



## PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST I/II

Classification specifications are only intended to present a descriptive summary of the range of duties and responsibilities associated with specified positions. Therefore, specifications *may not include all* duties performed by individuals within a classification. In addition, specifications are intended to outline the *minimum* qualifications necessary for entry into the class and do not necessarily convey the qualifications of incumbents within the position.

**FLSA STATUS:** Non-Exempt

### DEFINITION:

Under immediate (Peer Support Specialist I) or general (Peer Support Specialist II) supervision, utilizes lived experience to build rapport and provide support, guidance, and advocacy to clients and their families; assists clients with accessing and navigating behavioral health care services, resources, and systems of care; encourages full client engagement in services to promote wellness and recovery; and performs related duties as assigned.

### SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED:

Receives immediate (Peer Support Specialist I) or general (Peer Support Specialist II) supervision from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

### DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

*Peer Support Specialist I:* This is the entry-level classification in the certified Peer Support Specialist series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents learn and perform routine billable and non-billable peer support and advocacy duties and required documentation while learning Authority policies and procedures. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied, complex, and difficult; close supervision and frequent review of work lessen as an incumbent demonstrates skill to perform the work independently. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the Peer Support Specialist II level but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

*Peer Support Specialist II:* This is the journey-level classification in the certified Peer Support Specialist series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Peer Support Specialist I by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

This classification series is distinguished from the Behavioral Health Advocate series in that incumbents are certified Peer Specialists and perform a variety of billable and non-billable activities.

Positions in the Peer Support Specialist series are flexibly staffed; positions at the Peer Support Specialist II level are normally filled by advancement from the Peer Support Specialist I level; progression to the Peer Support Specialist II level is dependent on (i) management affirmation that the position is performing the full range of duties assigned to the classification; (ii) satisfactory work performance; (iii) the incumbent meeting the minimum qualifications for the classification including any licenses and certifications; and (iv) management approval for progression to the Peer Support Specialist II level.

#### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL DUTIES:**

Essential duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

*Positions at the Peer Support Specialist I level may perform some of these duties and responsibilities in a learning capacity.*

- Provides peer to peer support services in the office and/or in the field including, but not limited to outreach, support, encouragement, guidance, advocacy, and referrals to external resources and services for clients and their families; builds rapport with clients and their families through sharing stories of lived experience and recovery.
- Encourages and supports clients to fully engage in services; provides outreach and assists clients in addressing and overcoming barriers to treatment.
- Provides resources and referrals to address basic needs and other barriers to wellness and recovery including food, housing, clothing, transportation, and other financial resources.
- Assists clients with setting, implementing, and tracking wellness and recovery goals; develops individual Wellness and Recovery Action Plans (WRAP); models and shares effective coping strategies.
- Assists clients and families to understand behavioral health problems and steps to recovery.
- Provides support and guidance in navigating systems and obtaining additional support services; attends meetings and therapy sessions with clients; assists with completing applications and forms; and ensures client concerns are address and processes understood.
- Provides advice and guidance to clients and staff related to area of expertise, based on lived experience.
- Participates as a member of multidisciplinary treatment teams; addresses client concerns, barriers, progress, and other relevant information to enhance treatment services.; assists and supports clients in maintaining cooperative and effective relationships with treatment teams.
- Attends and participates in a variety of meetings, trainings, utilization and peer review activities, and other functions involving supervision, case consultation and public information and education.
- Maintains accurate, detailed, and thorough documentation, case records, and notes of all billable and non-billable activities and services related to client care; completes necessary documentation for billing purposes.
- Maintains client confidentiality in compliance with all Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) regulations.
- Observes and complies with all Authority and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols.

- Performs related duties as required.

## **QUALIFICATIONS:**

The incumbent will possess the most desirable combination of education, training, skills, and experience, as demonstrated in their past and current employment history. A typical example includes:

### **Education and Experience**

#### Education:

- Peer Support Specialist I/II: Equivalent to completion of the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade.

#### Experience:

- Peer Support Specialist I: Direct lived experience either personally or as a caregiver of someone who has recovered from behavioral health illness and/or substance use disorder.
- Peer Support Specialist II: Two (2) years of experience providing peer support services to clients in a behavioral health care setting.

### **Licenses and Certifications**

- Some positions may require possession of a valid California Driver's License, a satisfactory driving record, and a properly registered and insured vehicle, to be maintained throughout employment.
- Possession of a valid Peer Support Specialist Certification, to be maintained throughout employment.

### **Knowledge of:**

*Positions at the Peer Support Specialist I level may exercise some of these knowledge and abilities statements in a learning capacity.*

- Social, emotional, and behavioral aspects of behavioral health disorders and illness.
- Behavioral health care systems and services.
- Principles and practices of building and maintaining strong relationships and connections with peers.
- Principles and practices of direct client service delivery.
- Principles of behavioral health education.
- Principles and practices of case management for behavioral health clients, including client charting and process documentation.
- Cultural, social, and environmental factors and influences affecting behavioral health.
- Community and governmental services and resources.
- Basic needs and challenges for individuals and families accessing behavioral health services, including cultural barriers.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations as well as industry standards and best practices pertinent to the assigned area of responsibility, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- Authority and mandated safety rules, regulations, and protocols.

- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service, interacting and effectively dealing with the public, community-based organizations and service providers, stakeholders, and Authority staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.

**Ability to:**

- Provide peer mentoring and advocacy support and services to clients and their families.
- Engage and encourage clients to participate in treatment services by sharing stories of lived experience and inspiring hope.
- Assist clients in identifying and addressing barriers to treatment.
- Interpret Authority programs and policies to clients, the general public, and outside agencies/organizations.
- Establish and maintain the confidence of clients and family/caregivers from diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Understand scope of authority in making independent decisions.
- Effectively utilize community resources to assist clients.
- Listen attentively to clients and address their needs and issues fairly and professionally.
- Work well with and provide services to a variety of clients in various stages of behavioral health illness/treatment; maintain appropriate boundaries, identify and nurture strengths, and support their right to make independent decisions as appropriate.
- Perform crisis intervention, respond promptly to client emergency situations and take effective action within scope of authority.
- Prepare clear and concise correspondence, client case documentation, and other written materials.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and procedural guidelines.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Maintain the confidentiality of client information.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with clients, their families, Authority staff, and the behavioral health community.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS (ADA)**

When assigned to an office environment, must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone; ability to stand and walk between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate

standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information.

When performing field work, must possess mobility to work in changing site conditions; to sit, stand, and walk on level, uneven, or slippery surfaces; to reach, twist, turn, kneel, and bend; and to operate a motor vehicle and visit various sites throughout the Tri-Cities; vision to observe client behavior, signs of illness, and potential hazards. The job involves frequent walking to locate, assist, and deliver services to clients, with exposure to hazardous materials and waste in some locations. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects averaging a weight of 10 pounds, or heavier weights, in all cases with the use of proper equipment and/or assistance from other staff.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees also work in the field and are exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, and may be exposed to blood and bodily fluids, and other hazardous physical substances and fumes. Employees interact with clients with behavioral disorders who may display erratic and assaultive behavior, including those who require emergency crisis intervention. Employees may also interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

In accordance with California Government Code Section 3100, Tri-City Mental Health Authority employees, in the event of a disaster, are considered disaster service workers and may be asked to protect the health, safety, lives, and property of the people of the State.

Employees serve as members of the Authority's on-call crisis intervention team and may be required to be available and respond to crisis situation 24/7 during on-call rotation.

Receive satisfactory results from a background investigation, which includes fingerprinting; a pre-employment physical examination, which includes a drug/alcohol test; and an administrative review.