

Certified Parent Peer Specialists (CPPS) in the Workplace

A guide for the effective hiring, integration, and supporting of CPPS
services in Wisconsin



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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist and Certified Parent Peer Specialist Employment Initiative.

This guide is designed to help you assess your agency's readiness to successfully hire, integrate, and support a Certified Parent Peer Specialist as part of your staff and services. You will also find information about continued support needs of a parent peer workforce as an organization grows and learns from experience.

This guide clarifies terms and practices that define a recovery-oriented workplace, provides practical guidance for service implementation, and resource references. An agency committed to focusing on youth and family support can develop a plan for staff that addresses the needs of all employees including staff selection, training, ongoing coaching and supervision, program evaluation, and continuing education.

Thank you to Access to Independence staff, Brittyn Calyx and Tim Saubers, the Certified Peer Specialist and Certified Parent Peer Specialist Trainers, and the CPS and CPPS employers that provided feedback for their work in developing this updated document.

How to Use this Document

When used in this guide, "Certified" identifies only those certified by the state of Wisconsin and working within an organization providing peer-delivered services. It is expected that each organization be knowledgeable about its own funding sources and requirements regarding state certification.

This guide has not been designed to be a static and finished product. It is anticipated that as parent peer support and certification of individuals continues to grow worldwide, that lessons learned, new research, and innovative ideas that align with peer values will continue to improve parent peer support services. Resources will be renewed and substituted as this goal of improving outcomes and supporting families' resilience. When referencing this guide, always look for the most up-to-date version available on the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Employment Initiative website at www.wicps.org.

If while using this guide you encounter broken links or the inability to access any of the reference materials, please contact the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Program

Manager.

Likewise if in doing research and development in an effort to better support individuals you find new and interesting items, please let the Program Manager know so that it may be evaluated for future inclusion and updates to this guide. Program Manager contact information can be found at www.wicps.org/about-us.

History of the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Employment Initiative

Wisconsin has a long history of engaging with and supporting peer inclusion in the delivery of public mental health and substance use systems of care. The Wisconsin Peer Specialist Employment Initiative embodies this engagement, though the concept of peer support existed long before a certification for professional employment began. The Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Employment Initiative was launched by the Wisconsin Recovery Implementation Task Force (RITF) in December 2006.

The Peer Specialist Committee (PSC) of the RITF provided recommendations to the Department of Health Services (DHS) for the creation of the initiative. Funding was secured from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, and a contract was established with Access to Independence, Inc. (Access) to work with the PSC, DHS, and other stakeholders to build core competencies, a job description, ethics and boundaries guidelines, and more. Once those documents were in place, Access, DHS, and the PSC worked together to establish a training protocol and statewide competency-based examination process.

In February 2011, a separate design committee was developed with leaders in the parent support community in order to build a system that reflects the challenges and opportunities in supporting parents of children and youth experiencing mental health and substance use challenges. In partnership with Access and DHS, this committee developed guiding documents. The training protocol and the competency-based exam were launched in 2018.

Since 2006, many accomplishments have been achieved, including: building an active and engaged CPS workforce, developing a co-occurring capable peer workforce, launching a Certified Peer/Parent Peer Specialist Advisory Committee, and developing and implementing a Certified Parent Peer Specialist certification. Wisconsin is a leader in peer-delivered services, and both the Certified Peer Specialist

and the Certified Parent Peer Specialist initiatives continue to evolve as we learn.

What is a Certified Parent Peer Specialist?

A Certified Parent Peer Specialist is a person who has lived experience raising youth experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. This person combines their lived experience with formal training to increase their skills in supporting others in a parenting role.

What is the role of a 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 mental health and/or substance use concerns of their youth.

It is generally recognized that Certified Parent Peer Specialists provide the following services:

- Uses their own family's resiliency and experience as a tool
- Supports families they serve in recognizing and fostering their own resiliency
- Provides information about resources relevant to their needs
- Assists in identifying and supporting families navigating times of crisis
- Facilitates family-directed services, goal-setting, and communicating effectively with providers

The primary purpose of certification is to ensure that people employed in Wisconsin as Certified Parent Peer Specialists meet high standards of performance and that they:

- Create uniformity of core competencies of practitioners
- Ensure professional development, continued education and supervision
- Advance uniform standards, scope of practice and best practice
- Promote ethical practice within the profession
- Instill confidence with the families served
- Allow employers to tap into expanded funding sources

While the role of a Certified Parent Peer Specialist will vary from one family to the next, it generally includes empowering those who are parenting by:

- Increasing their knowledge and skills
- Modeling behavior for others
- Holding hope for change and growth
- Assisting in advocacy and teamwork

Certified Parent Peer Specialists use their experiences to assist other parents with:

- Navigating service and support systems
- Encouraging and understanding the youth's voice
- Providing peer support through the sharing of their own parenting experience.

