along with the priority system described below, determines who is accepted for training.

Priority System

Enrollment is limited to a class size of thirty participants. If applications exceed class size, participants are selected using a priority system based on current employment status.

- First preference is given to applicants who are currently employed in a peer specialist position.
- Second preference is given to applicants who have an offer of employment pending successful completion of the certification class.
- Third priority is given to applicants who are currently volunteering in a peer specialist position.
- Fourth priority is given to other applicants who have demonstrated mental health leadership and support experience.

The selection process also considers applicants' mental health leadership and support experience.

Pre-requisites

There are no pre-requisites in terms of prior training, employment, or volunteer experience, although these may be considered as part of the priority system. Employment as a certified peer specialist is often stressful work. For this reason, individuals applying for certification training are strongly encouraged to develop a Wellness, Recovery, Action Plan (WRAP), preferably before attending peer specialist training. WRAP is a simple self-help system for consumers to identify personal resources and then use those resources to stay well and help you when you feel badly. For more information about WRAP, go to viahope.org and click on the link to Essential Learning.

Training Program

The Certified Peer Specialist training is a five day, forty hour intensive course with homework most evenings. An outline of the current course curriculum is found in Appendix B. To be eligible to take the certification exam, individuals must:

- Attend all five days
- Actively participate in discussions and role plays
- Complete all homework assignments.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Classes begin at 8:30 am on Mondays and end at 5:00 pm on Fridays. There currently is no registration fee for the training. Continental breakfast, lunch and snack breaks are provided for all participants. For individuals traveling more than forty miles to the training site, Via Hope provides lodging and reimbursement for dinner meals (based on State of Texas rates.) Individuals are responsible for arranging and paying for their own transportation to the training site.

The training is provided in a relaxed, casual setting. However, it is training for employment in the workplace; casual but neat attire is required. No supplies are needed for the training; all course materials are supplied.

Currently scheduled training is shown in Appendix D.

Testing

Individuals who have successfully completed the training are eligible to take the certification exam. The exam is offered on-line and must be taken within four weeks following the end of the certification training. Individuals may also take the exam in person if desired; however, they are responsible for their own transportation to the exam site. For individuals who have taken Via Hope certification training, there is no fee for the exam.

Individuals who do not pass the exam the first time offered are eligible to re-take the exam the next time it is offered. Individuals will be notified within four weeks following the exam whether or not they passed.

Individuals who do not pass the exam in two attempts may reapply to take the certification training again on a space available basis.

Continuing Education and Re-Certification

The certification is valid for a period of twenty four months from the date the certification is issued. During that period, the Peer Specialist is required to acquire a minimum of twenty Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits. Credits may be obtained by attending authorized classes or taking online courses. The Peer Specialist is responsible for ensuring that a class is authorized for Peer Specialist continuing education before taking the course and applying for credit. If in doubt, contact the Via Hope certification program for confirmation.

Continuing Education courses can be taken to contribute to general skill levels, or they may be taken to achieve an advanced certification in a specialized area. Refer to Section on Advanced Training and Certifications for additional information.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Registering a CEU course in a Peer Specialist's certification file may take up to one month, so it is recommended that individuals complete any CEU courses well in advance of the expiration date of their certification to avoid any disruption in their eligibility.

Grandfather Provision and Reciprocity

Grandfathering

Individuals who have taken peer specialist training taught by the national Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) and passed the DBSA certification exam within the previous twenty four months prior to the inception of the Via Hope certification may apply to become certified by completing the Grandfathering/Reciprocity Application found in Appendix C. Applicants will receive a provisional Via Hope certification for up to six months (or twenty four months following their DBSA training, whichever is less), during which time they must complete a one day Whole Health training.

Individuals who have taken peer specialist training from other training providers may become eligible for Via Hope certification by successfully completing the Via Hope Certification exam.

The certification period for grandfathered individuals is the same as for all other certifications, and the same continuing education requirements are in effect for that period.

