PEER RECOVERY
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Defining Peer Support Worker Job Roles and Tasks

A Tool for Developing and Using Job Descriptions

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Peer support workers bring valuable skills, knowledge, and expertise to programs that support individuals in or seeking recovery from substance use and co-occurring disorders. Peer support workers use a combination of recovery experience—that is, their personal history of substance use disorder, the process of change, and a sustainable life in recovery—and communications skills to engage in conversations that help others to establish their own definition of and pathway for recovery.

Although trained peer support workers come with a ready-made set of competencies, they still will need a specific job description with specific core tasks suited for *your* program and its unique setting.

Well-crafted job descriptions are an essential part of the recruiting, hiring, and onboarding process. Developing the job description helps a team to clarify the specific needs of *your* program, ensuring that the position you are hiring fits the program design. Pre-hire, an effective job description lets candidates know exactly what the position they are applying for will entail. It also helps the hiring committee to create an effective interview process. Post-hire, the job description helps new hires to be clear on their roles and tasks, guides the delivery of services, and promotes best practices in peer support work.

> **THIS TOOL WILL HELP YOU TO:**
>
> - Define what peer practice means for your organization.
> - Identify the specific competencies, core tasks and responsibilities for the peer support worker(s) in your program.
> - Consider some unique challenges in recruiting, hiring, and onboarding peer support workers.

Defining Concepts: Role(s), Competencies, and Tasks

Peer recovery support services fall into four categories of social support: emotional, informational, instrumental, and affiliational (Salzer, 2002; SAMHSA, 2017). These categories cover a wide range of potential programming—and a wide range of possible roles, tasks, and responsibilities for peer support workers. Therefore, it is important for you to identify the job-specific requirements for your peer support worker(s).

Although often used interchangeably, it can be helpful to differentiate the concepts of role, competency, and task. A *role* is the part played by a person in a particular situation—the overarching purpose. Often the general role is indicated in the specific position title, such as recovery coach or peer navigator or peer advocate. A *competency* is the set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that define the essential functions of a job. A *task* is a specific action needed to fulfill a function. It can be viewed as a hierarchy: title > role > competencies > tasks.

For example, a treatment agency, a treatment court, and a hospital emergency room are three different practice settings in which PRSS are offered; while there is a broad definition of peer practice that is relevant across all three settings, there are unique aspects of the peer role in each. Table 1 provides examples of the roles, competencies, and tasks for the three different settings.

Table 1. Examples of Peer support worker Roles, Competencies, and Tasks

Recovery Coach

Roles	Key Competencies
Serve as guide and mentor to person seeking or already in recovery. Help identify and remove obstacles and barriers, support connections to recovery community and other resources useful for building recovery capital, respect path to recovery chosen by person seeking support.	• Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships • Provides personalized support **Key Tasks** ◦ Practices a strengths-based approach to recovery/wellness ◦ Tailors services and supports to meet preferences and unique needs ◦ Provides concrete assistance to help accomplish goals and tasks ◦ Assists individual in identifying support systems ◦ Assists individual to identify and build on their strengths and resiliencies ◦ Supports holistic, ongoing recovery planning ◦ Provides information about skills related to health, wellness, and recovery ◦ Promotes leadership, advocacy, growth, and development

Peer Specialist–Treatment Courts

Roles	Key Competencies
Supporting people involved with criminal justice system as mentor, guide, and/or resource connector while they are engaged with the court, and beyond.	• Supports personalized recovery planning and positive engagement in criminal justice system ◦ Assists and supports participants in setting goals related to adherence to court requirements ◦ Proposes strategies to help participants accomplish tasks or goals • Addresses barriers to housing, employment **Key Tasks** ◦ Links to resources, services, and supports ◦ Assists to identify, select, and use resources and services • Provides information about skills related to health, wellness, and recovery • Advocates for individuals while supporting compliance • Supports collaboration and teamwork

Recovery Interventionist/Crisis Interventionist

Roles	Key Competencies
Provide support and guidance to person at critical intercept point along recovery support continuum, linking person to treatment or other recovery support services, as requested by person being supported	• Supports personalized recovery planning that helps participants to manage crises and take steps toward more healthful behavior • Links to resources, services, and supports **Key Tasks** ◦ Assists to identify and access needed resources and services ◦ Accompanies peers to appointments • Develops tools for effective outreach and continued support • Addresses stigma • Supports collaboration and teamwork

NOTE
The specific role that your peer support worker will play is directly related to:
a. the practice area or setting,
b. the distinct program design, and
c. the service gaps that your program addresses.

