

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, and your answers will not put your job at risk.

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 XI: Promotes leadership and advocacy

This category of competencies describes actions that peer workers use to provide leadership within behavioral health programs to advance a recovery-oriented mission. They also guide peer workers on how to advocate for the legal and human rights of other peers..

1) Uses knowledge of relevant rights and laws (ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.) to ensure that peers' rights are respected [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) Advocates for the needs and desires of peers in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family *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) Uses knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organizations to build an advocacy plan *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) Participates in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health conditions and their families *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’ve never seen anyone do it
- I don’t know how to do this
- I don’t have opportunities to practice this
- I don’t have the confidence to do this

Other Comments:

5) Educates colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services

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’ve never seen anyone do it
- I don’t know how to do this
- I don’t have opportunities to practice this
- I don’t have the confidence to do this

Other Comments:

6) Actively participates in efforts to improve the organization [*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:

7) Maintains a positive reputation in peer/professional communities [*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 XI Competencies

In this category, you assessed your competencies in the area of *Promotes Leadership and Advocacy*. 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 XI: Promotes leadership and advocacy

1. [Uses knowledge of relevant rights and laws \(ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.\) to ensure that peers' rights are respected](#)
You are aware of key laws that protect the rights of peers in recovery, and educate peers, family members, providers, or community members as needed to advocate against discrimination.
2. [Advocates for the needs and desires of peers in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family](#) You are able to communicate effectively with family members and service providers about the needs and rights of peers.
3. [Uses knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organization to build an advocacy plan](#) You know how to connect a peer with legal aid resources to address discrimination, disability rights, family issues, or other concerns.
4. [Participates in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health conditions and their families](#) You look for opportunities to share your own story of recovery openly as a way to show that recovery is possible for everyone.
5. [Educates colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services](#) You consistently remind colleagues that recovery is possible for peers, and it is a lifelong journey requiring a range of formal and informal supports.
6. [Actively participates in efforts to improve the organization](#) You provide constructive feedback about ways your agency can better serve peers, such as improvements to the physical space, policies, and procedures.
7. [Maintains a positive reputation in peer/professional communities](#) You are well respected by your peer and professional colleagues for the work that you do to support recovery.

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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