Reciprocity

Individuals who have taken certification training from a recognized source in another state, and received a certification recognized by the state Medicaid agency in the state where the certification was issued, may apply to become certified by completing the Grandfathering/Reciprocity Application found in Appendix C. Applicants do not have to take and pass the Via Hope certification exam; however, they will receive a provision certification for up to six months (or twenty four months following their previous training, whichever is less), during which time they must complete a one day Whole Health training.

The certification period for reciprocal certifications is the same as for all other certifications, and the same continuing education requirements will be in effect for that period.

Advanced Training and Certifications

Individuals are encouraged to take additional training that qualifies them for one or more advanced certifications. Advanced training has several advantages. Most importantly it equips the individual to be a more effective peer specialist who can be of more help to other peers. It increases self confidence, furthering the individual's own recovery. Finally, it makes the individual more valuable to the employer, which increases both the level of respect and the individual's marketability. A list of Advanced Certifications is currently under development.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Guiding Principles and Code of Ethics

Guiding Principles for Peer Specialists

Via Hope's certification process for Peer Specialists in the State of Texas assures consumers, families, employers, and the public that individuals certified by Via Hope as Peer Specialists have been deemed to be qualified and competent in a set of educational principles and experiences needed to perform Certified Peer Specialist duties. Via Hope has adopted the Certified Peer Specialist Code of Ethics below in order that all Peer Specialists, certified or seeking certification will conform their behavior to the highest standards of ethical practice.

Via Hope is the governing body that investigates and sanctions Certified Peer Specialists, or those seeking certification who breach this Code of Ethics. Certified Peer Specialists, or those seeking certification should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the Code and guide their behavior accordingly.

Code of Ethics

The principles in the following Code of Ethics will guide Certified Peer Specialists in their various roles, relationships and levels of responsibility in which they function professionally.

In order to obtain status as a Certified Peer Specialist, an individual must sign an acknowledgement form stating that he or she has received a copy of the Code of Ethics and agrees to comply with the Code's provisions.

1. The primary responsibility of Certified Peer Specialists is to help individuals achieve their own needs, wants, and goals. Certified Peer Specialists will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all.
2. Certified Peer Specialists will maintain high standards of personal conduct. Certified Peer Specialists will also conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.
3. Certified Peer Specialists will openly share with consumers and colleagues their recovery stories from mental illness and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery.
4. Certified Peer Specialists will, at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.
5. Certified Peer Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.
6. Certified Peer Specialists will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

7. Certified Peer Specialists will advocate for those they serve that they may make their own decisions in all matters when dealing with other professionals.
8. Certified Peer Specialists will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.
9. Certified Peer Specialists will advocate for the full integration of individuals into the communities of their choice and will promote the inherent value of these individuals to those communities. Certified Peer Specialists will be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment.
10. Certified Peer Specialists will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.
11. Certified Peer Specialists will never engage in sexual/intimate activities with the consumers they serve.
12. Certified Peer Specialists will not abuse substances under any circumstance.
13. Certified Peers Providers will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues.
14. Certified Peer Specialists will not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.

Rules of Conduct

The following Rules of Conduct set forth the minimum standards of conduct which all Certified Peer Specialists or those seeking certification are expected to honor. Failure to comply with an obligation or prohibition set forth in the Rules may result in disciplinary action.

Applicability

The rules within this Professional Code of Ethics apply to all peer professionals seeking certification through Via Hope.

Professional Standards

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall meet and comply with all terms, conditions, or limitations of the peer professional certification which they hold.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not perform services outside of their area of training, expertise, competence, or scope of practice

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not fail to obtain an appropriate consultation or make an appropriate referral when the consumer's problem is beyond the area of training, expertise, competence, or scope of practice of the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not in any way participate in discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, socio-economic status, political belief, psychiatric or psychological impairment, physical disability, or the amount of previous therapeutic or treatment occurrences.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall seek therapy for any psychiatric or psychological impairment, psychoactive substance abuse or dependence, emotional distress, or for any other physical health related adversity that interferes with their professional functioning, and where any such conditions exist and impede their ability to function competently, a Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking certification shall request inactive status for medical reasons for so long as is necessary.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification has a responsibility both to the client and/or participant(s) and to the organization within which the service is performed to maintain a high standard of ethical conduct

The Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not discontinue professional services to a consumer nor shall the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification abandon the consumer without facilitating an appropriate therapeutic closure of professional services for the consumer

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not reveal confidential information obtained as the result of a professional relationship, without the prior written consent from the recipient of services, except as authorized or required by law

Unlawful Conduct

Being convicted or found guilty of a felony, regardless of adjudication, or entering a plea of nolo contendere to any crime relating to the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification's ability to properly provide certified peer specialist services shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not use, possess, or sell any controlled or psychoactive substance. Being convicted or found guilty, regardless of adjudication, or entering a plea of nolo contendere to any crime which involves the use of any controlled or psychoactive substance shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

If a Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification is reprimanded by any agency or organization through any administrative proceedings, this may be grounds for disciplinary action by Via Hope.

Sexual Misconduct

A certified professional or person seeking certification shall not engage in any form of sexual contact/behavior with consumers. The prohibition shall apply with respect to any consumer of the agency by which the certified professional or person seeking certification is employed, regardless of

Texas Certified Peer Specialist

whether or not the consumer is on their caseload. For the purposes of determining the existence of sexual misconduct the professional-consumer relationship, once established, is deemed to continue for a minimum of 2 years after the termination of services or the date of the last professional contact with the consumer

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not engage in sexual misconduct with any immediate family member or guardian of a consumer during the period of time services are being rendered to the consumer, during the entire professional consumer relationship.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not engage a supervisee in sexual misconduct during the period a supervisory relationship exists.

Fraud Related Conduct

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not

- Present or cause to be presented a false or fraudulent claim, or any proof in support of such claim, to be paid under any contract or certificate of insurance;
- Prepare, make or subscribe to a false or fraudulent account, certificate, affidavit, proof of loss or other document or writing, with knowledge that the same may be presented or used in support of a claim for payment under a policy of insurance; or
- Present or cause to be presented a false or fraudulent claim or benefit application, or any false or fraudulent proof in support of such a claim or benefit application, or false or fraudulent information which would affect a future claim or benefit application, to be paid under any employee benefit program.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not use misrepresentation in the preparation of an application for Certified Peer Specialist certification or in the procurement of certification or recertification as a Certified Peer Specialist, or assist another in the preparation of an application for certification or in the procurement of registration, certification or re-certification through misrepresentation. The term "misrepresentation" includes but is not limited to the misrepresentation of professional qualifications, certification, accreditation, affiliations, employment experience, educational experience, the plagiarism of application and recertification materials, or the falsification of reference.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not use a title designation, credential or license, firm name, letterhead, publication, term, title, or document which states or implies an ability, relationship, or qualification that does not exist.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not practice under a false name or under a name other than the name under which his or her certification is held



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not sign or issue in the professional capacity a document or a statement that the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification knows or should have known to contain a false or misleading statement.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not produce, publish, create, or partake in the creation of any false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading advertisement.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not develop, implement, or maintain exploitative relationships with current or past consumers.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not misappropriate property from a consumer.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not enter into a relationship with a consumer which involves financial gain to the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification or a third party resulting from the promotion or the sale of services unrelated to treatment or the therapeutic relationship

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not promote to a consumer for personal gain, any unnecessary, ineffective or unsafe psychoactive substance, or any unnecessary, ineffective or unsafe device, treatment, procedure, product or service

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not solicit gifts or favors from consumers.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not offer, give, or receive commissions, rebates, or any other forms of remuneration for a consumer referral.

Safety and Welfare

Peer Specialists have what is referred to as a “Duty to Warn”. In circumstances where the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification becomes aware, during the course of providing or supervising professional services, that a condition of clear and imminent danger exists that a consumer may inflict serious bodily harm on *another person or persons*, the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall, consistent with federal and state regulations concerning the confidentiality of medical records, take reasonable steps to warn any likely victims of the consumer's behavior.

