

What is Peer Support? Peer support is when an individual with lived experience is trained to utilize their personal experience to support and encourage others facing similar circumstances.

The Different Types of Washington State Peer Support

Community Health Worker (CHW)	Peer Coach (PC) 2 Definitions	Certified Peer Specialist (CPS)/Certified Peer Counselor (CPC)	Recovery Coach (RC)	Peer Navigators (PN)
A Community Health Worker (CHW) is an individual who use their experience and knowledge gained from being a member of that community to work with that same community to meet health-related needs. They often focus on educational, preventative, promotional, and rehabilitative care for a community.	<p>1. Peer Coaches (PC) are individuals with lived experience who are in recovery from a mental health diagnosis and/or addiction (substance use and/or behavioral), and who are partnered with others in or seeking recovery from the same. They are sometimes volunteers (stipend or not) or sometimes employed who receive some training (typically CCAR Certification) but may or may not hold a Certified Peer Counselor designation in Washington state. They can work as part of care teams, but most commonly work independent of traditional provider services to avoid any conflicts of interest between a provider treatment plan and the individual’s self-defined recovery plan.</p> <p>2. A Peer Coach also sometimes refers to an experienced peer specialist who trains/supports other peer staff.</p>	Certified Peer Specialists (CPS) and Certified Peer Counselors (CPC) are terms for the same profession. They are individuals with lived experience who are in recovery from a mental health diagnosis and/or addiction (substance use and/or behavioral), and who are partnered with others in or seeking recovery from the same or similar experience. They complete the necessary training to be certified in WA State. The job of a CPS/CPC is a professional position that usually works as part of a treatment/care team to support recovery. They frequently are utilized to connect and engage individuals in need of recovery services and then support them in their recovery by advocating for their right to self-determination, identifying recovery goals, and by connecting them to additional resources/services. Additionally, a CPS/CPC can be a Medicaid reimbursable service.	A Recovery Coach (RC) is like a Certified Peer Counselor or Peer Specialist; however, they focus only on those in recovery from substance abuse and addiction.	Peer Navigators are Certified Peer Specialists, but their focus is on guiding peers through systems of care. They are often used in the court system.

The Differences:

A Community Health Worker has connections to a specific community where work is to be performed but may not have *lived* experience.

Example: Luther was recruited to serve as a Community Health Worker in the South East Hills Community because he was also a resident of that community.

A Peer Support Professional (PC, CPC/CPS, RC, PN) has lived experience such as a diagnosis, experience with addiction, etc. related to the work to be performed but may not reside in or have connections to a specific community.

Example: Monique was a Certified Peer Specialist who used her personal experience with a mental health diagnosis to support others facing similar mental health challenges.

For more information on Washington State Peer Support including how to become a Certified Peer Specialist, visit <https://www.hca.wa.gov/billers-providers-partners/behavioral-health-recovery/peer-support>

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