

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Behavioral Health Services
PROVIDER MANUAL
*Magellan Health Services of Arizona Edition***

Section 9.2 Peer Support/Recovery Support Training, Certification and Supervision Requirements

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9.2.1 Introduction

The Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) has developed training requirements and certification standards for Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists providing Peer Support Services, as described in the [ADHS/DBHS Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#). Peers serve an important role as behavioral health providers, and ADHS/DBHS expects consistency and quality in peer-delivered behavioral health services and support for peer-delivered behavioral health services statewide.

9.2.2 References

[A.A.C. R6-5-5850](#)
[A.A.C. R9-20-1502](#)
[AHCCCS/ADHS Contract](#)
[ADHS/RBHA Contracts](#)
[ADHS/DBHS Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#)
[Section 3.13, Covered Behavioral Health Services](#)
[Section 4.5, Partnerships with Families and Family-Run Organizations in the Children's Behavioral Health System](#)
[Section 9.1, Training Requirements](#)
[The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\) State Medicaid Director Letter \(SMDL #07-011\)](#)

9.2.3 Scope

To whom does this apply?

All behavioral health providers delivering training services for certification¹ of individuals as Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists within the ADHS/DBHS public behavioral health system.

¹ Peer Support Services are also billed by family members who provide services in the public behavioral health system (see [PM Section 4.5, Partnerships with Families and Family-Run Organizations in the Children's Behavioral Health System](#) for additional information). Training and certification requirements described in this policy, however, are specific to peers, as defined in this policy.

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9.2.4 Did you know...?

People who have achieved and sustained recovery can be a powerful influence for individuals seeking their own path to recovery (see [Center for Mental Health Services \(CMHS\) Consumer Affairs E-News October 2, 2007, Vol. 07-158](#)). By sharing personal experiences, peers help build a sense of self-worth, community connectedness, and an improved quality of life.

Peer services are supported on a statewide and national level. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter to states, recognizing the importance of peer support services as a viable component in the treatment of mental health and substance abuse issues. In the letter, CMS provides guidance to states for establishing criteria for peer support services, including supervision, care-coordination and training/credentialing (see [SMDL #07-011](#) for a full copy of the letter).

9.2.5 Definitions

[Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#)

[Behavioral Health Paraprofessional](#)

[Behavioral Health Professional](#)

[Behavioral Health Technician](#)

[Peer](#)

[Peer-run Organization](#)

[Peer Support Services](#)

[Peer Support Specialist / Recovery Support Specialist](#)

[Recovery](#)

9.2.6 Objectives

To ensure that behavioral health providers and peers have the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully provide quality behavioral health services in the public behavioral health system.

To ensure that Peer Support Employment Training Certification Programs offer training and education that effectively prepares individuals for delivering behavioral health services, including Peer Support Services, as a peer.

To ensure that Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists are certified to provide Peer Support Services, as described in the [ADHS/DBHS Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#).

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9.2.7 Procedures

9.2.7-A. Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist Qualifications

Individuals seeking to be certified and employed as Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists must:

- be self-disclosed as a “peer”; and
- meet the requirements to function as a behavioral health paraprofessional, behavioral health technician, or behavioral health professional.

Individuals meeting the above criteria may be certified as a Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist by completing training and passing a competency test through an ADHS/DBHS approved Peer Support Employment Training Program. ADHS/DBHS will oversee the approval of all certification materials including curriculum and testing tools. Individuals are certified by the agency in which he/she completed the Peer Support Employment Training Program; however, certification through an ADHS/DBHS approved Peer Support Employment Training Program is applicable statewide, regardless of which program a person has gone through for certification.

Some agencies may wish to employ individuals prior to the completion of certification through a Peer Support Employment Training Program. However, certain trainings must be completed prior to delivering behavioral health services (see subsection 9.2.7-D.). An individual must be certified as a Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist or currently enrolled in a ADHS/DBHS-approved Peer Support training program under the supervision of a certified Peer prior to billing Peer Support Services.

9.2.7-B. Peer Support Employment Training Program Approval Process

A Peer Support Employment Training Program must submit their program curriculum, competency exam, and exam scoring methodology (including an explanation of accommodations or alternative formats of program materials available to individuals who have special needs) to ADHS/DBHS, and ADHS/DBHS will issue feedback or approval of the curriculum, competency exam and exam scoring methodology in accordance with subsection 9.2.7-D.

Approval of curriculum is binding for no longer than three years. Three years after initial approval and thereafter, the program must resubmit their curriculum for review and re-approval. If a program makes substantial changes (meaning change to content, classroom time, etc.) to their curriculum or if there is an addition to required elements (see subsection 9.2.7-C.) during this three year period, the program must submit the updated curriculum to ADHS/DBHS for review and approval.

