

CalMHSA's

# **Landscape Analysis**

Peer Certification

Training Curriculum

Core Competencies

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## **Introduction**

Senate Bill 803 (SB 803), authored by California State Senator Jim Beall is the “Mental Health Services: Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Act of 2020”. SB 803 recognizes the benefit that peer support provides to individuals and families with mental health and

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substance use difficulties and the increased diversity and effectiveness peers bring to the mental health workforce. In alignment with SB 803, the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) established statewide requirements for the development of a program that will certify Peer Support Specialists, creating a new Medi-Cal provider type and service type that will be reimbursable through Medicaid, referred to as Medi-Cal in California. The California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) is implementing a Peer Support Specialist Certification program on behalf of interested counties (mental health and behavioral health plans). As part of this implementation plan CalMHSA has undergone a thorough landscape analysis of existing Peer Certification programs across the United States to compare core curriculums, training standards, required skills, and best practices. This landscape analysis will focus on identifying and classifying required skills and ways in which competence can be shown in the field.

## **Research Methods of Core Competencies for Peer Certification Landscape Analysis**

To identify the landscape of core competencies for Peer Certification, two landscape analyses provided a solid foundation of understanding. “The Peer Provider Workforce in Behavioral Health: A Landscape Analysis” published by UCSF on November 9, 2015 provided a high level overview of peer certification programs across the country. More background was provided by The Center for Social Work Research at the University of Texas at Austin who published “Peer Specialist Training and Certification Program Outcomes Evaluation Report: September 2011”. Core curriculum, skills required, and standards of practice for Peer Certification were collected through a web-based search from national mental health organizations such as SAMHSA, Mental Health America’s National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) Certification, the National Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC); and nine states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, South Carolina, and Texas. Several states use the nationally recognized Appalachian Model of Peer Certification. These core curriculums, skills required, and standards of practice for Peer Certification were compared and themes

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identified across the spectrum of programs. These themes correlate to the seventeen core competencies of California's Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Act and are explored in this report.

## **Background**

Peer Support has been an essential part of the recoveries of people with mental illness and/or substance use challenges since before the deinstitutionalization movement closed the asylums that kept Peers imprisoned and segregated from society. The Core Competencies identified in the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification were developed over decades through the efforts and advocacy of countless Peers, mental health advocates, family members, and professionals.

Briefly, in 2011, the California Network of Mental Health Clients (CNMHC) formed the Peer Support Coalition because they recognized the “need to formally legitimize the valued practice of Peer Support services by developing language to propose certification and Medi-Cal billing of Peer Support services in a State Plan Amendment” (CNMHC RFP, 2011). This work continued through the Working Well Together (WWT) Statewide Technical Assistance Center, a collaborative made up of the California Association of Mental Health Peer Run Organizations (CAMHPRO)/Peers Envisioning and Engaging in Recovery Services (PEERS), the National Alliance on Mental Illness, California (NAMI), the United Advocates for Children and Families (UACF) and the California Institute for Mental Health (CiMH). This collaborative broadened the definition of peer provider to include consumers, transition-aged-youth, parents and family members working in the Adult and Children's Systems of Care throughout the state. The WWT collaborative goal was “to harness the input of various stakeholder groups in identifying certification standards for recommendation on a statewide basis.” Those certification standards led to the 17 Core Competencies advocated and fought for that were finally made law through the passage of SB 803 in 2020.

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## **Mental Health Services: Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Act of 2020**

Senate Bill 803 (SB 803), authored by California State Senator Jim Beall is the “Mental Health Services: Peer Support Specialist Certification Program Act of 2020.” It sets a standard of seventeen Core Competencies that every Peer Support Specialist is required to know to be certified as a practitioner. In California, this creates a new provider and service type eligible for Medi-Cal reimbursement through the county mental health and behavioral health plans. The Department of Health Care Services will create guidance of reimbursement requirements.

To be a certified Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist an individual must meet the following qualifications:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Possess a high school diploma or equivalent degree.
3. Be self-identified as having experience with the process of recovery from mental illness or substance use disorder, either as a consumer of these services or as the parent, caregiver or family member of a consumer.
4. Be willing to share their experience.
5. Have a strong dedication to recovery.
6. Agree, in writing, to adhere to a code of ethics.
7. Successfully complete the curriculum and training requirements for a peer support specialist.
8. Pass a certification examination approved by DHCS for a peer support specialist.

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## **Core Competencies**

The training curriculum for Peer Support specialists must incorporate the following core competencies:

1. The concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness.
2. The role of advocacy.
3. The role of consumers and family members.
4. Psychiatric rehabilitation skills and service delivery, and addiction recovery principles, including defined practices.
5. Cultural and structural competence trainings.
6. Trauma-informed care.
7. Group facilitation skills.
8. Self-awareness and self-care.
9. Co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance use.
10. Conflict resolution.
11. Professional boundaries and ethics.
12. Preparation for employment opportunities, including study and test-taking skills, application and résumé preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment.
13. Safety and crisis planning.
14. Navigation of, and referral to, other services.
15. Documentation skills and standards.

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16. Confidentiality.

17. Digital literacy

While there is variation in the terminology used in the sampled programs to describe core competencies, there remains consistent themes to create broader national standards that California can implement and lead with. For this report, we will provide a high-level overview of the essential components to each core competency as described across the selected states' standards for Peer Certification.