In circumstances where the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification becomes aware, during the course of providing or supervising professional services, that a condition of clear and imminent danger exists that a consumer may inflict serious bodily harm to *himself or herself*, the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall, consistent with federal and state regulations concerning the confidentiality of medical records , take reasonable steps to protect that consumer.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Records Management

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not falsify, amend, knowingly make incorrect entries, or fail to make timely essential entries into the consumer record.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall follow all Federal and State regulations regarding consumer records.

Assisting Unlicensed Practice

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not refer a consumer to a person that the Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking certification knows or should know is not qualified by training, experience, certification, or license to perform the delegated professional responsibility.

Cooperation With Via Hope

A certified peer professional or person seeking peer certification who has firsthand knowledge of the actions of a respondent or a complainant shall cooperate with a Via Hope complaint investigation or disciplinary proceeding.

A certified peer professional or person seeking peer certification shall not file a complaint or provide information to Via Hope which the certified peer professional or person seeking peer certification knows or should have known is false or misleading

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall cooperate in any investigation conducted pursuant to this Code of Ethics and a Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall not interfere with an investigation or a disciplinary proceeding or attempt to prevent a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action from being filed, prosecuted, or completed. Interference attempts may include but are not limited to:

- The willful misrepresentation of facts before the disciplining authority or its authorized representative;
- The use of threats or harassment against, or an inducement to, any consumer or witness in an effort to prevent them from providing evidence in a disciplinary proceeding or any other legal action;
- The use of threats or harassment against, or an inducement to, any person in an effort to prevent or attempt to prevent a disciplinary proceeding or other legal action from being filed, prosecuted or completed.

A Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall report any violation of the Code of Ethics. Failure to report a violation may be grounds for disciplinary action.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

In submitting any information to the Board, a Certified Peer Specialist or person seeking peer certification shall comply with any requirements pertaining to the disclosure of consumer information established by the federal or state government.

Complaints and Sanctions

If an individual believes that a Certified Peer Specialist has violated the Code of Ethics or the Rules of Conduct, their first recourse should be to notify the CPS's employer. If the employer does not take appropriate action, or the individual is unable to notify the employer for any reason, a complaint may be filed with Via Hope using the complaint form in Appendix E.

If a complaint has been filed with Via Hope against a Certified Peer Specialist, the CPS is provided an opportunity to respond to the complaint using the form in Appendix F.

Employment

Workplace Etiquette

The goal of most individuals who become a certified peer specialist is to become a paid employee of a mental health provider. Sometimes, the individual will be working for the same provider where they have, or are still, receiving care, which can result in a delicate situation. Some peer specialists may not have had much or any workplace experience prior to becoming a peer specialist. The following information is provided as basic guidelines that should apply to all employees, including peer specialists. Peer specialists are legally entitled to "reasonable accommodations" from their employer in order to perform their jobs satisfactorily. However, a peer specialist should not appear to unduly take advantage of this right.

1. Be respectful and use common courtesy at all times with clients and co-workers, cleaning and maintenance staff. When in the work environment, choose to become "part of the solution instead of part of the problem". As Gandhi prescribed, "become part of the change you want to see."
2. Act with honesty and dignity with everyone in the workplace. As peer specialists, we must reduce harm where we can by helping people to commit to non violence, by increasing emotional and moral intelligence, by improving relationships, and by being catalysts and mentors for the journey of recovery.
3. Wear appropriate office attire and be neat and clean.
4. Do not cough or sneeze in anyone's direction.
5. Keep interruptions of others to a minimum. Always apologize if your intrusion is an interruption of a discussion, an activity, or someone's concentration.



