

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Peer Evaluator

Policy Number: 107.07

Effective Date: 5/2/2022

Page Number: 1 of 5

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Inmate Services Division
(Office of Reentry Services)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The Office of Reentry Services (ORS) shall provide uniform administrative practices and guidelines to follow for the organization and management of the Peer Evaluator Program.

II. Authority:

- A. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 125-2-01-.01;
- B. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's): 107.03 Staff Development, 107.04 Risk Needs Assessment, 107.05 Program Management, and 107.08 Cognitive Behavioral Programs;
- C. ACA Standards: 2CO-4F-01, 5-ACI-5E-06, and 5-ACI-5E-07; and
- D. O.C.G.A. §42-2-11(c).

III. Definitions:

- A. **Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)** - MRT is a Cognitive Restructuring Program designed to promote pro-social behavior incorporating the following elements: confrontation and self-assessment, assessment of current relationships, reinforcement of positive behavior and habits, positive identity formation, enhancement of self-concept, decreasing hedonism, and developing higher stages of moral reasoning. This group is an opened ended group that can be completed within four (4) months.
- B. **Peer Evaluator** - Field staff who have completed specialized Peer Evaluator training from ORS to conduct peer to peer Quality Assurance Evaluations.
- C. **Problem Solving Skills in Action (PSSIA)** - PSSIA is a cognitive behavioral intervention that teaches cognitive skills. The intervention directly teaches offenders the critical prosocial skills-alternatives to antisocial behavior that

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address deficiencies in basic social skills, problem solving, anger management, perspective taking, and empathy. This program is a closed ended eight (8) session group.

D. **Quality Assurance Evaluation (QA)** - Facilitation practices are reviewed by a Social Service Program Consultant (SSPC) of ORS. QA Evaluations concentrate on program integrity to ensure the program is delivered in the way it was designed.

G. **Thinking for a Change (T4C)** - T4C is an integrated, cognitive behavioral change program for offenders that include cognitive restructuring, skill building and problem solving T4C focuses on the thinking skills that guide the behavior of offenders, and attempts to replace well-established, maladaptive thinking patterns with cognitive skills that can promote pro-social behavioral choices.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. Application Process:

1. Staff interested in becoming a Peer Evaluator will complete Attachment 1, Peer Evaluator Application/Agreement. The application must include a recommendation from the applicant's immediate supervisor;
2. Applications are forwarded to the ORS for review; and
3. Selected candidates will be scheduled for an interview with ORS staff before final approval is made. Once candidates have been selected, the ORS will schedule the necessary training for selected staff.

B. Selection and Training:

1. Peer Evaluator candidates for T4C must have successfully completed a

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minimum of one (1) rotation of T4C. Candidates for PSSIA and MRT must have at least six (6) months continuous facilitation of PSSIA and MRT.

2. Peer Evaluators must receive an assessment conducted by ORS that shows competency in the following characteristics:
 - a. Above-average verbal skills;
 - b. Ability to relate positively and empathetically to staff and offenders while maintaining a professional relationship that does not compromise rules and regulations;
 - c. Sensitivity to group dynamics and the ability to instruct other staff on how to stimulate groups and promote interest and high activity levels, while maintaining adequate discipline;
 - d. Ability to instruct staff on how to challenge offenders without demeaning them;
 - e. Ability to model above average interpersonal skills including:
 - i. Empathy;
 - ii. Effective problem-solving skills;
 - iii. Well-developed values;
 - iv. Rational and logical reasoning; and
 - v. Openness to new ideas.

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- f. Experience in managing groups of poorly motivated individuals who may be passively or aggressively hostile or critical;
 - g. Willingness to consider views that may not be consistent with their own; and
 - h. Must have a strong knowledge of Evidence Based Programs.
2. Once selected, Peer Evaluators will attend a training program to learn how to effectively conduct a QA. Conducting two QAs are included in these training hours.

C. Operational Guidelines:

- 1. Peer Evaluators will only conduct QAs on programs that they have been trained in and have facilitated.
- 2. ORS staff will accompany the Peer Evaluator on their first two (2) QA assignments and will evaluate the Peer Evaluator on their ability to relate to staff being evaluated, ability to model pro-social traits, and attention to details.
- 3. ORS staff will provide feedback to the Peer Evaluator and make suggestions for corrective action, if needed.
- 4. ORS staff will contact the Peer Evaluator to schedule specific sites or offices for QA. The Peer Evaluator will have fifteen (15) working days from this notification to complete the QA with that site or office.
- 5. Peer Evaluators will be scheduled to conduct a minimum of four (4) QA evaluations per year. Travel requirements will be taken into consideration when making these assignments.

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6. The Peer Evaluator will complete a QA Evaluation report, using the appropriate Competency Evaluation Form received in training and (Attachments 2-4) specific to the program reviewed, within five (5) working days of completing the QA visit. The QA forms are confidential and will be forwarded only to the facilitator, the facilitator's supervisor, and members of the ORS Reentry and Cognitive Behavior Program Unit.
7. Peer Evaluators will not conduct QAs at their own work site.
8. ORS staff may remove staff from the role of Peer Evaluator if it is determined that the individual is consistently not meeting the above standards.

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Peer Evaluator Application/Agreement to QA
Attachment 2: Moral Reconciliation Therapy Competency Evaluation Form
Attachment 3: Thinking for a Change Competency Evaluation Form
Attachment 4: Problem Solving Skills in Action Evaluation Form

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Upon completion, all competency evaluation forms should be kept on file, for review by ORS, for one (1) year.