

## What Are Core Competencies?

A competency is the ability to do something successfully. Competencies are comprised of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for performing specific tasks well. Core competencies are the basic or foundational competencies needed to do a specific job well. SAMHSA and BRSS TACS developed these core competencies recommended for peer workers in behavioral health services, including peer recovery coaches, peer recovery specialists, and dozens of other job titles that work in a variety of settings. In addition to these core competencies, some peer workers will go on to develop specialized competencies (for example, working in criminal justice settings, doing supported employment) or advanced competencies (for example, supervision, group facilitation).

## What is the Purpose of this Self-Assessment?

This self-assessment is a tool to assist you in reflecting on your own peer worker competencies. Here are the possible outcomes of using the Peer Worker Self-Assessment:

- Identify your strengths as a peer worker
- Identify competencies that need to be developed
- Make a plan to develop your competencies
- Use the information to build a career development plan
- Use the information in supervision
- Become an objective observer of yourself at work

Because this assessment is only to help you improve in your work and advance your career, feel free to complete this assessment as honestly as you can to get the most benefit. There are no wrong answers.

## What Happens Next?

After you complete the self-assessment, you can decide what you want to do with the information. Here are some recommended activities:

- Review your own assessment. See if you can find any themes or areas that you are interested in developing
- Work with your supervisor or mentor to process the self-assessment
- Work with your supervisor, mentors, and others to identify trainings or experiences you need to develop your competencies
- Complete one of the 12 self-assessments available. See a [list](#) of competency assessments

## Competency development activities might include:

- In-person trainings/courses
- Online training/courses
- Job shadowing (working side-by-side with someone doing tasks you want to learn)
- On-the-job training
- Internships or other work “practice” opportunities
- Working with your supervisor
- Skill development courses (leadership skills, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution etc.)
- A new job

# Complete the Self-Assessment

If you need help completing this self-assessment, ask your supervisor.

## Peer Worker Information

1. Date \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you worked here \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this your first time completing this self-assessment?

Yes          No

5. If no, when was your last self-assessment? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are your professional goals? (Type them in the box below)

7. What do you think you do well at work?

8. What do you think you need to improve on?

## Self-Assessment of Core Competency

Rate yourself on how well you currently demonstrate these competencies. In addition to self-assessment rating, you can note examples that show why you rated yourself this way, what gets in the way of doing some competencies well, and what types of training would be helpful to improve where needed.

### Category I: Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships

This category of competencies emphasizes peer workers' ability to initiate and develop ongoing relationships with people who have behavioral health conditions and/or family members. These competencies include interpersonal skills, knowledge about recovery from behavioral health conditions, and attitudes consistent with a recovery orientation.

#### 1) Initiates contact with peers *What does this mean?*

| I do this very well all of the time | I do this well most of the time | I can do this well under the right circumstances | I cannot do this well yet | I do not know how to do this | This is not applicable to my work |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |

Explain why you rated yourself this way using an example or a scenario from your work:

#### What do you think gets in the way of doing this competency well? (Check all that apply)

N/A—I already do this well

I don't know how to do this

I've never seen anyone do it

I don't have opportunities to practice this

I don't have the confidence to do this

#### Other Comments:

**2) Listens to peers with careful attention to the content and emotion being communicated**

*What does this mean?*

|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I do this very well all of the time | I do this well most of the time | I can do this well under the right circumstances | I cannot do this well yet | I do not know how to do this | This is not applicable to my work |
|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |

Explain why you rated yourself this way using an example or a scenario from your work:

**What do you think gets in the way of doing this competency well? (Check all that apply)**

N/A—I already do this well  
I don't know how to do this

I've never seen anyone do it  
I don't have opportunities to practice this  
I don't have the confidence to do this

**Other Comments:**

**3) Reaches out to engage peers across the whole continuum of the recovery process** *What does this mean?*

|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| I do this very well all of the time | I do this well most of the time | I can do this well under the right circumstances | I cannot do this well yet | I do not know how to do this | This is not applicable to my work |
|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |

Explain why you rated yourself this way using an example or a scenario from your work:

**What do you think gets in the way of doing this competency well? (Check all that apply)**

N/A—I already do this well  
I don't know how to do this

I've never seen anyone do it  
I don't have opportunities to practice this  
I don't have the confidence to do this

**Other Comments:**

#### 4) Demonstrates genuine acceptance and respect [What does this mean?](#)

| I do this very well all of the time | I do this well most of the time | I can do this well under the right circumstances | I cannot do this well yet | I do not know how to do this | This is not applicable to my work |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |

Explain why you rated yourself this way using an example or a scenario from your work:

#### What do you think gets in the way of doing this competency well? (Check all that apply)

N/A—I already do this well  
I don't know how to do this

I've never seen anyone do it  
I don't have opportunities to practice this  
I don't have the confidence to do this

#### Other Comments:

#### 5) Demonstrates understanding of peers' experiences and feelings [What does this mean?](#)

| I do this very well all of the time | I do this well most of the time | I can do this well under the right circumstances | I cannot do this well yet | I do not know how to do this | This is not applicable to my work |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                                     |                                 |  |                           |                              |                                   |

Explain why you rated yourself this way using an example or a scenario from your work:

#### What do you think gets in the way of doing this competency well? (Check all that apply)

N/A—I already do this well  
I don't know how to do this

I've never seen anyone do it  
I don't have opportunities to practice this  
I don't have the confidence to do this

#### Other Comments:

## Improving Category I Competencies

In this category, you assessed your competencies in the area of *Engages Peers in Collaborative and Caring Relationships*. What additional help or training would be beneficial to you to strengthen these competencies? Check all that apply.

- N/A—I don't need help
- More help from supervisor
- Read more about this on my own
- Watch someone else do this at work
- Attend a webinar
- Participate in training

## Core Competency Examples

### Category I: Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships

1. [Initiates contact with peers](#) You reach out to peers you work with and engage them before they have to track you down.
2. [Listens to peers with careful attention to the content and emotion being communicated](#) You actively listen to peers, allow space for silence when needed, and are able to summarize what you've heard and reflect it back.
3. [Reaches out to engage peers across the whole continuum of the recovery process](#) You work with peers throughout various recovery-oriented activities, including pre-treatment, treatment, and post-treatment.
4. [Demonstrates genuine acceptance and respect](#) You work with peers in a non-judgmental, non-critical manner, and seek to understand their point of view, even if it differs from your own.
5. [Demonstrates understanding of peers' experiences and feelings](#) You show empathy, seek to understand peers' points of view, and share your own related experiences when appropriate.

### Self-assessments are available for each of the core competency categories:

**Category I:** Engages peers in collaborative and caring relationships

**Category II:** Provides support

**Category III:** Shares lived experiences of recovery

**Category IV:** Personalizes peer support

**Category V:** Supports recovery planning

**Category VI:** Links to resources, services, and supports

**Category VII:** Provides information about skills related to health, wellness, and recovery

**Category VIII:** Helps peers to manage crises

**Category IX:** Values communication

**Category X:** Supports collaboration and teamwork

**Category XI:** Promotes leadership and advocacy

**Category XII:** Promotes growth and development

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