



**TITLE: PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST**

**FLSA: Non-Exempt**

**BOARD APPROVED:**

**BARGAINING UNIT: Misc.**

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### **DEFINITION**

Under limited supervision the Peer Support Specialist provides support and services with more difficult or complex assignments designed to ensure effective routine case management services; obtains information from clients/members; monitors and documents client conduct; provides client transport and performs general clerical duties as needed; provides recovery-oriented, culturally appropriate services that promote engagement, socialization, self-sufficiency, support self-empowerment of participants to act on their own behalf regarding their needs; acts as a resource and support system for participants; provides liaison functions between participants and service providers; provides services to participants and their family members/caregivers, both individually and in group settings, and performs related work as required.

The Peer Support Specialist will provide direct services, linkage, prevention services, care coordination, case management, coaching, social support, navigation of systems, education, assessments, and outreach for at-risk populations; and perform related duties as assigned.

The Peer Support Specialist will be culturally competent and perform their duties utilizing trauma-informed principles; and share similarities with the community members they serve, such as ethnicity, language, culture, socioeconomic status, values, and life experiences. In general, Peer Support Specialists are trusted members of the community they serve, responsive to the needs of community members, and trained in the context of health interventions.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives limited supervision from a licensed Behavioral Health Professional which may include but is not limited to a Drug and Alcohol Supervisor or Supervising Institutional/Crisis Registered Nurse. Provides lead direction and/or training to assigned Community Health Worker I/II staff.

### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

The Peer Support Specialist is a paraprofessional class and is distinguished from licensed and case management personnel in that the Peer Support Specialist does not assume primary responsibility for behavioral health clients/members. The Peer Support

Specialist performs a variety of less complex functions, provides lead direction and/or performs specialized assignments independently which do not require the skill and training of a licensed Behavioral Health professional.

### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS** (Illustrative Only)

- Gathers initial demographic information on potential clients/members and fills out appropriate forms as assigned.
- Disseminates educational and informational materials to potential clients/members, families and groups.
- Conducts field visits to disseminate information, provide education, and assist with case management at homes, detention facilities, hospitals, or mental health/health facilities.
- Provides transportation services for clients/members and/or family members to ensure treatment attendance or assistance in reaching case management goals.
- Assists clients/members with coordination of community services and support.
- Assists with referrals and the utilization of community resources in support of clients/members and their families.
- Assists counselors and case managers with residential placement communication and transportation services as needed.
- Coordinates inter-program transfers and completes paperwork as assigned.
- Participates in treatment team, staff, and professional meetings, and provides input on client progress.
- Gives informational presentations to schools, agencies, and community groups as assigned.
- Provides competent care to meet the basic needs of infants and children in the childcare setting, within an assigned treatment program while parents are participating in services on site.
- Interacts with children and infants in a positive manner and serves as a role model for parents who are engaged in treatment services.
- Maintains assigned vehicle.
- Performs various office duties as necessary, including typing reports and correspondence, copying and filing documents, reviewing mail, responding to public requests for information, answering telephone as needed.
- Complies with all provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
- Complies with all relevant laws and regulations regarding confidentiality.
- Reports documented or suspected abuse and neglect as mandated by law.
- Assists in verbal and physical de-escalation of clients/members acting out.
- Establishes, maintains, and co-facilitates a therapeutic relationship with clients/members and acts as a role model in maintaining a hopeful and positive attitude in problem solving and coping with the disabilities associated with mental illness.
- Performs crisis intervention, in person and over the phone, to provide support and assistance in problem resolution and coordinates or arranges for the provision of needed services.
- Admits and discharges clients/members as assigned including completing all associated documentation.
- Participates as an interdisciplinary team member and provides input via reporting observations, concerns or changes in client behaviors or physical condition.
- Performs facility or house cleaning and other household living tasks for behavioral

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health clients/members.

