

## ECHW vs. PSS

In California, both Enhanced Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Peer Support Specialists play vital roles in the healthcare system, particularly within the Medi-Cal program. While their functions may overlap in some areas, they have distinct responsibilities, training requirements, and scopes of practice.

Overview	Enhanced Community Health Worker (E-CHW)	Peer Support Specialist (PSS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Description</u>: Community based workers provide services aimed at preventing disease, disability, and other health conditions and promoting physical / mental health and well-being via connection to health and wellness resources.</li> <li><u>Role</u>: Identify clients' needs and connect them back to client's behavioral health and/or substance abuse issues.</li> <li><u>Duration</u>: Limited, short-term. Can only provide 6 hours of services per client per year.</li> <li><u>Focus</u>: System navigation, care coordination, addressing social determinants of health.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Description</u>: Peers leverage their lived experiences with mental health and/or substance use challenges to offer support, guidance, and advocacy to others facing similar issues.</li> <li><u>Role</u>: Help the client develop/ utilize skills, build trust/emotional connection and stay engaged in treatment.</li> <li><u>Duration</u>: No limit, throughout the length of treatment</li> <li><u>Focus</u>: Recovery, empowerment, and connection through shared lived experience.</li> </ul>
Training & Certification	Enhanced Community Health Worker (E-CHW)	Peer Support Specialist (PSS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>No Statewide Certification</i>: While CHWs may receive training, California does not require a standardized statewide certification for this role.</li> <li><i>Please note</i>: Some managed care plans or employers may have their own training requirements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Statewide Certification</i>: Peer Support Specialists must complete a state-approved training program and obtain certification through the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA) .</li> </ul>

## ECHW vs. PSS

Additional Functionalities		
	Enhanced Community Health Worker (E-CHW)	Peer Support Specialist (PSS)
<b>Navigation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>System navigation:</i> Help clients access services such as counseling, primary care, housing, food or other supports.</li> <li>• <i>i.e. CHW help support the “foundation” of treatment such as showing the client where to find the Provider Handbook to locate a PCP.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Care navigation-</i> Assist clients in building skills to help them participate in treatment programs, crisis services, housing, employment, and legal aid.</li> <li>• <i>i.e. PSS help clients apply skills and such as accompanying a client to a PCP appointment to mitigate the client’s anxiety and communicate with the provider in an appropriate way.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Education &amp; Treatment Adherence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide health education about mental health, substance use and treatment options.</li> <li>• Help clients overcome barriers to care such as scheduling appointments or assisting with transportation.</li> <li>• <i>Please note:</i> Provision of transportation is not a billable service but educating and assisting client to access transportation services available through their MCP benefit or other transportation arrangements would be billable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate the client about mental health and substance abuse issues via their own lived experience.</li> <li>• Help client’s problem solve barriers via discussion and application of learned skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Lived Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although CHW may have lived experience with mental health or substance use, it is not a requirement nor a distinction of the position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openly share personal experiences with recovery (Mental health/SUD) while modeling resilience and recovery to inspire hope and build trust.</li> </ul>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showing clients where to find various resources in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support self-advocacy, goal-setting, and coping</li> </ul>

## ECHW vs. PSS

	their community.	strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help individuals build trust, hope and motivation for recovery.</li> </ul>
<b>Relapse Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate client locating resources for SUD treatment.</li> <li>• Connecting client to resources, such as housing, that will reduce the likelihood of relapse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support goal setting, efficacy and action planning in recovery.</li> <li>• Identify early signs of crisis or relapse and help peers access appropriate services.</li> </ul>
<b>Treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May provide educational groups</li> <li>• Although CHW provide emotional support, it is an important distinction that they do not provide clinical therapy or longer term support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead or co-facilitate support groups, skill-building workshops, or wellness activities</li> <li>• Offer one-on-one peer mentoring</li> </ul>
<b>Procedure Codes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98960- Education and training for patient self-management by a qualified, nonphysician health care professional using a standardized curriculum, face-to-face with the patient; each 30 minutes; individual</li> <li>• 98961- Education and training for patient self-management by a qualified, nonphysician health care professional using a standardized curriculum, face-to-face with the patient ... 2-4 patients</li> <li>• 98962 - Education and training for patient self-management by a qualified, nonphysician health care professional using a standardized curriculum, face-to-face with the patient ... 5-8 patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H0025- Behavior health prevention education service (delivery of services with target population to affect knowledge, attitude and/or behavior) [Peer Support group session], 15 minutes</li> <li>• H0035- Self-help/peer services (individual) 15 minutes</li> </ul>