Inherent in this list are the many benefits that Certified Parent Peer Specialists bring to an employer and the families they serve. The CPPS has the privilege of being able to be guided by principles such as family-directed approaches, trauma-informed support practices, and strengths-based perspectives without the constraints faced by many clinicians. This freedom allows these principles to flourish and inspire change within the peer relationship, organizations, and the greater mental health and substance use service systems.

Certified Parent Peer Specialists as Change Agents

The emerging Certified Parent Peer Specialist workforce in Wisconsin is composed of a number of strong and forward-thinking advocates. They demonstrate the ability to give voice to youth and families' needs to work towards better services and environments for Wisconsin families. They have supported their own families in doing such work and are passionate and driven to bring that same level of advocacy to the workplace and families across the state.

The CPPS advocates for the voice of the family and youth within the rest of the support team. The CPPS recognizes the whole family as the ultimate expert in what will work best for themselves. The CPPS trusts and respects family decisions and advocates alongside them in order to ensure their needs are met in a family-directed manner.

One of the most important values of a CPPS is providing non-judgmental support to the families they serve. Oftentimes parents and families experience feeling shamed and judged by the systems they interface with and even the systems and agencies meant to support them directly. An effective CPPS serves as a validating and non-judgmental resource to a family as they navigate the system and foster their own resiliency.

How Employers can Support this Change

Embedding peer support services into treatment settings is more than just adding a new service option; it is a culture change that aims to improve service delivery across the entire organization. The inclusion of peer support shifts the focus and nature of treatment services themselves. As a result, the administrative context in which staff deliver those services (organizational policies, budgets, evaluation practices, and so on) must also align to support recovery-oriented services.

All of these changes, and more, require the active efforts and strong support of agency leadership in articulating a clear vision of where the agency is headed, addressing the inevitable barriers to achieving that vision, and institutionalizing the changes so that they endure.

Understandably, the prospect of initiating agency-wide culture change can be daunting. Where to start? Regardless of where the impetus for transformation originates—direct care staff, service users, advocates, or others—to fully reorient your agency culture, the transformation must be endorsed and promoted from the top down, as well as implemented from the bottom up.

“For culture change to occur, a ... prerequisite is for someone in a position of significant authority and leadership in the agency to announce that a recovery-focused transformation process is an agency-wide priority.” ~ Joe Schultz, Clinical Director, NET

Three Approaches to Systems Change

1. Additive Approach In this model, organizations add recovery services such as peer-led support groups, peer-based telephonic aftercare, and other services as discreet options to supplement existing treatment practices, which themselves remain unchanged.

2. Selective Approach The selective approach strategically aligns services in certain programs or levels of care with a recovery-orientation, but not all. Within the targeted elements, both clinical and nonclinical services become more recovery-oriented and the administrative context is aligned to support this orientation, while non-targeted aspects of the organization continue to operate as usual. The changed components of the organization may be viewed as pilot projects or recovery projects, but they do not influence the broader culture of the organization.

3. Transformative Approach True transformation integrates recovery-oriented principles throughout the entire entity under consideration. Both clinical and nonclinical services and supports are aligned with a recovery-orientation. The transformative approach ensures that all administrative and operational processes, policies, and fiscal strategies support the delivery of recovery-oriented services. As such, is it a value-driven culture change throughout the entire organization or system?

For a deeper discussion about ROSC transformation, see Achara-Abrahams, Evans, & King, 2010.

Philadelphia Dept. of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities Services and Achara Consulting Inc. (2017). Peer Support Toolkit. Philadelphia, PA: DBHIDS

What makes Wisconsin's Certified Parent Peer Specialists Unique?

Certified Parent Peer Specialists recognized in the State of Wisconsin complete parent peer support training, examination, and continuing education requirements.

Wisconsin is one of the first states in the country to develop a formal certification for Parent Peer Specialists. This certification went into effect in 2018. Comparatively, the Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist credential has existed since 2010. It is important for employers to recognize that by hiring a CPPS they are on the cutting edge of family support services in Wisconsin and the nation.

Certified Parent Peer Specialists in Wisconsin are guided by and expected to work in accordance to a list of Core Competencies, a clearly defined Scope of Practice, and a Code of Ethics.

These documents are central to the role of the Certified Parent Peer Specialist in Wisconsin. The training curriculum and examination coordinated by the Wisconsin Peer Specialist Employment Initiative is structured in such a way as to ensure a clear understanding of these documents and their application in the workplace.

Where can Certified Parent Peer Specialists be employed?

