



Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems Peer Support Services Program



Continuous Quality Improvement and Utilization Review Plan May 2018

Mission, Vision, Commitments and Goal

It is the mission of Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems to advocate passionately for the individuals and families we serve.

It is the vision of Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems to be the provider of choice for services that support the recovery and resiliency of individuals in the communities we serve throughout our rural communities.

Beacon Light has committed itself to promote hope, wellness, respect, responsibility, stewardship, safety, engagement, education, permanency, and citizenship through the commitments listed below:

- We will strive to recognize and support the ability of every individual and family to change.
- We will strive to recognize the strengths of every individual and family and help them build on those strengths.
- We will strive to respect each individual we come in contact with, including clients, consumers, families and staff.
- We will strive to take personal responsibility for all of our actions and interactions each and every day.
- We will strive to be responsible stewards of our financial resources recognizing them as community given.
- We will strive to provide safe, respectful, and healing environments.
- We will strive to create flawless and consistent processes.
- We will strive to build and maintain educational environments that provide every individual an opportunity to learn.
- We will strive for permanency in the lives of those we serve.
- We will strive to support full participation in community life for every individual we serve.

It is the goal of the Peer Support Services Program to effectively execute the mission, vision, and commitments of the agency.

Description of Services

Peer Support is a recovery based program through which adults diagnosed with serious mental illness provide assistance and guidance to others with mental illness to help them actively engage in their own treatment. The service includes such tasks as identifying and accessing community resources, developing wellness plans, and seeking out additional supports to further clients in their recovery. The program is intended to inspire hope in individuals that recovery is not only possible but achievable.

Peer support services are structured activities for adults age 18 and older diagnosed with mental illness, provided by a Certified Peer Specialist. The program is an individualized, recovery-focused service that allows individuals the opportunity to learn to manage their own recovery and advocacy process from others living with mental illness who demonstrates ongoing success in their recovery.

The Peer Support Services Program is intended for those presenting with mental illness that require, and are likely to respond to, therapeutic intervention. Individuals who have the capacity for participation in an individualized plan of care directed towards improving life skills and who are receptive to services in an unstructured environment without professional presence are appropriate.

Peer Support may be appropriate for individuals experiencing difficulties in the following areas:

- Is receiving or has recently received crisis intervention services
- Is experiencing functional problems in the home, community, church, school, job or volunteer activity.
- Is experiencing money management problems as a result of their ongoing mental illness.
- Would benefit from self advocacy skills to decrease dependency on more formal mental health systems.
- Would benefit from peer modeling in order to take increased responsibility for his/her own recovery.
- Needs peer supports in order to maintain a routine of daily living skills.
- Service prescriptions average between 2.5 to 5 hours weekly.

Intended Benefits of Peer Support Services

Peer support interventions focus on helping those with mental illness become as independent as possible. Interventions of peer specialists can help to improve and develop the following:

- Coping Skills
- Accessing Natural Supports
- Re-entry into the community following hospitalization.
- Prevention or reduction in hospitalizations
- Personal Safety
- Empowering, engaging and role modeling behaviors
- Confidence Building
- Goal Identification and Achievement
- Communication Skills
- Employment
- Furthering education
- Self-maintenance
- Support network building through positive relationships, clear roles, rules, expectations, and professional and ethical boundary setting
- Planning for goal participation and attainment

The Certified Peer Specialist

The aforementioned work is completed through the intervention of a Certified Peer Specialist. The Peer Support Specialist is responsible for the management of an assigned mental health caseload of clientele for recovery oriented peer support services. The specialist will establish a trusting, respectful relationship with peers through the sharing of life experiences with mental illness or the mental health system.

