



Youth Peer Support

WHAT IS THE YOUTH PEER SUPPORT STATWIDE NETWORK?

The Youth Peer Support Statewide Network (YPSSN) is a community of young people in Maine who have navigated the behavioral health system and support each other through shared life experiences. Anyone in Maine can participate if they are between the ages of 14-26 and self-identify¹ with behavioral health challenges.

YPSSN staff are trained in Intentional Peer Support, through a Department of Health and Human Services approved curriculum. This is not a clinical or treatment program. Program staff and participants support each other and build connections that help them better navigate the journey of a self-defined, meaningful life.

The YPSSN supports personal choice, compassion, respect, and openness in all activities, including:

- 1-1 youth peer support (online and in-person)
- Drop-in hours (online and in-person)
- Support groups (online and in-person)
- Outdoor activities
- Advocacy opportunities
- Youth Advisory Board (Statewide/ Regional)

Visit our website (<https://bit.ly/youthpeer>) for more information on all these opportunities.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUTH PEER SUPPORT

Services are **FREE** – Participants/ insurance is not billed. Referrals from anyone are accepted, as long as the youth gives permission to have their information shared. Referrals accepted at: <https://bit.ly/youthpeerreferral>.

For more information, visit the website, email at YPSSN@mainehealth.org or call [207-396-7052](tel:207-396-7052)



WHAT DOES PEER SUPPORT LOOK LIKE?

Peer support looks different within each relationship, focused on the interests, and needs of each individual. Youth can have conversations, participate in activities, and see their one-on-one Youth Peer Support person as often as it works for everyone. They can talk about both serious and casual topics, and all conversations are kept confidential to maintain trust (unless there is danger to self or others discussed). Peer support staff do not tell others what they “should” do – they view youth peers as experts on themselves and their own needs.

Peers can choose to focus on building a relationship one-on-one with a peer support staff, and/or to get to know more people in the community through groups and events. No referral is needed for groups or events; youth can show up and join YPSSN for games, food, art, outdoor activities, movie trips, and more! They hold events regularly throughout the state, including with local partners, and are always interested in collaborating with youth and/or community organizations.

¹ We use the language of “self-identify” to highlight personal choice. Youth do not have to have a diagnosis to participate, and it is the youth’s choice whether to participate in any case.