Using Existing Inventories to Define Your Peer support worker Role(s) Competencies, and Tasks

Although you do need to develop a job description specific to your program, you don't have to start from scratch. Existing competency lists, and job descriptions from other programs, can be useful in crafting your unique description. There are four inventories of note: Core Competencies for Peer support workers in Behavioral Health Services, published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) Peer Recovery Competency Domains; NAADAC certification competency domains; and the Regional Facilitation Center (*A brief summary of each is below*). The key is to (a) identify the three or four most important categories for your program—which you can list as either roles or core competencies—and then (b) look more closely at the underlying competencies to use as *your* key tasks.

SAMHSA Peer Support Worker Competencies

In the early 2000s, SAMHSA began to identify the core dimensions of recovery. Through this process, SAMHSA also identified the competencies needed by anyone who provides peer recovery support services. Published in 2015, these core competencies build on earlier work by local and national peer run and peer-led organizations on defining peer practice, philosophy, and guidelines. SAMSHA sorted 62 peer competencies into 12 categories: (1) Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships, (2) Provides support, (3) Shares lived experiences of recovery, (4) Personalizes peer support, (5) Supports recovery planning, (6) Links to resources, services, and supports, (7) Provides information about skills related to health, wellness, and recovery, (8) Helps peers to manage crises, (9) Values communication, (10) Supports collaboration and teamwork, (11) Promotes leadership and advocacy, and (12) Promotes growth and development.

N O T E Early in 2023, SAMHSA, in collaboration with federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local partners including peer specialists, developed and published the National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification. The National Model Standards are designed to accelerate universal adoption, recognition, and integration of the peer workforce, and to strengthen the foundation set by the peer workforce, reinforced by the Core Competencies, and implemented by state, local, and tribal partners.

IC&RC Peer Recovery Competency Domains

The IC&RC peer recovery certification was introduced in 2013, and it has been adopted by most states. Its certification study guide and exam cover four domains: (1) advocacy, (2) mentoring and education, (3) recovery and wellness support, and (4) ethical responsibility, with a total of 54 associated role competencies. The competencies were developed based on an in-depth role delineation and job analysis. Although certification is managed by state boards, the domains are relatively consistent across the states using this certification exam. Although certification is managed by state boards, the domains are relatively consistent across the states using this certification exam.

NAADAC Certification Domains

[NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals,](#) developed a [national credential](#) focused on competency domains for peer service within treatment agencies. These competencies are gathered under four headings, role of the peer recovery support specialist, recovery practice, pharmacology, and professional issues. recovery support specialist, recovery practice, pharmacology, and professional issues.

The Regional Facilitation Center

The Regional Facilitation Center (Portland, OR) developed a [best practices curriculum](#) that focuses on practices associated with peers who are in recovery from addiction, adjudication, and criminogenic thinking/lifestyles. The 10 practices identified have concomitant competencies that were founded on a review of the existing literature, supporting research, and the experience of subject matter experts. that focuses on practices associated with peers who are in recovery from addiction, adjudication, and criminogenic thinking/lifestyles. The 10 practices identified have concomitant competencies that were founded on a review of the existing literature, supporting research, and the experience of subject matter experts.

> **ROLES AND TASKS - KEY QUESTIONS**
>
> *Appendix A contains a combined list of peer support worker competencies. Refer to that list to answer the questions below.*
>
> 1. Select the two to four categories from the core competencies list that best fit or are most important for the roles peer support workers will have in your program.
>
> 2. For each category selected, choose the one or two competencies that are priorities for your program.

| Category	Competencies

> **NOTE** Under each category, consider: Are there additional competencies or tasks that are specific to your program that are not on the list? If so, add these to your list.