- Within the Wisconsin Community Mental Health Programs
- Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)
- Children's Long Term Support Waivers (CLTS)
- Crisis Services
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
- Non-Profit and Provider Organizations
- Peer Recovery Centers
- Parent-Run Organizations
- Schools
- Outpatient Settings
- Inpatient Settings
- Hospitals
- Jails

Clarifying Certified Parent Peer Specialist Services

Informal Support / Certified Parent Peer Specialist / Clinical Role

Is this a professional role?	Usually not	Yes	Yes
Do they utilize self-disclosure?	Yes	Yes and always with the needs of the family in mind	Generally discouraged
How mutual is the relationship?	Can be truly mutual	Strives towards mutuality and mitigating inherent power imbalances (one's being paid, the other isn't)	Little mutuality and usually seen as an expert or authority figure
What models are used in training?	Varied and often informed by the community or program in which they are providing support. May or may not have formal training.	Parent peer support model with emphasis on trauma-informed practices, strengths-based approaches, family-directed services,	Medical model with emphasis on diagnoses, treatment, medication, clinical intervention, etc.

		etc.	
How do they engage with the family receiving support?	Varied. Stress tends to be placed on the shared lived experience above other components of a peer relationship.	Meets the family where they are at, seeks connection, and supports self-determination and collaborative advocacy.	Prioritizes treatment plans specific to diagnoses, compliance-focused, engagement varies via level of care, individual approaches vary.
What is their scope of practice?	Rarely a clearly defined scope of practice. May provide support or advice in many areas of life.	Parent peer principles and guiding documents guide the support offered. Explores options with family regarding other professional services that might be beneficial	Provides professional medical or clinical services - may make referrals for other specialties
How are resources provided?	Resource and information sharing can be done various ways, from one-size-fits-all approaches to more person-centered	Parent Peer Specialists share resources in a family-specific way. They support empowering relationships and do “with” not “for” the	Referrals for resources are made in order to support the treatment plan. Formation of treatment plans can rely on varying levels of input

	models.	family.	from the family.
How is feedback given or progress measured?	Entirely dependent on the framework of informal support.	“Progress” is measured and defined by the family (youth included). Parent Peer Specialists do not focus on fixing or evaluating.	Clinicians review clients’ progress by measuring markers of engagement, “functionality,” compliance, and data collection.
How are goals and priorities determined?	Goals and priorities are determined based upon the framework in which support is provided. This may be done in a collaborative manner with the family or in a predetermined manner based upon the program.	Supports the family in developing and defining their own goals on their own terms. Validates and supports the family in working towards their goals regardless of how “realistic” they may be.	Goals and priorities are determined primarily by the clinician, the treatment team, insurance stipulations, and treatment method. Level of input from client varies upon restrictiveness of setting and treatment method.
How are services	Rarely.	Differs from	Required by all

documented?		program to program. When required, CPPS must complete documentation in a collaborative, strengths-based, respectful manner.	clinicians. Must complete regular progress notes, evaluating progress towards goals established by the treatment plan.
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Resources

Sera Davidow of the Western Mass Recovery Learning Community With contributions from Erin Levesque & the Western Mass Peer Network, “A Handbook For Individuals Working in Peer Roles” (pages 14-20)
http://www.psresources.info/images/stories/peer_role_booklet_peer_side.pdf

***Shery Mead, M.S.W., David Hilton, M.A., Laurie Curtis, M.A., “Peer Support: A Theoretical Perspective”
<http://www.intentionalpeersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Peer-Support-A-Theoretical-Perspective.pdf>

***Shery Mead, Cheryl MacNeil, “Peer Support: A Systemic Approach”
<http://www.intentionalpeersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Peer-Support-A-Systemic-Approach.pdf>

Office of Consumer Affairs, Office of Adult Mental Health Services in consultation with Shery Mead with funding from Center for Medicaid Services June 2006, “Intentional Peer Support: What Makes it Unique?”
https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/HTItoolkit/files/05-Organization_of_Peer_Support/1-Peer_Support_Descriptions/B.Intentional_Peer_Support-What_Makes_It_Unique.pdf

February 2, 2012, by Lori Ashcraft, PhD, and William A. Anthony, PhD, "Lessons learned in peer workforce development"

<https://www.behavioral.net/article/lessons-learned-peer-workforce-development>

Wisconsin's Working Definition of the Certified Parent Peer Specialist

A Certified Parent Peer Specialist is a person who has lived experience raising youth experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. This person combines their lived experience with formal training to increase their skills in supporting others in a parenting role.

CPPS can gain experience in a variety of ways; it goes beyond those who are biological or legal parents. CPPS focus on maximizing parent support and growth by understanding and responding to individual family cultures, strengths, and needs.

