

PEER PERSPECTIVE



What is a Peer Support Specialist?

This quarter, we're taking a different approach. Instead of our usual focus on client support from a Peer Specialist's perspective, we're shining a light on the unique and crucial role of Peer Support Specialists. These individuals are a vital part of the comprehensive mental health services we offer at CMMHC, often playing a pivotal role in the healing process for our clients.

Peer Support or Recovery Specialists are not just non-clinical professionals. They're individuals who provide support and hope by sharing their own stories and serving as role models for wellness. Individuals must demonstrate leadership and advocacy skills, as well as a lived experience with mental health conditions, substance use, or both, and a demonstrated time in recovery. Each undergoes specialized training, passes a certification exam, and engages in supervised work experience hours. CMMHC also requires that they qualify as Mental Health Practitioners. A training opportunity in MN is available [HERE](#).

Certified Peer Support provides support both individually and in groups in these areas:

Certified Peer Specialist - Assists in breaking down barriers to community resources and encourages individuals to get involved in activities that align with their goals and interests.

Certified Peer Recovery Specialist - Helps individuals become ready and willing to seek treatment by supporting the individual in exploring their options for recovery or treatment.

Certified Family Support Specialists - Play a crucial role in educating parents and caregivers about mental illness and substance use, the availability of community resources, and advocating for culturally appropriate services for a child in treatment to increase a child's ability to function at home, school, and in the community.

Clients must participate in another service to utilize Peer Support Services, either by accessing services from CMMHC or by receiving services from another community provider with whom we can collaborate. This requirement ensures that clients are actively engaged in their recovery journey and can benefit from additional support.



We are the evidence; we hold the hope.