

# PEER MENTORING



## What's it all about?

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

### What is a Peer Mentor?

Peer Mentors are individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), who have a unique skill level from their lived experiences, passing along encouragement and support to help others construct their own advocacy. A Peer Mentor offers first hand experiences on how to use community mental health services and resources available to people with I/DD. Peer Mentors can help guide individuals towards greater self-advocacy, empowerment and personal responsibility for their own success.

### Role of a Peer Mentor

Peer Mentors:

- ✓ Help people with I/DD advocate for their own goals
- ✓ Assist others in building their own independent lives
- ✓ Assist with person-centered planning goals
- ✓ Build bridges to people and resources within the community
- ✓ Are guided by the principle of self-determination for all

### Peer Mentor 101 Training

The DD Council provides an annual Peer Mentoring 101 training designed for individuals with I/DD, to become effective peer mentors to others with I/DD. The training provides Peer Mentors with tools to guide peers to become better self-advocates, make their own choices, and develop leadership skills so that they may lead self-directed and more autonomous, satisfying lives. The Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP) agency nominates individuals to attend the training. Once trained, the CMHSP would provide the individual with a supervised 90-hour internship. Upon successful completion of the internship, the Peer Mentor will be recommended for certification by the DD Council.

### Medicaid covered service

Peer Mentoring is a Medicaid covered service. A Peer Mentor's unique skills maybe utilized to assist a person in reaching their individualized goals at a CMHSP. Medicaid reporting can occur after the Peer Mentor completes their internship and is certified by the DD Council.



### What types of supports are covered?

The types of supports peers provide that are covered by Medicaid are assistance with:

- ✓ Sharing personal stories of advocacy for the purpose of supporting self-advocacy and independence, person-centered planning and arrangements that support self-direction
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Supported Employment
- ✓ Community Inclusion & Recreation
- ✓ Post-Secondary Education
- ✓ Providing information on entitlements
- ✓ Moving towards independence

For information or questions contact the Developmental Disabilities Council at: (517) 335-3158, or on the web at: [www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil](http://www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil)

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## Becoming a Peer Mentor?

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

### What skills do I need?

In Michigan, Peer Mentors get certified through the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. The guidelines for becoming a Peer Mentor are:

- ✓ Must be 18 years of age
- ✓ Must have an intellectual or developmental disability
- ✓ Must be willing to share personal experiences to guide and support others
- ✓ Should have personal experience and/or general knowledge in one or more of the Medicaid covered services
- ✓ Should have good people skills including the ability to listen and get along with different personalities
- ✓ Must have a serious intention to follow through once trained
- ✓ Must be able to devote the necessary hours to be trained as a peer and then the ongoing time to help a peer

### What do people say about it?

*“The power of peer to peer learning is one of the greatest resources available in our communities. Peer mentoring may very well be the key to systems change as it gently cultivates personal transformation one person at a time.”*

~RON

*“Peer mentors are powerful advocates that create a path of partnership with people they support.”*

~PAM

*“Peer mentoring builds self-confidence for both the peer mentor and the person they are mentoring.”*

~PEER MENTOR

### One Peer's Story



I always had a dream to mentor others! After I graduated from Alpena High School in 2003, I worked for a TV station and restaurants, but I knew this was not my passion as I wanted to help people! In 2012 the opportunity to become a Peer Mentor became a reality. I currently work at Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority as a Peer Mentor and this has changed my life. Over the past few years as a Peer Mentor, the people I work with and I, have been empowered. I have also learned how to be patient and that things take time. I currently work with 4 amazing individuals. I have assisted my peers with building bridges, volunteering, transportation, community inclusion, learning to read and appropriate social interactions.

*“Independence is the key to Success!”*

Having this opportunity has helped me “find the light!” I have a reason to get out bed every day knowing I will be helping my Peers live a fuller life.

Looking back I would have never dreamed of working for the best people ever! Dreams really do come true!

~Daniel Spaulding, Certified Peer Mentor