



## Agency Tip Sheet: Interviewing Youth Peer Advocates

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Employers of peers often have concerns related to asking about a person's lived experience due to the ADA and other privacy policies. However, the interviewer **CAN** ask about the person's history when there is a "bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ)." Under this qualification, you may ask about a candidate's lived experience and their age. BFOQ does not cover questions related to gender and race.

### Recommended Interview Guidelines:

- Consider including young people in the program throughout the interview process
- Review the job description with the YPA candidate
- Advise the YPA candidate that they must be able to talk about their recovery in this role
- In addition to asking about prior work history, ask about volunteer or other activities in which the YPA candidate demonstrated aspects of the peer role
- Incorporate scenario-based questions to gauge how a YPA candidate may handle common situations in this role

### When interviewing and considering applicants for the YPA position, we have a few recommended questions to ask:

- This role requires that you self-identify as a young person with first-hand experience with social, emotional, medical, developmental, substance use, and/or behavioral challenges. Can you tell us how you represent a peer from this perspective?
- One of the essential job functions of this position is being able to share about your lived experience for the benefit of the young person you are working with. Can you give us an example of using your story to benefit a peer or family member who is struggling with an issue?
- Describe a situation where you have encouraged someone to advocate for themselves.
- How do you practice self-care as a peer in this field?
- Please describe some community resources you have had contact with. How might you use these resources to support a young person you are working with?
- Describe a situation in which you helped someone set a goal, and then supported them to achieve that goal. What was the goal and how did you help?
- What do you feel is the most important aspect of youth peer support?

**We strongly encourage you to keep in mind that for many applicants this may be their first job and they may need additional support in the following areas; writing skills, knowing the chain of command, reasonable accommodations, and understanding job expectations.**