Taking a Closer Look at Core Tasks: Using the Participant Journey

The *Participant Journey*, also known as the customer journey, is a tool used in many different organizations to visualize an individual's experience interacting with a service. In a recovery-related program, it can be used to explore the path that individuals take when they enter, participate in, and complete a program—and how peer supports can help them at key touchpoints, milestones, or *pain points* (places where participant may experience obstacles or barriers along their journey).

Figure 1. Sample Participant Journey in Peer Recovery Support Services
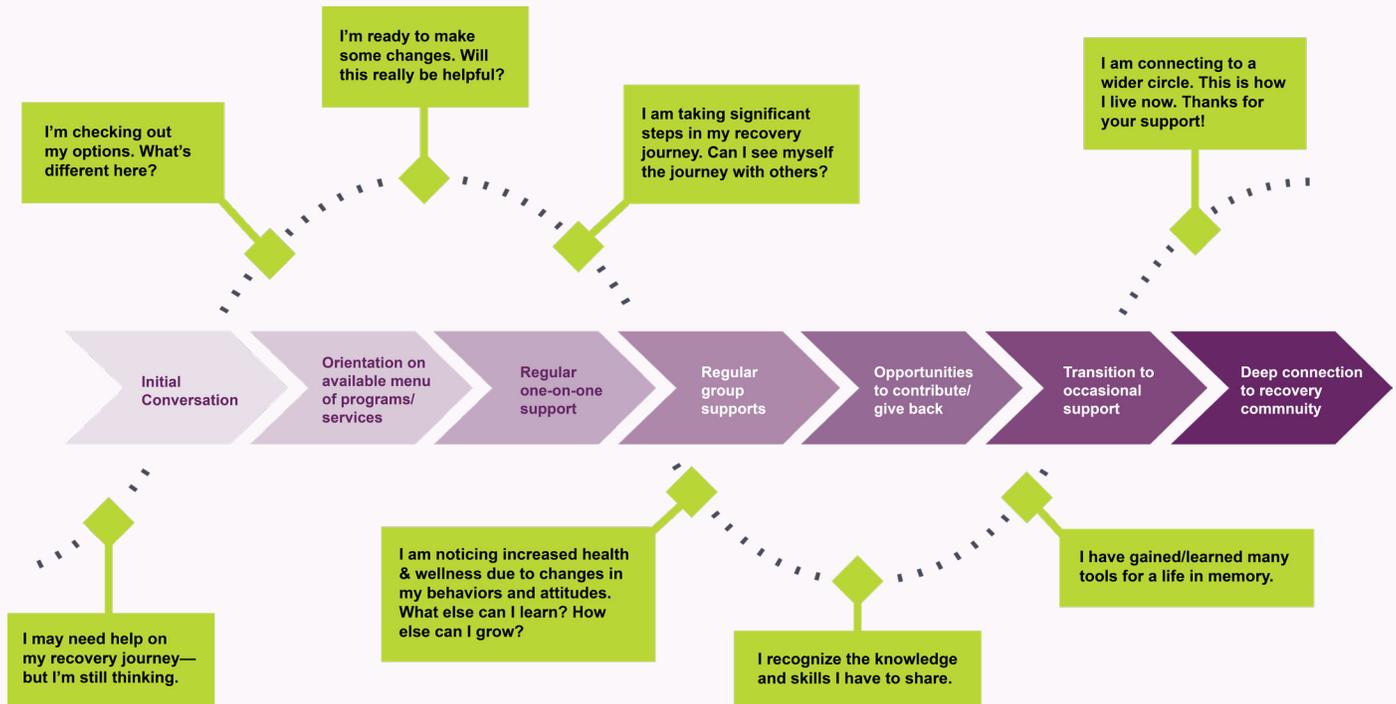
ROLES AND TASKS - KEY QUESTIONS

In this exercise, you will reflect on the different stages of participant engagement in your PRSS program and the core task of peer support workers, to refine the core tasks that will be listed in the job description.

1. On a large piece of paper, create a timeline of participation for your PRSS program, noting the key milestones, activities, or touchpoints in the recovery journey.

2. List the specific core competencies that peer supporters use for each touchpoint.

3. Map the common barriers that your participants have, placing them at the most appropriate point (or range) on the timeline. Use a different color ink or sticky note to help them stand out.

4. Identify specific supports or services that could be offered at each touchpoint that would address those barriers—and build participant strengths.

