

What is Peer Support?

A “peer” is someone who has personally experienced challenges related to their mental health. Many peers have used services in the mental health system, so they understand both the challenges and benefits. Peer support focuses on building mutually support relationships, which is different than traditional services. Peer relationships explore wellness, challenges and how our experiences impact our lives. Peer support is about each person deciding for themselves how they want to navigate their own challenges. Through giving and receiving support, each person can work towards building the life they want to live.

What is a Youth Peer Support Specialist?

A Youth Peer Support Specialist openly identifies as having struggled with mental health challenges as a young person. They meet PIER participants one-on-one, facilitate peer support and activity groups, and participate in outreach. Peers know, from their own experience, the value of talking about their struggles and learning from other people. Our Peer Support staff are required to maintain a certification in Intentional Peer Support.

How does Peer Support Help?

- Increases self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-advocacy
- Offers the chance to give and receive support
- Offers the opportunity to engage in community activities with someone who understands
- Provides space to share one’s story with a peer who works differently than the clinical team

Frequently Asked Questions

How often do we meet?

As often as is helpful - it can range from a few times per week to monthly. This may be through meeting one-on-one, at an activity or support group or as part of a multifamily group or some combination.

What do I do with a Youth Peer Support Specialist?

You and the Youth Peer Support decide what you want to do together. For example it could be going for a walk, sitting at a coffee shop, or playing a card game at the library. The Youth Peer Support Partner will also offer activity and support groups that you can attend.

Is it required that I meet with the Youth Peer Support Partner?

No, peer support is entirely voluntary. You can start and stop peer support whenever you want by letting the Youth Peer Support Specialist know what works for you.

Maine Medical Center
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