

## **Peer Specialists** *Igniting Recovery*

Improving Recovery Outcomes

### A Certified Peer Specialist is....

A person who has not only lived the experience of mental illness and/or substance use disorder but also has had formal training in the peer specialist model of mental health and/or substance use disorder supports. They use their unique set of recovery experiences in combination with solid skills training to support peers who have mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Peer Specialists actively incorporate peer support into their work while working within an agencies team support structure as a defined part of the recovery team.

A Certified Peer Specialist is not a mental health or substance use disorder technician limited to providing ancillary services without a clear therapeutic role, but as an active participant on the consumer's treatment and recovery team...Written by Lalena Lampe, DHS (2011)

## Scope of Practice...



### The Scope of Practice:

The primary function of the Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is to provide peer support. The CPS engages and encourages peers in recovery from mental health and/or substance use disorders. The CPS provides peers with a sense of community and belonging, supportive relationships, and valued roles. The goal is to promote wellness, self-direction, and recovery, enhancing the skill and ability of peers to engage in their chosen roles. The CPS works with peers as equals.

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## Code of Ethics...



### The Code of Ethics:

The principles will guide Certified Peer Specialists in their roles and relationships.

Example:

*"I understand that my primary responsibility is to help peers understand recovery and achieve their own recovery needs, wants, and goals. I will be guided by the principle of self-determination for each peer."*

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## What areas are CPS employed in...

Some of the areas that CPS are currently employed in are:

- CCS - Comprehensive Community Services
- Crisis Services
- In and outpatient care
- Veteran's hospitals, clinics and outreach
- Independent Living Center
- Homeless services
- Drop In Centers and Clubhouses
- Family Care
- Nonprofits
- Supported Living arrangements
- Peer Run Respite

## Where are CPS living...

Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists by County as of October 2017



## Peer Specialist Certification Pathways

**Certified Peer Specialists:** Peers who have the lived experience of mental health and/or substance use disorder.

*Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists are professionals that operate within a competency based Scope of Practice and a Code of Ethics and are examples of recovery to their peers.*

A Certified Peer Specialist is a job title within the agency of employment where the role of a peer specialist is specific to the lived experience of that specialist. And how that experience is utilized to help others move forward on their recovery journey.

## Peer Specialist Certification Pathways

### **Certified Parent Peer Specialist**

The role of the Certified Parent Peer Specialist is varied and can take on several forms of support and assistance to families experiencing social, emotional, behavioral and/or substance use concerns of youth. Although roles may vary in service agencies, it is generally recognized that Parent Peer Specialists provide the following services:

- Uses own family's resiliency experience as a tool
- Presents resiliency information
- Provides information about behavioral/emotional and/or substance use disorder resources

## Parent Peer Specialist...continued

- Assists in identifying and supporting families in crisis
- Facilitates family-directed services
- Goal setting and communicates effectively with treatment providers

*This is a new certification for Wisconsin and will begin trainings and certification exams in 2018.*

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## Peer Specialist Trainings...



- The new Peer Specialist curriculum has integrated both mental health and substance use disorders as part of the training.
  - Trainings are a minimum of 48 hours and are held throughout the State. They are facilitated by state-approved trainers.
  - Once an individual has successfully completed a training they are eligible to apply to take the Wisconsin certification exam.
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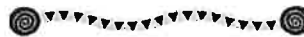
## Peer Specialist Trainings...continued

*Trainings are based on the Core Competencies.  
And the certification exam is also based on these principles*

- Values
- In-depth knowledge of recovery
- Roles and responsibilities of a Certified Peer Specialist
- Skills

## Independent Living Centers and their roles in providing trainings...

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ■ Access to independence (Madison)                    | ■ Options for Independent Living (Green bay)   |
| ■ Center for Independent Living (Menomonie)           | ■ Society's Assets (Racine)  |
| ■ Independence First (Milwaukee)                      | The ILC's will facilitate the delivery of peer specialist trainings in their region.       |
| ■ Independent Living Resources (LaCrosse)             | <i>Please refer to the brochure provided to you for locations and contact information.</i> |
| ■ Midstate Independent Living Choices (Stevens Point) | For questions call:  |
| ■ North Country Independent Living Center (Superior)  | Dee Nash 608-242-8484  |



## Wisconsin Certification Exam...



Once an individual successfully completes the state-approved training they are eligible to apply to take the certification exam.

The exam is based on the Core Competencies. The passing score is 85%.

There are currently 62 multiple choice questions. The exam was written by Peers, other stakeholders and reviewed by UW-Madison statisticians and validated.

Certification means that a person has successfully passed the state-approved training. *This is not a licensure.*

The database for exams and recertification is housed at the University of WI-Milwaukee.

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## Recertification...



After passing the certification exam Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists will need to complete 20 hours of continuing education every two years and submit the documentation to UW-Milwaukee using the required recertification forms.

Required areas of continuing education are:

- Cultural Humility
  - Ethics and Boundaries
  - Substance Use/Mental Health Specific
  - Peer Specialist Specific
  - Mental Health Specific
  - Trauma-informed care
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## Employer Toolkit...

Access to Independence in Madison, WI has developed an Employer Toolkit for Wisconsin for both the Certified Peer Specialist and Parent Peer Specialist models.

This toolkit will provide training on how to successfully hire, integrate and support Certified Peer Specialists in Wisconsin. This will include preparing staff for the addition of a Certified Peer Specialist in their organization and a tool to help determine how recovery-oriented the organization is and what their next steps will be.

Trainings will be held throughout the State in 2018.



## Peer Specialists statistics...



Wisconsin currently has 350 Certified Peer Specialists (CPS)

According to the CPS that responded to the October 2017 employment survey:

- 67.7 % are currently employed as CPS
- 39.5 % are working full-time. This is an increase from part-time employment over the last year.
- 60% have more than one CPS working at their organization



## How to assure a successful program

### Certified Peer Specialists are an integral part of a Peers recovery team.

It is important to remember that as a part of the team they need to be treated as equals in the person's recovery journey.

*"Aside from creating a receptive, welcoming community among existing staff, the provision of excellent supervision is arguably the most important aspect of sustaining your peer program. Good supervision allows peer specialists to identify and grow their unique strengths, effectively address areas for improvement, and truly flourish in their professional lives. Research also suggests that it contributes to staff retention."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whitley, R., & Drake, R. E. (2010). Recovery: A dimensional approach. *Psychiatric Services*, 61(12), 1248-1250

## Strengths and Challenges...



### Wisconsin has developed a strong training program and supports to prepare individuals to enter the workforce.

It is a challenge to employ CPS in more rural areas of the state. Through employer education these counties will see the benefits of hiring and supporting CPS in their organizations to provide mental health and/or substance use disorder recovery services.

Some larger metropolitan areas are finding there are not enough CPS to fill their job needs.

The new training curriculum will be important in providing qualified individuals to fill these positions.

**Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists Ignite Recovery!**

## The Website...



The Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist  
Employment Initiative Website

[www.wicps.org](http://www.wicps.org)

- PS trainings
- Employment
- Certification Exam information
- Links & resources



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## Contact Information...



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Thank you!



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