

Peer Support and Advocacy Network's (PSAN) Annual Report

For the Certified Peer Specialist Program

July 1,2023 through June 30, 2024

Overview

Peer Support Services are specialized interactions conducted by self-identified current or former consumers of mental health services. Peer Support is intended to inspire hope in consumers that recovery is possible. Certified Peer Specialists (CPSs) are examples of hope and can share what recovery is and can teach the skills to help facilitate a wellness journey.

Our CPS program provides services in Allegheny County. The 2023/24 fiscal year yielded growth, both with staff and with the number of participants PSAN served. In February, a second full-time CPS was hired, and another part-time CPS began working in June, bringing the total to five staff. This enabled us to continue to provide quality services to an increased number of participants. The information provided in this report is limited to the service quality audit information and outcome performance measures.

Training

The Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is trained and certified through the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB) to offer support and assistance in helping others in their recovery and community-integration process. All CPSs are up to date on annual trainings. The supervisor and other support staff for the program are also certified through the PCB and receive continuing education credits annually.

Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) Services Analysis

From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, 146 program participants received services. The following tables provide some information about the individuals served.

Demographics Total Current Participants Served													
Black		Hispanic		White			Native		Asian/Pac Islander		Other/Not Spec		
M	F	M	F	M	F	Other	M	F	M	F	M	F	
6	14	1	0	46	67	2	0	1	1	0	4	4	146

Primary Diagnosis Participants Served														
Maj. Depressive			Schizo Type (All)		Post Traumatic		Bipolar/Mood			Anxiety (All)		Other		
M	F	Other	M	F	M	F	M	F	Other	M	F	M	F	
19	32	1	19	21	3	5	9	16	1	4	9	3	4	146

The number of individuals served this fiscal year is higher than the previous fiscal year by 11 participants.

Sixty-one (61) individuals were referred and enrolled in the CPS program during the 2023/24 fiscal year in contrast to 38 the previous fiscal year. From information gathered during enrollment confirmation calls, individuals sought services to manage symptoms of their diagnosis better, such as anxiety and depression, and wanted to interact more in their communities. Other areas of recovery included vocational and educational goals.

All individuals referred received a confirmation call to ensure correct understanding of the certified peer specialist program and to verify personal interest in services. Once confirmed, the program coordinator reviewed each referral to determine appropriateness for services and identify the best peer specialist match.

Fifty-one (51) individuals were referred but never enrolled. Reasons for individuals not enrolling in services varied from incomplete or expired referral forms, disinterest expressed during the enrollment confirmation call, individuals not engaging or meeting with assigned CPS, or not appropriate for services based on determined support needs. Oftentimes, individuals simply did not return calls regarding their referral.

There were 59 discharges during the fiscal year and 61 the previous year. The primary reasons for discharges were successful completion of the services, disengagement, or request to discontinue services. Requests to discontinue services were presented for various reasons, such as medical issues or greater level of care needed, different services desired, departure of primary CPS or never actually engaged. CPS services returned to in person meetings, with very few encounters being held via telephone or video calls.

Continuous Quality Improvement Activities

PSAN's Continuous Quality Improvement Plan was followed during this fiscal year. There were no notable changes in activities aside from continuing the planning work to identify new outcomes and performance measures.

Internal Audits and Findings

A 10-15% sample of all documented services approved for claims submission was audited by the compliance and programs administrator. Of those months audited:

- 285 total individual progress notes (IPNs) were audited of 734 yielding a 39% sample of all claims records
- 175 IPNs for Community Care Behavioral Health Organization (CCBHO)
- 110 IPNs funded by Allegheny County

The records sample was randomly selected although some adjustments to the selection were applied to ensure all certified peer specialists had at least one IPN documentation sample included to be representative. The audit examined the following elements:

- i) Current Individual Recovery Plan (IRP) and Assessment (My Strengths and Skills)
- ii) Administrative documents
- iii) Documentation content and adherence to organizational and funder defined performance standards

Accomplishments and Positives

- 21% of the randomly selected progress notes received a good quality rating meaning the content exceeded the performance/quality documentation standards.
- All progress notes referenced participant goals and specific needs of the participants in a clear and professional manner.
- Non-billable notes were used consistently to explain missed/changed appointments, other non-service-related needs, and conversations with support persons.
- Participant comments continued to be more detailed overall.
- Many of the notes showed empathy, encouragement, positive engagement/rapport building, and genuine care for the participant.

Areas for Improvement

- Continue to reduce the amount of content that is a general recap about what the participant said or did independent of the CPS and provide more content on specific CPS interventions and facilitations during the session.
- More consistently indicate progress on goals with references and measures, especially when updating an individual's Individual Recovery Plan (IRP).

The results of the audits were provided to the program coordinator and executive director. The program administrator/compliance officer often relayed feedback directly to the CPSs following internal audits, or the program coordinator reviewed the findings with them, both providing individual supervision as needed to address areas identified for improvement.

Service Utilization Reviews

The program coordinator, program administrator/compliance officer, and executive director were directly involved during formal meetings, held quarterly, for service reviews as a function of billing approval for submission and appropriate utilization of the services. Additionally, service needs and issues were reviewed monthly in the individual supervision sessions with staff.

Performance Outcomes

The measures are captured for all new enrollees at the following intervals: enrollment confirmation (baseline measure), every 6 months thereafter and at exit from services whenever participants are able to be contacted. The Information will be obtained and entered into an outcomes measures form within E-Systems electronic health record. Once a full cycle of data can be collected and analyzed, specific action plans for improvement will be defined. The focus of the peer specialist program is on continuing to train new, quality certified peer specialists and continuing to address some of the specific areas of improvement with individual progress note documentation.