

BHS HEALTH PLAN ADMINISTRATION

Q&A on Peer Support Services

Revised on 7/22/2022 | Updates are in red font

A. Peer Support Specialists

1. *Wording suggests that certified SUD professionals cannot supervise Peers Support Specialist; is that accurate?*

BHS: Per [DHCS BHIN-22-018](#), Peer Support Specialist Supervisor qualifications include non-peer behavioral health professionals (including registered & certified SUD counselors) who have worked in the behavioral health system for a minimum of two years, and have completed a DHCS approved peer support supervisory training.

2. *Peers seem to be mental health and SUD related; would experience with homelessness also count as a peer?*

BHS: Per [DHCS BHIN-21-041](#), certified peers would be self-identified as having experience with the process of recovery from mental illness or substance use disorder, either as a consumer of these services or as the parent, caregiver, or family member of a consumer. Homelessness in and of itself would not qualify, but homelessness is identified as an area of specialization in addition to self-identifying with the experience that will be implemented.

3. *Will you be more specific about what the grandfathering entails?*

BHS: Please [click here for a copy of the BHS Information Notice regarding the legacy process for peers](#).

4. *What is changing in July 2022 for staff currently in peer roles and will all peers be required to become certified and bill Medi-Cal?*

BHS: There are no immediate changes expected of staff in peer roles. County BHS encourages current peer staff to consider the legacy process for certification. Additional information regarding future requirements in our system of care to be determined.

5. *Is there a particular organization that people could contact to learn more about the training curriculum specific to San Diego County?*

BHS: At this time, specific San Diego County peer training will conclude effective June 30, 2022. The State- approved Certified Peer Curriculum will be available through [CalMHSA](#).

6. *Are the Peer Employment Training Certifications of people who attended the RI-I training in the past on file somewhere after June 30, 2022?*

BHS: Individuals who are unable to locate their RI training certificate can log on to <https://riinternational.com/consulting-and-training/> and select the "contact training" option and this will continue to be an accessible/available option after the RI-I contract in San Diego terminates.

Have a new
question on Peers?

- Send questions related to Behavioral Health Services Peers to bhs-hpa.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov

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7. *One of our program managers contacted RRI regarding the Peer Support Specialist Training and they stated that they are no longer offering Peer Employment Training, PET. The DMC-ODS Required Training Grid currently has RRI listed. Is there another source that we should be reaching out to for Peer Support Training?*

BHS: CalMHSA will publish the approved Peer Training Providers ([Training Vendors](#)) on this website: <http://www.capeercertification.org/>. The [DMC-ODS Required Training Grid](#) has been updated with this information as well.

B. Peer Support Services

1. *How will this new peer support model impact caregivers/parents of children 0-5?*

BHS: MH and SUD treatment programs serving children and families, including perinatal SUD services, with peer support specialists under the new peer support certification model, will offer supportive services to family members in support of enrolled clients. This may include engagement, education on recovery, advocacy, and assistance with navigating the service system and accessing needed services and resources.

C. Peer Support Training and Certification

1. *Is there a solid culturally responsive component to the training or does the training ensure age-appropriate knowledge?*

BHS: CalMHSA confirmed that it is required of the Peer Training Providers' curriculum to include cultural humility as a component integrated into the totality of the training. We are awaiting additional details on the final curriculum from CalMHSA.

2. *For ESL learners, will the training be provided/facilitated in key languages?*

BHS: CalMHSA confirmed the Peer Training Providers were not mandated to translate their training curriculums into the 17 prevalent languages in the state of California.

3. *Depending on the requirements, I hope that we can ensure that training is required to effectively intervene with specific age groups- and if not offered at the state level, then required at the local level?*

BHS: We are awaiting details on the final curriculum from CalMHSA, but DHCS included Family Driven and Child-Centered language requirements in the final Code of Ethics each Certified Peer Support Specialists must sign and abide by.

4. *Are there considerations/accommodations for alternative testing methods (e.g., for peers who may have test anxiety)?*

BHS: CalMHSA confirmed ADA accommodations will be made available for peers that request them.