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p><b><u>1. The concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The ability to promote hope, the potential for change, and personal empowerment.</li><li>▪ The ability to create healing relationships based on respect, compassion, open and honest communication, active listening, and cultural humility.</li><li>▪ How to foster individual choice and self-determination.</li><li>▪ How to establish and maintain relationships based on mutuality, respect, acceptance, and compassion.</li><li>▪ Understand the peer experience.</li><li>▪ Demonstrate consistent support to individuals during times of wellness as well as during challenging times.</li><li>▪ Demonstrate non-judgmental behavior.</li><li>▪ Apply principles of empowerment.</li><li>▪ Define the concept of a wellness-focused approach to recovery.</li><li>▪ Address internal and external stigma.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Person-Centered - Peer recovery support services are always directed by the person participating in services. Peer recovery support is personalized to align with the specific hopes, goals, and preferences of the individual served and to respond to specific needs the individuals have identified to the peer support specialist.</li><li>▪ Self-Determination - The primary responsibility of Certified Peer Specialists is to help individuals achieve their own needs, wants, and goals. (Independent Living Philosophy). Certified Peer Specialists will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all.</li><li>▪ Voluntary - Peer support specialists are partners and consultants to those they serve. They do not dictate the types of services provided or the elements of recovery plans that will guide their work with peers. Participation in peer recovery support services is always contingent on peer choice.</li></ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know the basic five stages in the recovery process and what is helpful and not helpful at each stage.</li> <li>▪ Know the role of peer support services at each stage of the recovery process.</li> <li>▪ Know the basic definition and dynamics of recovery.</li> <li>▪ Identify beliefs and values individuals hold that work against recovery.</li> <li>▪ Be Strengths-Based.</li> <li>▪ Know the difference between treatment goals and recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Know the difference between focusing on the symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges and focusing on their impact on individuals and families.</li> <li>▪ Understand the role of culture in recovery.</li> <li>▪ Be trauma informed.</li> <li>▪ Promote a wellness-focused approach to recovery.</li> <li>▪ Be able to identify the beliefs and values an individual holds that support and enrich their recovery.</li> <li>▪ Be able to identify the beliefs and values an individual holds that works against their recovery.</li> <li>▪ Know the five stages in the recovery process, what is helpful and not helpful at each stage and the role of peer support services at each stage of the recovery process.</li> <li>▪ Know the ten guiding principles of recovery as defined by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).</li> </ul>	<p>Ten guiding principles of recovery as defined by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recovery emerges from hope</li> <li>2. Recovery is person-driven</li> <li>3. Recovery occurs via many pathways</li> <li>4. Recovery is holistic</li> <li>5. Recovery is supported by peers and allies</li> <li>6. Recovery is supported through relationship and social networks</li> <li>7. Recovery is culturally based and influenced</li> <li>8. Recovery is supported by addressing trauma</li> <li>9. Recovery involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibilities</li> <li>10. Recovery is based on respect</li> </ol>

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### **Field Examples: 1. Concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness**

- Apply the principles of individual choice and self-determination.
- Promote the development of recovery plans.
- Model acceptance and cultural humility.
- Model wellness for individuals in recovery by maintaining one's own personal wellness.
- Promote social learning through shared experiences.
- Create a sense of community and connection.
- Effectively and appropriately share relevant parts of your own recovery story, and, with permission, other stories of recovery to convey and inspire hope that recovery is possible in a manner that keeps the focus on the individual receiving services, not the peer specialist.
- Know the difference between an illness story and a recovery story.
- Discuss ongoing personal efforts to enhance health, wellness and recovery.
- Communicate genuine emotion.
- Recognize and use person-centered language.
- Promote the potential for recovery to transform lives.
- Assist individuals to develop decision making strategies and function as an active member of their own recovery team, to include the selection of traditional and nontraditional recovery strategies, supports, and providers.
- Assist individuals to identify and take actions necessary to develop behaviors that support achievement of their whole health goals.
- Help individuals learn how to access and navigate formal and informal community resources and services.
- Help individuals anticipate and avert or safely manage any re-experience of symptoms of their condition(s) to ensure continued wellness.
- Help individuals to respond to any setbacks on their recovery journey as an opportunity for learning additional techniques or strategies to achieve and maintain their whole health goals.
- Provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that individuals may find useful in achieving their whole health goals.
- Use questions to help individuals get in touch with the life they want.
- Use individuals' dissatisfaction as an avenue to setting recovery goals.
- Demonstrate non-judgmental behavior.
- Use active listening skills.
- Use empathic listening skills.
- Ask open-ended questions that connect individuals to their inner wisdom.
- Share personal stories appropriately.
- Articulate what has been helpful and what has not been helpful in their own recovery.

**Field Examples: 1. Concepts of hope, recovery, and wellness**

- Be aware of internal and external stigma.
- Use questions to help individuals identify and move through their fears.

<p><b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b></p>
<p><b><u>2. The Role of Advocacy.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of the terms “peer support”, “peer”, and “recovery” as established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the International Association of Peer Supporters (NAPS).</li> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of the SAMHSA and NAPS guiding principles, practice guidelines, and core values of peer support.</li> <li>▪ Understand the basic structure of the state Mental Health System (MHS) and how it works.</li> <li>▪ Know the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health.</li> <li>▪ Understand how peer support is shifting care from an illness model to a recovery model.</li> <li>▪ Know strategies to address internal and external Stigma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage individuals to make their own choices rather than letting others decide for them.</li> <li>▪ Assure that individuals know their rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals develop self-advocacy skills.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals develop communication skills including effective communication with staff and doctors regarding treatment in both their medical and mental health needs.</li> <li>▪ Educate individuals on forms of advocacy and effective strategies – consumer rights and navigating behavioral health system.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for the needs and desires of individuals in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Describe the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health.</li> <li>▪ Address internal and external Stigma.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organizations to help an individual build an advocacy plan.</li> <li>▪ Help Peers develop self-advocacy skills.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Know how to teach advocacy strategies that promote Self-Determination.</li> <li>▪ Model how to self-advocate.</li> <li>▪ Have a basic knowledge of empowerment and the goals and objectives of the consumer movement.</li> <li>▪ Understand relevant rights and laws (ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.) to ensure that peers' rights are respected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination towards people who have behavioral health conditions and their families.</li> <li>▪ Stigma and effective stigma reduction strategies: countering self-stigma; role modeling recovery and valuing the lived experience.</li> <li>▪ Use knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organization to build an advocacy plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 2. The Role of Advocacy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach individuals the skills needed to self-advocate.</li> <li>▪ Assure that individuals know their rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Model how to self-advocate.</li> <li>▪ Explain importance of self-advocacy to individuals as a component of recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Differentiate between the levels of advocacy.</li> <li>▪ Teach individuals effective communication skills with staff and doctors regarding treatment in both their medical and mental health needs.</li> <li>▪ Encourage individuals to make their own choices rather than letting others decide for them.</li> <li>▪ Encourage individuals to advocate for their needs and desires in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family.</li> <li>▪ Educate colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services.</li> <li>▪ Advocate within systems to promote person-centered recovery/wellness support services.</li> <li>▪ Participate in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination towards people who have behavioral health conditions and their families.</li> <li>▪ Teach stigma and effective stigma reduction strategies and how to counter self-stigma.</li> <li>▪ Role model recovery and valuing the lived experience.</li> </ul>	

