



Academy of Peer Services

Office of Consumer Affairs Webinar Series

May 6, 2014

Joseph Swinford, Deputy Director NYS OMH, OCA

Tara Davis, APS Registrar, NYAPRS

Why an Academy of Peer Services?

- Promote increased skill level of those providing services from the “shared personal experience” paradigm
- Improve the overall quality of peers services in NY
- Utilize technology to provide an opportunity for peers throughout the state
- Give an opportunity for academic recognition of this skill set

What is the Academy of Peer Services?

- Online training platform for individuals delivering peer support services in NYS
- Free of charge to persons working in or who wish to work in the NYS Mental Health System
- Courses designed by peer leaders in NYS
- Developed in partnership with our academic partner at Rutgers University School of Health Related Professions

What is the Academy of Peer Services?

- State-of-the-art multimedia, interactive learning modules developed by leading experts in the field
- Courses content shaped by a variety of influences including:
 - Interviews of peer leaders
 - Detailed input from peer provider experts from around the state,
 - Regional meetings throughout state
- Course are rigorously designed to assess what each participants learning
- Offering a certificate of completion after each course

How Does APS Relate to Certification?

- OMH is developing a Peer Specialist Certification process in conjunction with peer leaders
- This is intended:
 - Establishes the qualifications for “professional” recognition for individuals working in the mental health system based on “The Shared Personal Experience” paradigm
 - Establish a standard for the skills and training need for peers to assist another in their recovery journey
 - Provide a credential for peers supports in Medicaid

Certification Requirements

- General Requirements:
 - 18 years of age or older
 - Have a high school diploma or GED
 - Publicly self identify as a person who has direct personal experience living a life of recovery, overcoming the challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness
 - Have sufficient knowledge of recovery, overcoming the challenges resulting from a diagnosis of mental illness to assist others with recovery
 - Current or former recipient of mental health, or dual disorder services
 - Not currently hospitalized
 - Agree to abide by the CPS Code of Ethics
 - Provide Letters of Reference

Certification Requirements

- **Formal Training**

- Knowledge and understanding in the following areas:
 - **General Professional Skills** such as:
 - Advocacy
 - Values
 - Ethical balance
 - **Basic Technical Skills** such as:
 - Active Listening
 - Strategic Disclosure
 - Recovery Support Tools and Goal Setting
 - **General Mental Health Knowledge** such as:
 - General knowledge of mental illnesses
 - General knowledge of treatment of mental illness

Certification Requirements

- 2 Options for training:
 - **Option 1** – Online training through the Academy of Peer Services (APS) website
 - **Option 2** – Skills training obtained through other programs or on- the- job training **AND** pass the competency test for each of the classes for the “Core Courses” on the APS website.
Examples of other trainings include:
 - In person training offered by various peer run agencies (i.e. MHEP, HTH, etc.)
 - Peer support trainings through national programs (i.e. Self-Help Clearing House, DBSA, etc.)
 - On the job training through a peer run agency
 - Self taught through various activities and experiences

Certification Requirements

- Practical or field experience of applying the skills of Peer Support
 - A minimum 2000 hours of either in a paid OR volunteer experience doing activities such as:
 - Providing peer support either 1-1 or in a group setting
 - Documentation of activities
 - Writing plans for interactions including assisting others in setting and pursuing goals
 - Working a member of a team
 - Coordinating with traditional service providers
 - Utilize recovery tools to assist others
 - Utilizing personal recovery tools and activities to maintain one's own recovery
- Experience must include supervision from someone who has a clear understanding of the shared personal experience approach related to recovery (including the values and ethics) either as the Direct Supervisor or through involvement of an experienced peer specialist for the programmatic elements of peer support.

Certification Types

- Certification will be available in one of the following types:
 - Level 1 – “Provisional Certification” available to persons who meet the general requirements, having completed training but do not have the required supervised practical experience. This will be good for one year with the opportunity for a onetime renewal to extend the time for a maximum of 2 years. During this time the individual must complete the supervised experienced requirements to become eligible for a level 2 certification
 - Level 2 – “Professional Certification” available for those who meet the general requirements, has completed the required training and has the required supervised practical experience. This type of certification is good for 3 years and the individual must complete the recertification requirements for renewal.

Recertification Requirements

- 10 hours of approved CEUs per year. These may be continuing education trainings, seminars, workshops, APS courses or college courses.
 - CEUs must be related to mental health or dual diagnosis recovery
 - At least 1 CEU credit per year must cover each of the following
 - Ethics and boundaries
 - Trauma Informed Approaches
 - Peer support skill development
 - CEUs must be within the current certification period and cannot be carried forward to other periods
 - Each Certified Peer Specialist is responsible for documenting and reporting their CEUs for recertification.
 - Failure to report required CEUs will result in a certificate being listed as inactive for up to 1 year. If CEUs are obtained and reported then the certificate can be reactivated, if not the Certified Peer Specialist will need to submit an application for a new certificate

What Courses are Offered?

- New courses began in Jan 2014
- Currently 9 courses were offered covering between Jan and April
- 14 additional course will be added in May
- 4 courses will be added in September
- Total of 34 separate courses will be available by the end of 2014
- Beginning with the May term courses will be designated at Core or Elective

How do I take the courses?

- Create your user account at <http://www.academyofpeerservices.org>
- Respond to the verification email
- Log in with your user ID and Password
- Click the Browse Course button
- Select your course and then click the “register now” button
- Current term registration is now closed
- Registration will reopen on May 12, 2014

How do I take the courses?

- Once you start a class you can stop and then come back to the place left off
- Some classes provide opportunities to interact with classmates through forum postings
- Upon completion of the course you take the post test
- Score of 75% is required to pass
- After 2 attempts on the post test students must wait until the next term to try again

What Happens after the Test

- You can print out the test to use a study guide if you need to take it again
- After you pass the test you must take the end of course survey to help improve future course
- You can then print your Certificate of Completion
- You can go back to the course material as reference during the current term