While the role of a CPPS will vary from one family to the next, it generally includes empowering those who are parenting by:

- Increasing their knowledge and skills
- Modeling behavior for others
- Holding hope for change and growth
- Assisting in advocacy and teamwork

CPPS use their experiences to assist other families with:

- Navigating service and support systems
- Encouraging and understanding the youth's voice
- Providing peer support through the sharing of their own parenting experience

Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists Core Competencies

DOMAIN 1: Personal Attributes

- 1.1 Understands, supports, and models the importance of family-driven care
- 1.2 Accepts the family where they are without judgment
- 1.3 Able to communicate with empathy
- 1.4 Able to interact with families with compassion and clarity
- 1.5 Believes that communication occurs in many forms, not words alone
- 1.6 Believes that behavior is a form of communication
- 1.7 Conducts oneself with honesty and integrity

DOMAIN 2: Ethics and Confidentiality

- 2.1 Understands and maintains confidentiality as required by state and federal law
- 2.2 Uses self-disclosure appropriately as a tool to provide support
- 2.3 Understands and maintains professional boundaries
- 2.4 Treats all people with dignity and respect
- 2.5 Understands personal and professional limitations and biases based on own knowledge, skill, or experience
- 2.6 Recognizes when, and to whom, to report ethical and safety issues

DOMAIN 3: Advocacy

- 3.1 Knows how to and where to find information on child and parental rights
- 3.2 Assists families in asserting their rights
- 3.3 Able to assist families to recognize the difference between an individual

problem and a system problem or constraint

3.4 Able to assist families in how to advocate effectively within policy-making processes

DOMAIN 4: Wellness

4.1 Understands why self-care is important for parent peer specialists

4.2 Practices self-care strategies that enable one to work effectively with families

4.3 Able to work with families to explore wellness strategies

4.4 Understands the holistic view of family members' physical, mental, social, and spiritual strengths and needs

4.5 Understands resiliency and recovery principles

DOMAIN 5: Crisis and Safety Planning

5.1 Provides appropriate supports and advises families in the midst of crisis

5.2 Understands the purpose of crisis and safety planning

5.3 Supports families going through a crisis and safety planning process

5.4 Knows safeguarding and relapse prevention strategies for issues such as self-harm and substance abuse

5.5 Knows about suicide and research-based prevention strategies

5.6 Understands the purpose of functional behavioral assessments

5.7 Able to assist others in identifying situations that may cause challenging behavior

5.8 Knows about crisis resources available in the community and region

DOMAIN 6: Empowerment

6.1 Able to assist families explore their own choices and recognize the positive and negative consequences of those choices

- 6.2 Able to allow families the space necessary to help themselves
- 6.3 Communicates the principles of family-driven care
- 6.4 Supports, teaches, and coaches parents in identifying and articulating their families' needs and goals
- 6.5 Recognizes stigma, common superstitions, and myths regarding mental health and substance use issues
- 6.6 Able to assist families recognize their strengths and use them to effect change
- 6.7 Practices interventions to prevent or overcome stigma
- 6.8 Able to assist families to identify and build informal family and community supports

DOMAIN 7: Communication

- 7.1 Communicates and connects effectively with families of all cultures, value systems, and lifestyles
- 7.2 Listens actively
- 7.3 Practices effective information gathering and questioning techniques
- 7.4 Understands the value of fostering cooperation between families and the individuals and service systems involved in their lives
- 7.5 Communicates clearly in writing
- 7.6 Models effective working relationships

DOMAIN 8: Knowledge

- 8.1 Knowledgeable about resources (including funding options), rules, and regulations related to children's mental health and adolescent substance abuse
- 8.2 Knowledgeable about child and adolescent mental health and substance use conditions, treatments, services, and supports
- 8.3 Knowledgeable about how to find information about mental health and substance abuse systems, community resources, treatments, services, supports and individual and family rights
- 8.4 Knowledgeable about the public education system as it relates to children and youth with mental health and/or substance use issues
- 8.5 Knowledgeable about how to find information regarding child welfare,

juvenile justice, and health care systems in Wisconsin

- 8.6 Knowledgeable about the process and principles of collaborative systems of care, also known as “wraparound”
- 8.7 Knowledgeable about recovery-oriented systems of care (ROSC)
- 8.8 Knowledgeable about current best practices for addressing challenging behavior
- 8.9 Knowledgeable about impact of trauma on children, youth, and families
- 8.10 Understands the use of peer specialist services, as differentiated from clinical services

Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists Code of Ethics

This Code of Ethics will guide Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists in their roles, relationships, and professional responsibilities. The primary responsibilities of Certified Parent Peer Specialists are to promote the wellbeing of the families with whom they work, to promote family-driven practices that focus on strengths as part of the solution, and to ensure families and youth participate as partners in all aspects of their care.

As a Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist:

1. I will ensure that my conduct will not constitute physical or psychological abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the families I serve.
2. I will abide by the standards of supervision established by my employer, so long as the supervision is consistent with the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist Core Competencies and this Code of Ethics. If conflict exists, I will follow a grievance procedure for resolution.
3. I will, at all times, respect the rights, culture, and dignity of the families I serve.
4. I will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the families I serve. When circumstances – such as an imminent risk to safety – require the disclosure of confidential information, only information that is essential will be revealed. To the extent possible, families will be informed before confidential information is disclosed.
5. I will not engage in sexual or any form of intimate activities with any family members I am currently serving, and for a minimum of one year after they are discharged from service.
6. I will neither give nor accept gifts of money or items of significant value from the families I serve.
7. I will not use undue influence, create undue dependence, or make unwarranted promises of benefits.
8. I will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that may conflict with the interests of the families I serve. For example, I will not endeavor to purchase items or property from a member of a family I serve.
9. I will be guided by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment possible.
10. I will not participate in stigma or the blaming of families and youth for the challenges they face.
11. I will act with integrity in all professional relationships.