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

6. Show respect for other peoples' workspace, and keep your own work area tidy. Always knock before entering someone else's office.
7. Show appreciation for courtesies extended to you. Be thoughtful when interacting with peers and clients and be considerate of others' feelings. As peer specialists, we are an integral part of a transformed mental health system where those in recovery are offered realistic opportunities to achieve their maximum level of function.
8. Be helpful and co-operative, and use the phrases "Please; Thank you; and You're Welcome" often.
9. Do not gossip about the private lives of co-workers or clients.
10. Take responsibility for your mistakes, apologize, and take action to correct the mistake. It is the responsibility of every member of the organization to resolve interpersonal conflict in service of the greater good. As a role model for others, you must "walk the talk" to truly enable transformative changes.

Job Description Components

Every peer specialist should have a written job description just as any other employee. Development of job descriptions is the responsibility of employers. Since this is a new type of position for many employers, information about appropriate job description components is attached as Appendix G.

CPS Communications

Via Hope is developing an on-line community where certified peer specialists can communicate electronically with other peer specialists to ask questions, seek advice, and share experiences.

Medicaid Guidelines

Following is an excerpt of the current language relating to Peer Supports in the Texas Administrative Code implementing the Rehabilitation Option in the Medicaid State Plan. These rules are found at Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 419, Subchapter L.

(33) Peer provider--A staff member who:

(A) has received:

(i) a high school diploma; or

(ii) a high school equivalency certificate issued in accordance with the law of the issuing state;

(B) has at least one cumulative year of receiving mental health services for a disorder that is treated in the target population for Texas; and



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

(C) is under the direct clinical supervision of an LPHA.

(b) Staff supervision and oversight. A provider must develop policies and procedures for the supervision and oversight of CSSPs and peer providers.

(6) Medication training and support services provided to an adult must be provided by:

(A) a QMHP-CS;

(B) a CSSP;

(C) a peer provider; or

(D) a licensed medical personnel.

[Psychosocial Rehabilitation]

(4) Independent living services, coordination services, employment related services, and housing related services, as described in subsection (c)(1)-(4) of this section, must be provided by:

(A) a QMHP-CS;

(B) a CSSP; or

(C) a peer provider.

(5) Skills training and development services provided to an adult must be provided by:

(A) a QMHP-CS;

(B) a CSSP; or

(C) a peer provider.

[Day Programs for Acute Needs]

(2) Except as provided by paragraphs (4) and (5) of this subsection, day programs for acute needs must be provided by:

(A) a QMHP-CS;

(B) a CSSP; or

(C) a peer provider.

[\(note paragraphs 4 and 5 relate to nursing and pharmacological services\)](#)



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

(3) Except for the direct clinical supervision of a peer provider, which must be provided by an LPHA, the clinical supervision of the provision of MH rehabilitative services must be provided by a QMHP-CS.

Appendices

Appendix A - Written Application for Training

See separate PDF Document

Appendix B – Current Course Outline

See separate PDF document.

Appendix C – Grandfathering/Reciprocity Application

See separate PDF document.

Appendix D - Training Schedule for 2010

A peer specialist training class will be conducted in Austin on March 1-5, 2010. Applications are currently being accepted.

A three “Train the Trainers” class will be held in Austin in late April or early May. This class is designed for individuals interested in becoming peer specialist trainers.

A peer specialist training class will be conducted in Austin in late May or early June, 2010. Applications will be accepted once the exact dates are determined.

Appendix E – Certified Peer Specialist Complaint Form

Currently under development

Appendix F – Certified Peer Specialist Complaint Response

Currently under development



Texas Certified Peer Specialist

Appendix G – Job Description Components

A job description provides a summary of the primary duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of a position. It is important to reflect priorities and current expectations.

Components of the job description:

Function:

Summarize the main purpose of the position within the department/organization in one sentence.

Reporting Relationships

Describe the “chain of command” and the types of supervision the employee will get and will give, indicating the specific job titles of the supervisors and the positions supervised.

Responsibilities

List 4 to 6 core responsibilities of the position and identify several specific duties within each of the core responsibility areas.

