TN Department of
Disability & Aging

MEDICAID ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE ("MAPs")

Peer Mentoring Service Definition

Outcome Area:

Peer Mentoring

Service Area:

Peer Mentoring

Description:

Peer Mentoring is an authentic support for those who are seeking peer support and/or assistance with problem-solving as they move toward high school graduation and/or beyond. It is designed to assist individuals in exercising choices to maintain or increase their independence. Peer mentoring is also a process through which a more experienced individual encourages and assists a less experienced individual to develop their potential within an area of interest. The resulting relationship is a reciprocal one in that both individuals in the partnership have an opportunity for growth and development.

Peer mentors are individuals who traditionally have experience within a common area along with additional training in how to assist another in acquiring skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be more successful. Peer Mentors will be adequately compensated for their time and expertise.

Examples of Peer Mentoring impact on personal outcomes may be related to:
- Job skills
- Motivation and self-esteem
- Learning ways to utilize one's leisure time more fully and in ways which allow for desired opportunities.
- Social interaction
- Coping and adjusting to a disability
- Employment issues and educational opportunities
- Transportation issues
- Friendship
- Communication and assertiveness skills
- Problem solving and decision making

- Conflict resolution.
- Assistive and Enabling Technology

Service Objectives:

1. **Empowerment:** Enhance the self-confidence and independence of transition-aged youth by providing relatable mentorship.
2. **Guidance:** Offer practical advice and strategies for navigating personal and professional challenges.
3. **Support:** Serve as a sounding board for youth, helping them articulate and address their concerns and aspirations.
4. **Motivation:** Inspire youth to pursue their goals and overcome obstacles by sharing success stories and coping mechanisms.
5. **Encourage:** The use of Enabling Technology to promote independence and self-reliance.
6. **Impact:** Use shared experience to encourage, motivate and guide participants through navigating employment.

Scope of Activities:

1. **One-on-One Mentoring Sessions:**
   a. Regularly scheduled meetings between the peer mentor and the mentee.
   b. Sessions can be conducted in person, via phone, or through virtual platforms.
   c. Each session will focus on the mentee's current challenges, goals, and progress.
2. **Goal Setting and Achievement:**
   a. Assist mentees in setting realistic and achievable goals.
   b. Provide ongoing support and encouragement to help mentees reach their milestones.
   c. Celebrate achievements and help mentees reflect on their progress.
3. **Resource Sharing:**
   a. Provide information about community resources, programs, and opportunities that can benefit the mentees.
   b. Assist mentees in accessing these resources and navigating any related processes.
4. **Emotional Support:**
   a. Offer a safe and supportive environment for mentees to express their feelings and concerns.
   b. Provide empathetic listening and constructive feedback.

Peer Mentoring Service Delivery:

1. On an <u>at-least</u> monthly basis, mentors are expected to meet with their matched peer.
   a. These meetings can occur in-person or virtually.
   b. It should be expected that peer mentoring can also occur sporadically throughout the month, as well, by providing access to the person supported and peer via phone, facetime, teams, zoom, or other virtual platforms.

2. A Peer Mentor acts, not only as a role model, but also as a sounding board for frustrations related to disability and offers emotional support during a peer's adjustment to independence.
3. A peer mentor is in the position to offer experiential and personal advice to the person supported. In these dialogues, it is expected the peer mentor will have undergone situational training where these exchanges offer results for continued skill acquisition and achievement. When discussing a problem situation, a Peer Mentor should help the peer to look at the options available to them and possible consequences of each action.
4. A peer mentor will also assist the persons supported to set individual goals and measure their achievement.
   a. They can help the person supported by breaking the goals into smaller steps which are guided to reach certain levels of achievement.
   b. A peer mentor will provide on-going feedback on the achievement of goals and the necessary steps to achieve those goals using personalized experiences.
5. A peer mentor can be involved in the creation and revision of the Person-Centered Support plan to ensure the individual's goals and wishes are represented throughout the plan. The person supported may choose to include their peer mentor as part of their circle of support.

Peer Mentors will provide support in various ways:

1. During the initial contact, the Peer Mentor spends time getting to know the person and establishing a good rapport and trusting relationship, as well as acting as an advocate within the family network.
   1. Shares their knowledge, skills, and experience
   2. Provides emotional and social support
   3. Offers encouragement to less-experienced mentees

4. Serves as a positive role model, using positive reinforcement to raise aspirations
5. Demonstrates and teaches good communication and active listening skills.
2. The frequency, type (in-person or virtual), and length of a peer support contact depends on the needs of the peer and the distance of the Peer Mentor is from the peer.
3. The frequency of contacts can range from daily, to once a week, every other week, or once a month.
4. The length of the contact can vary from session to session but can also be in-person/virtual ranging in time from 1-2 hours per session.
5. Peer mentoring supports are optional for the person supported and can be discontinued at any time at the request of the person supported. In the event the discontinuance of the support is a result of any identified dissatisfaction, attempts will be made to offer alternative solutions to the person's supported to allow the continuance of the support.
6. Contacts may be by phone/FaceTime/Zoom, but preferably in person.

Qualifications:

- **Peer Mentor Eligibility Qualifications:**

  o Having Lived Experience with ID/DD.
  o Be 18 years or older.
  o Demonstrated success in academic, volunteer, employment, and/or independent living settings.
  o Capacity to ensure documentation/confirmation of delivery of peer mentoring supports are available.
  o Demonstrated ability to address virtual connectivity and ability to travel for peer mentoring meetings, as desired by the person supported.
  o Ability to convey empathy.
  o Ability to collaboratively problem-solve.

Training Requirements:
The Peer mentor will undergo the Peer Mentoring curriculum developed through DDA and Vanderbilt University. This curriculum will be delivered by the peer

mentoring agency. (Training requirements are reflected on the MAPs Training Matrix.)

Staffing and Supervision:

Peer Mentors will receive ongoing supervision and support from MAPs Peer Mentoring Agency. Regular check-ins and performance evaluations will ensure the quality and effectiveness of the mentoring relationships.

Outcome Measures:

- **Documentation and Reporting:**

Mentors will maintain records of mentoring sessions, including dates, topics discussed and progress toward goals. Questions or concerns can be included and discussed with supervisors. Periodic reports will be submitted to DDA MAPs to monitor outcomes and address any challenges.

- **Increased** participant confidence and self-efficacy in pursuing personal goals
- **Enhanced** skills in independent living, employment readiness and community engagement
- **Improved** utilization of enabling technologies to support daily activities.
- **Strengthened** social connections and support networks.