



Peer Support in North 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:²

- 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

North Carolina’s Peer Support Programs

What are the guiding values for peer support in NC?¹

- Individuals with lived experience have an important role in mental health care.
- The roles that peers fill in mental health care should draw on their lived experience.
- Lived experience and ongoing skill development are crucial components of peer support.
- Recovery environments are necessary for the success of peer support workers and individuals served.
- Peer support workers are esteemed practitioners and must be integrated into the mental health system.
- Peer support workers and other mental health professionals should foster mutual respect and equality.
- Self-directed preferences of mental health care consumers must be respected.
- Recovery may be self-directed, with or without the participation of mental health professionals.

What training is required to become a peer support worker in NC?

[North Carolina’s Certified Peer Support Specialist Program](#) approves peer support worker [training courses](#) and administers the [certification process](#). The cost of approved 40-hour [training sessions](#) varies widely, but most cost approximately \$300. An additional 20 hours of additional training related to adult mental health or substance use are also required. An additional \$20 registration fee is also required to apply for registration. Please refer to the [website](#) for North Carolina’s Certified Peer Support Specialist Program for more detailed requirements.



The Status of Peer Support in North Carolina

How many mental health care providers in North Carolina offer peer support services?⁴

The proportion of providers offering peer support services in North Carolina is similar to national and regional averages, with the exception of adult residential treatment centers. As is true in many states, relatively few mental health providers in North Carolina offer peer support services.

Facility type	Total count	# with peer services	% with peer services	% in Southeast	National %
Psychiatric hospital	15	3	20%	24%	29%
Inpatient psychiatric unit of a general hospital	34	5	15%	11%	16%
Residential treatment center for children	48	3	6%	8%	9%
Residential treatment center for adults	35	3	9%	24%	26%
Other type of residential treatment facility	2	0	0%	0%	14%
Veterans Administration medical center	9	6	67%	53%	54%
Community mental health center	22	9	41%	39%	36%
Partial hospitalization/day treatment facility	13	1	8%	18%	15%
Outpatient mental health facility	96	18	19%	19%	21%
Multi-setting mental health facility	13	3	23%	32%	31%

Does North Carolina Medicaid cover peer support services?⁵

North Carolina Medicaid provides reimbursement for peer services without copayment. 20 hours per week of peer support services are allowed following initial authorization. This amount decreases to 15 hours per week after 90 days and 10 hours per week after 180 days.

References

1. Program NCsCPSS. Guiding Values for Peer Support in North Carolina. 2020; <https://pss.unc.edu/guiding-values-peer-support-north-carolina>.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Peers. 2019; <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>. Accessed January 17th, 2020.
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. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Mental Health Services Survey 2018. In. Rockville, MD2018.
5. Kaiser Family Foundation. Medicaid Behavioral Health Services: Peer Support Services. In:2018.