

Chapter 246-929 WAC

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Certified Peer Specialists and Certified Peer Specialist Trainees

WAC Sections

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246-929-010

Definitions.

The definitions in [RCW 18.420.010](#) and in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly states otherwise.

(1) "Approved supervisor" means a credentialed behavioral health provider or peer specialist who meets the requirements in WAC 246-929-170.

(2) "Behavioral health provider" has the same definition as in [RCW 71.24.025](#) and includes physicians and physician assistants, osteopathic physicians, psychologists, licensed counselors, substance use disorder professionals, registered nurses, and advanced practice registered nurses.

(3) "Client" means an individual who receives peer support services from a peer specialist or peer specialist trainee.

(4) "Clinical services" means treatment provided by a behavioral health provider with a credential that allows them to provide mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, or co-occurring disorder treatment.

(5) "Distance supervision" means supervision provided when the approved supervisor is not at the same location as the peer specialist trainee.

(6) "Group supervision" means a supervision meeting with the approved supervisor and no more than six peer specialist trainees.

(7) "Individual supervision" means a supervision meeting with the approved supervisor and one peer specialist trainee.

(8) "Institution of higher learning" means a college or university that is nationally, regionally, or state accredited.

(9) "Joint supervision" means an approved supervisor and a peer specialist supervisor candidate who work in conjunction to provide supervision to certified peer specialist trainees.

(10) "Out-of-state" means any state or territory of the United States other than Washington.

(11) "Peer specialist supervisor candidate" means a certified peer specialist working under an approved supervisor and providing joint supervision to trainees to obtain the experience necessary to become an approved supervisor.

(12) "Reciprocity" means credentialing of out-of-state peer counselors based on substantial equivalence between Washington state certification requirements and the requirements of the other state or territory.

(13) "Recovery" means a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential. Recovery often involves achieving remission from an active substance use disorder or mental health condition.

246-929-020**Sexual misconduct.**

(1) The definitions and prohibitions on sexual misconduct described in chapter **246-16** WAC apply to certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist trainees except WAC **246-16-100** (4) and (5).

(2) A certified peer specialist and a certified peer specialist trainee shall never engage, or attempt to engage, in the activities listed in WAC **246-16-100** (1),(2), and (3) with a former patient, former client, or former key party.

246-929-030**Voluntary credential and title protection**

(1) Individuals who practice peer counseling or provide peer support services are not required to obtain the peer specialist certification to provide peer services in the state of Washington.

(2) The titles of certified peer specialist and certified peer specialist trainee are protected and only able to be used by an individual who has an active certification under [RCW 18.420](#) and this chapter.

246-929-040**Scope of practice and limits for certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist trainees.**

Certified peer specialists and certified peer specialist trainees can practice peer support services as defined in [RCW 18.420.010](#). This consists of providing interventions through the use of shared experiences to assist the client in acquiring and exercising skills needed to support their recovery.

(1) Interventions include activities to assist clients in accessing or engaging in treatment, symptom management, social connection, recovery, and self-advocacy. This incorporates guidance and development of natural community supports, improving basic daily living skills, and supporting clients in achieving and maintaining their health and wellness goals. These interventions may be achieved through various means, including working with clients outside of an office or

agency setting, connecting clients with resources, case management services, and other non-clinical treatments to assist clients in their recovery.

(2) Peer specialists and trainees are not clinical providers and may not provide clinical services. They cannot assess or diagnose identifiable mental health conditions or substance use disorders, and they are not able to provide mental health or substance use disorder counseling. Peer specialists and trainees work with their clients to connect them with behavioral health providers who may provide counseling within the scope of practice of their credential.

246-929-100

Certification of a peer specialist.

An applicant for a peer specialist certificate shall submit to the department:

- (1) An application on forms provided by the department;
- (2) An attestation the applicant self-identifies as:
 - (a) Having 1 or more years in recovery from a mental health condition, substance use disorder, or both; or
 - (b) The parent or legal guardian of a youth who is receiving or has received behavioral health services;
- (3) Official certificate(s) of completion of a peer training course as outlined in WAC 246-929-130;
- (4) Verification of meeting the supervised experience requirements under WAC 246-929-150 on forms provided by the department; and
- (5) The fee required under WAC 246-929-990.

246-929-110

Certification of a peer specialist trainee.

(1) An applicant for a peer specialist trainee certificate shall submit to the department:

- (a) An application on forms provided by the department;
- (b) An attestation the applicant self-identifies as:
 - (i) Having 1 or more years in recovery from a mental health condition, substance use disorder, or both; or
 - (ii) The parent or legal guardian of a youth who is receiving or has received behavioral health services;

(c) Official certificate(s) of completion of a peer training course as outlined in WAC 246-929-130; and

(d) An attestation the applicant is working to meet the supervised experience requirements under WAC 246-929-150.

