CHAPTER 6 – NETWORK REQUIREMENTS

6.4.1 – PEER /RECOVERY SUPPORT TRAINING, CREDENTIALING AND SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST/RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST QUALIFICATIONS

Individuals seeking to be certified and employed as Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists must:

- Be self-identified as a “peer”; and
- Meet the requirements to function as a behavioral health paraprofessional, behavioral health technician, or behavioral health professional.

Individuals meeting the above criteria may be certified as a Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist by completing training and passing a competency test through an AHCCCS/OIFA approved Peer Support Employment Training Program. AHCCCS/OIFA will oversee the approval of all credentialing materials including curriculum and testing tools. Individuals are certified by the agency in which he/she completed the Peer Support Employment Training Program; however, credentialing through an AHCCCS/OIFA approved Peer Support Employment Training Program is applicable statewide, regardless of which program a person has gone through for credentialing. Some agencies may wish to employ individuals prior to the completion of credentialing through a Peer Support Employment Training Program. However, required trainings must be completed prior to delivering behavioral health services (see Subsection E, PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS). An individual must be credentialed as a Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist under the supervision of a qualified individual prior to billing Peer Support Services (see Subsection E, PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS).

PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

A Peer Support Employment Training Program must submit their program curriculum, competency exam, and exam scoring methodology (including an explanation of accommodations or alternative formats of program materials available to individuals who have special needs) to AHCCCS/OIFA, and AHCCCS/OIFA will issue feedback or approval of the curriculum, competency exam and exam scoring methodology in accordance with PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS.

Approval of curriculum is binding for no longer than three years. Three years after initial AHCCCS approval and thereafter, the program must resubmit their curriculum for review and re-approval to AHCCCS. If a program makes substantial changes (meaning change to content, classroom time, etc.) to their curriculum or if there is an addition to required elements (see Subsection E of PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS) during this three year period, the program must submit the updated content to AHCCCS/OIFA for review and approval. AHCCCS/OFIA will base approval of the curriculum, competency exam and exam scoring methodology only on the elements included in this chapter. If a Peer Support Employment Training Program requires regional or culturally specific training exclusive to a GSA or tribal community, the specific training cannot prevent employment or transfer of Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist approval based on additional elements or standards.
COMPETENCY EXAM

Individuals seeking credentialing and employment as a Peer/Recovery Support Specialist must complete and pass a competency exam with a minimum score of 80% upon completion of required training. Each Peer Support Employment Training Program has the authority to develop a unique competency exam. However, all exams must include at least one question related to each of the curriculum core elements listed in Subsection E of PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS. If an individual does not pass the competency exam, the Peer Support Employment Training Program may require that the peer repeat or complete additional training prior to taking the competency exam again. For individuals certified in another state, credential’s must be sent to AHCCCS/OIFA. The individual must demonstrate their state’s credentialing standards meet those of AHCCCS prior of recognition of their credential.

PEER SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT TRAINING CURRICULUM STANDARDS

A Peer Support Employment Training Program curriculum must include the following core elements:

1. A Peer Support Employment Training Program curriculum must include the following core elements:
   a. Concepts of Hope and Recovery
      i. Instilling the belief that recovery is real and possible,
      ii. The history of the recovery movement and the varied ways that behavioral health issues have been viewed and treated over time and in the present,
      iii. Knowing and sharing one’s story of a recovery journey and how one’s story can assist others in many ways,
      iv. Mind-Body-Spirit connection and holistic approach to recovery, and
      v. Overview of the Individual Service Plan (ISP) and its purpose.
   b. Advocacy and Systems Perspective
      i. Overview of state and national behavioral health system infrastructure and the history of Arizona’s behavioral health system,
      ii. Stigma and effective stigma reduction strategies: countering self-stigma; role modeling recovery and valuing the lived experience,
      iii. Introduction to organizational change - how to utilize person-first language and energize one’s agency around recovery, hope, and the value of peer support,
      iv. Creating a sense of community; creating a safe and supportive environment.
      v. Forms of advocacy and effective strategies – consumer rights and navigating the behavioral health system, and
      vi. Introduction to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
   c. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills and Service Delivery
      i. Strengths based approach; identifying one’s own strengths and helping others identify theirs; building resilience,
      ii. Distinguishing between sympathy and empathy, emotional intelligence,
      iii. Understanding learned helplessness; what it is, how it is taught and how to assist others in overcoming its effects,
      iv. Introduction to motivational interviewing; communication skills and active listening,
      v. Healing relationships – building trust and creating mutual responsibility,
vi. Combating negative self-talk: noticing patterns and replacing negative statements about one’s self; using mindfulness to gain self-confidence and relieve stress,
vii. Group facilitation skills, and
viii. Introduction to Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards. The role of culture in recovery.