<p align="center"><b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b></p>
<p><b><u>3. The role of consumers and family members.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The role of consumer peer support specialists is to support other consumers through shared lived experience.</li> <li>▪ The role of family peer support specialists is to support other family members through shared lived experience.</li> <li>▪ The role of peers or family members is to use their experience to role model resiliency and recovery to their peers.</li> <li>▪ The role of consumers or family members is to give permission to recognize when self-care is needed and to practice it.</li> <li>▪ Use personal stories of lived experience to support and empower the person receiving services.</li> <li>▪ To build community and a sense of meaning and fulfillment.</li> <li>▪ Advocates for the needs and desires of individuals in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family.</li> <li>▪ Connect people to independent social support networks particularly self-help support groups.</li> <li>▪ Recovery involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibility.</li> <li>▪ Individuals, families, and communities have strengths and resources that serve as a foundation for recovery. In addition, individuals have a personal responsibility for their own self-care and journeys of recovery. Individuals should be supported in speaking for themselves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses knowledge of relevant rights and laws (ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.) to ensure that individuals’ rights are respected.</li> <li>▪ Advocates for the needs and desires of individuals in treatment team meetings, community services, living situations, and with family.</li> <li>▪ Uses knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organization to build an advocacy plan.</li> <li>▪ Participates in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health conditions and their families.</li> <li>▪ Educates colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services.</li> <li>▪ Actively participates in efforts to improve the organization.</li> <li>▪ Maintains a positive reputation in peer/professional communities.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant rights and laws to ensure that the individual’s rights are maintained.</li> <li>▪ Promote self-determination and person-centered services when communicating with other members of the individual’s care team.</li> <li>▪ Help the individual develop self-advocacy skills.</li> <li>▪ Describe the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health."</li> <li>▪ Relate to the individual as an advocate.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relate to the individual as an advocate.</li> <li>▪ Advocate within systems to promote person-centered recovery/wellness support services.</li> <li>▪ Describe the individual's rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Explain importance of self-advocacy as a component of recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Differentiate between the levels of advocacy.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant rights and laws to ensure that the individual's rights are maintained.</li> <li>▪ Uses knowledge of relevant rights and laws (ADA, HIPAA, Olmstead, etc.) to ensure that individuals' rights are respected.</li> <li>▪ Uses knowledge of legal resources and advocacy organization to build an advocacy plan.</li> <li>▪ Describe the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate within systems to promote person-centered recovery/wellness support services.</li> <li>▪ Describe the individual's rights and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Explain importance of self-advocacy as a component of recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Differentiate between the levels of advocacy.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Describe the skills needed to self-advocate.</li> </ul>
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**Field Examples: 3. The role of consumers and family members**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participates in efforts to eliminate prejudice and discrimination of people who have behavioral health challenges and their families.</li> <li>▪ Educates colleagues about the process of recovery and the use of recovery support services.</li> <li>▪ Actively participates in efforts to improve the organization.</li> <li>▪ Promote self-determination and person-centered services when communicating with other members of the individual's care team.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals develop self-advocacy skills.</li> </ul>
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- Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.
- Teach the skills needed to self-advocate.

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>4. Psychiatric rehabilitation skills and service delivery, and addiction recovery principles, including defined practices.</u></b></p> <p><b>Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person-Centered - Peer recovery support services are always directed by the person participating in services. Peer recovery support is personalized to align with the specific hopes, goals, and preferences of the individual served and to respond to specific needs the individual has identified to the peer support specialist.</li> <li>▪ Self-Determination - The primary responsibility of Certified Peer Specialists is to help individuals achieve their own needs, wants, and goals. Certified Peer Specialists will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all.</li> <li>▪ Voluntary - Peer support specialists are partners or consultants to those they serve. They do not dictate the types of services provided or the elements of recovery plans that will guide their work with peers. Participation in peer recovery support services is always contingent on peer choice.</li> <li>▪ Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills and Service Delivery utilizes a strengths-based approach;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop treatment goals and objectives by collaborating with client, family, and significant others.</li> <li>▪ Prioritize individual needs and services to develop a plan for intervention.</li> <li>▪ Develop mutually agreed upon options consistent with individual needs, goals, and resources.</li> <li>▪ Engage individuals in the treatment plan by using the strategies of motivational interviewing.</li> <li>▪ Understand the variety of healthcare settings and how peer support services can be integrated in these settings, including primary care settings, in-patient settings, emergency departments, crisis stabilization, mobile crisis teams, respite, psychosocial rehabilitation, outpatient behavioral health programs, peer-run programs, and the professionals who may serve in these settings (i.e., psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary care physicians.)</li> <li>▪ Describe a variety of traditional (such as CBT, DBT, Medication Management, etc.) and non-traditional healthcare services (such as yoga, nutritional management, music, art or drama therapy, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Know how to assist other healthcare team members to learn about the process of recovery, the concept of resiliency, and the relationship between person-centered, self-</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
	<p>directed care and achievement of whole health goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educate on, support, and coach the acquisition and exercise of skills needed for symptom management, the skills and attributes needed to attain and maintain long-term, stable employment and housing,</li> <li>▪ Provide recovery education based on the core principles of recovery and resiliency to increase knowledge and skills needed to live well per their definition of recovery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize the stages of change, recovery, and wellness.</li> <li>▪ Recognize signs of distress.</li> <li>▪ Understand the basic philosophy and principles of psychosocial rehabilitation and substance use recovery strategies.</li> <li>▪ Be able to use dissatisfaction as an Avenue for Change.</li> <li>▪ Be able to help a Peer articulate, set and accomplish his/her goals, including whole health and wellness goals.</li> <li>▪ Understand the role of healthcare professionals that may be members of an individual's care team, including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary-care doctors/nurses, specialty-care doctors/nurses, community health workers, case managers, and other professionals.</li> <li>▪ Support individuals in defining spirituality on their own terms.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peers Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge</li> </ul>	

