

Youth Peer Specialists

Guidelines for recruiting, training, supervising, and supporting Youth Peer Specialists.

01

Recruit
Wisely

02

Train
Effectively

03

Supervise
Well

04

Plan For
Wellness

05

Support
Transitions

Youth Peer Specialists (YPS)

01

Recruit Wisely

- Collaborate with child-serving agencies for recruitment.
- Conduct interviews focusing on organizational, growth and self-care skills. Hire more than one YPS to prevent isolation.
- Offer adequate compensation to support positive morale.

02

Train Effectively

- Provide Missouri YPS certification and agency-specific training.
- Provide agency-specific training on work culture policies and procedures.
- Offer additional training on evidence based practices and relevant topics like trauma and crisis intervention.

03

Supervise Well

- Set clear expectations and provide written performance planning.
- Understand and support YPS roles, boundaries and needs.
- Customize supervision: Address role confusion & self-care.
- Demonstrate qualities such as respect and leadership.
- Offer consistent availability and constructive feedback.

04

Plan For Wellness

- Include personal wellness and professional enhancement in performance planning.
- Continuously review and adjust performance and wellness plans.
- Document wellness plans to support YPS mental health. Arrange for continuing education on relevant topics.

05

Support Transitions

- Help YPS look for internal career advancement.
- With 2-week notice, employer can write letter of recommendation and/or offer networking contacts.
- If termination is warranted, provide clear guidance and communication.

Empowering Youth

Youth Peer Specialists foster emotional well-being, problem-solving, positive role modeling, skill development, and social inclusion. They are empowering young individuals to thrive.