

CDU HIV Peer Support Navigation

People Living with HIV (PLWH) have a first-hand understanding of the HIV services that are available in Wyoming and are able to serve as an excellent resource for individuals who have been newly diagnosed or someone who is struggling with any aspect of an HIV diagnosis. HIV Peer Support Navigators are individuals living with HIV or parents/guardians of children living with HIV who have special training and a willingness to provide HIV navigation support to others living with HIV. Peers are able to provide guidance and advocacy that is intended to supplement the education and information provided by medical case managers and clinicians.

HIV Peer Support Navigator Program Goals

- Provide support through lived experience, knowledge, and understanding.
- Improve health outcomes for those living with and affected by HIV in Wyoming.
- Overcome barriers that may prevent engagement, retention, or re-engagement in treatment.

Role of HIV Peer Support Navigators

- Visit with referred clients regarding the client's concerns
- Assist clients with learning the ins and outs of Wyoming's Ryan White (RW) and AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) eligibility process
- Help clients navigate barriers related to HIV care, prevention, and treatment
- Provide suggestions for treatment adherence based on training and lived experience as needed
- Provide suggestions to overcome social challenges and disclosure related to HIV
- Provide realistic advice for integrating adherence and wellness practices into daily life
- Help train and mentor new peer navigators

HIV Peer Support Navigator Requirements

- Individual living with HIV or parents/guardians of children living with HIV
- Employ effective self-care strategies
- Ability to advocate for self and for others
- Strong communication skills and the ability to communicate in a positive manner
- Able to communicate challenging topics in a respectful manner
- Interpersonal skills with knowledge of cultural competency and literacy levels that allow the Peer Support Navigator to provide assistance to all program participants with respect and compassion. It is also important for Peer Support Navigators to be mindful of their own personal and cultural identity as well as how these influence their perceptions
- Knowledge of HIV, disease progression, and physical impacts including the role of viral load and CD4 cells, and a thorough knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention
- Knowledge of Wyoming's RW and ADAP eligibility processes and other HIV services in Wyoming
- The importance of adherence to antiretroviral medication regimens for preventing disease progression and the development of viral resistance
- The ability to provide training and education on strategies that improve medication adherence
- A general understanding of medication side effects and how side effects can impact treatment adherence
- Knowledge of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including transmission and prevention, as well as their connection to HIV

HIV Peer Support Navigator Referral Process

1. An individual living with HIV or parents/guardians of a child living with HIV in Wyoming is interested in being linked to an HIV Peer Support Navigator.
2. If the referral is being made by someone other than the individual living with HIV or parents/guardians of a child living with HIV, the individual living with HIV or parents/guardians of a child living with HIV must be aware a referral is being made on their behalf and agree to be contacted by a Peer Navigator.
3. The individual living with HIV or parents/guardians of a child living with HIV, or other referral source completes the [HIV Peer Support Navigator Request Google form](#).
4. The Prevention Program Manager will contact an HIV Peer Support Navigator to determine their availability to receive a new Peer Support referral. When an available Peer Support Navigator is located, the Prevention Program Manager will share the Peer Support Navigator's contact information with the referral source, the individual living with HIV, or the parents/guardians of a child living with HIV.

The application to be a CDU HIV Peer Support Navigator, as well as the training requirements, will be released in early 2025.