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p>relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know how to assist other healthcare team members to learn about the process of recovery, the concept of resiliency, and the relationship between person-centered, self-directed care and achievement of whole health goals.</li> <li>▪ Social Development</li> <li>▪ Recovery Management skills.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of Addiction and the Stages of Recovery.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of Addiction and Brain Chemistry / Pharmacology.</li> <li>▪ Recovery Management skills.</li> <li>▪ Understanding of Co-occurring Disorders.</li> <li>▪ Understand the Harm Reduction model.</li> <li>▪ Lapse/Relapse Prevention tools.</li> <li>▪ Motivational Enhancement tools.</li> <li>▪ Identifying one’s own strengths and help individuals identify theirs.</li> <li>▪ Distinguishing between sympathy and empathy.</li> <li>▪ Understand learned helplessness; what it is, how it is taught and how to assist others in overcoming its effects</li> <li>▪ Understand the benefits of addressing mental health symptoms and addiction at the same time.</li> <li>▪ Know how to facilitate groups.</li> <li>▪ Recognize that there are multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Be able to help individuals combat negative self-talk, overcome fears, and solve problems.</li> <li>▪ Be able to help individuals create a Person-Centered Plan.</li> </ul>	

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**Field Examples: 4. Psychiatric rehabilitation skills and service delivery, and addiction recovery principles, including defined practices.**

- Relay coping skills, positive attitude skills and self- esteem building strategies.
- Help individuals identify beliefs and values that build on their recovery as well as those that work against their recovery.
- Facilitate an individual's recognition of behaviors that are consistent with progress towards recovery
- Use questions to help individuals get in touch with the life they want.
- Use an individual's dissatisfaction as an avenue to identify recovery goals.
- Use questions to help individuals identify and move through their fears.
- Support the development of healthy behavior that is based on choice.
- Support the development of problem-solving skills.
- Apply principles of empowerment.
- Assist the individual with setting goals.
- Utilize Harm Reduction strategies.
- Contribute to the individual's recovery/wellness team(s).
- Assist the individual to identify and build on their strengths and resiliencies.
- Apply effective coaching techniques such as Motivational Interviewing.
- Practice a strengths-based approach to recovery/wellness.
- Use adult learning techniques to support individuals in acquiring life skills.
- Participate as an active member of the individual's treatment team(s).
- Assure that all recovery-oriented tasks and activities build on the individual's strengths and resiliencies.
- Support the individual to identify options and participate in all decisions related to establishing and achieving recovery goals.
- Assist the individual to develop problem-solving skills.
- Promote the individual's use of self-determination in recovery.

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- Apply Motivational Interviewing skills to assist individuals in various stages of change.
  - Support the individual in identifying their current stage of change.
  - Partner with individuals to assist them in identifying their strengths, resiliencies, and challenges to recovery.
  - Inform individuals of their options regarding decisions that affect their recovery.
  - Educate on Recovery Management skills.
  - Educate peers on Addiction and the Stages of Recovery, Brain Chemistry and Pharmacology.
  - Address Co-Occurring Disorders at the same time.
  - Educate on Lapse/Relapse Prevention skills.
  - Educate on, support, and coach the acquisition and exercise of skills needed for symptom management, e.g., stress management, relaxation, communication, assertiveness, refusal skills, and coping skills, and attributes needed to attain and maintain long-term, stable employment and housing,
  - Educate on core principles of recovery and resiliency to increase knowledge and skills needed to live well per their definition of recovery.
  - Build trust and create mutual responsibility to create healing relationships.
  - Educate on how to overcome negative self-talk; noticing patterns and replacing negative statements about oneself, using mindfulness to gain self-confidence and relieve stress.
  - Help individuals build resilience.
  - Utilize Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards; creating a safe and supportive environment.
  - Keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues.