- May assist with pick-up and meal service delivery to clients/members.
- Provides safe, effective and efficient implementation of direct care in accordance with established policies, procedures and standards of care while protecting clients/members from behavior that could damage themselves or others.
- Provides front line support and customer service to clients/members, community members, and public stakeholders.
- Responds to queries and provides information to public in person, over the phone, or by interacting with clients/members and others.
- Assists with planning and/ or conducting community outreach programs, workshops, and training events.
- Participates in departmental meetings, committees, and task forces to share information with other agencies or departments; contributes information and suggestions regarding how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of assigned responsibilities.
- Reviews reports, logs, and other documents; obtains and compiles administrative data and information from multiple sources; tracks and maintains data and prepares summaries and reports for management; notes trends and areas of concern; provides comments and/or recommendations regarding procedure, staffing, program, or resource changes.
- Prepares general and technical correspondence, and promotional materials; develops forms, tracking systems, databases, spreadsheets, and data collection methods.
- Organizes and maintains filing systems; maintains records related to specific area of assignment.
- Performs visits to clients/members and their families in their homes, shelters or on the streets to provide information and education; assists professional staff in providing health education and in the implementation of client care plans.
- Interviews clients/members to assess risk factors for various health and safety problems including HIV, domestic violence and child abuse or neglect; refers clients/members to appropriate support services or community service agencies.
- Participates in the development of the client care plan for assigned clients/members; monitors progress and provides information for care plan updates.
- Assists clients/members, their caregivers and families in developing healthier lifestyles; provides information concerning ways to reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases.
- Models daily living skills appropriate for the client including resource management, housekeeping methods and parenting and childcare skills.
- Collects data, maintains records and prepares progress notes and reports in accordance with state and local requirements.
- Advocates for clients/members and assists clients/members and their families to establish and maintain a community support system.
- Maintains current knowledge of cultural factors, health issues and community resources and services which affect clients/members.
- Provides lead direction, training, and coordinates and reviews daily technical work of assigned Community Health Worker Staff.
- Confers with inpatient and/or outpatient professional staff to evaluate needs and problems of clients/members.
- Reviews referrals from other agencies in order to determine appropriate service
- Makes referrals and provides information to other behavioral health agencies.

- Provides related assistance to case managers and professional staff
- Makes home visits to monitor the level of client functioning; works as member of a treatment team to allow clients/members to live in the least restrictive setting.
- Assists in initial intakes (processing of paperwork), in scheduling appointments, may observe clients/members in individual and group settings or consult with other staff in the program to obtain information regarding behavioral health problems and related needs.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Principles and techniques related to facilitating groups and activities.
- Methods and techniques of caring for clients/members who require behavioral and substance abuse treatment.
- Cultural issues that may have a bearing on service provision.
- Basic medical terminology and concepts related to basic behavioral health care.
- Community resources aiding clients/members with behavioral health or substance abuse issues.
- Record keeping principles and practices.
- Household management and personal care activities.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.
- Prevention, intervention and treatment strategies for communicable diseases, crime, substance abuse and other social or community issues.
- Local, state and national behavioral and public health education goals, priorities, and core programs, and laws related to health education practices and policies.
- Trauma-informed principles.
- Motivational interviewing.
- Causes, effects and methods of treatment for mental health diseases and disorders.
- Causes, effects and methods of treatment for alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse.
- Principles and practices of nutrition, child development and health education.
- Proper methods of transporting young children, infants, disabled adults and elderly persons.
- Leadership methods and group/team process and facilitation skills.
- Typical and problem behavior in small children, adolescents, disabled adults and elderly persons.
- Interpersonal skills and relationship-building.
- Cultural humility.
- Behavioral/physical signs and symptoms of clients/members requiring professional and/or medical assistance.
- Effective oral, written and electronic communication methods, and techniques for effectively communicating with diverse language and cultural populations.
- Community service agencies and other governmental assistance programs.

- County and department policies and procedures.
- Cultural, social, health and mental health issues affecting the client population.
- Basic principles of training and instruction; and general medical and psychological terminology.
- Techniques for dealing with clients/members with multiple problems.
- Basic interviewing techniques and methods.
- Principles and methods of housekeeping, household safety, household maintenance, money management, nutrition, meal planning and shopping.
- Ethnic and/or socio-economic factors of the community.
- A variety of methods to assist client's in solving problems.
- Principles and methods of parenting and child development including alternative discipline methods.
- Leadership methods and group/team process and facilitation skills.

