



Iowa

Peer Support Specialist

Scope of Practice

A. Understanding Recovery

1. Understand and model recovery
2. Promote a recovery culture within the agency
3. Utilize lived experience with mental illness and recovery to empathize, support and connect with individuals
4. Strategically share your recovery story
5. Assist individuals in identifying their own experience and situation and how it has impacted their hopes for the future
6. Introduce recovery oriented activities that assist individuals in building hope
7. Share personal experiences of the role that hope has played in your own recovery
8. Respect the many pathways of recovery
9. Understand the stages of recovery and how peer support services can assist in working through each stage

B. Providing Emotional Support

1. Use Active listening skills
2. Validate individuals' experiences and feelings
3. Respectfully challenge negative thoughts
4. Listen to and help calm peers in distress (crisis)
5. Understand the grief process and situational emotional responses
6. Understand the impact of trauma on mental health
7. Help individuals experiencing acute symptoms of a mental health disorder, such as a flashback or panic attack
8. Recognize the warning signs and risks of suicide
9. Be able to access crisis referral sources

C. Coaching and Teaching

1. Practice healthy self-care
2. Identify techniques and resources that promote good self-care
3. Share self-care techniques that have assisted you in your own recovery
4. Coach the use of WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) or SAMSHA's Action Planning for Prevention and Recovery.
5. Gauge an individual's readiness for change and adjust services accordingly
6. Help individuals prioritize/re-prioritize goals
7. Support the choices that individuals make in an agreed-upon care/case plan
8. Support the individual to implement their goals, assisting in refocusing when necessary
9. Track progress toward goals
10. Coach individuals in problem solving
11. Teach individuals about grievance procedure options in agencies.
12. Help resolve conflict between peers on site/within the program (e.g. club, community settings, or support groups)
13. Conduct informal and formal presentations and in-services for co-workers, health care providers, community agencies, and others
14. Create and facilitate groups and activities to support recovery
15. Educate family members and other supportive individuals about recovery and recovery supports

D. Empowering and Advocating

1. Collaborate with individuals to identify strengths to empower them and build confidence
2. Coach individuals on self-advocacy skills
3. Coach individuals on how to collaborate with providers in making decisions about their care
4. Coach individuals to fully participate in meetings and appointments

5. Accompany individuals to meetings and appointments to support their self-advocacy
6. Partner with individuals to identify and prioritize their needs throughout care
7. Advocate for the individual's voice within the team and with other agencies, providers, and professionals
8. Accompany individuals to community activities and appointments for the purpose of achieving a goal when appropriate and in accordance with care plan

E. Navigating Systems

1. Help individuals expand their natural and formal support networks
2. Refer individuals to appropriate information and services
3. Follow up and monitor outcomes of referrals
4. Reach out to other Peer Support Specialists to learn about and share new resources
5. Research qualifications for benefits and entitlements (including income entitlements)
6. Recognize individuals that may potentially be eligible for special services
7. Provide application assistance as needed
8. Help individuals navigate the behavioral health system of care
9. Help individuals navigate the health care system

F. Practicing Ethics and Professionalism

1. Focus on the individual's strengths, preferences, and right to self-determination
2. Adhere to confidentiality, including its ethical limits
3. Understand the completion of forms related to confidentiality
4. Help individuals understand consent to release information
5. Understand and comply with mandatory reporting requirements
6. Work within the boundaries of the Peer Support Specialist role
7. Seek the services of nurses, social workers, and other clinicians when needed service is outside Peer Support Specialist scope of practice
8. Receive supervision and seek supervisory input
9. Understand the professionalism and culture of employing organization
10. Adapt your practice when working with individuals from other cultures to increase effectiveness
11. Respect the values and life experiences of individuals
12. Recognize how your own values, beliefs, and biases may affect your work
13. Participate in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health conditions
14. Use respectful, person-centered, recovery-oriented language in written and verbal interactions
15. Practice trauma-informed care
16. Seek opportunities to increase knowledge and skills of peer support
17. Clarify your understanding of information when in doubt of the meaning
18. Create and maintain timely and accurate documentation

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