



Peer Support in Mississippi

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

Mississippi’s Peer Support Programs

How are peer support workers trained and credentialed?²

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) began training Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) in 2012 as part of its mission to provide a person-centered and recovery-oriented system of mental health care. To hold the CPSS DMH professional credential, peers in Mississippi must be employed by the state mental health system.

How do you become a peer support worker in Mississippi?²

Mississippi residents may [apply](#) to participate in a CPSS training sponsored by the Mississippi DMH. The course consists of an online pre-training, four days of classroom training, and a written examination. Modest fees are associated with the application and training, and some scholarships are available. CPSS applicants must also meet the following criteria to become a CPSS:

- Be a Mississippi resident.
- Self-identify as a current/former recipient of behavioral health services or family member of recipient.
- Be employed in Mississippi’s public mental health system.
- Have a high school diploma or GED certificate and be at least sixteen years of age.
- Have proficient reading and writing skills.
- Have 250 hours of work/volunteer hours in a support/advisory role or 1 year of college in the past 3 years.
- Have two references confirming the applicant’s ability to perform the CPSS role.
- Complete the CPSS training and pass the examination with a score of 75% or higher.



The Status of Peer Support in Mississippi

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

The proportion of community health centers in Mississippi that offer peer support services is notably higher than national and regional averages. Peer support services are not offered in inpatient psychiatric settings, presenting an area for potential improvement.

Facility type	Total count	# with peer services	% with peer services	% in Southeast	National %
Psychiatric hospital	11	0	0%	24%	29%
Inpatient psychiatric unit of a general hospital	22	0	0%	11%	16%
Residential treatment center for children	6	3	50%	8%	9%
Residential treatment center for adults	6	4	67%	24%	26%
Veterans Administration medical center	2	2	38%	53%	54%
Community mental health center	79	42	53%	39%	36%
Partial hospitalization/day treatment facility	12	1	8%	18%	15%
Outpatient mental health facility	29	7	24%	19%	21%
Multi-setting mental health facility	3	3	100%	32%	31%

Does Mississippi Medicaid cover peer support services?⁵

Mississippi Medicaid covers peer support services with no copayment. Services are limited to 6 daily and 200 yearly.

References

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Peers. 2019; <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>. Accessed January 17th, 2020.
2. Program AGtMsCPSS. Peer Support services. 2020; <http://www.dmh.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CPSS-Individual-Guide.pdf>. Accessed May 27, 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.