

What is a Peer Specialist?

A Peer Specialist is a person with a significant life-altering experience, also referred to as a *lived experience*, who provides support to individuals with struggles pertaining to mental health, psychological trauma or substance use.

Our Peer Specialists are trained and certified through the *NYS Academy of Peer Services*.

There are many benefits to having the help and guidance of a “peer” throughout a difficult stage in life. Since our Peer Specialists have *lived experience*, they have truly “walked the walk,” and they are now trained and ready to share their obtained knowledge with those who are struggling.

Our Peer Specialists focus on providing advocacy and support to individuals in Niagara County who need help navigating through the many difficulties that come with mental illnesses, psychological trauma, and/or substance use issues.

Peer Specialist Services are provided for Niagara County residents by the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. One of our Peer Specialist programs is provided in collaboration with the Niagara County Department of Mental Health.

Mission Statement

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. will offer programs and services aimed at promoting mental health while advocating for individuals with mental illnesses and working toward dispelling commonly held misunderstandings regarding mental illnesses.



716.433.3780 www.MHANC.com

36 Pine St. Lockport, NY 14094

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PEER SPECIALIST SERVICES



THE ROLE OF A PEER SPECIALIST

Advocating

- Helping an individual with self-advocacy
- If an individual requests, a peer specialist may accompany them on doctors visits as well as appointments in the community.

Goal setting

- Helping individuals define their goals and assist them on meeting these goals. These goals can include:
 - ⇒ Finding employment
 - ⇒ Learning new or different independent living skills
 - ⇒ Locating housing
 - ⇒ Going back to school

Providing community information and referrals

- The peer specialist can help individuals find other services and resources in the community that may help them further in meeting their goals and needs.

Assisting in filling out paperwork

- Including Dept. of Social Services applications, job applications, housing applications, etc.

Creating a personalized care plan for that individual

- Working to establish a customized care plan on an individualized basis, which includes specific goals and needs.

Attending support groups with an individual for support

- Many find it difficult to attend a support group for the first time. A peer specialist can attend a group with you as moral and emotional support.



Think our Peer Specialist Services may be right for you?

To get started, we will schedule a one-on-one intake meeting with any interested individuals. At this meeting we will determine the individual's needs, and what specific Peer Specialist Services and programs he or she qualifies for.

The scope, duration, and frequency of meetings between an individual and their Peer Specialist is determined on a case-by-case basis.

To find out what Peer Specialist Services and programs you qualify for or to schedule an intake, please call the MHA at 716.433.3780.



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