The Certified Peer Specialist must:

- 1) Be a self identified individual who has received or is receiving state priority group services
- 2) Have a high school diploma or GED
- 3) Have maintained, within the past three years, at least 12 months of successful full or part-time paid or voluntary work experience or one year of post secondary education
- 4) Completed and passed a Peer Specialist certification training program including written examination, which is offered in accordance with guidelines defined by OMHSAS and DPW
- 5) Apply and complete the process for the Pennsylvania State Certification Board CPS certification

The Certified Peer Specialist will also be responsible for:

- Participating in weekly team meetings.
- Participate in supervisory meetings as required.
- Maintain their certification through continuing education.
- Interacting with client families and non-agency personnel in courtesy and professional manner.
- Works a flexible schedule as necessary to meet consumer needs. Work must be within the parameters of the peer services work schedule/agenda.
- Must have access to or own a vehicle which will enable worker to carry out the duties assigned, including transporting consumers
- All Certified Peer Specialists must receive at 18 hours of training/continuing education with at least 12 hours per year of education specifically focused on recovery.
- Maintains a high level of familiarity with DPW, OMHSAS and Peer Support regulations, objectives, etc., by attending relevant training, workshops, regional meetings, webinars, etc.
- Participates in individual face to face supervision consisting of one hour per week with the Peer Support Supervisor.
- Actively participating on Agency committees when requested.
- Knowing and supporting the agency mission, vision and value statement.
- Attending and completing scheduled required annual training.
- Working as a member of a team including, being supportive and friendly to co-workers, keeping personal problems away from work, splitting duties equally amongst co-workers, assisting co-workers when requested and welcoming new employees giving them extra support and encouragement.
- Providing an appropriate role model for staff and the individuals they serve in appearance, actions, manner of speech, etc.
- Ensuring that incident reports are thoroughly completed and filed in a timely manner.
- Attending and participating in case conferences when requested to do so.

- Following through on directives given to him/her by their supervisor.
- Assisting with developing and monitoring quality initiatives.
- Completing reports or other written work assigned in a timely manner.
- Documentation of important information and data in a timely and professional manner
Keep accurate case notes of every contact with participants.
- Will have face-to-face contact, or documented attempt, with consumers at least once every two weeks.
- Assesses consumers, with the consumer's input, for the purpose of developing a Recovery Focused Individualized Service Plan. Emphasizes the consumer's strengths, goals, and interests as well as clearly documented time frames for goals and objectives.
- Develops and periodically reviews the consumer's Recovery Focused Individualized Service Plan with significant input from the consumer and collaterals.
- Monitors the implementation of the individualized service plan on an ongoing basis, providing coordination and management of the service plan as needed/as appropriate.
- Provides supportive services to consumers and their families and other caretakers, including problem resolution and accessing specialized services, generic services, and benefits. Assures that the consumer receives the appropriate quality, type, and level of services needed.
- Maintains regular contact (with the consumer's consent through an agency release) with family, friends, and other community members in order to develop and/or enhance the consumer's natural support network. Assists the consumer in locating and establishing ongoing relationships with individuals and services which are considered non-mental health resources.
- Offer to assist peers in creating a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (if so desired) and document this through the agency document provided during the intake process
- Model effective coping techniques and self-help strategies.
- Teach peers how to identify and combat negative self talk and how to identify and overcome fears or other obstacles to recovery.
- Support vocational or volunteer choices and help peers to overcome obstacles related to accessing services
- Use "Recovery Principles" to help peers meet the recovery goals reflected in the ISP; offering education, guidance, encouragement and support from a peer perspective.
- Be willing to travel when required in the performance of duties.
- Enhances consumer self-determination by functioning as his/her advocate, and by teaching the consumer, through role modeling, how to be a more effective advocate for himself/herself in the community.
- Completion of safety plans when necessary
- Completion of all strength based comprehensive assessments.
- Completion of all discharge summaries.
- Assists with community education regarding mental health.

Additionally, it is the agency's expectations that staff will:

1. Preserve the positive public image of the agency and its staff.
2. Be familiar with Agency's Procedure and Personnel Manuals and function within the directives provided.
3. Be aware of and follow state regulations.
4. Report to administrative staff any situation that interferes with proper operation of the department/agency.
5. Report to administrative staff any actions by another employee which may constitute possible emotional or physical abuse.
6. Maintain a confidential attitude in regards information pertaining to the individuals we serve.

