



Job Title: Peer Specialist

Job Group: V

Location: ACT Team – 1050 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14213

Reports to: Program Director

SUMMARY:

The PS is a member of the multidisciplinary team and has responsibility for carrying out rehabilitation and support functions and assisting in treatment. Under the clinical supervision of the staff with professional degrees, the ACT Peer Specialist will participate in the provision of crisis intervention services when appropriate. The Peer Specialist assists recipients in accessing needed supportive services and entitlements and encourages recipients to engage in rehabilitative activities, such as social clubs, vocational programs, IPRT and self-help groups. Engages in outreach and support activities to ensure recipient access to rehabilitation services and community supports. The Peer Specialist maintains regular contact with recipients to coordinate recovery activities. The PS is a current or former recipient of mental health services and has a fundamental understanding of mental illness, psychiatric rehabilitation and community resources. Has familiarity with mental health treatment and recovery programs, including social clubs, peer support activities, and vocational services. The Peer Specialist does not participate in after-hours on-call or crisis intervention.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Responsible for the management of five to ten client charts. Participates with team members by contributing to the comprehensive assessment of psychiatric history, mental status, and diagnosis; physical health and dental health; use of drugs of alcohol; education and employment; social development and functioning; activities of daily living (e.g., self-care, living situation, nutrition, money management); and family structure and relationships.
- Consults with community agencies and families to maintain coordination in the treatment process. Participates in the provision of rehabilitation services.
- Documents client progress to maintain a permanent record of client activity according to established methods and procedures.
- Participates in daily Morning Meetings and treatment planning review meetings.
- Insures immediate and appropriate interventions are provided in response to changes in mental status or behaviors which put recipients at risk (e.g., suicidality).
- Assists and supports recipients to carry out personal hygiene and grooming tasks.
- Provides nutrition education, meal planning, grocery shopping, and food preparation.
- Assists recipients in finding and maintaining a safe and affordable place to live – apartment hunting, finding a roommate, landlord negotiations, cleaning, furnishing and decorating, and procuring necessities (e.g., telephone, furnishings, linens).
- Assists and supports recipients in performing household activities, including house cleaning and laundry.
- Helps recipients to access reliable transportation (e.g., obtain a driver's license and car, arrange for cabs, access bus lines, find rides).
- Assists and supports recipients to have and effectively use a personal physician and dentist.
- Encourages and promotes recipients engaging in social clubs, self-help support groups, rehabilitation programming.
- Provides side-by-side support and coaching to help recipients socialize (e.g., going with a recipient to a basketball game, coaching and supporting a recipient before he or she goes to a family reunion).
- Engages in outreach activities. Provides community advocacy to ACT recipients.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, AND SKILLS:

Good communication skills, both written and oral. Ability to engage recipients in a therapeutic alliance. Knowledge of community resources. Ability to work within a team setting. Ability to work independently within the community. Ability to tolerate stressful and/or ambiguous work situations. Ability to maintain flexibility in scheduling and/or rescheduling work assignments. Confidence in ability to provide community outreach services. Ability to identify potential crisis situations and convey this information to team members in a timely and appropriate manner.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Bachelor's degree in a field other than behavioral sciences or a HS diploma with relevant work experience with adults having severe and persistent mental illnesses. May have related training or work experience and life experience. Skills and competence to establish supportive trusting relationships with persons with severe and persistent mental illnesses and respect for client rights and personal preferences in treatment are essential. Must be a current or past consumer of mental health services. Must have a valid NYS driver's license and an automobile in good operational condition.

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