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

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9.2.1 Introduction

- a. The Arizona Department of Health Services/Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) has developed training requirements and certification standards for Peer/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.
- b. Peer-delivered services are supported on a statewide and national level. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a letter to state Medicaid directors/agencies, 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 state Medicaid and public health agencies on minimum requirements 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).

9.2.2 Terms

Definitions for terms are located online at <http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/definitions/index.php> or <http://www.narbha.org/for-providers/provider-resources/provider-policy-manual/definitions>. The following terms are referenced in this section:

[Behavioral Health Paraprofessional](#)

[Behavioral Health Professional](#)

[Behavioral Health Technician](#)

[Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#)

[Individual Service Plan](#)

[Peer](#)

[Peer-Delivered Services](#)

[Peer Support Services](#)



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[Peer/Recovery Support Specialist](#)

[Peer Worker](#)

[Recovery](#)

[Resilience](#)

9.2.3 Procedures

- a. Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist Qualifications
 - i. Individuals seeking to be certified and employed as Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists must:
 1. Self-identify as a “peer”; and
 2. Meet the requirements to function as a behavioral health paraprofessional, behavioral health technician, or behavioral health professional.
 - ii. 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. Certification through an ADHS/DBHS approved Peer Support Employment Training Program is applicable statewide.
 - iii. Some agencies may wish to employ individuals prior to the completion of certification through a Peer Support Employment Training Program. However, required trainings must be completed prior to delivering behavioral health services (see subsection 3-D.). An individual must be certified as a Peer/Recovery Support Specialist or currently enrolled in an ADHS/DBHS-approved Peer Support Employment Training Program under the supervision of a qualified individual (see subsection 3-E) prior to billing Peer Support Services.
- b. Peer Support Employment Training Program Approval Process
 - i. 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 3-d.
 - ii. 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 3-c.) during this three year period, the program must submit the updated content to ADHS/DBHS for review and approval.
 - iii. 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



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Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist certification based on the additional elements or standards.

- c. Competency Exam
 - i. Individuals seeking certification and employment as a Peer/Recovery Support Specialist 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 3-d. Individuals certified in another state may obtain certification after passing a competency exam. If an individual does not pass the competency exam, the Peer Support Employment Training Program may require that the individual repeat or complete additional training prior to taking the competency exam again.
- d. Peer Support Employment Training Curriculum Standards
 - i. A Peer Support Employment Training Program curriculum must include the following core elements:
 - 1. Concepts of Hope and Recovery
 - a. Instilling the belief that recovery is real and possible;
 - b. The history of recovery and the varied ways that behavioral health issues have been viewed and treated over time and in the present;
 - c. Knowing and sharing one's story of a recovery journey; how one's story can assist others in many ways;
 - d. Mind- Body-Spirit connection and holistic approach to recovery; and
 - e. Overview of the Individual Service Plan (ISP) and its purpose.
 - 2. Advocacy and Systems Perspective
 - a. Overview of state and national behavioral health system infrastructure and the history of Arizona's behavioral health system;
 - b. Stigma and effective stigma reduction strategies: countering self-stigma; role modeling recovery and valuing the lived experience;
 - c. Introduction to organizational change- how to utilize person-first language and energize one's agency around recovery, hope, and the value of peer support;
 - d. Creating a sense of community;
 - e. Forms of advocacy and effective strategies – consumer rights and navigating behavioral health system; and
 - f. Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - 3. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills and Service Delivery
 - a. Strengths based approach; identifying one's own strengths and helping others identify theirs; building resilience
 - b. Distinguishing between sympathy and empathy; emotional intelligence;
 - c. Understanding learned helplessness; what it is, how it is taught and how to assist others in overcoming its effects;
 - d. Introduction to motivational interviewing; communication skills and active listening;
 - e. Healing relationships – building trust and creating mutual responsibility;



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- f. Combating negative self-talk; noticing patterns and replacing negative statements about one's self, using mindfulness to gain self-confidence and relieve stress;
 - g. Group facilitation skills; and
 - h. Introduction to Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards; creating a safe and supportive environment.
4. Professional Responsibilities of the Peer Support Employee and Self Care in the Workplace. Qualified individuals must receive training on the following elements prior to delivering any covered behavioral health services:
- a. Professional boundaries & ethics- the varied roles of the helping professional; Collaborative supervision and the unique features of the Peer/Recovery Support Specialist;
 - b. Confidentiality laws and information sharing – understanding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);
 - c. Responsibilities of a mandatory reporter; what to report and when;
 - d. Understanding common signs and experiences of mental illness, substance abuse, addiction and trauma; orientation to commonly used medications and potential side effects;
 - e. Guidance on proper service documentation, billing and using recovery language throughout documentation;
 - f. Self-care skills and coping practices for helping professionals; the importance of ongoing supports for overcoming stress in the workplace; resources to promote personal resilience; and, understanding burnout and using self-awareness to prevent compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.
- ii. 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 individuals for employment with a licensed agency or Community Service Agency (CSA)¹. Training elements in this section must be specific to the Peer/Recovery Support Specialist's role in the public behavioral health system and instructional for peer interactions.
 - iii. 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](#).
 - iv. NARBHA's network offers NAZCARE as a source of peer certification training provision. NAZCARE can be reached at (928) 442-9205. With any questions regarding curriculum, standards or training, the NARBHA Office of Individual and Family Affairs staff may be contacted at (928) 774-7128.
- e. Supervision of the Peer Workers Employed as Peer/ Recovery Support Specialists
 - i. Agencies employing Peer /Recovery Support Specialists must provide supervision by individuals qualified as Behavioral Health Technicians or Behavioral Health Professionals. Supervision must be appropriate to the services being delivered and the Peer/Recovery Support Specialist's qualifications as a Behavioral health Technician,

¹ 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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Behavioral Health Professional or Behavioral Health Paraprofessional. Supervision must be documented and inclusive of both clinical and administrative supervision.

- ii. Individual providing supervision must receive training and guidance to ensure current knowledge of best practices in providing supervision to Peer/Recovery Support Specialists. (For more information, see [DBHS Practice Protocol, Clinical Supervision.](#))
 - iii. NARBHA's Office of Individual and Family Affairs staff will complete site visits to discuss with peer and family support staff their satisfaction relative to access to supervision. NARBHA will monitor supervision hours provided by reviewing personnel charts at its provider agencies on an as-needed basis. "Supportive Supervision" is a resource offered to supervisors at Responsible Agencies, available through NAZCARE.
- f. Process for Submitting Evidence of Certification
- i. 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.
 - ii. NARBHA's Office of Individual and Family Affairs staff will complete site visits to discuss certification accomplishments and/or barriers. As a result of these visits and/or through Credentialing processes, NARBHA will monitor peer certification by reviewing personnel charts at its provider agencies on an as-needed basis.

9.2.4 References:

[A.A.C. R9-10-101](#)

[AHCCCS/ADHS Contract](#)

[ADHS/RBHA Contracts](#)

[ADHS/DBHS Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide](#)

[Section 3.13, Covered 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 \(SMDL #07-011\)](#)

9.2.5 PM Forms

None.

9.2.6 PM Attachments

[PM Attachment 9.2.1 Suggested Curriculum Development References](#)



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Signature on file 02/27/15

Mary Jo Gregory Date
President and Chief Executive Officer

Signature on file 02/27/15

Teresa Bertsch, MD Date
Chief Medical Officer

[Reference ADHS/DBHS Policy 404](#)