12. I will seek to resolve philosophical differences with professionals and/or the families I serve in a respectful, fair, and honest manner.

13. I will take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, and/or report, following established agency policies, the unethical conduct of colleagues.

14. I will act in a manner to create and maintain safety for myself and the families I serve.

15. I will provide services consistent with the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist Core Competencies in effect at the time the service is provided.

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Division of Care and Treatment Services

Bureau of Prevention Treatment and Recovery

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Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist Scope of Practice

Summary: The primary function of the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists is to provide peer support and promote the well-being of the families with whom they work. Certified Parent Peer Specialists also promote family-driven and youth-guided practices that focus on strengths as part of the solution and ensure families and youth participate as partners in all aspects of their care.

Providing Support

Essential Functions

Certified Parent Peer Specialists will:

1. Identify with lived experience in parenting a child with mental health and/or substance use concerns and successfully navigated systems of care for that child.
2. Be mindful of the ethics, boundaries, power, and control issues inherent to the Certified Parent Peer Specialist role.
3. Use active listening skills.
4. Foster a collaborative partnership with the child, family, and service systems.
5. Provide culturally sensitive and age-appropriate services.
6. Establish supportive relationships with families with whom they work.
 7. Support families in exploring options that may be beneficial to returning to emotional and physical wellness after a crisis.
 8. Strategically share own story, as appropriate, for the benefit of the family served, providing hope and strengthening resiliency.
9. Assist families to understand the purpose of peer support.
10. Encourage and assist families to promote wellness and thrive as a family.
11. Discuss boundaries with the families on an ongoing basis.

12. Work with people in a way that reflects an understanding of trauma and the fact that it can impact all aspects of a person's life.

13. Assist families in identifying their strengths, natural supports, goals, and support community connection.

Communicating with Supervisors and Interacting with Staff

Certified Parent Peer Specialists will:

1. Communicate needs and ask questions, especially about ethics, boundaries, and confidentiality, and know when to mention concerns to supervisors.
2. Be knowledgeable about state language regarding supervision of Certified Peer Specialists.
3. Understand his or her role and fully participate as an integral part of the professional support team.
4. Demonstrate and model that resiliency is possible and that peer support is an evidence-based practice.
5. Accurately, respectfully, and promptly complete all required documentation.
6. Work with families and staff to develop healing and trauma-sensitive relationships.
7. Report all intended, serious harm to self or others immediately to the appropriate person.

Demonstrating Confidentiality

Certified Parent Peer Specialists will:

1. Be familiar with state and federal policies relating to confidentiality.
2. Be knowledgeable of all confidentiality directives at his or her agency.
3. Maintain confidence concerning all verbal and written information, whether obtained from families or otherwise.
4. Be knowledgeable of information that is not to be kept in confidence, including intended, serious harm to self or others, and know how to handle these situations.

Embracing Change in the Workplace

In the following 18-minute video, Jason Clarke of Mindsatwork will introduce many aspects of implementing meaningful change. As you will see, change is hard for any organization, industry, or service sector. The information presented in this talk is inherent

to change universally.

TEDxPerth - Jason Clarke - Embracing Change, December 2010

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPhM8lxibSU>

Emerging Practice in Recruiting and Hiring a Parent Peer Workforce

Adapted from: Living the values of recovery in policies, programs, and practice, NJPRA ,
<http://www.patnemec.com/pdfs/NJPRA-HO-2010-Swarbrick-Nemec.pdf>

1. Hire people who are qualified to do the job—no tokenism; lived experience by itself is not enough. CPPS need relevant work experience, training, skill sets, and values that align with the hiring organization.
2. Develop a clear job description and provide detailed information about essential functions of the position, job expectations, and requirements. Revisit the job description from time to time to ensure that it is current and applicable.
3. Apply the principles of universal design when you develop human resources policies that are flexible enough to create an accepting, adaptable program culture that works for everyone.
4. Provide accommodations through a standardized disability policy that applies to everyone. Inform all of your staff about the process for requesting accommodations.
5. Provide competency-based training and supervision and remember that changing existing practice is much more difficult than teaching an inexperienced person the right way from the beginning.
6. Utilize a qualified supervisor who is knowledgeable about the parent peer role, peer relationship, and parent peer model of service delivery. When possible, it is most beneficial to have a supervisor with personal experience in a CPPS role.