(2) The peer specialist trainee certification may only be renewed 4 times.

(3) There is no fee for certification as a peer specialist trainee.

246-929-130

Education and examination requirements.

(1) Applicants for certification as a peer specialist or trainee must meet one of the following requirements:

(a) Successful completion of an 80-hour peer services training course and the examinations developed by the Health Care Authority under [RCW 71.24.920](#); or

(b) Successful completion of an apprenticeship program reviewed and approved by the department and registered with the Department of Labor and Industries.

(2) Applicants for certification as a peer specialist or a trainee who have previously completed the Health Care Authority's 40-hour peer counselor training must also complete the Health Care Authority's gap training provided under [RCW 71.24.920](#).

(3) Applicants for certification as a peer specialist or a trainee who obtained their training in another state must provide:

(a) A certificate of completion from their out-of-state peer training provider and any required examination scores;

(b) A copy of the out-of-state peer specialist or peer counselor credential; and

(c) Proof of completing the Health Care Authority's peer counselor pre-requisite training course and the gap training required in subsection (2) of this section.

246-929-150

Supervised experience requirements.

(1) Supervised experience shall consist of 1,000 hours of peer support services to clients under the supervision of an approved supervisor who meets the requirements under WAC 246-929-170.

(a) Supervision may be provided via distance supervision or in-person supervision.

(b) Trainees may have multiple approved supervisors at the same time.

(c) Supervision obtained prior to July 2025, or out-of-state, is not required to meet requirements for formal supervision as outlined in subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The trainee and the approved supervisor must meet for supervision every other week unless the trainee has had no client contact since the last supervision meeting. A peer specialist trainee must have individual supervision at least once every two months. The remaining supervision meetings may be either individual supervision or group supervision.

(3) The supervised experience obtained by trainees shall be reported on forms provided by the department with a signed attestation from the approved supervisor.

246-929-160

Supervised experience hours.

(1) Applicants for the certified peer specialist credential must show they have obtained the required supervised experience hours in one of the following ways:

(a) For experience obtained on or after July 1, 2025, an applicant must complete at least 1,000 hours of volunteer or paid practice of peer support services under an approved supervisor as defined in WAC 246-929-170.

(b) For experience obtained prior to July 1, 2025, an applicant must provide:

(i) An attestation, on a form provided by the department, that documents at least 1,000 hours worked as peer counselor signed by an employer or a supervisor credentialed as a behavioral health provider; or

(ii) Documentation the applicant held an agency affiliated counselor registration and was working as a peer counselor in an agency for at least 1 year.

(c) For experience obtained out of state, an applicant must show they have held an equivalent credential in good standing for at least 1 year, or hold an acceptable national certification as defined in WAC 246-929-180.

(2) For experience obtained under multiple options in subsection (1), a separate form must be provided for each type of experience and must total at least 1,000 hours.

246-929-170

Approved supervisor requirements.

(1) An approved supervisor who is eligible to supervise certified peer specialist trainees must be either:

(a) Until July 1, 2028, a behavioral health provider as defined in [RCW 71.24.025](#) with 2 years of experience working in a behavioral health practice that employs peer specialists as a part of their treatment teams; or

(b) A certified peer specialist who has completed:

(i) at least 1,500 hours of work as a fully certified peer specialist actively engaged in the practice of peer support services;

(ii) at least 500 hours of joint supervision of peers in conjunction with an approved supervisor; and

(iii) the peer specialist supervisor training course provided by the Health Care Authority under [RCW 71.24.920](#).

(2) Individual peers who supervised peers prior to the creation of the certified peer specialist credential may qualify as an approved supervisor if they:

(a) Hold an active certified peer specialist credential;

(b) Provided supervision to peers for at least 2 years prior to July 2025; and

(c) Completed the peer specialist supervisor training provided by the Health Care Authority under [RCW 71.24.920](#).

(3) The approved supervisor must respond to a request for assistance with emergencies or situations with a significant impact on a client within 48 hours of the request from a trainee or supervisor candidate.

246-929-175

Joint supervision.

(1) A certified peer specialist must meet the following before becoming a peer specialist supervisor candidate:

(a) Hold an active peer specialist certification;

(b) Complete 1,500 hours of experience after becoming a certified peer specialist; and

(c) Complete the peer specialist supervisor training course provided by the Health Care Authority under [RCW 71.24.920](#).

(2) Joint supervision is defined as an approved supervisor working together with a peer specialist supervisor candidate who is obtaining experience to become an approved supervisor. The peer specialist must obtain at least 500 hours of joint supervision experience to be eligible to be an approved supervisor.

