

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 IX: Values communication

This category of competencies provides guidance on how peer workers interact verbally and in writing with colleagues and others. These competencies suggest language and processes used to communicate and reflect the value of respect.

1) Uses respectful, person-centered, recovery-oriented language in written and verbal interactions with peers, family members, community members, and others *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) Uses active listening skills [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) Clarifies their understanding of information when in doubt of the meaning [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) Conveys their point of view when working with colleagues [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) Documents information as required by program policies and procedures [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:

6) Follows laws and rules concerning confidentiality and respects others' rights for privacy

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 IX Competencies

In this category, you assessed your competencies in the area of *Values Communication*. 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 IX: Values communication

1. **Uses respectful, person-centered, recovery-oriented language in written and verbal interactions with peers, family members, community members, and others** You use language that puts the person first, such as “a person experiencing mental illness” or “a person in recovery from substance use disorders” rather than a “mentally ill person” or “an addict.”
2. **Uses active listening skills** You give your full attention to peers and are able to summarize and reflect back what you have heard.
3. **Clarifies their understanding of information when in doubt of the meaning** You pause in conversations to ensure peers understand the meaning of new information, and take the time needed to explain yourself.
4. **Conveys their point of view when working with colleagues** You are able to clearly and succinctly share your opinion with peers and other colleagues, and you make a point to speak up on behalf of peers when needed.
5. **Documents information as required by program policies and procedures** You are able to follow the required documentation procedures that allow your agency to maintain files or bill insurance companies.
6. **Follows laws and rules concerning confidentiality and respects others’ rights for privacy** You have received training on privacy and confidentiality laws and make every effort to protect the privacy of peers.

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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