All Certified Peer Specialists will be required to maintaining the following trainings:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. CPR | 6. Fire Safety and Extinguisher Use |
| 2. First Aid (every 3 years) | 7. Policy and Procedure |
| 3. Forms | 8. Client Rights |
| 4. Intro to the Agency | 9. Documentation |
| 5. HIPAA | 10. LGBTQ Competency |

Currently, trainings for Community Based services are being amended to provide more specific information in the field. The suggested trainings are currently being implemented and are listed below.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------|
| CPR (every 2 years) | Fire Safety and Extinguisher Use | Environment of |
| Care | First Aid (every 2 years) | |
| Policy and Procedure | Corporate Compliance | |
| Intro to the Agency | Clinical Pathways | |
| CBS – Clients Rights and Professional Ethics | CBS – Crisis Management | |
| Universal Precautions | CBS – Recovery Principles | |
| Forms | HIPAA | |
| Cultural Competency | Drug and Alcohol Issues | |
| Psychotropic Medication | CBS – Trauma Informed Care | |
| CBS – Parent/Family Engagement | LGBTQ Competency | |
| CBS – Technology Skills: BLBHS Computer System and Evolv | | |
| CBS – Systems of Care: Managed Care and Skills for Interacting with Customers | | |

This position is required to maintain 40 hours of annual training.

Required external continuing education

1. Peer to Peer Certification Training
2. Wrap Facilitator Training
3. Advance Directive Training

Additional Training Opportunities Supported

1. Aging and Older Adult CPS Training
2. Peer Support within the Criminal Justice System
3. Youth and Young Adult CPS Training
4. Mental Health First Aide
5. Trauma Informed Care
6. Veteran CPS Training

Barriers to Successful Delivery of Certified Peer Specialist Services

Since the inception of the Peer Support Services Program, there have been many barriers in successfully delivering these services. The agency has struggled to identify, train, and retain individuals in the Peer Specialist Position.

Recovery

Many of the Peer Support Specialists struggle with balancing work and their own personal recovery, making it very difficult for them to concentrate on both. Frequently, the Certified Peer Specialists struggle with maintaining their own therapy and case management appointments, medication regimen, and personal well-being along with their consumers' issues. This struggle often leads to frequent and lengthy calls to the Peer Support Supervisor for help with responding to their own mental health needs. Furthermore, the idea of recovery is still fairly new to the consumers that we serve. Educating consumers on the recovery model and principles is still a challenge.

Recruitment of CPS staff and funding

In addition to the high cost of the training, travel, and accommodations to hire a certified peer specialist, the hiring process is then lengthy. We have seen a decrease in the availability to trainings in a timely manner and they are often hours away from the counties that we serve. Many of the applicants for the Certified Peer Specialist position that Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems have received are not certified or do not meet other necessary requirements for the position such as owning a vehicle or having a criminal background. This necessitates the agency to allocate monies to Certified Peer Specialist trainings in order to have the individual certified in order for them to begin employment. Some of these individuals have chosen to terminate their employment soon after this training, leaving the agency without a Certified Peer Specialist and at a loss with the money that has been spent on their training. Additionally, those individuals who do complete the training and are willing to work are sometimes disqualified by their criminal background, making recruitment even more difficult. Because the applicants must have a serious mental health disorder themselves, this often lends itself for many of the individuals to have had criminal backgrounds due to their behaviors when they were not active in their recovery. Furthermore, when an individual meets all other criteria and does not have a vehicle, this requires further assistance from the Peer Support Services Program staff to help this individual obtain and maintain a vehicle so that they may maintain employment and meet consumer needs. Additionally, because of the individual's recovery process, he or she may not have been able to work the required amount of time to qualify them for a Certified Peer Specialist position. This decreases the pool of potential applicants for the position.

Transportation

In order for the Certified Peer Specialists to perform many of their job duties, they frequently travel long distances to consumers' homes and resources to help the consumer with their recovery. This can be a major stressor on the specialist as they must maintain their vehicles. At this time, the Peer Support Services Program does not have vehicles that the staff may use, forcing each of the specialists to use their own vehicles all of the time. In order to meet the consumers' needs, the specialist often has to travel to help them attain their set goal plans. Because of the geographical location, many of the Certified Peer Specialists must travel a significant distance to see a consumer. If the consumer is ill, refuses to meet, or has forgotten about the appointment on that day, the specialist will need to travel back to the home office and attempt to locate that consumer, making that time non-compensable.

Supervision

Because of the wide range of counties in which Peer Support is provided, supervisors and specialists must travel in order to meet face to face and conduct supervision. It would be beneficial if telephone supervision was allowable as this would aid with inclement weather situations as well as cut down on mileage costs to meet.