ADHS/DBHS will base approval of the curriculum, competency exam and exam scoring methodology only on the elements included in this policy. If a Peer Support Employment Training Program requires regional or culturally specific training exclusive to a GSA or tribal community, the specific training cannot prevent employment or transfer of Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist certification based on the additional elements or standards.

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9.2.7-C. Competency Exam

Participants must complete and pass a competency exam with a minimum score of 80% upon completion of required training. Each Peer Support Employment Training Program has the authority to develop a unique competency exam. However, all exams must include at least one question related to each of the curriculum core elements listed in subsection 9.2.7-D. For peers who have been providing Peer Support Services prior to the implementation of this policy or peers who have training or work history from another state, certification may be obtained after passing the competency exam. If a peer does not pass the competency exam, the Peer Support Employment Training Program may require that the peer repeat or complete additional training prior to taking the competency exam again.

9.2.7-D. Peer Support Employment Training Curriculum Standards

A Peer Support Employment Training Program curriculum must include, at a minimum, the following core elements:

- Concepts of Hope and Recovery
 - Instilling the belief that recovery is real and possible;
 - The history of recovery and the varied ways that behavioral health issues have been viewed and treated over time and in the present;
 - Knowing and sharing one's story of a recovery journey; how one's story can assist others in many ways;
 - Mind- Body-Spirit connection and holistic approach to recovery; and
 - Overview of the individual service plan and its purpose.
- Advocacy and Systems Perspective
 - Brief overview of behavioral health system infrastructure;
 - Stigma and effective stigma reduction strategies;
 - Organizational change- how to utilize person-first language and energize one's agency around recovery, hope, and the value of peer support;
 - Creating a sense of community;
 - Brief overview of advocacy and effective strategies; and
 - Familiarization of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills
 - Strengths based approach; identifying one's own strengths and helping others identify theirs;
 - Distinguishing between sympathy and empathy;
 - Learned helplessness; what it is and how to assist others in overcoming its effects;
 - Overview of motivational interviewing; communication skills and active listening;
 - Healing relationships and creating mutual responsibility;
 - Combating negative self-talk; noticing patterns and replacing negative statements about one's self, using one's mind to boost self-esteem and relieve stress;
 - Group facilitation; and
 - Creating a safe and supportive environment; building trust.

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- Professional Responsibilities of the Peer Support Employee and Self Care in the Workplace. Qualified peers must receive training on the following elements prior to delivering any covered behavioral health services:
 - Professional boundaries & ethics- the varied roles of the helping professional;
 - Confidentiality;
 - Mandatory reporting requirements;
 - Understanding common symptoms of mental illness and substance use and orientation to commonly used medications;
 - Service documentation/billing and using recovery language throughout documentation; and
 - Self-care and the use of ongoing supports; dealing with stress in the workplace.

Some curriculum elements include concepts included in required training, as described in PM [Section 9.1, Training Requirements](#). Peer support employment training programs must not duplicate training required of peers for employment with a licensed agency or Community Service Agency (CSA)². Training elements in this section must be specific to the peer role in the public behavioral health system and instructional for peer interactions.

For a list of references to assist in developing a curriculum that addresses the topics listed in the Curriculum Standards, see [PM Attachment 9.2.1, Suggested Curriculum Development References](#).

For additional assistance, contact the Chief of Recovery and Resilience Officer at 602-572-8364 or the Director of Consumer and Recovery Services at 602-797-8348

9.2.7-E. Supervision of the Certified Peer Support Specialist / Recovery Support Specialist

Supervision is intended to provide support to Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists in meeting treatment needs of behavioral health recipients receiving care from Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists. Supervision provides an opportunity for growth within the agency and encouragement of recovery efforts.

Agencies employing Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists must have a qualified individual (behavioral health professional (BHP) or behavioral health technician (BHT)) level individual designated to provide Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist supervision. Supervision must be documented and inclusive of both clinical and administrative supervision.

The individual providing supervision must also complete training and pass a competency test through an approved Peer Support Employment Training Program.

² While peer support employment training programs must not duplicate training required of licensed agencies or CSAs, it is possible that licensed agencies and/or CSAs may consider training completed as part of the peer support employment training program as meeting the agencies' training requirements.

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9.2.7-F. Process for Submitting Evidence of Certification

Agencies employing Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists who are providing peer support services are responsible for keeping records of required qualifications and certification. T/RBHAs must ensure that Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists meet qualifications and have certification, as described in this policy.