d. Professional Responsibilities of the Peer Support Employee and Self Care in the Workplace. Qualified individuals must receive training on the following elements prior to delivering any covered behavioral health services:
i. Professional boundaries and ethics - the varied roles of the helping professional, collaborative supervision and the unique features of the Peer/Recovery Support Specialist,
ii. Confidentiality laws and information sharing – understanding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA),
iii. Responsibilities of a mandatory reporter; what to report and when,
iv. Understanding common signs and experiences of mental illness, substance abuse, addiction and trauma, orientation to commonly used medications and potential side effects,
v. Guidance on proper service documentation, billing and using recovery language throughout documentation,
vi. Self-care skills and coping practices for helping professionals, the importance of ongoing supports for overcoming stress in the workplace, resources to promote personal resilience; and, understanding burnout and using self-awareness to prevent compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.

Professional Responsibilities of the Peer Support Employee and Self Care in the Workplace
Qualified peers must receive training on the following elements prior to delivering any covered healthcare services:
• Professional boundaries & ethics-the varied roles of the helping professional; Collaborative supervision and the unique features of the Peer/Recovery Support Specialist;
• Confidentiality laws and information sharing - understanding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);
• Mandatory reporting requirements; what to report and when;
• Understanding common symptoms of mental illness and substance use and orientation to commonly used medications and potential side effects;
• Service documentation/billing and using recovery language throughout documentation; and
• Self-care and the use of ongoing supports; dealing with stress in the workplace; resources to promote personal resilience; and, understanding burnout and using self-awareness to prevent compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.

Some curriculum elements include concepts included in required training, as described in TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR RBHAS AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS. Peer support employment training programs must not duplicate training required of peers for employment with a licensed agency or Community Service Agency (CSA). Training elements in this chapter must be specific to the peer role in the public healthcare system and instructional for peer interactions.

For a list of references to assist in developing a curriculum that addresses the topics listed in the Curriculum Standards, see AHCCCS AMPM 1060 Policy, TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR RBHAS AND
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS.

Health Choice Integrated Care must develop and make available policies and procedures as well as additional resources for development of curriculum, including Health Choice Integrated Care staff contacts for questions and assistance. For questions or additional information, please contact the Health Choice Integrated Care Peer Support Administrator at (928) 774-7128.

While peer support employment training programs must not duplicate training required of licensed agencies or CSAs, it is possible that licensed agencies and/or CSAs may consider training completed as part of the peer support employment training program as meeting the agencies’ training requirements.

SUPERVISION OF CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST/RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALIST
Supervision is intended to provide support to Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists in meeting treatment needs of behavioral health recipients receiving care from Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists. Supervision provides an opportunity for growth within the agency and encouragement of recovery efforts.

Agencies employing Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists must have a qualified individual (behavioral health professional (BHP) or behavioral health technician (BHT)) level individual designated to provide Peer Support Specialist/Recovery Support Specialist supervision. Supervision must be documented and inclusive of both clinical and administrative supervision.

The individual providing supervision must also complete training and pass a competency test through an approved Peer Support Employment Training Program.

PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING EVIDENCE OF CREDENTIALING
Agencies employing Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists who are providing peer support services are responsible for keeping records of required qualifications and credentialing. Health Choice Integrated Care ensures that Peer Support Specialists/Recovery Support Specialists meet qualifications and have credentialing, as described in this chapter.