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5. *If a peer reaches the required number of hours within the month December 2022, could they still be considered for the grandparenting process and if so, by when should they apply and/or take the exam?*
BHS: CalMHSA confirmed a peer has until December 31, 2022 to apply to grandparent into the certification examination process. [Please click here for the Grandparenting Guidelines for reference and review.](#)
6. *Is there a list of the Peer Training Providers?*
BHS: CalMHSA will publish the approved Peer [Training Providers](#) on this website: <http://www.capeercertification.org/>
7. *If a peer has recently completed peer training (e.g., within the last 6 months) from one of the approved peer training providers (e.g., RI International) would CalMHSA require the peer to re-take the training? Or is CalMHSA going to allow the peers to just take the test to be certified?*
BHS: CalMHSA confirmed that a peer that is interested in taking the Peer Support Specialist certification examination via the [legacy/grandparenting](#) path and has completed a peer training (e.g., RI International training), but has not completed the [legacy requirements](#) will have to **apply via the Initial Certification path**. This entails completing an 80-hour training with an approved [training vendor](#) listed at www.CaPeerCertification.org prior to taking the certification examination.
8. *If a peer completes the 80 hours of training through one of the approved vendors (but decides not to take the certification test right away), is there a time limit to how long that peer training completion would be good for to be eligible to test for certification?*
BHS: CalMHSA confirmed that a peer who interested in Peer Support Specialist certification via the [legacy/grandparenting](#) path must take and pass the exam by February 28, 2023. Peers will have to go through the initial certification process in the event they do not pass the exam by that time. (Please note that information on the time limit for peers applying via the **initial certification** path is not yet determined at this time.)
9. *Will the scholarships cover any exam re-takes and if so, is there a maximum number?*
BHS: CalMHSA confirmed that the scholarship will not cover any exam retakes.
10. *Does the training curriculum include interventions for specific age groups and/or ensure age-appropriate knowledge?*
BHS: CalMHSA confirmed the training curriculum is standardized but they cannot provide insight into the teaching approach of each training vendor. DHCS included Family Driven and Child- Centered

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D. BHS Providers

1. *What can providers expect for the changes in the pay model if providers are working to increase the demands of this role forward?*

BHS: BHS builds competitive wages into procurement funding however actual payment for staffing positions is left to agencies to develop.

2. *Are the certification trainings offered at the county's expense or do agencies pay for staff to attend?*

BHS: There are current funding opportunities to assist with expenses. Please [click here for a copy of the flyer on Peer Training/Certification scholarships](#).

3. *What are some of the options available to BHS Providers for assisting Peer Support Specialists in obtaining jobs within the BHS provider network?*

BHS: Individuals and program providers may directly contact various [BHS programs](#) for information on job opportunities.

4. *In addition to peer training provided through CalMHSA, what resources are available to BHS Providers to support Peer Support Specialists?*

BHS: Providers are encouraged to avail of resources that their organization deems appropriate. Some resources found online for BHS Providers to support Peer Support Specialists could include, but are not limited to:

- Doors to Wellbeing [National Consumer Technical Assistance Center](#)
- Recovery Innovations-International (RI-I) [Hope Central](#)
- [C4Innovations](#)
- National Association of Peer Supporters [N.A.P.S.](#)
- CA Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations [CAMHPRO](#)
- WRAP Certification Training [Copeland Center](#) Correspondence Course
- WHAM Facilitator and Participant Manuals [Center on Integrated Health Care & Self-Directed Recovery](#)

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5. *Until further information is available from CalMHSA on Peer Supervisor training, what resources are available to BHS Providers to support Supervisors of Peer Support Specialists?*

BHS: Providers are encouraged to avail of resources that their organization deems appropriate. Some resources found online for BHS Providers to support supervisors of Peer Support Specialists could include, but are not limited to:

- Peer Support Toolkit [Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services](#)
- [National Practice Guidelines for Peer Specialists and Supervisors](#)

E. Miscellaneous

1. *Are you able to send the PowerPoint shared at the March 2022 joint BHS Council Meeting?*

BHS: Please [click here for a copy of the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist presentation dated March 2022.](#)

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