5. Consider: *What peer support worker competencies or tasks correspond to the added service?* Add any new ones to the timeline.

Sidebar

The Impact of Duration on Core Roles and Tasks

In project management, there is a concept called the "iron triangle," which has three constraints—time, scope, and cost. Common wisdom says that you can have two of the three but not all: Either you get something quickly and of quality (and it will therefore be costly), or you get it quickly and cheaply (and it will be of low quality), or you get high quality and low cost (but it will take a long time.

There is a similar maxim for peer supports, where the three constraints are the *duration* of supports (the ideal length of time a participant will be engaged with the overall PRSS program), the *intensity and frequency* of supports, and *number* of individuals one peer practitioner can work with. The ideal duration of participation in your PRSS will influence the intensity and frequency of the services, and the number of peer practitioners your program will need. You're looking for the sweet spot. You can serve:

- fewer individuals, intensively, for a long duration
- more individuals, intensively, for a short period of time
- more individuals, less intensively, for a longer period of time

Figure 2. Iron Triangle – PRSS
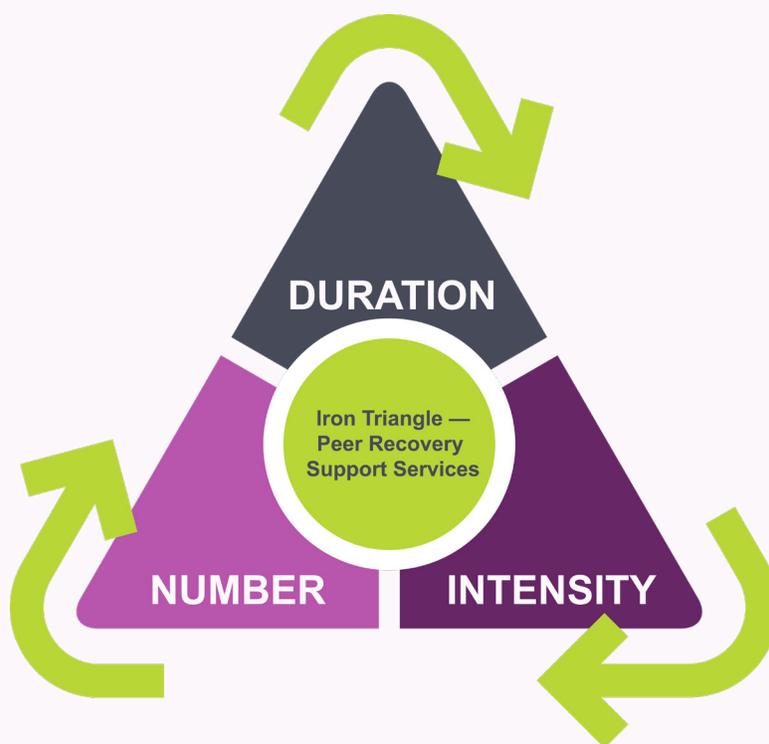
There isn't a right or wrong way to balance these three things. There is only the way that fits your program context, purpose, desired outcomes—and of course, resources. However, research indicates that the longer individual participates in peer supports may be better for their recovery outcomes, and that the intensity of support may wax and wane, and eventually decrease with time in recovery.

Duration, intensity, and number also may impact the program-specific definition of peer support worker core competencies. For example, PRSS of a shorter duration, such as emergency-room based peer supports, may emphasize different competencies than those that extend for 24 months or more.

After the Job Description: Recruiting, Hiring, and Onboarding

Research suggests that poorly defined job roles and tasks make it difficult for peer support workers to be successful, and to be successfully integrated into multidisciplinary teams. Writing a clear job description is an important process. Using it effectively in recruiting, hiring, and onboarding are also important. Following are some tips.

Best practices for recruiting and engaging peer support workers: Recruit potential candidates such as statewide peer-to-peer organizations, national employment websites, mental health, criminal justice, health care and recovery organizations and local and state career centers (Legere, 2015) could be helpful.

Interviewing potential candidates: Develop an interview committee that represents the diversity of roles on your team. In writing interview questions, use language that respects the individual's lived experience, including past involvement with the criminal justice system—while also being mindful of the state and federal anti-discrimination laws throughout the hiring and employment process.

