

Youth Peer Mentors

Who are the Youth Peer Mentors?

Youth Peer Mentors are young adults who have personal experiences with mental health services. They utilize those experiences to collaborate with, coach and challenge youth and young adults, helping them to view their life situations as opportunities for growth and change. This will be done using the four components of Intentional Peer Support: building connections, helping each other understand how we've come to know what we know, redefining help as a co-learning and growing process, and helping each other move toward what is wanted rather than away from what is not wanted.

What do the Youth Peer Mentors do?

The needs of transitional age youth and young adults differ from those of children and older adults; for example, engagement often takes longer and traditional supports may not be developmentally appropriate. The Youth Peer Support Specialists will provide support to youth and young adults as they begin the process of developing the skills they need to live in the community with independence and success.

In practice, the support offered by the Peers will take three primary forms depending on the needs of the agency at which they are co-located. Peers may be paired one-on-one with youth participating in TIP case management services, providing support for self-directed case planning and advocacy of the youth's life goals. They can also provide support to agency staff on engaging youth and young adults in services, or be involved in efforts to enhance the agency's existing services to better serve transition-aged youth. Lastly, Youth Peer Mentors may serve as a resource to youth receiving services at the agency by meeting with them as requested or being available during scheduled hours to help them to access resources, training and skill-building opportunities available within the greater community or to discuss challenges they are experiencing.

These three types of support will allow Peers to contribute to the opportunities and supports available to youth in various settings such as an individual TIP team, formal services that are not implementing the TIP model, or a youth Drop-in or Wellness Center.

Role of the Youth Peer Mentors

The exact nature of each Youth Peer Mentor's role will be determined by the needs of individual youth, and the venue in which the peer support services are being provided. A Youth Peer Mentor can expect to engage in some or all of the following tasks:

Retrieved from Maine Moving Forward Youth Peer Support Specialists: Guide to Implementation

1. Peer support to TIP participants as part of the model
 - Interact with youth/young adults as a peer by sharing common experiences and modeling resiliency and recovery.
 - Assist youth and young adults in understanding components of recovery and resiliency and in applying skills to achieve life goals.
 - Attend TIP Solutions Reviews, youth/young adult's case meetings (when asked), other meetings as appropriate/assigned.
 - Provide individualized direct support to peers according to that person's TIP plan by supporting the individual's choice and building confidence.
 - Locate available resources, trainings or skill-building opportunities that will help an individual young person to achieve his/her TIP goals.

2. Assistance to agencies in developing youth-guided approaches to services
 - Participate in ongoing program development and enhancement at partner agencies, building on the strengths of youth/young adults and maintaining youth/young adults' connections to the community.
 - Support agency staff in efforts to engage youth/young adults in services.
 - Participate in the development and implementation of workshops/groups to help promote empowerment, advocacy and life skills through agency resources (e.g., at the Wellness Center).
 - Participate in community resource mapping to assist the initiative in the identification of formal and informal community resources as they relate to the transition domains. These resources could be available through the agency or through other organizations.

3. Peer support to any youth/young adult as needed
 - Serve as a resource for youth/young adults served by the agencies during scheduled appointments or designated drop-in hours.
 - Interact with youth/young adults as a peer by sharing common experiences and modeling resiliency and recovery.
 - Provide information to youth/young adults about resources, trainings or skill-building opportunities in the community.
 - Provide referral information to youth/young adults interested in the initiative and the TIP model for case management.

The Youth Peer Mentor is expected to:

- Participate in all required trainings; expected certification within one year.
- Fill out and submit required paperwork such as contact logs and timesheets
- Communicate promptly and in advance – e.g., Notify supervisor of schedule/changes/cannot attend a scheduled meeting, (e.g., sitting in resource center at 10am and can't make it) or training
 - Youth Peer Mentors will be terminated after three unexcused attendance issues, including training
- Provide up-to-date contact information

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- Respond promptly to inquiries from agency or Operations Coordinator
- Seek out advice from Operations Coordinator when they have questions
- Report any concerns that arise when working with youth/young adults as specified in mandated reporting training