

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES

PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

Purpose

The purpose of the Ryan White Part A quality management standards and measures is to ensure that a uniformity of service exists in the Atlanta Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA) such that the consumers of a service receive the same quality of service regardless of where the service is provided. If an agency is unable to meet a particular standard, the agency must document why the standard was unable to be met and explain the steps it is taking to meet that standard.

Definition

Peer counseling services are services provided by Certified Peer Counselors that include the provision of psychosocial support and assistance in obtaining a range of services and resources that will meet the needs of the client. Peer counseling services provide opportunities for sharing of information and resources, with the goal of promoting self-advocacy by persons living with HIV and facilitating the development of social/emotional support networks by and for persons living with HIV. Peer counseling services do not involve coordination and/or follow up of medical treatment. In addition, peer counseling services are distinct from case management, mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

Certified Peer Counselors (modified from Medicaid peer specialist definition) are non-licensed, para-professional individuals who are living with HIV and trained according to Atlanta EMA peer counseling standards. They are current or former recipients of HIV healthcare services who provide direct services to consumers in emergency, outpatient or inpatient settings. A certified peer counselor must:

1. Be trained according to the Atlanta EMA standards
2. Be able to complete all paperwork required by the position
3. Have the following skills or knowledge:
 - Good verbal and written communication skills
 - Good listening skills
 - Good interpersonal skills
 - Good problem solving skills
 - Basic knowledge of community supports, including state and federal benefits

Crisis Management and Psychiatric Emergencies

Agencies are asked to develop a comprehensive list of who provides services internally and/or externally for them related to crisis management and psychiatric emergencies so agency staff know whom to contact during these situations.

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

Application of Standards

These standards apply to all agencies that are funded to provide peer counseling services. If an agency would like to view sample policy and procedures, including ethics contracts, please contact the Grantee's office.

Standards Development Process

The standards were developed through extensive background research on quality management standards, a review of existing standards from other Ryan White Part A EMAs, meetings of the Peer Counseling and Outreach Task Force and meetings with the Ryan White Part A Grantee.

Acknowledgements

Fulton County would like to thank all of the EMAs that shared their standards, as well as the members of the Peer Counseling and Outreach Task Force who gave generously of their time to provide valuable input to the development of these quality management standards and measures.

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES
PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

I. Policies and Procedures	
Standard	Measure
A. Agency must have policies and procedures in place that address confidentiality (HIPAA), grievance procedures and supervision requirements per federal and state law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and procedure manual • Grievance procedure posted in visible location
B. Agency has eligibility requirements for services in written form. This is inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clients rights and responsibilities ✓ Release of information/confidentiality ✓ Eligibility for services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file
C. Agency is licensed and/or accredited by the appropriate city/county/state/federal agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current licensure on file from appropriate city/county/state/federal agency
D. Agency has written policies and procedures in place that protect the physical safety and well-being of staff and clients. This is inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Physical agency safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets fire safety requirements • Complies with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • Is clean, comfortable and free from hazards • Complies with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) infection control practices ✓ Crisis management and psychiatric emergencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to assess emergent/urgent vs. routine need • Verbal intervention • Non-violent physical intervention • Emergency medical contact information • Incident reporting • Voluntary and involuntary inpatient admission ✓ Refusal of services ✓ Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities of staff, including supervision responsibilities and staff/client ratio • Ethics contract on personal boundaries (encompassing physical, emotional, spiritual & financial) ✓ Client/Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities (see Standard IV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file • Site visit
E. Agency has a formal relationship with a mental health/substance abuse professional for consultation as needed if a mental health/substance abuse professional is not on staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written letter of agreement on file

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES
PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

