

Colorado Access has Peer Specialists available to support members and their families.

What is a Peer Specialist? A Peer Specialist is a person who has lived the experience, the fear, confusion and sometimes helpless or even hopeless feelings of being challenged with mental illness. Living a productive and happy life after being diagnosed with a mental illness can be challenging.

A Peer Specialist is a person who has been there, has lived through the experience of a mental illness and has learned to live with that condition to find balance and happiness and to experience life as everyone has the right to do. A Peer helps to overcome terms and labels that can be scary and limiting.

A Peer Specialist has been trained to forge a relationship with another person in need of guidance and empathy. He or she understands the feelings and obstacles faced along the road to recovery, and can help in recovering a life that is full and rewarding, loving and gentle.

The Peer Specialist's main goal is to encourage self-empowerment by listening and relating to the experience of living with difficult challenges. This is accomplished by being a positive influence and by conducting life in a way that reflects the possibilities through example.

In the end, each of us is responsible for the quality of life we experience. Through the help of professionals, our doctors and therapists and various treatments, we can learn a new way to live and find the peace that we all long for. The Peer Specialist does not replace treatment or therapy, but is there to support and encourage navigation through a difficult period in one's life, to instill hope that there is another way to live, and happiness and serenity are within reach.

If you or a loved one is interested in receiving Peer support, you are welcome to call Caroline Constantine, ABC Peer Services Program Manager, at 720-744-5647.