<p align="center"><b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b></p>
<p><b><u>5. Cultural and structural competence trainings.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural humility.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and understand your own personal values, culture, and spiritual beliefs; how they may contribute to your own judgments, biases, and beliefs about others; and how to respond if they inhibit your ability to effectively serve another individual.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of cultural sensitivity and practice.</li> <li>▪ Define culture, elements of culture, and its impact.</li> <li>▪ Ability to communicate utilizing person first and person-centered language.</li> <li>▪ Recognize different types of cultures.</li> <li>▪ Explain key recovery language and culture concepts.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of the influence of cultural heritage on individuals and groups.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of and sensitivity to how cultural identity can influence the dynamics in communication.</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of and sensitivity to how cultural identity shapes the helping process.</li> <li>▪ Appreciate, recognize, and respect the personal values, cultural, spiritual beliefs, and practices of peers and their families and how these play a role in achieving their whole health goals.</li> <li>▪ Recognize the importance of a holistic (e.g., mind, body, spirit, environment) approach to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Be able to describe successful multicultural interactions and explain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learn how to be responsive to the unique cultural identities of people with whom you work. Being responsive to others requires an understanding of your own cultural identities.</li> <li>▪ Be able to describe successful multicultural interactions and explain why the topic is important to peer services.</li> <li>▪ Apply multicultural interaction skills to all your inter-personal interactions. These skills include being able to help people express and utilize positive aspects of their cultural identity to promote recovery.</li> <li>▪ Self-assess your own multicultural interaction skills and act on the challenges you identify in your self-assessment.</li> <li>▪ Understand the meaning and importance of cultural and structural competency.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p>why the topic is important to peer services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the concept of ‘seeking out common ground’.</li> <li>▪ An understanding of structural racism and how it creates disparities in Wealth, Employment, Education, Housing Discrimination, Government Surveillance, Incarceration, Drug Arrests, Immigration Arrests, and Infant Mortality.</li> <li>▪ An understanding of how structural racism impacts health and recovery outcomes for people of color.</li> <li>▪ Recognize the Connections between Behavioral Health Conditions and Trauma, Health Disparities, and Social Inequity.</li> </ul>	
<b>Field Examples: 5. Cultural and structural competence trainings.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate for multiple pathways to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Be able to help people express and utilize positive aspects of their cultural identity to promote recovery.</li> <li>▪ Use person-centered language.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Support Specialists will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.</li> <li>▪ Assure that interpersonal relationships, services and supports, reflect individual differences and cultural diversity.</li> <li>▪ Be able to interact sensitively and effectively with people of other cultures.</li> <li>▪ Attend trainings on cultural competence and structural racism that highlight the impacts they have on health outcomes for people of color.</li> <li>▪ Attend trainings on identifying Implicit Bias.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>6. Trauma-informed care.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the core principles of trauma-informed care.</li> <li>▪ Understand the prevalence of trauma and its impact on physical, behavioral, and emotional wellness.</li> <li>▪ Be familiar with the ACE (Adverse Childhood Events) model.</li> <li>▪ Understand cultural considerations and the effect of trauma on how we view our cultural experiences and the lens in which we view the world.</li> <li>▪ Recognize signs of distress.</li> <li>▪ Assist the individual in identifying basic needs.</li> <li>▪ Recognize risk indicators that may affect the individual's welfare and safety. Respond to personal risk indicators to assure welfare and safety.</li> <li>▪ Identify examples of traumatic events and individual responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trauma-informed peer support can counter the impact of trauma on people in recovery by reducing the effects of unresolved and secondary trauma and supporting healing.</li> <li>▪ Understand cultural considerations and the effect of trauma on how we view our cultural experiences and the lens in which we view the world.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of healthy behavior that is based on choice.</li> <li>▪ Recognize signs of distress.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 6. Trauma-informed care</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize principles of trauma-informed practices and their application in peer services that support recovery.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of healthy behavior that is based on choice.</li> <li>▪ Use patience and compassion in all interactions.</li> <li>▪ Teach coping skills of mindfulness, stress reduction, anxiety management, and relaxation techniques.</li> <li>▪ Be non-judgmental.</li> <li>▪ Report suspicions of abuse or neglect to appropriate authority.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>7. Group facilitation skills.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the difference between treatment goals and recovery goals and be able to create and facilitate a variety of group activities that support and strengthen recovery.</li> <li>▪ Describe, select, and appropriately use strategies from accepted and culturally appropriate models for group counseling.</li> <li>▪ Understand how to facilitate peer support/self-help groups.</li> <li>▪ Know how to facilitate a Recovery Dialogue.</li> </ul>	<p>Understand the difference between treatment goals and recovery goals and be able to create and facilitate a variety of group activities that support and strengthen recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe, select, and appropriately use strategies from accepted and culturally appropriate models for group counseling.</li> <li>▪ Understand how to facilitate peer support/self-help groups. Know how to facilitate a Recovery Dialogue.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 7. Group facilitation skills.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apply basic group facilitation techniques. Practice effective communication skills. Be non-judgmental.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of healthy behavior that is based on choice.</li> <li>▪ Apply instructional strategies and materials that reflect the needs of the target audience.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate the entry of new members and the transition of exiting members.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate group growth within the established ground rules by using methods consistent with group type.</li> <li>▪ Describe and summarize individual behavior within the group to document individual progress and identify needs and issues that may require further assistance.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>8. Self-awareness and self-care.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize the importance of self-care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop self-care skills and coping practices for helping professionals.</li> <li>▪ Know the importance of ongoing supports for overcoming stress in the workplace</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop self-care skills and coping practices for helping professionals.</li> <li>▪ Know the importance of ongoing supports for overcoming stress in the workplace.</li> <li>▪ Know resources to promote personal resilience.</li> <li>▪ Understand burnout and using self-awareness to prevent compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.</li> <li>▪ Strengthen social skills and healthy social networks including peer and natural support systems.</li> <li>▪ Be able to discuss their own tools for taking care of themselves.</li> <li>▪ Learn to respond appropriately to personal stressors, triggers and indicators.</li> <li>▪ Understand the concept of dual/complex relationships.</li> <li>▪ Understand the dynamics of power, conflict and integrity in the workplace.</li> <li>▪ Anticipate and avert or safely manage any re-experience of symptoms of their own challenge(s) to ensure continued wellness.</li> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “activation” and “self-management” of whole health goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know resources to promote personal resilience; and, understanding burnout and using self-awareness to prevent compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.</li> <li>▪ Be able to discuss their own tools for taking care of themselves.</li> <li>▪ Learn to respond appropriately to personal stressors, triggers and indicators.</li> <li>▪ Understand the concept of dual/complex relationships.</li> <li>▪ Understand the dynamics of power, conflict, and integrity in the workplace.</li> <li>▪ Anticipate and avert or safely manage any re-experience of symptoms of their own challenges(s) to ensure continued wellness.</li> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “activation” and “self-management” of whole health goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 8. Self-awareness and self-care.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practice personal safety and self-care.</li> <li>▪ Practice a strengths-based approach to recovery/wellness.</li> <li>▪ Communicate to support network personal challenges that impact ability to perform job duties.</li> <li>▪ Respond to any setbacks on their recovery journey as an opportunity for learning additional techniques or strategies to achieve and maintain their whole health goals.</li> </ul>	

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that the individual may find useful in achieving their whole health goals.</li> <li>▪ Develop decision making strategies and function as an active member of their own recovery team, to include the selection of traditional and nontraditional recovery strategies, supports, and providers.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals learn how to access and navigate formal and informal community resources and services.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Support Specialists will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.</li> </ul>	

