



Expanded Ages (14-25) for Peer Support Services through Bucks LIFE

What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is a non-traditional, supportive service that understands the stigma and adversity of living with a mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis from a personal perspective. Peer Support focuses on empowerment, resiliency, and instilling hope towards fulfilling, productive futures. A Certified Peer Support Specialist or “CPS”, will share their own personal lived experiences and their own journey of recovery to help individuals create a plan to work on goals for their futures. A CPS will help youth create recovery goals of their choosing, develop self-advocacy skills, and increase ability to be independent in a non-stigmatizing way.

How can Peer Support help?

CPS's can provide an individual with an opportunity to direct their lives and increase one's wellness. CPS's can support learning skills that enhance individual recovery journeys as well as make empowered, knowledgeable choices. A CPS will collaboratively work with an individual to determine personal goals. Goals can include, but are not limited to, obtaining assistance with furthering one's education, developing job readiness, supporting independence, and finding ways to connect to the community.

Why is our Peer Support Program the best choice for a transition age youth?

Access Services has developed expertise in the unique supports a young individual needs to be successful moving into adulthood. CPS's are trained and knowledgeable about transition to independence principles, person-centered planning, and Casey Life Skills assessment and training, all of which are proven to help assess and develop skills towards independence. Furthermore, our CPS team is connected to the youth and young adult community in Bucks County through various resource partnerships and can help link peers to activities and supports that are relevant to their age group.

Who is eligible and how can Peer Support Services get started?

Young people, ages 14-25, living in Bucks County, who experience emotional and/or behavioral struggles or co-occurring substance abuse disorder, are eligible for Peer Support Services. **Now is the Time: Healthy Transitions Grant** is providing peer services at no cost. Anyone can make a referral on behalf of the young person, including themselves, by contacting the Bucks LIFE Program office directly. It is encouraged that if the young person is not self-referring, that the referral be discussed with the young person to ensure that they are interested in exploring Peer Support Services.

**For more information, please contact Michaela Smith
1-888-442-1590, x23 or email MSmith@accessservices.org**