



Peer Support in South Carolina

The Basics

Recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. - SAMHSA

Who are peer support workers?

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes peer support workers as “people who have been successful in the recovery process who help others experiencing similar situations.”³

What do peer support workers do?

The role of peer support workers varies widely, but many peer support workers:¹

- Support recovery from mental health or substance use disorders
- Teach and practice skills that promote recovery
- Mentor people in recovery both individually and in groups
- Raise awareness of personal, interpersonal, and community resources
- Advocate for and represent people in recovery

South Carolina’s Peer Support Programs

Who trains mental health peer support workers in South Carolina?

South Carolina Self-Help Association Regarding Emotions (SC SHARE) is a peer-run non-profit organization founded in 1985 that trains Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS).² SC SHARE trains mental health peer support workers, while Faces and Voices of Recovery South Carolina (FAVOR SC) trains substance use peer support workers. Both organizations have a long history of collaboration with state agencies, and their trainings are recognized by the SC Department of Health and Human Services.

What is required to become a Certified Peer Support Specialist?⁴

Peer support workers must attend a 40-hour classroom training and pass an examination to obtain CPSS certification. Fees are associated with the training and the post-training certification application. Peers must meet the following criteria to apply for the certification program:

- Be 18 years of age or older and have a high school diploma or general education diploma (GED).
- Self-identify as a person diagnosed with a mental illness or co-occurring disorder.
- Have demonstrated 3 years of self-directed recovery, as indicated by 3 professional references.
- Have completed 100 hours of paid or volunteer work providing peer support services.
- Have 4 hours of professional supervision for paid or volunteer work.
- Complete Peer Support Specialist Certification application packet.
- Submit [required documents](#) and registration fee.



The Status of Peer Support in South Carolina

How many mental health care providers in South Carolina offer peer support services?⁵

A high proportion of community mental health centers in SC offer peer support services. Inpatient psychiatric units of general hospitals do not offer peer support services in SC, indicating an area of potential improvement.

Facility type	Total count	# with peer services	% with peer services	% in Southeast	National %
Psychiatric hospital	9	3	33%	24%	29%
Inpatient psychiatric unit of a general hospital	12	0	0%	11%	16%
Residential treatment center for children	4	0	0%	8%	9%
Residential treatment center for adults	3	1	33%	24%	26%
Other type of residential treatment facility	2	0	0%	0%	14%
Veterans Administration medical center	10	5	50%	53%	54%
Community mental health center	57	32	56%	39%	36%
Partial hospitalization/day treatment facility	1	0	0%	18%	15%
Outpatient mental health facility	7	2	29%	19%	21%
Multi-setting mental health facility	1	0	0%	32%	31%

Does South Carolina Medicaid cover peer support services?

Data are not available on peer support Medicaid reimbursement in South Carolina.⁶

References

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3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Recovery Support Tools and Resources. 2018; <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools-resources#what-is-recovery>. Accessed January 17th, 2020.
4. SC SHARE. Peer Support 101. 2020; <https://www.scshare.com/peer-support-101>. Accessed May 28, 2020.
5. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Mental Health Services Survey 2018. In. Rockville, MD2018.
6. Kaiser Family Foundation. Medicaid Behavioral Health Services: Peer Support Services. In:2018.