Orientation and training after onboarding: Provide a substantive orientation to your organization and program. Use the job description to frame the peer support work, describe expectations for their specific role, and specify job-related responsibilities. You can also use the job description to identify any new knowledge and skills, specific to your setting, that may be needed. Orientation should reinforce workplace culture and values (which of course you've already aligned with peer recovery support core values).

Preparing other staff: Provide training for other staff members on the value of PRSS and the role(s) and tasks of peer support workers.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING - KEY QUESTION

Certified peer specialists have a core body of knowledge and skills to be successful peer support workers. Other staff have training and skills for their roles.

- What additional specialized training will be required for peer support workers to be most effective in your program setting?
- What additional training will be required for non-peer staff to be effective colleagues to peer support workers?

Contributors

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Appendices

Anytown Peer Advocate

Reports to the Anytown PRSS Program Administrator

Summary (*Summarize the purpose of the program and the peer support worker role within it.*)

The Anytown Peer Recovery Support Services (A-PRSS) program supports individuals and families in their recovery, honoring all pathways. A-PRSS works to reduce the stigma associated with addiction and to create recovery-rich communities for all.

The A-PRSS **Peer Advocate** works directly with A-PRSS program participants, engaging participants in programming and offering assertive advocacy on recovery-related issues to reduce/eliminate service disparities, reduce/eliminate stigma/discrimination, and make addiction treatment more responsive, effective, and efficient.

Responsibilities and Tasks (*List the core tasks that will be a regular part of the work.*)

- Assist in the orientation process for participants who are new to the program
- Support personalized recovery planning focused on positive engagement in criminal justice system
- Advocate for individuals while supporting compliance

    1. Address relationship between incarceration and trauma
    2. Address stigma, discrimination, and exploitation individuals face within society as a result of their criminal justice involvement

- Link participants to resources, services, and supports

    1. Address barriers to housing, employment
    2. Assists to identify, select, and use resources and services

- Assist participants in managing crises
- Maintain group and individual supportive interaction with participants, their families, and social supports
- Facilitate recovery support groups as assigned
- Provide education and advocacy within the community and agency that promotes awareness of substance abuse disorders and criminal thinking while reducing misconceptions, prejudice, and discrimination.
- Complete all required documentation in a timely, legible manner.

Required Knowledge and Skills (*Be clear about the knowledge and skills needed; ensure that it relates directly to the position.*)

Working knowledge of:
- Diverse paths to recovery
- Recovery process and stages of change
- Recovery-focused and strengths-based problem-solving approaches
- Signs and symptoms of substance use and mental health challenges
- local recovery community and resources
- Local drug and alcohol treatment system
- Community resources necessary for establishing and maintaining an independent life in recovery

Ability to:

- Communicate effectively, including appropriate and effective use of recovery stories
- Develop authentic peer-to-peer relationships
- Facilitate recovery using established peer support processes.
- Teach and engage others in basic problem-solving strategies to support self-directed recovery.
- Establish and facilitate mutual support and educational groups
- Use a computer for word processing and basic data entry

Minimum Qualifications (*Be specific about the type of lived experience needed for the role.*)

- Acquired, or meet the qualifications for state peer specialist certification
- Experience working with participants with substance use or co-occurring disorders referred by the courts, jail, and others within the Justice System
- Demonstrated commitment to the recovery community

Appendix 2. Peer Support Core Competencies: A Compilation

Introduction

SAMHSA identified the core competencies needed by anyone who provides peer support services to people with or in recovery from a mental health or substance use condition (SAMHSA, 2015), which built upon earlier work by local and national peer-run and peer-led organizations that defined peer practice, its philosophies, and guidelines. Additionally, the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) identified four domains that underpin the peer specialist certification exams in 28 states and territories. Lastly, the Regional Facilitation Center (Portland, OR) developed a best practices curriculum that focuses on practices associated with forensic peers who are in recovery from addiction, adjudication, and criminogenic thinking/lifestyles. The ten practices the RFC identified have concomitant competencies that were found on a review of the existing literature, supporting research, and the experience of subject matter experts.