Funding

Another barrier that the Peer Support Services Program has experienced involves funding. When a specialist travels a significant distance to meet with the consumer at his or her home and the consumer is either not there or refuses to meet, this contact is not reimbursable. Additionally, while Certified Peer Specialist requirements such as training and supervision are necessary, they, too, are not reimbursable. Furthermore, hosting trainings for individuals is expensive and also takes a toll on the program itself. There is also a funding issue when individuals either lapse in their coverage or do not have MA or a MCO. Often times, there is no county contract where county funding would be available to cover the difference, leaving the specialists to work with the individual to regain coverage at no reimbursable cost to the program.

Documentation

Many of the Certified Peer Specialists struggle with understanding how to document their interventions in a legible and timely manner. The Certified Peer Specialists require many hours of training on how to perform an intake with a consumer and experience difficulty with documenting notations to meet billing deadlines as they do not have a background with completing documentation nor do they have a familiarity with billing, authorizations, or managed care organizations. Furthermore, the specialist often feels rushed to write about their encounter with the consumer with them. The specialist must complete the encounter log as they will need the consumer's signature to verify the appointment, however, the specialist is sometimes unable to efficiently document what had occurred during the time spent, especially if the consumer and specialist had spent a significant amount of time together. Specialists report feeling overwhelmed by documentation and continue to struggle with how to document out of the ordinary things that happen. For example, Certified Peer Specialists struggle with how to document when they meet with a consumer prior to and following a doctor's or therapist's appointment. Specialists also find it difficult to remember to document the specific relationship between the recovery goal and the interventions/activities during the appointment.

Referrals and Consumer Retention

Depending on the county that Peer Support Services is serving, obtaining viable referrals is difficult. Many of the individuals still do not understand the program, its benefits, and its limitations. Many times, the Peer Support Supervisor will need to contact the consumer several times in order to explain this service in order for them to agree to meet with a Peer Specialist. The Peer Support Services Program is a voluntary service, many of the consumers who are struggling with severe mood disorders tend to voluntarily withdraw themselves from services when they are asked to involve themselves in their treatment. Additionally, finding a good fit between the consumer and the Certified Peer Specialist takes time. Because a doctor's referral is only valid for 60 days after it is written, it can be difficult to find a suitable specialist who will meet the needs of the consumer within this time period. This often leads to expired referrals and requires the Peer Support Services Supervisor to speak with the referral source. Furthermore, establishing an Individualized Service Plan may take over the required 30 days as the specialist may experience difficulty with locating a consumer or having them agree to meet consistently. Also, even if the specialist and consumer do meet consistently during this time, learning about the consumer enough to work with them on a recovery oriented goal is difficult as more time may be needed. Additionally, the consumer may be unable to meet for either mental or physical health reasons, making it difficult for staff to collect signatures on documents within the time frames.

Resources

Because Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems is providing Peer Support Services in rural areas, resources available to the consumers are very limited and often times necessitate traveling to other counties in order to acquire the necessary things to meet the consumers' needs.

Program Requirements

In order to be considered to receive Peer Support Services, an individual must meet specific DSM criteria. It has been our experience that there are several individuals with PDD, severe anxiety disorders, as well as other diagnoses that would benefit tremendously from these services, but do not meet criteria. Due to the strong community integration, socialization, and positive relationship improvement components to the Peer Support Services Program, it is difficult to turn these individuals away.

Criminal Background

Throughout the recruitment and hiring process, there have been a number of individuals who have made progress with their own recovery and are prepared to share their message of wellness and change with others. Most of these individuals, however, have a history of being involved with the judicial system and carry crimes that resulted from their period of being unwell. This often times precludes individuals from hire due to their behaviors and choices in the past. Because of the message of hope and change that is intrinsic to Peer Support Services, it is often contradictory to turn these individuals away who have a lived experience that could potentially motivate or even prevent other individuals from making the same choices.

Changes to Peer Specialist Certification Process

Now that the new process for Pennsylvania Certification Board has been established, all current CPS and new CPS will have new requirement in establishing a career as a CPS. The following are the new processes for the CPS state certification grand-parenting and renewal:

REQUIREMENTS FOR CPS GRANDPARENTING

Education

- Completion of the 75 hours of approved peer specialist certification training.

