

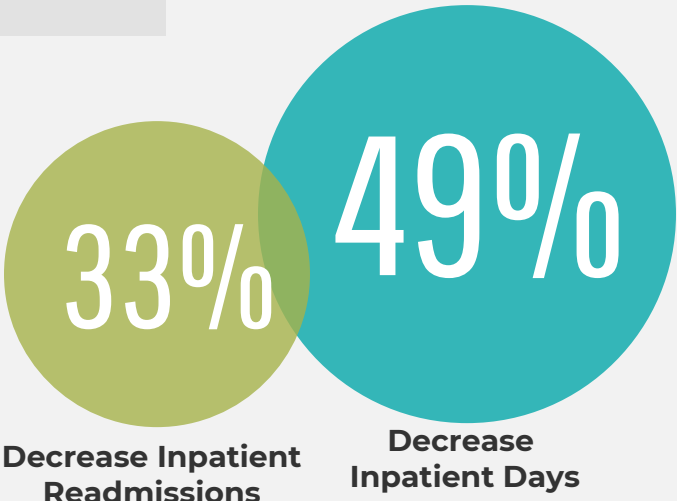
"Youth Peer Services: A Providers' Overview"



Youth Peer Services offer a unique opportunity to support youth and young adults in transition to adulthood by collaborating across child and adult systems. As young adults move from receiving care in the child serving system to accessing services within the adult system or graduate from system involvement, Youth Peers can be the “bridge” that ensures a smooth transition. Youth Peers accomplish this through an understanding of lived experience in both the child- and adult serving systems and provide youth-centered mutual support system navigation and resources necessary to achieve and sustain wellness. A high school diploma/GED and ongoing training is required per Florida Certification Board's requirements.

Youth Peer Services Defined

Youth Peer Services can be offered in a variety of ways: as indirect support, based in the community and available to a large population of young adults, or as direct support offered to individuals in service settings. Direct Youth Peer Support is a formalized service that has requirements for the Youth Peer providing the service and for the youth receiving it. Youth accessing these services must meet eligibility criteria for service, which includes a mental health, substance use or co-occurring diagnosis.



Youth Peer Services Provided

- Although youth peer services can be provided in a variety of settings and programs, generally the role of a youth peer includes the following:
- Provide one-on-one support and encouragement to young adults;
- Assist with goal setting and identification of positive environments;
- Advocate for youth in team meetings;
- Facilitate group meetings of youth and young adults;
- Conduct outreach in the community;
- Provide education on youth engagement, youth peer support, and recruitment of young adults to access available supports and services; and advocate for youth voice and the value of lived experience within agencies, communities, and systems.



Youth peer services may also be paid for on an individual basis through other funding sources, such as Community Based Care agencies or local county funding.

Benefits for Young People

There is a growing interest in providing these services to youth, given research that shows youth and young adults with mental health conditions are more likely to turn to their peers for help and, when asked, express a desire to have peer support services available to them. Additionally, a study found that youth who had access to peer services were more satisfied with their services than youth who did not.

Peer Support Services for Youth and Young Adults Who Experience Serious Mental Health Conditions:
<https://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/state-of-the-science-articles-2018-amp-plus>

Natl. Institute of Health:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24522553>



Youth peer services have increased hope and belief in the possibility of recovery, empowerment and increased self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-management of difficulties, social inclusion, engagement, and increased social networks

Young people with mental health conditions who had access to peer advocates—as compared to those who lacked such access—had more favorable views regarding access to services, appropriateness of and participation in services, as well as higher overall/global satisfaction.

The Role of the Service Provider

The exact nature of each Youth Peer Support Specialists role will be determined by the needs of individual youth, the needs of the agency to which he or she is assigned, and the venue in which the peer support services are being provided.

- Determine how you will implement youth peer support services (within an existing program, as a standalone service) and with what specific populations/ages.
- Define the role of youth peers within your organization and develop a job description to delineate responsibilities and role within the treatment team.
- Establish relationships with funders needed to bill for the services you want to provide.
- Recruit, hire, and provide on-going supervision and coaching.
- Provide individualized direct support to peers according to that person's plan by supporting the individual's choice and building confidence, leading to a greater degree of independence.
- Interact with the youth/young adult as a peer by sharing common experiences and modeling resiliency and recovery.

Funding Youth Peer Services

Youth Peer Support Services are paid for by Medicaid and the Department of Children and Families

- **Medicaid: In Lieu of Service, Self-Help/Peer Services Procedure Code H0038 for Youth with mental health or substance use conditions**
- **Department of Children and Families: Recovery Service Codes 46 & 47 for Individual and Group Services**

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Resources:

Florida Department of Children and Families: Peer Services:
<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/samh/publications/>

Florida Certification Board - Certified Recovery Peer Specialist:
<https://flcertificationboard.org/certifications/certified-recovery-peers-specialist/>