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p><b><u>9. Co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance use.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ability to promote hope, the potential for change, and personal empowerment.</li> <li>▪ The ability to create healing relationships based on respect, compassion, open and honest communication, active listening, and cultural humility.</li> <li>▪ How to foster individual choice and self-determination.</li> <li>▪ Use active listening skills.</li> <li>▪ Use empathic listening skills.</li> <li>▪ Communicate genuine emotion.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and use person-centered language.</li> <li>▪ Define the concept of a wellness-focused approach to recovery.</li> <li>▪ Have a basic knowledge of treatment approaches such as Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify beliefs and values a peer holds that works against recovery.</li> <li>▪ Use questions to help a peer get in touch with the life they want.</li> <li>▪ Use a person’s dissatisfaction as an avenue to setting recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Use questions to help a peer identify and move through their fears.</li> <li>▪ Know the difference between treatment goals and recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Be Strengths-Based.</li> <li>▪ Support individuals to acquire life skills.</li> <li>▪ Use adult learning techniques to support individuals in acquiring life skills.</li> <li>▪ Know the difference in focusing on the symptoms of the illness and the impact of the illness.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals overcome negative self-talk.</li> <li>▪ Utilize current research literature on addiction treatment and substance use disorders in order to improve client care and enhance professional growth.</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the prevalence of trauma in the lived experience of people with co-occurring disorders.</li> <li>▪ Meet people where they are.</li> <li>▪ Understand Harm Reduction.</li> <li>▪ Be able to communicate their lived experience in a way that is supportive.</li> <li>▪ Peers support Peers in whatever their goal is.</li> <li>▪ Understand the Stages of Change.</li> <li>▪ Understand Recovery Capital</li> <li>▪ Understand Recovery Action Planning.</li> <li>▪ Have a basic understanding of the Disease Model of Addiction and the difference between prevention, treatment, and recovery.</li> <li>▪ Understand Recovery Management Planning to support individuals with life domains.</li> <li>▪ Know the science of addiction and the history of addiction.</li> <li>▪ Embrace all pathways to recovery.</li> <li>▪ Be active in your own recovery.</li> <li>▪ Identify your own triggers and actively manage your recovery.</li> <li>▪ Develop and maintain your own support system.</li> <li>▪ Conduct yourself in a manner that fosters your own recovery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comply with Federal and California State laws and regulations relevant to treatment of substance use disorders.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 9. Co-occurring disorders of mental health and substance use.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer counseling.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals set recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Support peers to be part of recovery groups and communities to stay active and around others in recovery when not in contact with a Peer Supporter or engaged in treatment.</li> <li>▪ Promote the potential for recovery to transform lives.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrate understanding of peer experience.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate consistent support to individuals during times of wellness as well as during challenging times.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate non-judgmental behavior.</li> <li>▪ Apply principles of empowerment.</li> <li>▪ Ask open-ended questions that connect a person to his/her/their inner wisdom.</li> <li>▪ Communicate from a place of compassion.</li> <li>▪ Use a trauma-informed approach.</li> <li>▪ Use non-judgmental listening.</li> <li>▪ Address internal and external stigma.</li> <li>▪ Emphasize strengths and connect to resources.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals identify beliefs and values individuals hold that work against their recoveries.</li> <li>▪ Use questions to help individuals get in touch with the life they want.</li> <li>▪ Use individuals' dissatisfaction as an avenue to setting recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Take into account the life stage the person is going through when providing support.</li> <li>▪ Use questions to help individuals identify and move through their fears.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals in recognizing the effect of substance abuse on current life challenges and effects of continued use.</li> <li>▪ Provide culturally relevant education to individuals, community members, or groups on the role that cultural identity, ethnic background, age, and gender can have in creating resiliency and improving prevention, treatment, and recovery from substance use challenges.</li> <li>▪ Provide education regarding warning signs, symptoms, and progression of substance use disorders.</li> <li>▪ Provide peer support services even if individuals are not engaged in treatment.</li> <li>▪ Provide peer support to individuals regardless of whether they take medication.</li> <li>▪ Provide education on how substance use challenges affect families and society.</li> <li>▪ Provide education regarding continuum of care and available resources for substance use challenges.</li> <li>▪ Be able to help individuals navigate the substance use system, public and private so they can receive the services they want.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>10. Conflict resolution.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop effective communication skills.</li> <li>▪ Develop conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>▪ Develop problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop effective communication skills.</li> <li>▪ Develop conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>▪ Develop problem-solving skills.</li> <li>▪ Understand the dynamics of power, conflict, and integrity in the workplace,</li> <li>▪ Understand the concept of 'seeking out common ground'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the dynamics of power, conflict and integrity in the workplace,</li> <li>▪ Understand the concept of 'seeking out common ground'.</li> <li>▪ Be able to personally deal with conflict and difficult interpersonal relations in the Workplace.</li> <li>▪ Resolve conflicts in relationships with peers and others in their support network.</li> <li>▪ Utilize de-escalation techniques.</li> <li>▪ Communicate to support network personal issues that impact ability to perform job duties.</li> <li>▪ Use organizational / departmental chain of command to address or resolve issues.</li> <li>▪ Practice non-judgmental behavior.</li> </ul>
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**Field Examples: 10. Conflict resolution.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be able to personally deal with conflict and difficult interpersonal relations in the workplace.</li> <li>▪ Resolve conflicts in relationships with peers and others in their support network.</li> <li>▪ Utilize de-escalation techniques.</li> <li>▪ Communicate to support network personal issues that impact ability to perform job duties.</li> <li>▪ Use organizational / departmental chain of command to address or resolve issues.</li> <li>▪ Practice non-judgmental behavior.</li> </ul>
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<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p><b><u>11. Professional boundaries and ethics.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will maintain high standards of personal conduct.</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The role of consumer peer support specialists is to support other consumers through shared lived experience.</li> <li>▪ The role of family peer support specialists is to support other family members through shared lived experience.</li> <li>▪ The role of peers or family members is to use their experience to role model resiliency and recovery to their peers.</li> <li>▪ Understand how to establish, negotiate, and maintain appropriate interpersonal limits and boundaries that are necessary to promote effective peer support services.</li> <li>▪ Understand the Peer Support Specialists' scope of service (i.e., know what you can and cannot do as a credentialed Peer Support Specialist).</li> <li>▪ Conduct self-evaluations of professional performance applying ethical, legal, and professional standards to enhance self-awareness and performance.</li> <li>▪ Recognize situations outside the competencies of a Peer Support Specialist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will never engage in sexual/intimate activities with the consumers they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Perform all job duties in accordance with federal and state rules and regulations and published code of ethics and professional conduct for credentialed peer support specialists.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and maintain professional and personal boundaries.</li> <li>▪ Establish and maintain a peer relationship rather than a hierarchical relationship.</li> <li>▪ Establish a respectful, trusting relationship with individuals.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate respect and non-judgmental attitudes toward clients in all contacts with community professionals and agencies.</li> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality of client information in written and oral communications in accordance with code of conduct and government statutes, e.g., communication of information with third parties.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comply with professional code of conduct in accordance with code of conduct and government statutes.</li> <li>▪ Use a range of supervisory options to process personal feelings and concerns about clients.</li> <li>▪ Conduct self-evaluations of professional performance applying ethical, legal, and professional standards to enhance self-awareness and performance.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.</li> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality.</li> <li>▪ Utilize supervision and consultation regarding dual/complex relationships.</li> <li>▪ Adhere to responsibilities and limits of the role.</li> <li>▪ Apply fundamentals of cultural competency.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and adhere to the rules of confidentiality.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and address personal and institutional biases and behaviors.</li> <li>▪ Maintain current, accurate knowledge of trends and issues related to wellness and recovery.</li> <li>▪ Use organizational/departmental chain of command to address or resolve issues.</li> <li>▪ Practice non-judgmental behavior.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 11. Professional boundaries and ethics.</b>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will maintain high standards of personal conduct.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will never engage in sexual/intimate activities with the consumers they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will not use unprescribed or illegal substances under any circumstance.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists recognize and maintain professional and personal boundaries.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will establish and maintain peer relationships rather than hierarchical relationships.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists demonstrate respect and non-judgmental attitudes toward clients in all contacts with community professionals and agencies.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists maintain confidentiality of client information in written and oral communications in accordance with code of conduct and government statutes.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists use a range of supervisory options to process personal feelings and concerns about clients.</li> <li>▪ Certified Peer Specialists communicate personal issues that negatively impact their ability to perform job duties and utilize supervision and consultation regarding dual/complex relationships.</li> <li>▪ Comply with professional code of conduct in accordance with code of conduct and government statutes.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>12. Preparation for employment opportunities, including study and test-taking skills, application and résumé</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teach, coach, and model the skills and attributes needed to attain and maintain long-term, stable employment and housing.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know community resources for employment skills development.</li> <li>▪ Be familiar with how to transition from Social Security and other disability benefits.</li> <li>▪ Peers assist, guide, and support in developing education and employment skills as a Peer.</li> <li>▪ How to use shared experience to leverage social capital and networking.</li> <li>▪ Preparation for employment opportunities, including study and test-taking skills, application and résumé preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Field Examples: 12. Preparation for employment opportunities, including study and test-taking skills, application and résumé preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment.</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learn employment skills such as study and test-taking skills, application and résumé preparation, interviewing, and other potential requirements for employment.</li> <li>▪ Utilize employment development resources such as job centers, community colleges, and others.</li> <li>▪ Teach, coach, and model the skills and attributes needed to attain and maintain long-term, stable employment and housing.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>13. Safety and crisis planning.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand basic de-escalation techniques.</li> <li>▪ Recognize various crisis and emergency situations.</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand basic de-escalation techniques.</li> <li>▪ Recognize various crisis and emergency situations.</li> <li>▪ Recognize and respond to risk indicators to assure welfare and safety.</li> <li>▪ Recognize signs of distress and threats to safety among peers and in their environments.</li> <li>▪ Understand basic suicide prevention concepts and techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognize signs of distress and threats to safety among peers and in their environments.</li> <li>▪ Recognize risk indicators that may affect the individual's welfare and safety. Respond to personal risk indicators to assure welfare and safety.</li> <li>▪ Understand basic suicide prevention concepts and techniques.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate consistency by supporting individuals during ordinary and extraordinary times.</li> <li>▪ Provide reassurance to peers in distress.</li> <li>▪ Practice non-judgmental behavior.</li> <li>▪ Take action to address distress or a crisis using knowledge of local resources, treatment, services and support preferences of individuals served.</li> <li>▪ Identify indicators that the individual may be re-experiencing symptoms of his or her condition(s) and provide early intervention strategies to avert crisis and/or the need for intensive services.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals to develop and activate self-management plans, advanced directives, recovery prevention strategies, and crisis prevention strategies.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals in developing advance directives and other crisis prevention tools.</li> <li>▪ Plan continuing care, relapse prevention, and discharge planning with client, family and significant others.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess individuals for behavior that may result in harm to self or others.</li> <li>▪ Respond appropriately to risk indicators to assure the individual's welfare and physical safety.</li> <li>▪ Use organizational / departmental chain of command to address or resolve issues.</li> <li>▪ Immediately report suspicions if abuse or neglect are suspected.</li> </ul>