7. Ensure quality of services through feedback, supervision, and performance evaluation mechanisms.

The CPPS workforce does not require “special treatment” but equitable treatment when family or personal situations arise.

There are no indicators that a CPPS workforce requires more “sick days” or take above average time off.

Employers need to plan, as with any employee, for who will take over the responsibilities of the CPPS should they need to take time off.

Considerations:

- Is there more than one CPPS on staff?
- Do CPPS have opportunities to network with other CPPS and engage in mutual support?
- How will the peer’s needs be met if the CPPS has to take an extended leave?
- Can the employer partner with another agency/organization to provide peer support during a CPPS’ leave of absence?
- Does the employer have a plan in place for supporting all staff members to transition back into the workplace once they feel well enough to return?

Keeping the lines of communication open and discussing these possibilities can be a positive, effective way to plan for continuity of services.

Recruiting/Job Posting

A successful CPPS will bring more than the value of lived experience of raising youth with mental health and/or substance use challenges. They will possess knowledge, attitudes, and skills to assist you in creating a trauma-informed, safe, trusting, and a healing environment that respects the perspective of the family they support. They will also have the ability to set appropriate boundaries, be knowledgeable of HIPAA requirements, and understand the ethics and boundaries unique to CPPS.

A resource from William White and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services in Philadelphia can be helpful to clarify both the role and boundary-related guidelines for people in peer support roles. The resource will assist agencies to initiate the conversation, at any time, to better process their own guidelines and policies around these concerns. By opening the link below and reading pages 31-34 and using the facilitated framework on pages 164-172, agencies have a more open, transparent and honest conversation to determine its individual course of action when Ethics and Boundaries of peer support workers create concerns. <http://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/1970/01/PCCI-Peer-Support-Toolkit.pdf>

A large key to a CPPS being successful during employment is the development of a comprehensive and accurate job description for your organization. A clear and thorough job description will help facilitate the integration of parent peers into a multi-disciplinary team environment and strengthen the organizational validation of the support that parent peers can offer. Without clarity in an organization's job description, CPPS may experience a great deal of job frustration, feelings of being under-utilized, and that their qualifications are not respected. Whenever possible, it is important that employers hire more than one CPPS when launching their program in order to ensure that no staff is working in isolation. There is a myth that people in peer roles, whether traditional peer support or parent peer support, cannot or do not desire full-time work. This is not true. People working in peer roles are like any other employees in that their desires around appropriate scheduling are specific to their own lives and circumstances.

Job descriptions for Certified Parent Peer Specialists are variable and change based on the program and agency looking to hire them. In this handbook, several examples of job descriptions have been included. To see additional examples visit the following link: <http://wicps.org/jobs>

In an effort to assist in building a detailed job description for a CPPS for your needs, a guideline has been adapted to include Wisconsin's requirements for funding reimbursement. Again not all programs require "Certification" and it is the agency's responsibility to know the specific requirements for reimbursements and funders.

Interview

One thing found helpful in the Certified Peer Specialist workforce regarding the interview process is that an "Emerging Practice" is to include others, such as, peers receiving services, supervisors, and current CPS team members on the interview panel. In

doing this, organizations get multiple perspectives and input into selecting the best candidates to support others.

Strive to conduct interviews in a trauma-sensitive environment, multiple people going in and out of locked doors, or other possible distractions or triggers.

Another noticeable change in the interviewing of candidates for parent peer support positions is the use of unique and specific questions. We must caution organizations that if they attempt to integrate some types of the following examples to check with their agency's human resources and legal department to clarify any restrictions, regulations, and limitations in interviewing candidates.

Below are some questions to be considered when interviewing CPPS:

1. What interests you in applying for this position?
2. Please share with us what experience, work and personal ("lived" experience), that you have relevant to this position.
3. Tell us a bit about what you know of the role of a parent peer specialist.
4. How familiar are you with parent peer support and what does it mean to be a peer to other families in your opinion?
5. What do you view as your personal strengths?
6. What does family resilience mean to you?
7. What do you do to take care of yourself and nurture your own well-being?
8. There will be many opportunities to challenge the mental health and substance use service system, doctors, nurses, social workers, and to advocate for families in this position. Tell us a bit about your ability to respectfully challenge individuals working in these systems.
9. What challenges do you think you may encounter in this position?
10. What would you say about your dependability?
11. Describe how you would respect a family's privacy and confidentiality while working with your team and connecting that family to resources they have determined as appropriate.
12. Do you have the ability to work independently? How about as a collaborative team member?

13. What would you expect from a supervisor and support system in this position?

The above suggested questions were edited from:

https://www.mainequalitycounts.org/image_upload/Peer%20Services%20Tool-Kit.pdf (pages 46 and 47)

Living Wages and Benefits

When establishing pay rates for Certified Parent Peer Specialists, employers have a wide variety of factors to keep in mind. It is primarily important for employers to recognize the value that CPPS bring by ensuring that they are paid a living wage. This wage, at a minimum, must increase as the cost of living increases. Of additional importance to recognize are the unique skills in which CPPS have been trained, the work required to maintain a professional certification, and the pay rate for others at the same employer providing similar services. Employers also need to recognize additional certifications, degrees, and trainings that CPPS may have upon hire and take those into account when determining an appropriate pay rate.

