

## What is a Peer Bridger?

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Peer Bridgers use their experience to provide support, guidance and hope to people with behavioral health issues.

Peer Bridgers are Washington State Certified Peer Specialists personally experiencing recovery. They have addressed the many challenges of those being discharged from patient settings and they are uniquely qualified to support individuals on their recovery journey.

## Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

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SAMHSA defines recovery as *a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential.*

**SAMHSA** has identified four major dimensions that support a life in recovery:

**Health** — Learning to overcome, manage, or more successfully live with symptoms and making healthy choices that support one's physical and emotional wellbeing.

**Home** — A stable and safe place to live.

**Purpose** — Meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteer work, or creative endeavors; increased ability to lead a self-directed life; and meaningful engagement in society.

**Community** — Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

**Peer workers support people in all of these dimensions.**

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

# Peer Bridger Program



*Sharing Hope. Empowering Renewal*  
[www.CVABonline.org](http://www.CVABonline.org)

## What is the goal of Peer Bridging?

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The goal of Peer Bridging is to offer support to peers who are transitioning from inpatient settings back into their community.

*“We believe that all people deserve the opportunity to fundamentally change their lives for the better.”*

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## What do Peer Bridgers do?

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A Peer Bridger develops rapport with a person preparing to leave treatment and return to a healthy life in their community. A Peer Bridger shares hope and encouragement and may function as:

- ⇒ a role model
- ⇒ a peer support
- ⇒ a mentor or teacher
- ⇒ an advocate
- ⇒ an ally

A Peer Bridger supports laying the groundwork for independence as they work with individuals in identifying their strengths and assisting in the development of skills for community success.

***Peer Bridgers support a person in establishing a wider circle of support in the community and enhanced social activities.***

## What types of assistance can Peer Bridgers offer to support peers while transitioning back into the community?

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- ⇒ Providing social support
- ⇒ Support developing coping and community adjustment skills
- ⇒ Linking peers with important community resources
- ⇒ Assistance with budgeting
- ⇒ Support with menu planning and shopping
- ⇒ Assist in learning bus routes and other forms of transportation
- ⇒ Support addressing medical needs
- ⇒ Assistance with attaining use of necessary benefits and social services
- ⇒ Regular visits to talk, have coffee, and discuss ways for being positively engaged in the community.

***Peer Bridger supports are limited in duration to less than a half a year for a person.***