WHAT IS YOUTH PEER SUPPORT?

Youth Peer Support services are formal and informal services and supports provided to youth who are experiencing social, medical, emotional, developmental, substance use, and/or behavioral challenges in their home, school, placement, and/or community centered services.

Youth Peer Support services are provided by a trained and credentialed Youth Peer Advocate (YPA) who is uniquely qualified to work with young people based on their personal lived experience with social, emotional, medical, developmental, substance use, and/or behavioral challenges and the specialized training they receive.

This service can occur in a variety of settings including where the young person lives, works, attends school, engages in services, and/or socializes.

YOUTH POWER!

For more information, visit www.YOUTHPOWERNY.org
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WHAT DOES YOUTH PEER SUPPORT INCLUDE?

There are five categories of Youth Peer Support and Training (YPST). A Youth Peer Advocate is able to offer all five categories based on the individual needs and preferences of the young person.

1. Skill Building
2. Coaching
3. Engagement, Bridging & Transition Support
4. Self-Advocacy, Self-Efficacy, & Empowerment
5. Community Connections & Natural Supports

PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH PEER SUPPORT

**Is Youth Guided** - Acknowledges that every young person has a choice and should be informed, consulted and active participants in their own lives, as well as policies and procedures governing care for all young people in their community, state, and nation.

**Partners with Young People** - Recognizes that power should be shared in making decisions with young people based on their understanding and maturity.

**Promotes Independent Recovery** - Provide young people with the tools to make educated and informed decisions on their own health and wellbeing.

**Provides Mentoring** - Shares personal journey of recovery to foster hope for youth and their families.

**Promotes Advocacy** - Listens to young people without judgment and promotes environments where young people are heard and their voice is sustained.

**Is Culturally Competent** - Creates safe environments that respect and empower young people to feel a sense of pride in their cultures and beliefs that they identify with.

**Makes Connections** - Facilitates connections between young people; their services, agencies, activities, training, and peers for support and advocacy.

**Is Individualized** - Acknowledge that a young person’s recovery journey and experiences are unique to them.

**Is Strength-Based** - Moves the focus away from deficits towards building on the strengths and resources that the young person can use to better their own lives.

WHO PROVIDES YOUTH PEER SUPPORT SERVICES?

A New York State Credentialled Youth Peer Advocate (YPA) delivers Youth Peer Support services for young people who are experiencing social, medical, emotional, developmental, substance use, and/or behavioral challenges in their home, school, placement, and/or community centered services.

**A Youth Peer Advocate is someone 18-30 years old who has self-identified as a person who has first-hand experience with social, emotional, medical, developmental, substance use, and/or behavioral challenges.**

They are able to use lived experience with a disability, mental health challenges, juvenile justice, special education, substance use disorder, and/or foster care to assist in supporting young people in their resiliency/recovery and wellness.

For more information on how to become a Credentialled YPA, visit YOUTHPOWERNY.org