

## Peer Respite

Peer respites are one of many peer-operated services offered in the behavioral health care field across the U.S. The peer movement has steadily impacted behavioral health care systems for nearly 40 years, increasing access to effective, low-barrier support for individuals experiencing behavioral health challenges.

Peer respites are staffed by trained peer specialists—individuals with lived experience in mental health challenges who are maintaining their own recovery and wellness. This model of peer respite closely aligns with the values of peer supporters and advocates in Washington State and nationally.

In Washington, the primary service provided in peer respites is peer support by Certified Peer Counselors, primarily funded by Medicaid reimbursements.

While at the peer respite, individuals may come and go for appointments, work, or other essential activities. Certified peer counselors help individuals evaluate their circumstances, problem-solve, and make decisions to move forward. The peer-run model fosters an environment of respect and understanding, encouraging participants to help themselves and others through building mutual relationships and learning from one another. Respites often also provide self-help groups, housing and employment supports, and help individuals recognize their strengths, skills, and resources to use when experiencing emotional distress. Participants also examine the relationship between their wellness and current situations.

## Overview

Peer respites offer voluntary, holistic, trauma-informed, short-term (up to seven days within a 30-day period), 24-hour services in home-like settings. Individuals in psychiatric distress can receive peer support services to aid in their wellness and recovery, helping them avoid more intensive levels of care. Peer support may be provided one-on-one or in group settings by certified peer counselors, who are credentialed through the Department of Health (DOH), have at least two years of experience, 82-0555 (9/24)

and have completed the necessary training assigned by the Health Care Authority (HCA).

Agencies who wish to start a peer respite can become certified through DOH, contract with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and begin billing for services. Peer respites may also contract with HCA. HCA will work with HCA-contracted peer respites through the start-up and ramp-up periods, providing technical assistance to meet deliverables that help the peer respite begin operating.

Currently, there are two HCA-contracted peer respites operational in Washington, one at Three Rivers Therapy in Kennewick and one in Spokane at Passages (Termonn).

## Eligibility requirements

Peer respites serve individuals who are in psychiatric distress but do not meet criteria for detainment or involuntary commitment and must enter the respite voluntarily. At this time, individuals must be 18 or over to access a peer respite.

## Budget for SFY 25

- SFY24 State General Funds \$708,000
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## Partners

Peer respites partner with local crisis services, behavioral health treatment providers, behavioral health administrative service organizations, and managed care organizations.

## For more information

Contact: [HCADBHRInformation@hca.wa.gov](mailto:HCADBHRInformation@hca.wa.gov)

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