When peer specialists advance into supervisory positions, it is expected that they will be paid on par with other supervisory staff. Employers must also take into consideration the size of the program they're supervising, the number of staff they have, and their overall performance when determining wages for CPPS in supervisory positions.

Employers of CPPS need to ensure that they receive benefits at the same level as other staff. This can be a crucial step to take in order to better retain parent peer specialists.

Resource:

(Lyn Legere of Lyn Legere Consulting With contributions from the Western Mass Peer Network & Sera Davidow of the Western Mass Recovery Learning Community:

http://www.psresources.info/images/stories/A_Providers_Handbook_on_Developing_Implementing_Peer_Roles.pdf

Supervising and Supporting the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist

Effective supervision is one of many important aspects of sustaining a parent peer support program.

Supervisors of CPPS should be thoroughly knowledgeable with the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist Scope of Practice, Core Competencies, and the Code of Ethics as well as funding and state requirements around supervision.

The following language comes from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Though it is meant for supervision of Certified Peer Specialists, it also is relevant and applicable for the CPPS.

Certified Peer Specialist Supervision Approved Language February 2016

*“The Division of Care and Treatment Services (DCTS) oversees the certification of Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) which allows individuals to work within programs and/or agencies to provide peer support. DCTS strongly believes that CPS, like many professionals providing services to individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders, benefit from employer supervision. **Below is guidance on what employer supervision should be.**”*

For Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists working in a program or agency that provides services that are reimbursed by Medicaid, DCTS adheres to Federal guidance that Peer Specialists must have supervision by a mental health professional, must be coordinated within the context of coordinated service plans and have continuing education. These programs have structured roles and supervision requirements that can be utilized by a CPS for employer supervision.

For Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists working in a program or agency that provides services that are NOT reimbursed by Medicaid, such as Peer Run Respite, Peer Run Organizations and others; DCTS anticipates that the program or agency will provide supervision, by a knowledgeable and skilled individual, who understands the role of peer specialists, which will focus, not only on employment, but the peer specialist’s work and skills in working with individuals with mental health and substance use disorders. CPS and employers should be aware if the program or agency’s funding sources have supervision requirements and abide by those requirements”.

There is absolutely no question that the most qualified supervisor for a CPPS is someone

else who has also worked as CPPS. This is because:

- People who have 'been there' themselves are better able to understand the challenges of working in a system where one's family has potentially previously received services.
- People who have worked as CPPS are better able to understand the tensions and potential isolation of working in a role where they may be one of the only people in that position and are nonetheless asked to challenge others and act as a change agent.
- People who have been through the training for CPPS are more likely to understand the core competencies and functions of the job.
- People who have been asked to sign on to the same Code of Ethics and/or values are more likely to understand the integrity of the role and when certain duties may be in conflict with it.

Another bonus of having a supervisor with this experience is that they are often in a much better position to unite people working as CPPS across an organization. That is to say, in organizations where individuals working as CPPS are placed separately on various clinical teams, they are much less likely to know one another and much more likely to feel isolated in their work. On the other hand, when there is a centralized supervisor who has also worked as a CPPS and who is responsible for supervising other CPPS, there are more likely to be regular team gatherings for all CPPS and for individuals to feel that their roles are well understood and supported.

In organizations where this just isn't possible, sometimes including Medicaid-billable services, some ideas include:

- Requesting training and technical assistance on CPPS supervision from the Peer Specialist Program Manager (the technical assistance form can be found at the end of this guide)
- Seeking supplemental supervision for your employee from a local parent-run organization
- Sub-contracting with a local organization to hire CPPS to work in your agency and so that their direct supervisor is someone who has that experience
- Supporting and encouraging your employed CPPS to attend networking meetings, trainings, and other gatherings related to peer roles offered by other organizations and then working with them to implement ideas and best practices learned at such gatherings.

Programs that utilize Certified Parent Peer Specialists are varied and a new piece of the mental health and substance use service system. This is important to keep in mind and can be viewed as an opportunity to shift the way supervision has traditionally been provided towards specialized, tailored supervision that meets the needs of the programs and the CPPS providing services.

Some programs may benefit from having a clinical supervisor and a program supervisor while others may benefit from having one supervisor who is able to provide both forms of oversight, while still others may benefit from a different arrangement. Supervision needs to be viewed as flexible and adaptable and the way it is provided for programs and individual CPPS should be re-evaluated and adjusted regularly and/or as needs change.