Other

- Signed and dated Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Signed, dated and notarized Release.
- You must either live or work in Pennsylvania at time of application.
- You must be a person with lived experience.
- You must be 18 years of age or older.

CERTIFICATION TIME PERIOD

PCB certification is valid for two years starting on the date the application is approved. Two dates, date of issue and valid through, will appear on the certificate along with a certification number.

RENEWAL OF YOUR CPS EVERY TWO YEARS

To maintain your CPS certification, PCB requires renewal **every two years**.

To renew CPS certification, an individual must:

1. Hold a current and valid certificate issued by PCB;
2. Acquire 36 CEUs of relevant education/training every two years per the following: a. 24 CEUs must be specifically focused on peer support or recovery practices or both;

- b. 3 CEUs must be in ethics (i.e. boundaries, confidentiality, cultural competence, mental health law, mandated reporting, etc.);
 - c. 9 CEUs are elective and can be any education/training the CPS chooses;
 - d. The education/training hours can be from various sources (online, face-to-face trainings, in-service trainings, college courses, home study trainings, webinars, etc.);
3. Sign and date the PCB Peer Code of Ethical Conduct for CPS;
 4. Complete a renewal application and pay the \$50 renewal fee.

There are also new barriers that have been presented to both the specialists and the agencies alike. Right now, specialists continue to struggle with maintaining their own recovery focus while balancing their employment as well as changes to their benefits that employment has brought. This often times negatively impacts their recovery and presents personal challenges for them. Asking these individuals to take an additional examination may cause additional anxiety and confusion. In addition, this new process will put undue stress on program funds that may otherwise be used to hire new individuals to work with the growing need for Peer Specialists or for the consumers themselves. Now that less funding is available for trainings to certify individuals, it is becoming more difficult to find and fund more people to meet the growing need. Additionally, as individuals struggle with their ability to focus on tasks and work on preventing relapse, asking them to study and take lengthy exams will be extremely anxiety provoking. Several specialists have needed to take time away from work in order to concentrate and refocus themselves on their own recovery creating a gap in consumer coverage and services for periods of time. The following are a few key points that have been voiced by current CPS:

- No county or state funding to support the CPS certification and/or training requirements. This cost is imposed on the agency. This includes training cost, travel/mileage, food and hotel cost. All of this is done before the CPS can be paid for the job.
- The new CPS will now have the extra step of traveling to Harrisburg for a test
- The new process will also delay the process of hiring. Some new hires are leaving jobs to be trained in this position but cannot be paid for CPS employment until they complete all the steps as outlined above. This will increase the financial hardship for new hires and restrict some applicants from applying for open positions.
- The new process will lengthen the time between CPS training and actual job application of the training tools that were presented.

Technology

As technology continues to advance, so does agency protocol for it. The agency continues to utilize quicker means of accessing and documenting consumer files through electronic medical records. Many of the specialists do not have access to computers or the technology in the field and have difficulty staying connected through email and meeting documentation requirements by getting in their assessments and progress notes within the allotted time limit. Furthermore, some of the specialists have limited knowledge of computers and are not proficient with software and typing. This makes it difficult for them to adapt to changes in documentation protocol and accessing consumer files, particularly when funding is not available to purchase the required technology for them to use.

Stigma

Despite Peer Support Services now operating for several years, many individuals continue to struggle with having to go public with their mental health status and feel that doing so has changed the relationships they hold with other professionals in the field.

Attrition

Maintaining staff after they complete the extensive certification process continues to prove to be difficult. After the agency reimburses vendors, and the individual themselves, for training costs, there is significant pressure to get the individual trained and meeting with consumers in order to begin generating revenue. Specialists receive extensive agency training and program specific education following the intensive 2 week certification training. This often times causes anxiety about work load and performance and individuals frequently leave the position without assisting to recoup any of the funds invested into their certification. There have been several individuals who have received a certification, but have been unable to maintain employment for one reason or another. This costs the program several thousand dollars and makes it difficult to serve consumers who are in need of services. Furthermore, it becomes more difficult to replace that specialist as we would need to locate an individual who meets criteria for the position and have them trained as well. This creates stress on existing specialists who need to cover this caseload and also puts stress on programmatic budgets to be able to acquire the necessary funds to pay for another certification.

Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

Internal Quality Improvement Meetings with other leaders within Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems as well as quarterly quality meetings with Certified Peer Specialists and consumers of the Peer Support Services Program will be held to discuss current barriers, successes of the program, and review cases that require further intervention.

Being that recovery is at the cornerstone of the Peer Support Services Program, the staff will continually promote a strong advocacy for mental health services and resources. The Peer Support Services will work intensively in a collaborative environment with county resources in an attempt to combat stigma, spread the word of recovery, and team up with critical resources to consumer needs.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are developed by the program director and will include an evaluation of compliance with the approved PSS agency service description. The surveys will be distributed and collected (in a sealed envelope) by the CPS to each open consumers biannually. Each consumer will remain anonymous and the data will be analyzed by the program director in order to focus on the consumers' areas of need. Furthermore, outcomes of the surveys will be discussed with CPS staff at the following staff meeting. They will also be reviewed with consumers and staff in an open forum during quarterly quality meetings will be offered the chance to discuss their concerns. In addition, we will continue to strive to participate in the CFST or Consumer and Family Satisfaction Program completed by Roads to Recovery for the Northwest 9 Counties. This program was established by OMHSAS in order to ensure that consumers of behavioral health/drug & alcohol services are receiving quality services. Peer support has implemented the signing of these releases during our intake process to ensure that all peers support consumers have the option to participate in this program with the surveyors and will continue to work together to review survey results.

Consumer Advisory Board

Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems has committed itself to involving its consumers on every level of their treatment. Because of this, Beacon Light continues to host a Consumer Advisory Board made up of and led by consumers who receive our services so that they may have input that directly impacts the services they receive.

Quality Assurance Meetings

Beacon Light hosts quarterly Quality Assurance meetings in order to further reach out to consumers and their needs. During these meetings, information regarding Peer Support Services and educational opportunities will be discussed along with ways of improving existing services. Consumers are also provided a voice to share stories of recovery and discuss how Peer Support has improved their wellness, encouraging others to maintain focus on their personal wellness. The annual CQI plan will serve to identify the processes and program quality development. This CQI plan will be made available to the public on the Journey Health System website under Beacon Light Behavioral Health System's Peer Support Program. This plan will also be available in paper form upon request to the program director.

Program Monitoring

Beacon Light will also continue to use the current program monitors that are in place to review our program and program affiliates under Journey Health System. Monitors of this program will include but not limited to program census, staffing numbers/trends, average lengths of stays, billable unit trends, agency discharges, service plan compliance, discharge types, WRAP involvement and/or completion, and CPS training hour compliance. Beacon Light PSS participates in external bench marking by comparing quality metrics for performance improvements with it's affiliates.

Recruitment of both consumers and Certified Peer Specialists

The Peer Support Services staff will continue to meet with outpatient therapists, intensive case managers, doctors, resources within each community, and consumers at places of gathering in order to host meetings about the Peer Support Services Program. The agency will also continue to advertise the services as well as open positions in community papers as well as brochures that will be easily accessible at places of consumer gatherings. The Peer Support Services Program manager also participates in weekly management meetings with other adult services program managers on a weekly basis.

In terms of recruitment of Certified Peer Specialists, the current Certified Peer Specialists often times help to identify interested individuals and are also able to help them with acquiring the skills necessary to become a Certified Peer Specialist. Furthermore, through Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems' participation on BHARP workgroups, we are able to brainstorm other effective ideas on how to recruit new consumers and interested individuals for the Certified Peer Specialist position.

Additionally, the ability to request waivers for individuals who are in need of the service, but may not carry a specific diagnosis has been incredibly helpful to reach out to those in need.

This program will not discriminate against staff or individuals receiving services on the basis of race, color, creed, disability, religious affiliation, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, or economic status, and will observe all applicable State and Federal statutes and regulations.

*Individuals may refuse to participate in this program without jeopardizing other parts of his or her treatment with this agency.

*Eligibility for participation in this program is not dependent upon compliance or participation in another agency or non-agency program.

* Individuals to be served and the CPS will have joint input on caseload assignment – All potential conflicts of interest will be discussed and addressed prior to opening of services. They will also be monitored throughout the program participation.

* All consumer and CPS request to change CPS workers will be honored if possible and documented in the consumer records.

*Efforts will be made to re-engage any consumers and documentation will be present in the consumer records

* This agency will make every attempt to assign any consumer re-admitted to the previous CPS unless the individuals request otherwise.

