Peer Specialist Readiness

Self-Assessment

2013-14

These questions are meant to assist you in deciding about participating in the Certified Peer Specialist Basic training. They address the knowledge foundation and supports that have contributed to success in the class for past CPS participants.

*This is for your use alone and should not be submitted to the Peer Support Supervisor, Case Manager or the WSU Peer Support trainers. The application itself will ask about what you learned here.
Do You Want to Be a Peer Specialist?

Some questions you may want to ask yourself . . .

The job of a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) in Kansas is to help instill the hope of recovery from psychiatric diagnosis or dual diagnosis. CPSs demonstrate or model recovery skills they have learned through lived experience. A person wanting to become a CPS must complete a training program and pass a written exam.

A peer specialist has the opportunity to be aware of, openly share, and model what they have learned in the recovery process.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>These questions might help you decide if you are interested in becoming a peer support specialist.</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you willing to disclose to other people that you have a psychiatric diagnosis?</td>
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<td>2. Can you describe in detail what has helped you move from where you were to where you are now? What did you do? What did others do?</td>
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<td>3. Can you describe what you have learned about yourself in your recovery? Please explain.</td>
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4. Can you describe some of the strengths you have developed? What are a few of these?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

5. Can you describe some of the things that you do on a regular basis to help yourself feel well?

6. Can you describe how having a psychiatric diagnosis impacted your life?

7. Can you be comfortable discussing people’s experiences with medications?

8. Can you describe some of the beliefs and values you have or have developed that help strengthen and support your recovery? What are a few of these?

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

9. Can you describe some of the things you have found helpful in combating negative self-talk?

10. Do you have a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) or other type of personal wellness plan? Can you discuss its value with a peer?

11. Do you believe that you could talk to a person to help them understand recovery and that it is possible?
12. Can you describe how a sense of hope and resiliency plays a part in your life, your recovery? What are some words you would use to describe this?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

13. Can you describe some of your community supports and how they help you?

14. Can you describe how you deal with difficult situations? With setbacks?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

15. Have you ever led a group? What did you like about it?

__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

16. Do you see yourself in the role of an advocate?

These questions might help you decide if you are prepared for peer support specialist training.

<table>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am willing to disclose to my colleagues and peers that I have been diagnosed with a psychiatric diagnosis. I understand that in doing so I help educate others about the reality of recovery.</td>
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2. I have the time needed to participate in a challenging course of study.

3. I have taken and completed formal schooling, adult education classes, or a GED or High School Equivalency program.

4. I have read articles by Pat Deegan, Judi Chamberlin, Dan Fisher and other peer leaders, or I follow online communities such as Mad in America, The Icarus Project, or Beyond Meds?

5. I am able to travel away from my home for multi-day trainings?

6. I have worked or volunteered as a peer group facilitator or mentor.

7. I feel ready to be involved in a class that requires active participation.

8. I advocate for myself, even when it’s against those in authority.

9. I am able to participate for a full 8-hour training day.

10. I’m comfortable talking about my own story and experience.

11. I can listen to other people’s stories and feel empathy for their experience, even when it parallels painful places from my past.

12. I can arrange for my transportation needs.
Did you answer the majority of these questions with a “yes”? The guide above is only a general guide. This survey has not been tested to determine whether these scores really do predict completion. However, the survey items were selected based on factors that have contributed to the success or difficulties of past CPS course participants.

If you would like to strengthen your foundation in order to be better prepared for the CPS course, review the questions where you answered “no,” and develop a personal plan that will help you change those answers to “yes.” Here are some specific strategies that may be helpful:

- Learn more about peer work and peer supports on the Internet.
- Get involved in a peer support group.

Read first-person stories of recovery by people such as Pat Deegan, Judi Chamberlin, Dan Fisher and Others.

**Some helpful links –**

National Empowerment Center: [http://www.power2u.org/index.html](http://www.power2u.org/index.html)

The Copeland Center – WRAP – [www.mentalhealthrecovery.org](http://www.mentalhealthrecovery.org)

International Association of Peer Specialist: [http://inaops.org/](http://inaops.org/)

I am the Evidence: [http://www.itecampaign.org/](http://www.itecampaign.org/)

Mad In America: [http://www.madinamerica.com/](http://www.madinamerica.com/)

Pat Deegan and Associates: [https://www.patdeegan.com/](https://www.patdeegan.com/)

Judi Chamberlain: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGT4xJXgmoE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGT4xJXgmoE)


*Adapted from the South Carolina Department of Mental Health Peer Support Readiness Self-Assessment and Missouri Peer Specialist Department of Mental Health Peer Specialist Readiness Assessment*