

Job Descriptions for Peer Support Specialists

Adapted from Via Hope Texas Mental Health Resource

The job description should provide a summary of the peer support specialist's primary duties, responsibilities, and required qualifications. It is important to reflect priorities and expectations *before* hiring a CPSS.

Components of the job description should include:

Purpose

Briefly summarize the main purpose of the peer specialist position within your organization.

Sample purpose statements*

- Engage individuals in their recovery process
- Provide hope and encouragement to support consumers in their recovery
- Provide opportunities for consumers to direct their own recovery process
- Act as an advocate for the needs of consumers
- Work with consumers on a one-to-one basis to support them in setting recovery goals
- Share personal recovery experiences and develop authentic peer-to-peer relationships
- Offer support to help consumers develop the skills they need to facilitate their recovery
- Promote the use of natural supports and resources within the community
- Support consumers in achieving the resiliency and recovery they want

Reporting Relationships

Describe the “chain of command” and the types of supervision the peer specialist will receive, indicating the specific job titles of the supervisors and the positions supervised if applicable.

Responsibilities

List specific responsibilities of the peer specialist position.

Sample responsibility statements*

- Collaborate with treatment team about consumers' strengths and accomplishments 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 consumers to assist them in becoming familiar with potential opportunities
- Facilitate the transition from a professionally directed service plan to a self-directed recovery plan

- Model personal responsibility, self-advocacy, and hopefulness by telling one’s personal recovery story and demonstrating how a belief in oneself is maintained
- Ensure confidentiality of individual information
- Assess emergency situations, notify supervisor and/or appropriate personnel of actual and potential issues
- Maintain a nonjudgmental approach, effective listening, eye contact, professionalism, and positive interactions
- Assist consumers in identifying strengths and readiness to actively pursue recovery goals
- Assist consumers in choosing, obtaining and keeping recovery goals
- Utilize a variety of methods, tailored to the consumer, to move through the process of setting and reaching recovery goals
- Ask facilitative questions to help consumers gain insight into their personal situations
- Empower consumers to problem solve and find their own solutions
- Provide consistency and support to promote personal progress and accountability
- Selectively use self-disclosure to inspire and support consumers

Qualifications/Competencies

List the required and preferred qualifications, credentials, and competencies in order of importance. These might include educational requirements (e.g. a high school diploma or equivalent), training and certification as a peer specialist, access to transportation, and/or specify that the peer specialist must be a person in recovery (e.g. “Be a self-identified current or former consumer 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)

Employment Conditions

Describe any relevant circumstances, such as any physical requirements (e.g., standing, lifting), environmental conditions, work schedule, and any other requirements (e.g., driver’s license, background check).

Compensation

We see starting peer specialist wages in Idaho range from \$13-\$18 per hour. It is imperative for your agency to provide a fair living wage to certified peer support specialists. They are valuable members of the team and compensation is an important way to reflect this. Highly qualified peer specialists find other work when they feel they can’t make a living doing what they love.

*Adapted from job descriptions and materials from Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Recovery Innovations of Arizona, Florida Peer Network Inc., the Transformation Center in Boston, MA, Collaborative Support Programs of NJ, and Via Hope Texas Mental Health Resource