* Any consumer that is has their services reduced or terminated will be provided with a discharge summary and information about re-engaging in future services regardless of timeframe out of the program. If requested, consumers will also be provided with information on an appeal process if they disagree with their discharge.

Resources for the consumers as well as the Certified Peer Specialists

The Certified Peer Specialists will obtain information from resources within the county regarding housing, transportation, vocational, and educational materials, working closely with other services such as Case Management. The Peer Support Director and Supervisors will also continue to present training opportunities to each specialist and encourage them to further their learning in areas they wish to become more knowledgeable. During weekly supervision, each specialist will also receive education on diagnoses and medications as well as clinical suggestion for strategies to intervene with each consumer in an individualized manner. The Peer Support Director, Supervisors and Certified Peer Specialists will continue to implement Personal Wellness tools such as Personal Medicine and Wellness Recovery Action Plans in order to involve the consumer in their own treatment and proactively plan for their successful recovery. In addition, Certified Peer Specialists now use a goal planning sheet with the consumer to encourage more involvement in their own recovery. The consumer's current goal is also printed on the top of every Encounter Log so that the consumer may be reminded of what they are working toward and it can be referenced during their appointments.

Maintaining recovery

Through increased and on-call supervision, the Certified Peer Specialist will have access to the Peer Support Director and Supervisors in the event that they themselves require help with their own recovery. Each specialist will also have an opportunity to discuss personal recovery during their scheduled weekly supervision time if they desire. Certified Peer Specialists will also be given the opportunities to attend trainings to further their knowledge on the recovery model and treatment success and may work with the supervisor to apply these techniques and strategies to their own recovery process. Additionally, Certified Peer Specialists from the counties that Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems currently serves gather at monthly meetings to provide feedback, support, and assistance to one another.

Personal Medicine, Wellness, and Resiliency

Through the implementation and utilization of the Personal Wellness Toolkit, the Certified Peer Specialists will be able to promote recovery principles with their consumers, engaging them in their own recovery and promoting advocacy. Additionally, they will be able to work within a framework that will help to increase the likelihood of recovery success, thus providing a higher quality service. Furthermore, Beacon Light continues to participate in the Recovery Learning Collaborative through Community Care Behavioral Health in order to continue to receive updates on the Personal Wellness Toolkit along with ways of implementing this in order to meet fidelity and provide high quality services. All Certified Peer Specialists also receive a username and password to the CommonGround Software through CCBH to be used with their consumers. This is a comprehensive tool that includes Whole Health Recovery tools for anyone to access on their own, focusing on diagnoses, education, medication, suggestions for wellness, and video on other individuals experiencing the same thing.

Documentation

The Certified Peer Specialists will participate in agency and program-specific documentation trainings. Upon hire, each specialist receives training specific to program paperwork and OMHSAS regulations. Each specialist will have documentation reviewed during their weekly supervision and will be given new tips at each monthly staff meeting. The Certified Peer Specialists also receive consistent training on how to coordinate with other services such as case-management and Psychiatric Rehabilitation so that there is no overlap in services. Furthermore, the specialist will be able to process through specific concerns with documentation with their supervisor and will practice how to complete effective documentation during their ongoing trainings. It may also be suggested that there be time during the

two-week certification process dedicated to how an individual would interface with these tools and provide them with some information and resources on computer and writing skills.

Transportation

The Certified Peer Specialists will work in collaboration with the consumer and other service providers in order to coordinate transportation and better serve the consumer. Furthermore, specialists attempt to utilize agency vehicles, if available, and help individuals qualify for public transportation in their area.

Follow-up – Discharge

The Peer Support Supervisor and/or Director will follow-up with the consumer at the time of their voluntary withdrawal from the Program and thoroughly document suggestions in the discharge summaries. The Peer Support staff will notify referral resources, provide suggestion to other programs that may further their recovery and will continue to offer the service in the future. Additionally, an exit survey will be given to consumers at the time of discharge, asking them to complete questions about the efficacy of the program and their experiences with services if they choose.

Internal Auditing

Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems will continue to conduct internal agency chart audits in order to ensure accuracy and efficacy.

