

Youth Peer Support

A Statewide Partnership between
the Michigan Department of
Health and Human Services and
Association for Children's Mental
Health



Reviewed 2/2024



Julie Brown
Youth Peer Support
Tuscola Behavioral
Health Systems
Or
Crystal Waugh
Supervisor of
Children's Services
989.673.6191

Administrative Services
323 N. State Street,
Caro, MI 48723

Emergency Services are
available 24/7
989.673.6191 or 1.800.462.6814
www.tbhsonline.com

Clinical Programs located at
1332 Prospect Ave.
Caro, MI 48723

Programs and services funded in part by
by Michigan Department of Health
and Human Services.

Youth Peer Support For Youth By Youth

**available to youth who are
receiving services
through
Tuscola Behavioral Health
Systems**



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Caro, MI 48723
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What is a Youth Peer Support Specialist?

A youth peer support specialist (YPSS) works with young people transitioning to adulthood, who are usually involved in a child-servicing system or experiencing a unique challenge. YPSSs use their own lived experience with mental health and child-serving systems to relate and engage with the youth they serve.

In their work together, YPSSs help youth to identify goals and advocate for themselves through the following strategies:

Building Hope

YPSSs use their lived experience to relate and to show that there is hope for a brighter future. Lived experience refers to a person's journey through a system, trauma, or unique challenge that a youth might relate to. YPSS can normalize feelings, thoughts, or situations that young individual might be experiencing, for the person feels less alone.

Strategic Sharing

When a YPSS talks about their lived experience, they can share parts of their story that are relevant, and do so in a way that help to advocate with and/or for the youth, make them feel like they are not alone or show them that this is hope!

Shared Understanding

The YPSS is able to empathize with the young people they encounter through shared understanding.

Affirmation

The YPSS assists with identifying their goals, and offers validation. They assist with the persona goals and ideas by helping them explore the situation, identify a plan and actions steps. Checks in and the youth's plans and affirms their perspective by offering support.

Normalization

The YPSS helps the youth feel less isolated by reminding them that other people experience struggles similar to theirs. that they other

Destigmatization

Young people involved in systems often internalize stigmatizing beliefs about themselves. By normalizing the youth's feelings and sharing some of their own struggles and successes, the YPSS helps to challenge the labels and assumptions.

Relationship Building

The YPSS builds relationships with youth through rapport building, tapping into their "peerness" by relating to youth culture, talking with the one on one, learning about the interests, goals and experiences.

Individualized Support

The YPSS acknowledges that each youth they work with has a unique set of strengths, needs and goals. Each interaction relies on their relationship building skill to learn more about each person.

The amount of time a YPSS will support youth will vary due to the goals set and how long it takes a youth to reach those goals. The YPSS position is to support youth so that they can successfully build in their resiliency and navigate systems on their own.

The Youth Peer Support Specialist is to partner with the youth and their family to support the direction the youth wish to take in their mental health treatment and care.

The Youth Peer is not the following:

- A friend
- A case-manager or therapist
- Respite Sitter or babysitter
- Advocate or their spokesperson
- Know all available resources
- Chauffeur