(3) When providing joint supervision, the approved supervisor is the primary supervisor and may delegate tasks to the peer specialist supervisor candidate according to their skills and abilities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) mentoring and advising trainees;
- (b) supervision of trainees while providing services;
- (c) addressing concerns around client treatment or issues requiring immediate actions;
- (d) leading group supervision sessions under the observation of the approved supervisor; and
- (e) other tasks pre-approved by the approved supervisor.

(4) The supervisor candidate may not be the primary supervisor for a peer specialist trainee, may not approve or modify documentation for the client's recovery plan or treatment plan, may not hold individual supervision meetings, and cannot sign off on any documentation as the trainee's supervisor.

(5) The approved supervisor and peer specialist supervisor candidate must meet at least once a month to discuss the ongoing supervision of trainees working with the peer specialist supervisor candidate.

(6) The approved supervisor must provide, on forms provided by the department, an attestation that the supervisor candidate obtained at least 500 hours of joint supervision experience under their supervision.

246-929-180

National and international certifications.

An applicant who obtains one of the following national or international certifications shall be considered to meet the education, training, and experience requirements to receive certification as a certified peer specialist:

- (1) National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Counselor's (NAADAC) certification as a National Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (NCPRSS);
- (2) Mental Health America's certification as a National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS);
- (3) Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) certification as a Recovery Coach Professional (RCCP); or
- (4) National Federation of Families certification as a Family Peer Specialist.
- (5) International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) Peer Recovery credential; or
- (6) RI International Peer Training certification.

246-929-200

Disclosure statements.

(1) Certified peer specialists and trainees are required to provide a disclosure statement to each client prior to starting services.

(2) The disclosure statement must contain the following information:

(a) The name of the certified peer specialist or trainee and the name of their agency or business, if applicable.

(b) The peer specialist or trainee's credential number.

(c) The peer specialist or trainee's business address, email, and telephone number.

(d) The type of peer services to be provided, including an explanation of the differences between peer services and clinical services and how they work together.

(e) The duration of time expected to provide the peer services and goals of the services.

(f) Fee information, including billing practices.

(3) Peer specialist trainees must also include information for their approved supervisor, including the supervisor's name, credential number, and contact information.

246-929-210

Ethical practice of peer support services.

(1) The practice of peer support services includes interventions provided by a certified peer specialist or trainee with a similar lived experience as the client. Interventions may include:

(a) Activities that assist clients in accessing or engaging in treatment and symptom management;

(b) promoting social connection, recovery, and self-advocacy;

(c) providing guidance in the development of natural community supports and basic daily living skills; and

(d) supporting clients in engagement, motivation, and maintenance related to achieving and maintaining health and wellness goals.

(2) The practice of peer support services is not required to be held in a clinical setting. Peer specialists meet their clients where they are and engage in a

different manner than clinical providers do. They may also interact with the client's family or friends while providing interventions.

(3) Certified peer specialists and trainees shall provide services with a trauma-informed, person-centered approach. Their methodology must be recovery-orientated and relationship-focused, working only with clients who are voluntarily seeking services.

246-929-220

Mandatory reporting.

Individuals and other entities must report unprofessional conduct in compliance with the Uniform Disciplinary Act in chapter [18.130](#) RCW and the standards of professional conduct in chapter [246-16](#) WAC.

246-929-300

Continuing competency program requirements.

(1) Certified peer specialists are required to complete a continuing competency program of thirty hours of continuing education or other educational activities every two years.

(a) At least 14 hours must be specific to providing peer support services as defined in [RCW 18.420.010](#).

(b) At least 2 hours are required in professional law and ethics.

(c) The remaining 14 hours may be related to other aspects of mental health or substance use disorder treatment, coaching, professional development, or employer-sponsored trainings. This also includes the required trainings listed in subsections (2) through (5) of this section.

(2) At least once every six years a certified peer specialist must complete three hours of training in suicide assessment, including screening and referral, as specified in WAC 246-929-320.

(3) At least once every four years, a certified peer specialist must complete two hours of health equity training as specified in WAC 246-929-330.

(4) A certified peer specialist who is practicing as an approved supervisor must complete 6 hours of supervisory continuing education every 2 years.

(5) A certified peer specialist who provides telehealth services must take the telehealth training as specified in WAC 246-929-340.

(6) A certified peer specialist must complete the continuing competency program requirements every two years. A certified peer specialist must develop and implement the plan upon their first full year of certification, and every two years thereafter.

(7) The trainee must obtain a certificate of completion for each course, which includes the attendee's name, the date of the course, and the number of hours of education provided. It must also list the name of the organization that approved the course for continuing education credit. Transcripts from a recognized educational institution will also be accepted.

(8) A certified peer specialist trainee is not required to complete a continuing competency program.

246-929-305

Acceptable continuing education programs.

