

Competencies for Direct Service Staff
Who Work with Adults with Serious Mental Illness
In Public Mental Health / Managed Care Systems

Condensed Competency Set

Adult Panel of the Managed Care Initiative
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**Competencies for Direct Service Staff
Who Work with Adults with Serious Mental Illness
in Public Mental Health/Managed Care Systems**

- 1. Regards adults with serious mental illness as persons with dignity and competence and engages them as full collaborators in service planning, delivery, and evaluation**
 - A. *Uses language and behavior that consistently reflect and enhances the dignity of individuals with mental illness*
 - B. *Fosters client empowerment*
 - C. *Fosters consumers' recovery*
 - D. *Demonstrates holistic understanding of adults with mental illness*
 - E. *Works in partnership with service recipients in all aspects of service planning, treatment, and support activities*
 - F. *Provides needed information and education*
 - G. *Helps clients achieve a normal lifestyle*
 - H. *Works to diminish stigma*

- 2. Where relevant, includes family members and caring others in all aspects of service planning, delivery, and evaluation**
 - A. *Understands the unique issues facing family members of persons with mental illness*
 - B. *Engages families in the treatment and rehabilitation process*
 - C. *Knows about family support resources and intervention strategies*
 - D. *Addresses the expressed needs of individual families*

3. Demonstrates current knowledge of issues related to mental illness

- A. *Demonstrates up-to-date knowledge of different characteristics and courses of mental illnesses, as well as risk factors, and how people are affected*
- B. *Recognizes the unique needs of individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders (e.g., substance abuse, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, personality disorders, trauma, brain injury)*
- C. *Knows about societal, cultural, racial, gender, and other issues related to mental illness and its treatment*

4. Knows and uses best practices of intervention and support strategies

- A. *Demonstrates basic communication and other intervention skills*
- B. *Teaches both simple and complex skills, including physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and other relevant skills*
- C. *Knows a variety of program models and their philosophies*
- D. *Knows about a range of crisis prevention and crisis intervention approaches*
- E. *Understands the principles of community support, rehabilitation, and managed behavioral healthcare*
- F. *Knows about psychotropic medications*

5. Designs, delivers, and documents highly individualized services and supports

- A. *Encourages and facilitates personal growth and development toward recovery and wellness*
- B. *Routinely solicits personal goals and preferences*
- C. *Designs personal growth/service plans based on individual choices and preferences*
- D. *Ensures individualized services and supports*
- E. *Facilitates and supports natural support networks*
- F. *Designs, delivers, and documents services that meet the requirements of state, regulatory, and funding agencies*

6. Effectively accesses and employs community resources

- A. *Identifies, develops, and maintains good relationships and linkages with a wide range of community resources*
- B. *Knows about entitlement and benefit programs*
- C. *Integrates community resources and entitlement programs into service planning and delivery*
- D. *Participates in public education and advocacy*

7. Demonstrates knowledge of legal issues and civil rights that are relevant to work setting and occupation

- A. *Knows about legal issues applicable to provider's mental health setting*
- B. *Knows about individual rights*
- C. *Recognizes ethical guidelines and boundaries for community support work*
- D. *Knows about and connects individuals to legal and advocacy resources as needed and/or requested*

8. Works collaboratively within and across the service system

(e.g., with other professions, with agency and interagency teams, managed behavioral healthcare organizations, state and county systems, community boards, all in the best interests of the client)

- A. *Demonstrates knowledge of own agency and its place within the mental health care system*
- B. *Assists in building positive working relationships within and across the service system (e.g., agency and interagency teams, family members, service recipients, concerned others)*
- C. *Knows about and skilled in working within a managed behavioral healthcare framework*

9. Conducts activities in a professional and ethical manner

- A. *Adheres to recognized ethical and other relevant standards*
- B. *Performs work in a positive manner*
- C. *Shows commitment to professional development*
- D. *Values accountability and observes appropriate procedures*

10. Conducts activities in a culturally competent manner

- A. *Understands and values cultural and racial differences, their alternative perspectives on mental illness, help-seeking, and alternative healing practices, as well as lifestyles, goals, family and community life*
- B. *Able to clearly understand and communicate effectively with the client*
- C. *Makes diagnoses that are culturally informed*
- D. *Makes assessments that are culturally informed*
- E. *Develops treatment plans that are culturally informed*
- F. *Provides culturally competent treatment*

11. Knows methods of evaluation and applies them appropriately to own work

- A. *Knows research findings applicable to position*
- B. *Uses evaluation and feedback in own work*

METHODS: Competencies were defined as attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills that staff need to deliver quality services to people with serious mental illness in public mental health/managed care systems. Dr. Robert Coursey was chair of the Adult Panel of 28 experts that was balanced across disciplines, consumers, family members, state providers, and managed behavioral healthcare executives. They reviewed standards of care, clinical guidelines, outcome studies, evaluation measures, and the views of the various stakeholders. Panel members wrote nine and reviewed 11 other relevant competency statements. The background documents and references used in this endeavor can be found at WWW.med.upenn.edu/CMHPSR/. See "Adults with SMI Reports" under "Managed Care Consensus."

A consensus conference consolidated the information, building on a competency document developed by Laurie Curtis, MSW ("Training Standards for Staff Who Work with Adults with Serious Mental Illnesses in Public Mental Health Services," published by the Vermont Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, 1993). It was judged to be the most comprehensive, most reflective of the best materials, and most in accord with our expert panel members. Seven representatives from the Adult Panel extensively revised the document that was then sent to all of the Adult Panel members who provided extensive feedback on this and three other drafts. New or extensively revised sections were developed for consumers (# 1), families (#2), legal issues (# 7), and cultural competency (# 10).

Bibliographic references and the full methods section can be found in the complete Competency Set.

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