The authors have used the sources above to compile a comprehensive list of peer support competencies. The list uses the SAMHSA categories and core competencies as its base; items from the other sources were added under the corresponding SAMHSA categories.

Category 1. Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships
This category of competencies emphasized peer workers' ability to initiate and develop on-going relationships with people who have behavioral health condition and/or family members. These competencies include interpersonal skills, knowledge about recovery from behavioral health conditions and attitudes consistent with a recovery orientation.

1.1.   Initiates contact with peers
1.2.   Listens to peers with careful attention to the content and emotion being communicated
1.3.   Reaches out to engage peers across the whole continuum of the recovery process
1.4.   Demonstrates genuine acceptance and respect
1.5.   Demonstrates understanding of peers' experiences and feelings
1.6.   Establishes and maintains a peer relationship rather than a hierarchical relationship. (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
1.7.   Establishes a respectful, trusting relationship with the individual (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
1.8.   Recognizes and use person-centered language (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
1.9.   Inspires hope and change (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 6)
    1.9.1.   Fulfills the role of a trusted and supportive guide

Category 2. Provides support
The competencies in this category are critical for the peer worker to be able to provide the mutual support people living with behavioral health conditions may want.

2.1.   Validates peers' experiences and feelings
2.2.   Encourages the exploration and pursuit of community roles
2.3.   Conveys hope to peers about their own recovery
2.4.   Celebrates peers' efforts and accomplishments
2.5.   Provides concrete assistance to help peers accomplish tasks and goals
2.6.   Assists the individual in identifying and establishing positive relationships (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
2.7.   Assists the individual in identifying support systems (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
2.8.   Practices a strengths-based approach to recovery/wellness (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)

Category 3. Shares lived experiences of recovery

These competencies are unique to peer support, as most roles in behavioral health services do not emphasize or even prohibit the sharing of lived experiences. Peer workers must be skillful in telling their recovery stories and using their lived experiences as a way of inspiring and supporting a person living with behavioral health conditions. Family peer support worker likewise share their personal experiences of self-care and supporting a family-member who is living with behavioral health conditions.

3.1.   Relates their own recovery stories, and with permission, the recovery stories of others to inspire hope
3.2.   Discusses ongoing personal efforts to enhance health, wellness, and recovery
3.3.   Recognizes when to share experiences and when to listen
3.4.   Describes personal recovery practices and helps peers discover recovery practices that work for them
3.5.   Serves as a role model for an individual (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
3.6.   Educates through shared experiences (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
3.7.   Inspires hope and change (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 6)
    3.7.1.   Understands the meaning of the statement, "I am the evidence that recovery is possible"
    3.7.2.   Understands the fears associated with re-integration and help resolve those fears through shared lived experience
    3.7.3.   Acts as role models, and as a testament to changes in thinking
    3.7.4.   Exercises discernment when deciding which stories to share

Category 4. Personalizes peer support

These competencies help peer workers to tailor or individualize the support services provided to and with a peer. By personalizing peer support, the peer practitioner operationalizes the notion that there are multiple pathways to recovery.

4.1.   Understands his/her own personal values and culture and how these may contribute to biases, judgments, and beliefs
4.2.   Appreciates and respects the cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices of peers and their families
4.3.   Recognizes and responds to the complexities and uniqueness of each peer's process of recovery
4.4.   Tailors services and support to meet the preferences and unique needs of peers and their families
4.5.   Applies the principles of individual choice and self-determination (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
4.6.   Recognizes that there are multiple pathways to recovery/wellness. (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
4.7.   Assists the individual to identify and build on their strengths and resiliencies (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
4.8.   Elicits individual needs and goals (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 5)
    4.8. 1. Creates an environment where individuals feel safe acknowledging areas where they need improvement
    4.8.2. Assists individuals to identify their experience, personal characteristics, strengths, and skills necessary to develop success
    4.8.3. Helps individuals clarify goals and develop desistance strategies

Category 5. Supports recovery planning

These competencies enable peer workers to support other peers to take charge of their lives. Recovery often leads people to want to make changes in their lives. Recovery planning assists people to set and accomplish goals related to home, work, community and health.