I. Policies and Procedures (continued)	
Standard	Measure
<p>F. Agency has private, confidential office space for seeing clients (e.g. no half-walls or cubicles, all rooms must have doors).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit
<p>G. Peer counseling staff/volunteers at an agency must complete a peer counseling training course from a grantee approved site(s). Training should consist of a certification process of at least 40 total hours of training. Training topics must include at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ HIV basic science and psychological issues ✓ Communication and listening skills ✓ Infection control (based on OSHA infection control practices) ✓ Basic mental health and substance abuse issues ✓ Basic treatment issues and how to talk about them (i.e. not providing care or telling what care to get) ✓ Client rights and responsibilities ✓ Confidentiality (HIPAA) ✓ Client advocacy ✓ Personal boundaries (encompassing physical, emotional, spiritual & financial) ✓ Difference between peer counseling and case management ✓ Recognizing an individual in crisis ✓ Crisis intervention procedures ✓ Cultural competency ✓ Empowerment of peers ✓ Volunteer/employee rights and responsibilities ✓ How to make a referral ✓ Atlanta EMA peer counseling standards and measures ✓ General understanding and current contact information for the local HIV/AIDS medical, health-related and social service organizations that provide basic services such as mental health, substance abuse treatment, food, shelter, clothing, etc. to facilitate referral ✓ General understanding of how the Atlanta EMA Ryan White system of HIV continuum of care operates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records in personnel files

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES
PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

II. Program Staff	
Standard	Measure
A. Peer staff and peer volunteers are HIV positive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written job description that includes roles and responsibilities signed by staff/volunteers & staff/volunteer supervisor in personnel files
B. Peer staff have appropriate skills, relevant experience, cultural and linguistic competency, knowledge about HIV/AIDS and available health and social service related resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff résumés in personnel files • Training records in personnel file • Client satisfaction survey
C. Peer staff and peer volunteers have a clear understanding of their job description and responsibilities as well as agency policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written job description that includes roles and responsibilities and a statement of having been informed of agency policies and procedures on file signed by staff/volunteer & staff/volunteer supervisor
D. Peer staff and peer volunteers sign an ethics contract on personal boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed ethics contract in personnel file
E. Peer staff complete training within two weeks of employment. Peer volunteers complete a training prior to providing direct services to clients (See minimum training requirements under Policies and Procedures).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed form attesting to completion of training in personnel file • Signed confidentiality agreement in personnel file
F. Peer staff and peer volunteers participate in at least 8 hours of job-related education/training annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training/education documentation in personnel files
G. Peer staff shall receive a minimum of 2 hours of monthly supervision by their supervisor. Peer volunteers shall receive a minimum of 1 hour of monthly supervision by their supervisor. Supervision shall consist of providing peer support, allowing peer opportunities to discuss work issues and provide peer with direction for his or her job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel files
III. Access to Services	
A. Agency is accessible to desired target populations. Accessibility includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ proximity to community ✓ proximity to mass transit ✓ proximity to low-income individuals ✓ proximity to underinsured or uninsured individuals ✓ proximity to individuals living with HIV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit • Agency client data report consistent with funding requirements

ATLANTA EMA QUALITY MANAGEMENT STANDARDS AND MEASURES
PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

III. Access to Services (continued)	
Standard	Measure
B. Agency demonstrates the ability to provide culturally and linguistically competent peer counseling services according to Atlanta EMA standards for desired target population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel and training records • Site visit • Client satisfaction survey • Agency client data report consistent with funding requirements
C. Agency demonstrates input from clients in the design and delivery of peer counseling services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of Consumer Advisory Board (CAB); if agency does not have a CAB, it may ask for client input from the Consumer Caucus or other agencies' CABs • Client satisfaction survey
D. Agency is compliant with ADA requirements for non-discriminatory policies and practices and for the provision of reasonable accommodations to address communication (i.e. sign language interpreter).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file
IV. Service Coordination/Referral	
A. Agency staff act as a liaison between the client and other service providers to support coordination and delivery of high quality care. For those clients not in primary medical care, agency staff must note progress towards linking the client into primary medical care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client record – documentation of with whom staff are communicating and progress to linking client to primary care if appropriate • Agency client data report consistent with funding requirements • Policy on file
V. Clients' Rights and Responsibilities	
A. Client confidentiality policy exists for all service settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file
B. Grievance policy exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file
C. An up-to-date release of information form exists and is signed by the client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on file • Client record, specifically a current release of information signed by client
D. Client will be informed of the client confidentiality policy, grievance policy, their rights and responsibilities and their eligibility for services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation in client chart initialed or signed by client (chart review) showing that they have read or been informed