**Field Examples: 13. Safety and crisis planning.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide reassurance to peers in distress.</li> <li>▪ Practice non-judgmental behavior.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate consistency by supporting individuals during ordinary and extraordinary times.</li> <li>▪ Assess individuals for behavior that may result in harm to self or others.</li> <li>▪ Respond appropriately to risk indicators to assure welfare and physical safety.</li> <li>▪ Identify indicators that individuals may be re-experiencing symptoms of their condition(s) and provide early intervention strategies to avert crisis and/or the need for intensive services.</li> <li>▪ Take action to address distress or a crisis using knowledge of local resources, treatment, services and support preferences of peers.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals to develop and activate self-management plans, advanced directives, recovery prevention strategies, and crisis prevention strategies.</li> <li>▪ Plan continuing care, relapse prevention, and discharge planning with client, family, and significant others.</li> <li>▪ Use organizational / departmental chain of command to address or resolve issues.</li> <li>▪ Immediately report suspicions if abuse or neglect are suspected.</li> </ul>
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California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<b><u>14. Navigation of, and referral to, other services.</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and maintain up-to-date information about community resources and services</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and maintain up-to-date information about community resources and services.</li> <li>▪ Have a basic understanding of mental health and substance use challenges and the behavioral health system.</li> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of available healthcare resources to help individuals navigate and choose between options.</li> <li>▪ Have the ability to assist in establishing support systems and interfacing with agencies, organizations, and groups.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with individual to identify, link, and coordinate choices with resources.</li> <li>▪ Develop tools for effective outreach and continued support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a working knowledge of available healthcare benefits for individuals living with debilitating behavioral health conditions in order to help the individual navigate and choose between options.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with individuals to identify, link, and coordinate choices with resources.</li> <li>▪ Develop tools for effective outreach and continued support.</li> <li>▪ Have a basic understanding of mental health and substance use challenges and the mental health system.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals to investigate, select, and use needed and desired resources and services.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals to find and use health services and supports.</li> <li>▪ Accompany individuals to community activities and appointments when requested.</li> <li>▪ Support individuals to use decision-making strategies when choosing services and supports.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals to function as a member of their treatment/recovery support team.</li> <li>▪ Research and identify credible information and options from various resources.</li> <li>▪ Adhere to responsibilities and limits of the Peer Support Specialist role.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals in identifying basic needs.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals in identifying support systems.</li> <li>▪ Identify collateral support systems consistent with individual needs.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make referrals to and placements with other professionals, agencies, community programs, or other resources to meet individual needs.</li> <li>▪ Explain necessity for and process of referral to individuals to increase likelihood of individuals understanding and following through.</li> <li>▪ Exchange relevant information with the agency or professional to whom the referral is being made in a manner consistent with confidentiality rules and regulations and generally accepted professional standards of care.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate outcomes of services received from referrals to determine need for change of referral services.</li> <li>▪ Provide information regarding community resources that support goal achievement, e.g. education, recreation, job training, housing, etc.</li> <li>▪ Partner with individuals to access the services and supports that will help them attain their person recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with individual to identify, link, and coordinate choices with resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 14. Navigation of, and referral to, other services.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist individuals in identifying needs.</li> <li>▪ Partner with individuals to access the services and supports that will help them attain their personal recovery goals.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with individuals to identify, link, and coordinate choices with resources.</li> <li>▪ Provide information regarding community resources that support goal achievement, e.g., education, recreation, job training, housing, etc.</li> <li>▪ Accompany individuals to community activities and appointments when requested.</li> <li>▪ Coach individuals in desired skills and strategies.</li> </ul>	

