

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 VIII: Helps peers to manage crises

This category of competencies assists peer workers to identify potential risks and to use procedures that reduce risks to peers and others. Peer workers may have to manage situations in which there is intense distress, and work to ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and other peers.

1) Recognizes signs of distress and threats to safety among peers and in their environments

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) Provides reassurance to peers in distress [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) Strives to create safe spaces when meeting 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:

4) Takes action to address distress or a crisis by using knowledge of local resources, treatment, services, and support preferences of 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:

5) Assists peers in developing advance directives and other crisis prevention tools *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 VIII Competencies

In this category, you assessed your competencies in the area of *Helps Peers to Manage Crises*. 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 VIII: Helps peers to manage crises

1. [Recognizes signs of distress and threats to safety among peers and in their environments](#) You are able to see when peers are in trouble and might not be safe—either at work, at home, with their friends, or anywhere else.
2. [Provides reassurance to peers in distress](#)
You calm fears during hard times and help peers stay focused on their recovery.
3. [Strives to create safe spaces when meeting with peers](#) You do everything you can to make peers feel physically and emotionally safe, and ask them to let you know if they do not feel comfortable at any time.
4. [Takes action to address distress or a crisis by using knowledge of local resources, treatment, services, and support preferences of peers](#) You help peers find help when they need it— you take them to emergency help, or tell them how to get emergency help.
5. [Assists peers in developing advance directives and other crisis prevention tools](#)
You help peers create plans for health emergencies so that their wishes and preferences may be honored.

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

[Click to Return to Top](#)

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