5.1.   Assists and supports peers to set goals and to dream of future possibilities

5.2.   Propose strategies to help a peer accomplish tasks or goals
5.3.   Supports peers to use decision-making strategies when choosing services and supports
5.4.   Helps peers to function as a member of their treatment/recovery support team
5.5.   Researches and identifies credible information and options from various resources
5.6.   Assists the individual with setting goals (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
5.7.   Applies effective coaching techniques such as Motivational Interviewing (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
5.8.   Recognizes the stages of change (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
5.9.   Recognizes the stages of recovery/wellness (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
5.10.   Assists the individual in identifying basic needs (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
5.11.   Elicits individual needs and goals (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 5)
5.12.   Encourages broad and ambitious thinking about future goals and achievements

Category 6. Links to resources, services, and supports
These competencies assist peer workers to help other peers acquire the resources, services, and supports they need to enhance their recovery. peer practitioners apply these competencies to assist other peers to link to resources or services both within behavioral health settings and in the community. It is critical that peer practitioners have knowledge of resources within their communities as well as online resources.

6.1.   Develops and maintains up-to-date information about community resources and services
6.2.   Assists peers to identify (investigate), select, and use needed and desired resources and services
6.3.   Helps peers to find and use health services and supports
6.4.   Accompanies peers to community activities and appointments when requested
6.5.   Participates in community activities with peers when requested
6.6.   Provides resource linkage to community supports and professional services (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
6.7.   Develops tools for effective outreach and continued support (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
6.8.   Collaborates with individual to identify, link, and coordinate choices with resources (RC Domain 1: Advocacy)
6.9.   Addresses barriers to housing (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 3)
    6.9.1.   Aware of barriers individual face, such as homelessness
    6.9.2.   Understands that housing weighs heavily on individuals re-entering society
    6.9.3.   Stays up-to-date on housing availability, programs that assist with deposits and move-in fees, re-entry program that provide transitional housing
    6.9.4.   Knows civil rights, fair housing laws, and legal protections for persons with criminal histories
    6.9.5.   Collects information and makes appropriate referrals
    6.9.6.   Assist individuals with self-advocacy

6.10.   Addresses barriers to employment (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 4)
    6.10.1.   Understands the importance of employment for those re-entering society
    6.10.2.   Addresses employment challenges that include the development of job readiness skills and access to professional attire

6.10.3. Facilitate job application process: gathering supportive documents, filling out applications, writing resumes

6.11. Elicits individual needs and goals (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 5)

6.11.1. Assists individuals in acquiring medical insurance, dental insurance, or care

6.11.2. Uses needs assessment tools or basic needs questionnaires to discover an individual's area of need and direct individuals to the appropriate services and community resources

Category 7. Provides information about skills related to health, wellness, and recovery
These competencies describe how peer workers coach, model or provide information about skills that enhance recovery. These competencies recognize that peer practitioners have knowledge, skills and experiences to offer others in recovery and that the recovery process often involves learning and growth.

7.1. Educates peers about health, wellness, recovery, and recovery supports
7.2. Participates with peers in discovery or co-learning to enhance recovery experiences
7.3. Coaches peers about how to access treatment and services and navigate systems of care
7.4. Coaches peers in desired skills and strategies
7.5. Educates family members and other supportive individuals about recovery and recovery supports
7.6. Uses approaches that match the preferences and needs of peers
7.7. Support the development of healthy behavior that is based on choice (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
7.8. Apply basic supportive group facilitation techniques (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
7.9. Recognize the importance of a holistic (e.g., mind, body, spirit, environment) approach to recovery/wellness (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
7.10. Assists individuals in discovery of healthy lifestyle choices [across SAMHSA's 8 dimensions of wellness (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 9)
7.10.1. Addresses the importance of self-care
7.10.2. Facilitates self-assessment of medical, dental, hygienic, social, and emotional needs
7.10.3. Facilitates the creation of a wellness plan
7.10.4. Models wellness
7.10.5. Introduces pro-social events and outings

Category 8. Helps peers to manage crises
These competencies assist peer workers to identify potential risks and to use procedures that reduce risks to peers and others. Peer workers may have to manage situations, in which there is intense distress and work to ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and other peers.

