

# DRAFT

## ACCS Peer Support Fidelity Tool

### Introduction

Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) provides more guidance on implementing Peer Support than Community Based Flexible Supports. Information from the Request For Response (RFR) about Peer Support is condensed in [Appendix 1: Contract Requirements](#). This document elaborates on these requirements and describes the benefits of these changes.

The Peer Specialist community hopes to collaborate with ACCS providers to maximize the effectiveness of their Peer Support services. The goal of this document is to equip all stakeholders with a clear understanding of how to best integrate the unique Peer Specialist roles. We want agencies to feel confident that they are meeting the requirements of their contract by providing effective, evidence-based Peer Support.

For the purpose of this document we will use the following definitions:

- **Peers** are people who have shared experience. In human services organizations that can mean a shared experience of mental health treatment, extreme experiences, trauma, substance use, or homelessness.
- **Peer Support** is a service designed from the ground up to be informed by these experiences as collected by our community. You can find more details in the [Massachusetts Certified Peer Specialist Code of Ethics \(Appendix 2\)](#) and the [interNational Association of Peer Supporters \(iNAPS\) Practice Guidelines](#).
- **Peer Specialists** are peers operating in paid and volunteer roles where they deliver Peer Support. Many have received specialized training, such as the Massachusetts Certified Peer Specialist Training.

The goal of services is to help people move through extreme experiences, emotional distress, and trauma. Our experience demonstrates that the best way to do so is by forming a genuine, human connection. Peer Specialists cultivate reciprocal relationships by approaching people as equals and respecting their expertise on their own lives, rather than acting as an authority. Peer Specialists maintain the mutuality of the relationship by not powering over the people they support. We discuss our own experiences to strengthen connection, validate experiences, and model recovery. Peer Specialists develop relationships through genuine curiosity and avoid information that would foster implicit bias. In these relationships, people feel safe discussing challenges they are facing.

By talking through these challenges, people develop a better understanding of their experiences. As a person's understanding improves, they can begin working through challenges they face toward what they desire in their lives. By maintaining the relationship through adversity, peers help build hope. Through this process people build the capacity, relationships, and skills to create a life of their choosing.

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## ACCS Peer Support Fidelity Tool Checklist

### Empowerment

- Peer Specialists do not participate in any form of involuntary treatment.
- Peer Specialists do not participate in discussions about someone without that person present.
- Peer Specialists do not assess risk or share information associated with clinical risk.
- Peer Specialists share their story.
- Peer Specialists are connectors; they are not convincers or persuaders.

### Caseload

- Peer Specialists are not assigned a caseload.
- Peer Specialists are not the primary outreach worker or primary administrative or clinical contact within the organization for any person they support.

### Documentation

- Any documentation Peer Specialists generate does not have enough information to identify people they support.
- Peer Specialists do not conduct assessments or evaluations.
- Peer Specialists do not handle charts.
- Peer Specialists can choose whether to offer paperwork to the people they support.

### Medications

- Peer Specialists do not receive Medication Administration Program training or certification.
- Peer Specialists do not handle medications.

### Representative Payee

- Peer Specialists do not participate in any aspect of a provider's representative payee function.

### Training and Education

- Staff in Peer Specialist roles are required to be Certified Peer Specialists.
- Peer Specialists are to be supported by providers in pursuing advanced Peer Support trainings.
- Peer Specialists are to be supported in educating other peers and co-workers.

### Supervision

- All Peer Specialists' supervisors of record are Certified Peer Specialists with demonstrated expertise regarding the role.
- Peer Specialists must have access to other Peer Specialists, both within and outside of the provider organization.
- Organizations may not limit, discourage, forbid, or otherwise interfere in Peer Specialist engagement with the larger peer community.

### Access and Inclusion

- Every ACCS team must have 3 full-time peer support workers or equivalent for every 100 people receiving services.
- Work environments must be inclusive, accessible, and trauma-informed.
- Peer Specialists roles should have compensation parity with comparable non-peer roles.
- Peer Specialists are represented at every level of the organization.