

Youth Peer Self-Assessment Tool



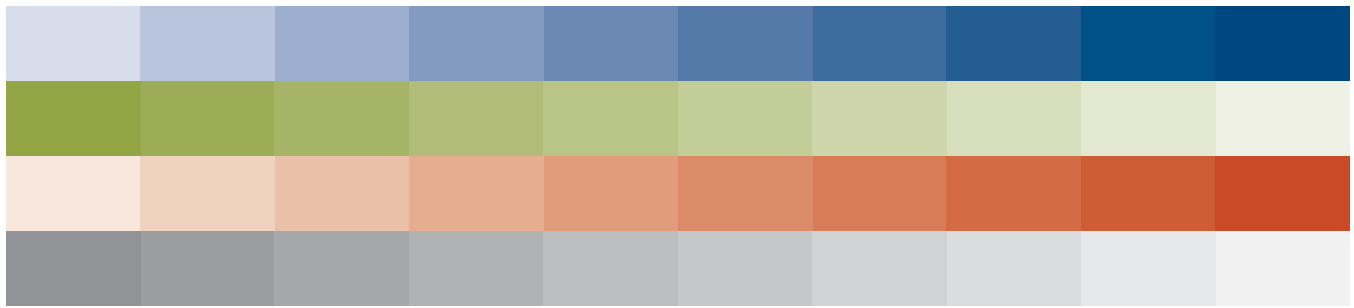
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Acknowledging Our Contributors

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As a Youth Peer Worker, you are tasked with providing peer support and mentorship to youth and young adults being supported by your organization or group. In this role, you are expected to utilize your knowledge of youth-serving systems, adolescent and young adult wellness and recovery, and your own lived experience to uplift and support young people.

About this Tool

Youth peer work is part of a new and quickly expanding field within the peer support world, which means that it may be difficult to find specific standards to abide by or share with team members who are new to understanding this role. This self-assessment tool was designed by a team of current and former youth peer workers and young adults, to be a tool used by youth peers to grow their skills, understand their professional development, and educate their employers on how best to support them.

How to use this Tool

These practices have been broken down into three different topic areas: *Foundational Skills*, *Continuous Professional Growth*, and *Access to Peer Specific Resources*. This tool can be completed as frequently as is beneficial for you. We recommend completing this with your supervisor 6 months into your role as a youth peer supporter and as part of subsequent annual performance review processes. Use this tool to develop and update your professional development plan. At the end of this tool you will find a fillable resource sheet, fill it with any resources that come up throughout the process that you want to make sure you remember.

The indicators listed below should be interpreted as broadly as possible to fit your role and setting.

1. Foundational Skills

Standard: Youth peer workers are between the ages of 18 and 30 with lived or living experience (see definition below). Youth peers have a willingness and ability to name and draw on their lived and living experiences in their work. They bring authenticity and honesty to their work, and lead with a desire to have mutuality being the driving force in their relationships with youth. They provide person centered, trauma informed, wellness-oriented and recovery-focused services. They are capable of advocating and serving in numerous settings, including school, medical settings, foster care, and other youth serving roles. Youth peer workers believe in multiple pathways of recovery.

Lived and living experience includes either direct (yourself) or indirect (through your family, peer group, or community) experiences with overcoming issues related to behavioral health and/or well-being. This can include, but is not limited to, experiences with substance use, mental health, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, addiction, recovery, housing insecurity, homelessness, discrimination, racism, trauma, and community or other types of violence.

