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Q1: What is peer support?

A1: Peer support is a non-clinical, strengths-based, judgment-free health care service to help individuals with mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders develop their goals and take actionable steps toward living fulfilling, self-determined lives.

Peer and Recovery Support Specialists and Peer Support Employment Training Programs FAQ's

Q2: Who can receive peer support services?

A2: Peer support services are available by request to AHCCCS members who have mental health and/or substance use challenges. All AHCCCS services must be medically necessary.

Q3: Who can deliver peer support services?

A3: Peer support is a distinct health care practice that complements other behavioral health services, including therapy and case management. Peer support services are provided by trained individuals called Peer and Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS) who have lived experiences of sustained recovery.

Q4: What is a Peer and Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS)?

A4: There are many names and job titles for individuals who provide peer support services. The credential recognized by AHCCCS is "Peer and Recovery Support Specialist" (PRSS). A PRSS is an individual who uses their personal, lived experience of recovery from a mental health condition and/or substance use disorder, and has received special training and credentialing to deliver peer support services. A PRSS provides support to others with similar experiences and demonstrates that recovery and resiliency are possible. To deliver peer support services in Arizona, you must be a credentialed PRSS.

Q5: How do I become a credentialed PRSS?

A5: To become a credentialed PRSS, you must successfully complete a Peer Support Employment Training Program and pass an exam. AHCCCS recognizes [Peer Support Employment Training Programs](#) (PSETP) that are compliant with Medicaid reimbursement policy for peer support services and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations.

Q6: Does an individual have to be an AHCCCS member and/or have a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) determination to become a credentialed PRSS?

A6: AHCCCS does not require a PRSS to be enrolled in Medicaid and/or have a Serious Mental Illness (SMI) determination in order to be credentialed. However, some PSETP operators may have additional admission requirements above and beyond what is required by AHCCCS policy.

Q7: Does the PRSS credential expire? How often do I need to renew my credential?

A7: The PRSS credential does not expire and does not need to be renewed. Employers who operate a PSETP for internal staff may require re-training, but the original credential is still valid.

Peer and Recovery Support Specialists and Peer Support Employment Training Programs FAQ's

Q8: How many units of continuing education do I need per year to maintain my PRSS credential?

A8: Individuals who are employed as a PRSS are required to complete four hours of continuing education, ongoing learning, and professional development relevant to peer support, with one hour dedicated to peer support ethics and boundaries. The PRSS's employer provides access to continuing education and ongoing learning from a variety of no-cost sources, including but not limited to the Peer and Family Career Academy, SAMHSA, Mental Health America, the National Association of Peer Supporters, Doors to Wellbeing, and Relias.

Q9: How many years does an individual need to be in recovery to qualify for a PRSS credential?

A9: AHCCCS does not require a specific number of years in recovery to qualify for a PRSS credential. During the pre-admission interview process, applicants are asked to attest to at least 1-2 years of self-managed recovery.

Q10: Are there separate credentials for substance use and mental health peer support?

A10: No. The PRSS credential, like the public behavioral health system, is integrated. Individual credentialing programs may choose to specialize in substance use, mental health, and/or other areas of peer support.

Q11: What are the professional qualifications for becoming a PRSS?

A11: To be credentialed as a PRSS, individuals must complete a PSETP curriculum as described above, and meet requirements for behavioral health paraprofessionals (BHPP), and/or behavioral health technicians (BHT) as defined in Arizona Administrative Code [R9-10-101](#).

Q12: How much does the training cost?

A12: PSETP operators determine what, if any, fees or costs are associated with their training program.

Q13: How long is the training?

A13: Typical training programs run approximately 40 hours, but may vary in length and may have other attendance requirements.

Q14: Is there required training for PRSS supervisors?

A14: Those who supervise a PRSS are required to have access, through their employer, to continuing education and ongoing learning relevant to their supervisory role. A course for supervisors is available through the [Arizona Peer and Family Career Academy](#).

Q15: Who can operate a PSETP?

A15: PSETP operators must be AHCCCS-registered providers and complete the OIFA Alliance Review and Recognition Process. To learn more about the AHCCCS provider registration process, please visit the [AHCCCS Provider Enrollment Portal](#) (APEP).

Peer and Recovery Support Specialists and Peer Support Employment Training Programs FAQ's

Q16: Who reviews and recognizes PSETPs?

A16: The OIFA Alliance oversees the review and recognition of PSETPs. For more information on becoming a PSETP operator, please visit our [Peer Support web page](#).

Q17: Can PSETP operators credential their own staff?

A17: Yes, PSETP operators can credential their own staff

Q18: Does an individual have to be employed to become credentialed?

A18: An individual does not have to be employed to be credentialed

Q19: If I have a credential issued in another state, do I have to complete an AHCCCS-recognized credentialing program?

A19: AHCCCS recognizes credentials issued in states where peer support services receive Medicaid reimbursement. You may submit an electronic copy of your credential to OIFA@azahcccs.gov and you will be added to the master registry. You will receive an email confirmation of your credential's registration and the email may be used for verification.

Q20: Does a PRSS credential entitle me to a job?

A20: Being credentialed does not entitle you to employment.

Q21: Is a PRSS credential considered Protected Health Information (PHI)?

A21: No. Lived experience is a mandatory prerequisite for the PRSS credential. The application interview will ask the potential trainees to consent to sharing their lived experience. If they object, they cannot be admitted to the training.

Q22: I lost my credentialing certificate. How can I obtain a new one?

A22: As of 10/1/2023, credentialing program operators are required to maintain records of credentials and provide graduates with an electronic copy of the credential upon request. If you are still unable to obtain a copy of your credentialing certificate, email OIFA@azahcccs.gov to request verification using the master registry. We will respond with confirmation of your credentialed status.

Q23: What is the difference between peer-delivered services and peer support service?

A23: "Peer-delivered" services are any behavioral health service delivered by a person with lived experiences related to mental health and/or substance use. It includes all services delivered by a PRSS. "Peer support services" are specific, defined behavioral health services delivered within Arizona's Medicaid program.

Peer and Recovery Support Specialists and Peer Support Employment Training Programs FAQ's

Q24: Can people with criminal backgrounds be employed as a PRSS?

A24: Generally, yes. However, AHCCCS does not determine hiring restrictions for behavioral health workers with past justice experience. Providers who specialize in delivering forensic peer support services may have additional requirements, such as past justice experience. In Arizona, peer support services are Medicaid reimbursable services regardless of specialty.

Q25: What is the difference between peer support services and a Peer-Run Organization?

A25: Peer support services are supportive behavioral health services available to AHCCCS members. A Peer-Run Organization is any AHCCCS provider that is owned, administratively controlled, and operated by peers and that emphasizes self-help as an operational approach.

Q26: What code do I use to bill peer support training?

A26: There is no covered service called "peer support training." For guidance on employment services, please contact an Employment Administrator at an AHCCCS health plan.

Q27: What are the governing documents for peer support in Arizona?

A27: Peer support services are governed by AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual, Policy 963, Peer and Recovery Support Service Provision Requirements ([AMPM 963](#)); and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) State Medicaid Director Letter, August 15, 2007 ([SMDL 07-011](#)).