

Warren  
Forest  
McKean  
Elk  
Cameron  
Potter

1885 Market Street  
Warren, PA 16365  
Phone 814.723.1832  
Fax 814.817.1446



**BEACON LIGHT**  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM



# *Peer Support Services*



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## What is Peer Support?

Peer Support service is an individualized, recovery-focused service that allows adult individuals the opportunity to learn to manage their own recovery and advocacy process. Interventions of peer specialist staff serve to enhance the development of natural supports, coping skills, and other skills necessary to function as independently as possible in the community. Peer Specialist interventions may also provide services to help a person's re-entry into the community after a hospitalization

## Admission Criteria

Must have a significant mental illness prescribed by a physician and you must Meet One of the Categories A, B or C as well as D

### A. Treatment History:

- Currently resides in State Mental Hospital or discharged from SMH in the past 2 years
- Two admissions to inpatient psychiatric unit or crisis residential totaling 20 or more days in the past two years
- Five or more face to face contacts with walk-in, mobile, or emergency services within the past 2 years
- One or more years of continuous attendance in a community mental health or prison psychiatric service within the past 2 years
- History of sporadic course of treatment, inability to maintain med regime or involuntary commitment to outpatient services
- One or more years of mental health treatment provided by a PCP within the past 2 years

### B. Coexisting Condition or Circumstance with Mental Illness

- Psychoactive substance use disorder
- Mental retardation
- HIV/AIDS
- Sensory disability
- Developmental disability
- Physical disability
- Homelessness
- Release from criminal detention

### C. Involuntary Treatment Status

Met standards for involuntary treatment in the past 12 months preceding this assessment.

D. Must have a moderate -severe functional impairment that limits performance in educational, social, vocational, and/or self-maintenance.

## What Does Peer Support Do?

Certified Peer Specialists help consumers:

- Build natural supports
- Develop coping skills and other skills necessary to function as independently as possible in the community
- Re-enter the community after a hospitalization
- Set healthy boundaries
- Advocate for themselves
- Communicate effectively with friends, family, doctors, therapists, etc.

Certified Peer Specialists complete challenging two-week training in:

- Principles of recovery, resiliency and empowerment
- Cultural competency
- Dealing with conflict
- Goal setting and problem solving
- Understanding psychosocial rehabilitation
- Consumer rights and confidentiality
- Professional boundaries in a peer support setting
- Self advocacy
- Listening and responding skills
- Telling personal stories in a way that helps consumers

## Authorization For Services

CCBH pays for services with authorization provided for individuals who meet medical necessity criteria. Exceptions can be granted for individuals who do not meet the diagnostic criteria but could still benefit from the service.

## Continued Stay Criteria

- The individual continues to meet the criteria for admission
- Documentation indicates that the individual benefits from Peer Support Services
- There is reasonable expectation that the withdrawal of services may result in loss of rehabilitation gains or goals attained

## Discharge Criteria

- Consumer fulfills goals and no longer has a need to work within services
- Consumer chooses to end services
- Consumer is not focusing on goal plan, refuses to meet or does not answer attempts to engage. The Peer Specialist and the supervisor will send letters to attempt to contact, attempt to have consumer sign engagement in services contract, and will attempt to arrange appointments that are more convenient for the consumer
- Consumer becomes aggressive and unsafe
- Consumer moves out of the county

## Referrals

Admission requires a physician's recommendation as well as a referral by another individual which may include the consumer themselves.

## Peer Support Interventions

Examples of peer support interventions include:

**Self Help:** developing a person's ability to make informed, independent choices; helping the person develop a network of contacts for information and support with the help of the experienced peer specialist.

**Community Education:** Peer specialists work with community providers and other natural support entities to teach them about recovery, mental illness, and help create an environment of acceptance and support. Through education, peer specialists work to decrease the stigma and discrimination that surrounds mental illness.

**Individual Advocacy:** Peer specialists discuss concerns the consumer may have about medication or diagnosis with prescribers and other professional staff if the consumer requests this service. Peer specialists also help the consumer make appointments for medical, mental health and other human services. The most important role of the peer specialist, however, is to teach the consumer skills to enable them to effectively advocate for themselves.

**Pre-crisis support:** Peer specialists work with the consumer to help them create and implement a WRAP plan or personal crisis plan. They make appropriate referrals if a consumer may be escalating to a crisis.

**Education, Volunteering, Employment:** Peer specialist help the consumer get information about returning to school, applying for volunteer positions, and job training. They also work with the consumer to teach them how to ask for reasonable accommodations.

**Managing distressing symptoms:** Peer specialists work with the consumer and treatment team to help the consumer identify effective strategies for managing distressing symptoms.

People receiving peer support meet with their Peer Support Specialist a few hours each week to discuss what their short and long term recovery goals are and how they can work to achieve them. Peer Specialists can provide help in a variety of areas, including:

- Coping Skills
- Accessing Natural Supports
- Re-entry into the community following hospitalization.
- Personal Safety
- Confidence Building
- Goal Identification and Achievement
- Communication Skills
- Boundary Setting
- Planning