**Ability to:**

- Conduct interviews and assessments with people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
- Respond to client situations and take effective action.
- Maintain accurate case records, files and reports.
- Utilize community resources effectively to assist clients/members.
- Respond sensitively to the needs of people from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Research problems, find and apply alternative solutions.
- Exercise sound judgment within established guidelines.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the work.
- Provide support for clients/members in out- or in- patient settings.
- Assist in verbal de-escalation and management of assaultive behavior.
- Respond promptly and calmly to client emergency situations, as directed by treatment staff. Facilitate group recreational activities.
- Work well with special population clients/members, maintain appropriate boundaries, identify and nurture strengths, and support their right to make independent decisions when possible.
- Update client records, document actions, and complete other paperwork in a timely manner. Establish and maintain patience, discretion and a high level of professionalism.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.
- Present program and service information to clients/members, patients, and the public.
- Organize and prioritize work to meet various program compliance deadlines.
- Speak confidently and professionally one-on-one and/or present to small or large groups.
- Work fairly and courteously with the public; handle multiple case assignments; and work effectively with interruptions.

- Maintain confidential information in accordance with legal standards and/or County regulations.
- Understand and work effectively with clients/members dealing with mental illness and substance abuse clients/members.
- Work with Mental Health professionals, case managers, social service agencies and other staff.
- Effectively handle patients in crisis situations.
- Read and understand behavioral health charts and be able to prepare written reports.
- Resolve issues on a one-on-one basis, prior to bringing them to the supervisor.
- Learn federal, state and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations.
- Interpret and apply federal, state and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations.
- Provide effective leadership, coordination and training as assigned.
- Prepare and maintain accurate reports, records and logs.
- Gain cooperation through discussion and persuasion.
- Speak confidently and professionally before various groups.
- Establish and maintain effective working relations with co-workers, outside organizations, and the public.
- Plan, assign, supervise, and review the work of the employee performing journey-level case assignments.
- Plan, assign, supervise, organize, and/or coordinate community events; assure compliance with department policies and procedures.
- Develop data collection practices and relay information to stakeholders to inform programs and policies.
- Manage care and care transitions for complex cases and vulnerable populations.
- Create protocols for Advocacy, Outreach and enrollment, Navigation, Education, Health services, and Social-emotional support.

### **Education and Experience:**

Any combination of experience and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

- Three (3) years of experience with increasing responsibility in performing advanced journey level or specialized duties in the provision of mental or public healthcare management services, psychiatric social services, public health education services, counseling, nutrition counseling, or substance abuse counseling (i.e., supervisor/lead cashier, lead store clerk, supervisor/lead clerical, etc.) and/or work-like experiences (i.e., volunteering, school activities, intern).

OR

- High school diploma or GED equivalent. Associate's degree from an accredited college or university in social/ behavioral science or other related field is preferred and one (1) year experience as a Community Health Worker II.

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## **License and Special Requirements:**

- Successfully complete the curriculum and training requirements for a Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist.
- Community Health Worker or Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certificate.
- Possession of, or ability to obtain and maintain, a valid California Class C Driver License and a satisfactory driving record is required. Individuals who do not meet this requirement due to a disability will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Obtain and maintain a valid CPR and basic life support certification.
- Be self-identified as having experience with the process of recovery from mental illness or substance use disorder, either as a consumer of these services or as the parent, caregiver or family member of a consumer; be willing to share their experience' and have a strong dedication to recovery.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Requires the ability to maintain physical condition appropriate to the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities, which may include lifting/transporting clients/members and subduing combative individuals, minimal dexterity in the use of fingers, limbs and body in the operation of office equipment. Requires the ability to maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception required for making observations and communicating with others. Position often requires standing in work areas and walking between work areas. This position may require stamina for long distance or all-day driving of a vehicle. Employees must be able to support the weight of clients/members for brief periods of time, which requires the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull, more than 75 pounds occasionally and frequently 50 pounds or more, as necessary to perform job functions, with assistance when available.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

Tasks require exposure to illness/disease, strong odors, harsh chemicals and cleansing agents, other skin irritants and to stressful, crisis and/or potentially dangerous situations. Employees may work varying shift schedules including nights, weekends, and/or holidays.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER / AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT  
COMPLIANT / VETERANS' PREFERENCE POLICY / DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**