(1) A continuing education program or course must be relevant to peer support services, counseling, or coaching and must contribute to the advancement or enhancement of the professional competence of the credential holder. Courses or workshops primarily designed to increase practice income or office efficiency are not eligible for CE credit.

(2) Continuing education courses, seminars, workshops, training programs, and institutes must have a featured instructor, speaker(s), or panel approved by an industry-recognized professional organization or institutions of higher learning.

(3) Distance learning programs approved by an industry-recognized professional organization or educational organization may meet these requirements. Distance learning courses must require a test of comprehension upon completion to qualify as continuing education.

(4) A certified peer specialist who prepares and presents lectures or education that contributes to the professional competence of other peers or behavioral health providers may accumulate the same number of hours obtained by attendees. The hours for presenting a lecture or education on a specific topic may only be used for continuing education credit once during each reporting period.

(5) Other learning experiences, such as serving on a panel, board or council, professional research, peer consultation, or publishing articles for professional publications are acceptable if the experience contributes to the advancement or

enhancement of the professional competence of the certified peer specialist. The experience is limited to six hours per reporting period.

246-929-310

Continuing education provider requirements.

(1) Local, state, national, and international organizations that are industry-recognized are eligible to provide continuing education courses for peer specialists. The organizations must be directly related to peer support services, peer counseling, or be a counseling organization that is recognized for mental health or substance use disorder treatment. This also includes state and federal government agencies, accredited institutions of higher learning, and tribal training organizations.

(2) Credit hours for a continuing education course are determined by the amount of time the training takes to complete. Distance learning courses must require a test of comprehension to qualify as continuing education.

246-929-315

Industry-recognized local, state, national and international organizations or institutions of higher learning.

Local, state, national and international organizations that are industry-recognized and institutions of higher learning include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Peer Washington;
- (2) Wellness Recovery Action Plan;
- (3) National Association of Peer Supporters;
- (4) The Copeland Center;
- (5) Holding the Hope;
- (6) SPARK Peer Learning Center;
- (7) Coach Approach Training;
- (8) Washington State Community Connectors
- (9) National Association of Social Workers;
- (10) National Board of Certified Counselors;
- (11) American Mental Health Counselors Association;
- (12) National Association of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counselors;
- (13) American Psychological Association;

- (14) Institutions of higher learning that are accredited by a state, national or regional accrediting body;
- (15) State and federal government agencies; and
- (16) Tribal training organizations.

246-929-320

Suicide prevention continuing education.

(1) A certified peer specialist must complete training in suicide assessment, including screening and referral, every 6 years. The training must:

- (a) Be provided by a single provider;
- (b) Be at least three hours in length, which may be provided in one or more sessions; and
- (c) The training must be on the department's model list for training programs in suicide assessment, treatment, and management which was developed in accordance with [RCW 43.70.442](#) and chapter [246-12 WAC](#).

(2) The first training must be completed during the first full CE reporting period after initial certification unless an applicant can demonstrate completion of a three-hour training in suicide assessment, screening, and referral that:

- (a) Was completed no more than six years prior to the application for initial certification; and
- (b) Meets the requirements of this section.

(3) A certified peer specialist who is a state or local government employee, an employee of a community mental health agency licensed under chapter [71.24 RCW](#) or a substance use disorder program certified under chapter [71.24 RCW](#) may be exempt if they receive eligible training from their employer pursuant to [RCW 43.70.442](#).

246-929-330

Health equity continuing education.

(1) A certified peer specialist must complete training in health equity as part of their continuing education. The certified peer specialist must complete at least two hours of health equity training every four years. The training may be in-person or virtual but must meet the course requirements in [WAC 246-12-830](#), including strategies to reduce implicit bias and assess the provider's ability to apply health equity concepts into practice.

(2) The hours spent completing training in health equity education count towards the 30 total hours of continuing education as described in WAC 246-929-300.

246-929-340

Telehealth training requirements.

A certified peer specialist who provides clinical services through telemedicine must complete a one-time telemedicine training that complies with [RCW 43.70.495](#).

246-929-990

Certified peer specialist and trainee fees and renewal cycle.

(1) A certified peer specialist must renew their credential every two years on the practitioner's birthday.

(2) A certified peer specialist trainee must renew their credential every year to correspond with the issuance date. This credential may only be renewed 4 times.

(3) Certified peer specialist trainees do not have a fee for their credential.

(4) If a certified peer specialist certification is expired, the individual must meet the requirements of [WAC 246-12-040](#) in order to return to active status.

(4) Pursuant to [RCW 43.70.110](#) and [43.70.250](#), the following nonrefundable fees will be charged:

Title of fee	Fee
Certified Peer Specialist	
Application and certification	\$100.00
Renewal	\$100.00
Late renewal penalty	\$50.00
Expired certification reissuance	\$50.00
Duplicate certification	\$10.00
Verification of certification	\$25.00