- A chart audit tool has been developed in order to comprehensively outline the chart structure and service delivery. These monthly audits are conducted by the program director and CPS supervisors and are reported to the Program Director, Chief Compliance Officer, and Chief Operating Officer. 6 active and 1 closed charts are randomly selected to be reviewed monthly.
- The intended benefits of service delivery (previously mentioned) along with individual satisfaction are monitored through internal performance improvement councils, supervisors supervisions, and external bench marking with affiliate agencies and CCBH.
- The following program outcomes are regularly reviewed:
 - Documentation format
 - Documentation content as it relates to individualized Recovery Plans
 - Timeliness of services
 - Adherence to Pennsylvania Department of Welfare regulations
 - Adherence to Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations standards
 - Adherence to the Pennsylvania Office of Medical Assistance Programs regulations
 - Adherence to Community Care Behavioral Health quality improvement processes and standards

Open Communication

Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems will maintain involvement in outside organizations such as BHARP (Behavioral Health Alliance of Rural Pennsylvania) and the Peer Support Coalition in order to obtain suggestion and participate in open dialogue regarding documentation, funding, transportation, and program requirement issues. Furthermore, Beacon Light Behavioral Health Systems will maintain an open dialogue with Community Care Behavioral Health, Medical Assistance, and county funding sources in order to address the aforementioned issues and concerns.

Criminal Background/Changes to Peer Specialist Certification Process

As an agency, we continue to work with individuals at Managed Care Organizations, OHMSAS, BHARP, the Peer Support Coalition and other entities in order to begin to create regulations that govern situations like these in order to make the program accessible to individuals who may have been normally precluded from employment. Furthermore, it will be important for the agency to continue to provide input on these subject matters in order to give perspective on how changes to the Peer Certification Process, whether it be examinations or annual fees, would impact individuals as applicants, specialists, and the agency as a whole. As the agency attempts to provide Forensic Peer Support, we perform background checks on individuals prior to hire and process through their history with them, utilizing employment exclusionary criteria when necessary.

Education

Through continued education, both internally and externally, the specialists can gain a higher understanding of documentation requirements, changing program regulations, and more effective ways of adhering to expectations. Classes held for specialists after hours and staff meetings have seemed to alleviate some stress from these increased and newer expectations. In addition, educating the public and the agency on mental health will also help to eliminate the stigma against mental illness. By associating with other groups such as BHARP, The Rays of Hope Committee and adjacent Mental Health Associations, the education given to our communities will hopefully be a proactive step in changing the way individuals view mental health and wellness in general.

Attrition

Both the Peer Support Services Program and the entire agency are looking for new ways to address concerns that staff have and move forward with resolutions. Group gatherings in informal settings seem to facilitate a higher morale and a greater dependency amongst specialists. It is the hope that this will increase retention and assist with motivation to produce quality services. Furthermore, more extensive training for the specialists in the field is being provided, hoping to inform the specialists of the expectations and assist them with completing their work. In addition, it might be suggested that just as supervisors have a six month grace period to obtain their supervisor's certification and may act as a practicing Peer Supervisor, that specialists would also have this same advantage so that they would be able to determine if they are capable of maintaining employment before the agency incurs such a significant expense.

Training

Because the WRAP certification is not always a part of the CPS training process, we will continue to look for outside resources to help specialists obtain their WRAP certification so they may complete the WRAP with their consumers. Additionally, we will also be offering the Veterans and Forensic certification opportunities to specialists as they arrive so that we may service a wider range of consumers. Likewise, connecting with organizations such as NBCC, WPIC, Relias Learning, BHARP and CCBH will allow the specialists to gain access to webinars, teleconferences and trainings that may expand their knowledge on how to better service consumers.

Coordination and Networking

By connecting Peer Specialists and Supervisors with other groups of specialists, more individuals are able to gain access to more relevant trainings and can share experiences with others providing the service in different areas. The specialists are able to join listservs and email groups that provide them access to webinars, resources, free trainings and gatherings of peer providers and consumers that demonstrate the importance of recovery work. This seems to help minimize attrition and provide further support with pitfalls of the position. Additionally, specialists are able to obtain information on remaining successful with their own wellness and can hear others' shared experience in Peer Support which stimulates personal and professional growth. More specifically, it allows specialists to strengthen areas of interest by becoming more involved with Forensic, Veteran, and Youth and Young Adult Peer Services.