Qualifications/Competencies

List required and preferred qualifications, credentials, and competencies in order of importance. These might include educational requirements (e.g., a high school diploma or equivalency), training or certification as a peer specialist, or specify that the employee must be a person in recovery (e.g. “Be a self-identified current or former user of mental health or co-occurring services who can relate to others who are now using those services” or “Must be a self-disclosed individual with a mental illness)

Note: Texas requirements for Medicaid reimbursement require that a peer provider must have received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate; have at least one cumulative year of receiving mental health services for a disorder that is treated in the target population for Texas; and be under the direct clinical supervision of a Licensed Professional of the Healing Arts (LPHA).

-From the Texas Certified Peer Specialist Learning Community Implementation Toolkit (Via Hope).

Employment Conditions

Describe any relevant circumstances, such as any physical requirements (e.g., standing, lifting), environmental conditions, unusual work schedule (e.g., rotating shift, on-call hours), and any other requirements (e.g., driver’s license, background check, random drug screen).

Tips from the Small Business Association (<http://www.sba.gov>):

Texas Certified Peer Specialist

- A good job description begins with a careful analysis of the important facts about a job, such as tasks involved, methods used to complete the tasks, and the relationship of the job to other jobs.
- It's important to make a job description practical by keeping it dynamic, functional, and current.
- Don't get stuck with an inflexible job description! A poor job description will keep you and your employees from trying anything new and learning how to perform their job more productively. A well-written, practical job description will help you avoid hearing a refusal to carry out a relevant assignment because "it isn't in my job description."

http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/manage/manageemployees/SERV_JOBDESC.html

Sample Peer Specialist Job Description Components*

Sample function statements

- Provide vision driven hope and encouragement to support people in their recovery and assist them in connecting to the community
- Provides opportunities for individuals receiving services to direct their own recovery process (self-determination) and acts as an advocate for the needs and rights of persons served
- Works with individuals in groups and on a one-to-one basis to provide recovery training and outreach to individuals who use mental health services in the community
- Shares personal recovery experiences and develops authentic peer-to-peer relationships
- Offers instruction and support to help people develop the skills they need to facilitate their individual recovery
- Informs people served of available service options and choices while promoting the use of natural supports and resources within the community
- Supports people to articulate and describe their needs, wants and desires to providers and family members (self-advocacy)
- Provides peer mentoring and support for individuals with psychiatric disabilities receiving mental health services
- Assists individuals in navigating the mental health services system and in achieving resiliency and recovery as defined by the person

Sample responsibility statements

- Assist in the orientation process for persons who are new to receiving mental health and/or co-occurring disorders services
- Educate and support people in the use of Wellness Plans, including Wellness Recovery Action Plan, as a means to recognize early triggers and signs of relapse, and use of individual coping strategies as an alternative to more restrictive services
- Outreach/accompany to ensure the individual is making a successful transition to community integration and is continuing their progress toward recovery goals
- Support the individual in seeking to connect/reconnect with family, friends, significant others and in learning how to improve or eliminate unhealthy relationships
- Provide education and advocacy within the community that promotes awareness of psychiatric disorders while reducing misconceptions, prejudice, and discrimination

Texas Certified Peer Specialist

- Keep treatment team informed about individual's strengths, accomplishments and obstacles in relation to their recovery goals
- Complete all required documentation in a timely, legible manner
- Educate professional staff about the recovery process and the damaging role that stigma can play in undermining recovery
- Visit community resources with people using services to assist them in becoming familiar with potential opportunities
- Facilitate (via personal coaching and WRAP groups) the transition from a professionally directed service plan to a self-directed Recovery Plan
- Model personal responsibility, self-advocacy, and hopefulness through telling one's personal recovery story, how needs are respectfully met, and how a belief in oneself is maintained
- Ensures confidentiality of individual information
- Assess emergency situations, notifies supervisor and/or appropriate clinical and administrative personnel of actual or potential problems
- Exhibits a nonjudgmental approach, effective listening, good eye contact, and positive interactions

*adapted from job descriptions and materials from Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Recovery Innovations of Arizona, Florida Peer Network Inc., the Transformation Center (Boston, MA), and Collaborative Support Programs of NJ