MEDICAL NECESSITY CRITERIA
Peer Support Services

Based upon the fundamental principles of recovery, Peer Support Services (PSS) are specialized therapeutic interactions conducted by self-identified current or former consumers of behavioral health services who are trained and certified to offer support and assistance in helping others in their recovery and community-integration process. PSS are intended to inspire hope in individuals that recovery is not only possible, but probable. The service is designed to promote empowerment, self-determination, understanding, coping skills, and resiliency through mentoring and service coordination supports that allow individuals age 18 years and older with severe and persistent mental illness to achieve personal wellness and cope with the stressors and barriers encountered when recovering from their disabilities.

PSS are designed on the principles of consumer choice and the active involvement of persons in their own recovery process. Peer support practice is guided by the belief that people with disabilities need opportunities to identify and choose for themselves their desired roles with regard to living, learning, working and social interaction in the community. For this reason, the agreement of the individual to receive services is critical.

On an ongoing basis, individuals receiving the service are given the opportunity to participate in and make decisions about the activities conducted. Services are self-directed and person-centered with a recovery focus. PSS facilitate the development of recovery skills. Services are multi-faceted and include, but are not limited to, individual advocacy, education, development of natural supports, support of work or other meaningful activity of the individual’s choosing, crisis management support, skills training, effective utilization of the service delivery system, and coordination of and linkage to other service providers.

Specific service goals are based on individual needs and personal aspirations, which may be in the areas of wellness and recovery, education and employment, crisis support, housing, social networking, self-determination and individual advocacy. The relationship between the peer specialist and the individual served is intended to facilitate accomplishment of the goals specified in the Recovery-focused Individual Service Plan (ISP), which is also referred to as an Individual Recovery Plan. Face-to-face contact is critical to develop the relationship effectively, but there may be times when a telephone contact with the individual service may be appropriate.

The member must meet ALL of the following:

A. Diagnosis
   1. The individual has a Serious Mental Illness as defined in Mental Health Bulletin OMH-94-04, Serious Mental Illness: Adult Priority Group

B. Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF)
   1. GAF is 65 or below

C. Must have a moderate-severe functional impairment that limits performance in at least one of the following:
   1. Educational
   2. Social
3. Vocational  
4. Self-maintenance  

D. Additional Criteria for Continued Stay Review Only  
   1. Member continues to meet the above guidelines  
   2. There is documentation supporting the benefits from Peer Support Services  
   3. Withdrawal of Peer Support Services may result in loss of gains or goals  

Discharge Criteria  
Must Meet Criteria I, II, III or IV  

1. The person has successfully accomplished the goals specified in the Recovery-focused Individual Service Plan (ISP)/Individual Recovery Plan.  
2. The person receiving PSS and his/her team agrees there is not an expectation of additional benefits from continued Peer Support Services.  
3. There is a reasonable expectation that the withdrawal of PSS will not result in loss of services gains or goals attained by the person receiving PSS.  
4. The person voluntarily terminates from the Peer Support Services.