

Opportunities

Certified Peer Specialists are valued additions in many different professional settings including:

Advocacy Organizations
Crisis/Drop-in Centers
Community Treatment Teams
County/State Administrations
Inpatient/Outpatient Programs
Medicaid-billable Peer Specialist Programs
Psychiatric Rehabilitation Centers
Recovery Training Programs
Residential Programs
Service Coordination
Veterans Programs



“Working as a Peer Specialist has enriched my life tenfold. I wake each day knowing I make a difference in people’s lives by supporting and skill-building. Loving what you do and helping others is a dream come true. Come join the recovery movement and become an advocate. We are Peer Strong!”

-J. Holland MYCS/CPS Team Leader

For more information

For more information about CPS, please contact the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Office of Behavioral Health at 412-350-4166.

For information about funding for trainings, please contact the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) at 412-392-4950

DHS is

responsible for providing and administering publicly funded human services to Allegheny County residents.

DHS Principles

All services will be:

- High quality, comprehensive and accessible.
- Individualized and designed to be respectful of the unique cultural characteristics of each individual and/or community.
- Integrated and offered through a team approach that recognizes the capacity of individuals and families to identify their own strengths, needs and goals; create relationships and natural supports; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals.



Human Services Building

One Smithfield Street, Fourth Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
phone: 412-350-5701
fax: 412-350-4004
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs.aspx

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of a protected class including: race; color; religion; national origin; ancestry or place of birth; sex; gender identity or expression; sexual orientation; disability; marital status; familial status; age (40 and older); use of guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

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DHS

Certified Peer Specialists:

Making a positive difference every day.



What is a Certified Peer Specialist (CPS)?

Certified Peer Specialists have lived-experience with mental illness and are well on their way on their own path of recovery.

They are both positive role models and mentors who encourage trust and hope in each individual they serve.

Certified Peer Specialists help individuals reach a state of personal wellness by emphasizing the value of a positive self-image, empowerment and resilience.

They provide a unique viewpoint in treatment settings.

In addition to making a positive difference in the lives of the individuals they serve, those who work as a CPS also expand their own personal and professional skills.

What are the primary responsibilities of a CPS?

Certified Peer Specialists help individuals understand their strengths and develop their goals. They also connect individuals to resources to help them reach their goals. They work with families and treatment providers to ensure that the individual being served receives consistent care. They assist individuals in their recovery process through six key areas.



Key Areas in the Recovery Process

Crisis support

Supporting individuals as they make a wellness plan and teaching them how to use effective coping strategies.

Community and natural supports

Helping individuals get more information about returning to school, employment and housing. And, helping them become and stay active members in their community.

Individual advocacy

Making sure that each individual has a more active and vocal role during his or her treatment and recovery.

Self-help

Helping individuals understand and develop their strengths, skills and goals.

Self-improvement

Creating and overseeing activities that teach skills like solving problems and controlling symptoms.

Social networks

Teaching individuals the skills needed to maintain positive social and personal relationships.

How to become a CPS

Eligible individuals must take 75 hours of CPS training to learn the skills necessary to provide effective peer support.

Be eligible

To be eligible for CPS training, an individual must be 18 years of age or older and:

- must have kept a full-time, part-time or voluntary work position for at least 12 months or taken at least 24 college credits within the last three years,
- must have a high school diploma or GED,
- must have received or be receiving services for a serious mental illness.

Take the CPS training

- In Allegheny County, trainings are available through the Peer Support and Advocacy Network (PSAN).
- State-sponsored trainings are offered through the Institute for Recovery and Community Integration or RI International.

Get funding

Individuals who are not able to self-pay, but are interested in becoming a CPS, can seek funding for the CPS training through:

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Individual's employer