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support individuals to use decision-making strategies when choosing services and supports.</li> <li>▪ Help individuals to function as members of their treatment/recovery support teams.</li> <li>▪ Research and identify credible information and options from various resources.</li> <li>▪ Adhere to responsibilities and limits of the Peer Support Specialist role.</li> <li>▪ Assist individuals in identifying support systems.</li> <li>▪ Make referrals to and placements with other professionals, agencies, community programs, or other resources to meet individuals' needs.</li> <li>▪ Provide warm hand-offs to referred agencies and explain the necessity for the referrals so individuals understand and follow through.</li> <li>▪ Exchange relevant information with the agency or professional to whom the referral is being made in a manner consistent with confidentiality rules and regulations and generally accepted professional standards of care.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate outcomes of services received from referrals to determine need for change of referral services.</li> </ul>

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
<p><b><u>15. Documentation skills and standards.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand current documentation requirements for submitting bills to Medi-Cal.</li> <li>▪ Understand the concept of accountability.</li> <li>▪ Understand and follow Mandatory Reporting requirements.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate a basic knowledge of medical language and chart/record documentation standards to communicate effectively with members of the care team and help the individual understand clinical situations and/or terminology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentation is a universal skill for all types of service delivery.</li> <li>▪ Documenting services contributes to service continuity, maintains accountability, and substantiates payments for services.</li> <li>▪ Document information as required by program policies and procedures for billing and treatment purposes.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate individual satisfaction with their progress toward recovery/wellness goals.</li> <li>▪ Document service coordination activities throughout the continuum of care consistent with Federal, California State, agency, and treatment program standards, rules, and regulations.</li> <li>▪ Document individual progress in relation to treatment goals and objectives, e.g., identify needs and</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<p>issues that may require modification in treatment plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document treatment and recovery goals of client including nature of services, program goals, program procedures, and rules regarding the individual.</li> <li>▪ Document treatment activities and client rights and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 15. Documentation skills and standards.</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document information as required by program policies and procedures for billing and treatment purposes.</li> <li>▪ Evaluate individual satisfaction with their progress toward recovery/wellness goals.</li> <li>▪ Document Peer progress in relation to treatment goals and objectives, e.g., identify needs and issues that may require greater assistance.</li> <li>▪ Document service coordination activities throughout the continuum of care consistent with Federal, California State, agency, and treatment program standards, rules, and regulations.</li> <li>▪ Communicate Peer rights and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>16. Confidentiality.</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)</li> <li>▪ Understand Substance Abuse Confidentiality rules (42 CFR Part 2).</li> <li>▪ Understand basic federal, state, employer regulations regarding confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);</li> <li>▪ Understand basic federal, state, employer regulations regarding confidentiality.</li> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws.</li> <li>▪ Inform individuals of confidentiality rights, program procedures that safeguard them, and the exceptions imposed by regulations.</li> </ul>

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exchange relevant information with the agency or professional to whom the referral is being made in a manner consistent with confidentiality rules and regulations and generally accepted professional standards of care.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 16. Confidentiality</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws.</li> <li>▪ Inform and explain to individuals confidentiality rights, program procedures that safeguard them, and the exceptions imposed by regulations.</li> <li>▪ Exchange relevant information with the agency or professional to whom referrals are being made in a manner consistent with confidentiality rules and regulations and generally accepted professional standards of care.</li> </ul>	

California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies	Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards
<p><b><u>17. Digital literacy</u></b></p> <p><b>Skills that can be assigned to this core competency include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand digital platforms that can be used for service delivery, benefits acquisition, and resource connections.</li> <li>▪ Understand digital privacy protections.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apply appropriate technologies to deliver education, training, technical assistance and other information.</li> <li>▪ When possible, effectively use technology to engage and provide peer support services to individuals living in rural or remote settings or experiencing other barriers to traditional “face-to-face” interaction.</li> <li>▪ Provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that the individual may find useful in achieving their whole health goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Examples: 17. Digital literacy</b>	

<b>California Peer Support Specialist Core Competencies</b>	<b>Summary of Themes Across Other State Standards</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use online and virtual tools to provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that the individual may find useful in achieving their whole health goals.</li> <li>▪ Apply appropriate technologies to deliver education, training, technical assistance and other information.</li> <li>▪ Maintain familiarity with computer applications such as Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Acrobat to develop recovery-focused resources for peers</li> <li>▪ Maintain familiarity with online video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or WebEx to be prepared in the event of needed virtual services.</li> <li>▪ Share digital privacy protections to individuals in order to protect health information and confidential conversations.</li> <li>▪ Create online support groups.</li> <li>▪ Effectively use technology to engage and provide peer support services to individuals living in rural or remote settings or experiencing other barriers to traditional “face-to-face” interaction.</li> </ul>

**Summary of Comparative Analysis of Core Competencies**

Many of the core competencies identified by Federal entities like SAMHSA and state certification programs overlap and complement each other. Recovery based, person-centered, self-directed, trauma-informed, and culturally competent services were all represented by the certification programs surveyed. California’s standards go further in identifying employment skills training and digital literacy as core competencies. California’s Peer Movement recognizes that work can be a wellness tool and that digital literacy is a vital skill in today’s world. Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist certification supports and enhances the workforce and may offer additional professional career paths for Peers to work in the public mental health system and through its contracted agencies for the

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delivery of behavioral health services covered by Medi-Cal. Certification ensures that Medi-Cal Peer Providers will be equipped with tools to provide quality service, anticipate the needs of Medi-Cal beneficiaries, and support Peers working in the public mental health system. Peer services enrich the lives of both recipients and providers, create hope, and can even save lives.