| Add a "✓" in the box that aligns with where you consider yourself to be right now. | This is an area I would like to develop. | I am sometimes proficient in this and sometimes I struggle. | I excel in this area. | I don't think this is relevant to my current role. |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| <i>I am willing and able to name and draw on my lived experience in my work with youth.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I am able to share my lived experience in an appropriate manner and time.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I create a safe, authentic and inviting space for youth and young adults to reach out for support.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I can meet youth where they are at, no matter what state of wellness or recovery they are in.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable advocating for youth voice in one on one settings.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable supporting young people in advocating for themselves.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable advocating for youth voice at systems levels.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I can provide person centered, trauma informed, and wellness-oriented care to the youth I support.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable discussing different pathways to recovery.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable expressing boundaries with youth.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I can define what equity and cultural humility mean, and I know what role they play in my work.</i> | | | | |

***Reflect on how you answered the questions above. What areas are you excelling in?
What areas would you like to develop?***

2. Continuous Professional Growth

Standard: All youth peer workers will participate in trainings to further develop their skill sets and to ensure they are capable of providing person centered, trauma informed, wellness-oriented, and recovery focused services to the youth and young adults they support. They will develop strong written and oral communication skills, and, if in an appropriate setting, develop note taking skills. They will work to maintain strong and firm boundaries with the youth they support and will work to model those skills appropriately. They will feel comfortable orienting youth to their role and be able to explain the ways that a youth peer worker can support them. They will have a working knowledge of the resources in their area, those nationally available and an understanding of the child and young adult serving systems in their state. They will continue their education and work to ensure they are culturally responsive and equity focused.

| Add a "✓" in the box that aligns with where you consider yourself to be right now. | This is an area I would like to develop. | I am sometimes proficient in this and sometimes I struggle. | I excel in this area. | I don't think this is relevant to my current role. |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| <i>I have received enough training to provide person centered, trauma informed, wellness oriented, and recovery-focused services to youth and young adults.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I am confident in my written and oral communication skills.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable maintaining strong boundaries with the youth I support.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I can orient a young person to my role and explain how I can support them.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel like I have a good understanding of the child and young adult serving system in my area.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I know what resources are available to youth in my area.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I stay up to date on new and developing resources and supports for youth in my area and nationally.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I am able to perform my role within the ethical standards that exist for my role.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I reflect on whether or not my work is culturally responsive, and I continue to further my knowledge on equity.</i> | | | | |

Reflect on how you answered the questions above. What areas are you excelling in? What areas would you like to develop? Identify your goals for your development and growth plan.

3. Access to Peer Specific Resources

Standard: All youth peer workers should have access to appropriate and trained peer supervision,¹ both in one on one and group settings. Their employers should be connecting them to ongoing and appropriate training opportunities to further their knowledge base and skill set. The youth peer worker is responsible for maintaining their state of wellness, and communicating to their team if they are in a place of needing additional support on their work loads. Their employer should understand the unique role of a youth peer worker.

| Add a "✓" in the box that aligns with where you consider yourself to be right now. | I do not currently have access to this support. | I sometimes receive this support and sometimes don't. | I always receive this support. | I don't think this is relevant to my current role. |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>I receive group and one on one supervision.</i> | | | | |
| <i>My supervisor is a trained peer supervisor and is a peer themselves.</i> | | | | |
| <i>My employer provided me or connected me with youth peer training when I first started in my role.</i> | | | | |
| <i>My employer continues to provide me with ongoing training and professional development opportunities that are relevant to my role.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable maintaining my wellness outside of work.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel supported to maintain my wellness by my employer and team.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel comfortable communicating with my team when I need additional support on my workload.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel like my employer understands the role of a youth peer worker.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I feel happy and fulfilled by my role and the work I do.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I am given growth opportunities and have discussions about my career goals with my employer.</i> | | | | |
| <i>I have access to a mentor at work who understands peer work and the unique challenges of the peer role.</i> | | | | |

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 1 Ideally, youth peer supervision is performed by someone who is also a peer worker and has received peer supervisor training.

Reflect on how you answered the questions above. Do you feel like you have enough access to supervision, training and support maintaining your wellness? What types of additional support might you need? Who do you need support from?

Resource Sheet

| Resource Name | How will it help? | When can I use it? | Do I need help accessing it? |
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