8.1. Recognizes signs of distress and threats to safety among peers and in their environments
8.1.1. Recognizes signs of distress (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/ Wellness Support)
8.2. Provides reassurance to peers in distress
8.3. Strives to create safe spaces when meeting with peers

8.4. Takes action to address distress or a crisis by using knowledge of local resources, treatment, services, and support preferences of peers
8.5. Assists peers in developing advance directives and other crisis prevention tools

Category 9. Values communication
These competencies provide guidance on how peer workers interact verbally and in writing with colleagues and others. These competencies suggest language and processes used to communicate and reflect the value of respect.

9.1.   Practices effective communication skills (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
9.2.   Uses respectful, person-centered, recovery-oriented language in written and verbal interactions with peers, family members, community members, and others
9.3.   Uses active listening skills
9.4.   Clarifies their understanding of information when in doubt of the meaning
9.5.   Conveys their point of view when working with colleagues
9.6.   Documents information as required by program policies and procedures
9.7.   Follows laws and rules concerning confidentiality and respects others' rights for privacy

Category 10. Supports collaboration and teamwork
These competencies provide direction on how peer workers can develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues and others to enhance the peer support provided. These competencies involve not only interpersonal skills but also organizational skills.

10.1.   Contributes to the individual's recovery/wellness team(s) (ICRC Domain 4: Recovery/Wellness Support)
10.2.   Works together with other colleagues to enhance the provision of services and supports
10.3.   Assertively engages providers from mental health services, addiction services, and physical medicine to meet the needs of peers
10.4.   Coordinates efforts with health care providers to enhance the health and wellness of peers
10.5.   Coordinates efforts with peers' family members and other natural supports
10.6.   Partners with community members and organizations to strengthen opportunities for peers
10.7.   Strives to resolve conflicts in relationships with peers and others in their support network
10.8.   Recognizes the importance of self-care (ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)

Category 11. Promotes leadership and advocacy
These competencies describe actions that peer workers use to provide leadership within behavioral health programs to advance a recovery-oriented mission of the services. They also guide peer practitioners on how to advocate for the legal and human rights of other peers.

11.1.   Uses knowledge of relevant rights and laws (ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.) to ensure that peer's rights are respected
11.2.   Advocates for the needs and desires of peers in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family
11.3.   Uses knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organization to build an advocacy plan
11.4.   Participates in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health conditions and their families
11.5.   Educates colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services
11.6.   Actively participates in efforts to improve the organization
11.7.   Maintains a positive reputation in peer/professional communities
11.8.   Relate to the individual as an advocate. (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
11.9.   Advocate within systems to promote person-centered recovery/wellness support services. (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
11.10.   Explain importance of self-advocacy as a component of recovery/wellness. (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)

11.11. Differentiate between the types and levels of advocacy. (ICRC Domain 1: Advocacy)
11.12. Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.
11.13. Describe the skills needed to self-advocate. {ICRC Domain 3: Mentoring and Education)
11.14. Advocate for Individuals while Supporting Compliance (Regional Facilitation Center, Best Practice 2)
  11.14.1. Advocate for peer support and treatment interventions in the entire continuum of criminal justice involvement and educate the system, society, and communities regarding the cost-benefits of these interventions over traditional criminal justice models
  11.14.2. Advocate for individuals in a variety of settings including detention, court, parole/probation, specialty courts, child welfare proceedings, and other justice related programs
  11.14.3. Understand that advocacy efforts are dynamic in nature and are determined on an individual basis by client need
  11.14.4. Understand that they can be advocates regardless of level of engagement or compliance and should not abandon any individual due to noncompliance or perceived low motivation for change.

Category 12. Promotes growth and development
These competencies describe how peer workers become more reflective and competent in their practice. The competencies recommend specific actions that may serve to increase peer practitioners' success and satisfaction in their current roles and contribute to career advancement.

12.1. Recognizes the limits of their knowledge and seeks assistance from others when needed
12.2. Uses supervision (mentoring, reflection) effectively by monitoring self and relationships, preparing for meetings, and engaging in problem-solving strategies with the supervisor (mentor, peer)
12.3. Reflects and examines own personal motivations, judgments, and feelings that may be activated by the peer work, recognizing the signs of distress, and knowing when to seek support
12.4. Seeks opportunities to increase knowledge and skills of peer support