Professional Development of CPPS Staff

Supporting the professional development of CPPS staff is a key responsibility of the program and employer of the CPPS. It is important for employers to keep in mind that CPPS have completed professional training and hold a certification backed by the State of Wisconsin. CPPS staff require and deserve the same level of investment and support that all other staff receive.

CPPS are expected to stay up-to-date with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and family resilience, and one way to ensure that they are able to do so is for the employer to support their professional development. This can include being sent to trainings, attending conferences, workshops, networking events, and so on. It is crucial that employers and CPPS evaluate which events they attend in order to ensure that the information presented is in line with parent peer values rather than presented only through the traditional, clinical lens.

By ensuring that CPPS stay knowledgeable with emerging best practices, employers position their staff, programs, and agency on the cutting edge of service provision, serving as leaders in the communities in which they provide services. Additionally, sending CPPS staff to certain trainings such as WRAP, e-CPR, Alternatives to Suicide facilitator training, and so on creates opportunities for the employer to expand the services and supports provided to peers and community members.

Finally, CPPS are required to maintain their certification and recertify every 2 years. Many of the requirements necessary for this process can be obtained while simultaneously working on professional development. The following section will break down specific requirements for CPPS recertification.

CPPS recertification requirements

Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists Continuing Education Requirements

Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialists practice within their area of competence and attain appropriate continuing education to maintain proficiency and remain current with emerging knowledge relevant to their work.

Twenty hours of continuing education hours (CEH) are required every two years. A minimum of three hours is required in each of the following categories.

Cultural Humility: Cultural Humility is the ability to strive to set aside individual cultural expectations and honor the fact that there are innumerable cultures and micro-cultures. It is a commitment to self-evaluation of individual beliefs, the understanding that people are experts in their own culture, and to being open to the idea that learning people's individual cultures is a continuous process. This may also be known as, "Cultural Competence," "Cultural Responsiveness," or "Cultural Awareness."

Ethics and Boundaries: Ethics and Boundaries is the ability to understand and maintain confidentiality and appropriate boundaries and to recognize when to seek guidance or consultation. This includes training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and ethical decision-making models.

Parent Peer Specialist Specific: Parent Peer Specialist Specific training builds skills specific to the population served. Examples include Motivational Interviewing, Peer Support, Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development, Systems of Care, Serious Emotional Disturbance, or Substance Use Disorders.

Child/Adolescent Development or Parenting: Child/Adolescent Development or Parenting builds awareness and skills that may assist families as they engage with peer support services. Skills can be gained from an understanding of the physical, social, psychological, and cognitive development of young people and successful parenting strategies involved with each stage.

Funding/Billing for Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialist Services

The funding source that is the focus of this toolkit are the Medicaid psychosocial rehabilitation services such as Comprehensive Community Services and Community Recovery Services. With the continued improvements in outcomes with peers and families, the opportunities for more funding options may increase. For example:

Certified Peer services may also be covered by Medicaid HMOs as “in lieu of services” in some instances. The specific benefit serving the member will determine how and what services can be billed. For private insurance, an agency biller would need to contact the insurance carrier.

NOTE: Within the Certified Parent Peer Specialist model, only county-run programs that provide services to children and youth will be billable and reimbursed by Medicaid.

Families participating in Children’s Long-Term Support (CLTS) Waiver programs will need to be “Dually Enrolled” to access “Certified Parent Peer Specialist” services if billing and reimbursement of Medicaid funding is required.

(See Joint memo here for clarification):

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dltc/memos/2014-01policymemo.pdf>

Also see “Peer/Advocates Supports” on page 17 and page 118 of the following document for further explanation:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/waivermanual/waiverch04-10.pdf#page=1>

While we have tried to provide organizations with the most accurate and up to date information, information changes often. The best resource that is available for questions on funding, billing and reimbursement for any peer related services is the funder itself. In the case of county-run programs, that contact will vary depending on the program. Each county- run program has a program Administrator or Coordinator at the state level along with administrative codes that outline and define each program.

For specific assistance with billing and reimbursement for county-run programs, the forward health portal will also be of assistance to agencies. “The ForwardHealth Portal serves as the interface to ForwardHealth interChange, the new Medicaid Management Information System for the state of Wisconsin. Through this portal, providers, managed care organizations, partners, and trading partners can electronically and securely submit, manage, and maintain health records for members under their care. This Portal also provides users with access to the current health care

information available.”

Wisconsin Department of Health Services, ForwardHealth Portal:

<https://www.forwardhealth.wi.gov/WIPortal/Default.aspx>

If you are a health care provider or HMO representative, contact Provider Services at 1-800- 947-9627.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services (DCTS)

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dcts/index.htm>

Technical Assistance for Wisconsin Employers

If you would like to receive Technical Assistance regarding hiring, integration and supporting Certified Peer Specialists or Certified Parent Peer Specialists please use the Technical Assistance Request form available at: http://www.wicps.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/cps_pps_ta_form.pdf