

Clarification 7: Structured Skill Development and Support

Clarification on the use of the Structured Skill Development service.

Guidelines

- Structured Skill Development is a Community Rehabilitation and Support (CRS) service used to help individuals learn and practice a skill that has been identified as a barrier to the individual's achievement of his or her goal. The barrier that the service addresses must be related to the participant's mental illness.
- The service must be included in each individual's Individualized Recovery Plan (IRP).
- Documentation must establish the purpose for the individual's participation in the Structured Skill Development service by demonstrating how the activity will be used to address a specific barrier created by the person's mental illness and related to his or her goal. The IRP should describe what barrier(s) the individual is working to overcome in the Structured Skill Development service and how the structured skill activity will be used to accomplish this. This is essential to showing medical necessity for that particular service.
- Skills are developed through a process of teaching, practice, observation and feedback in settings that replicate community life roles.
- Supportive counseling, mentoring and skill development techniques are used in the Structured Skill activity to assist the individual to learn and adapt the identified skill.
- Skills may be taught in a combination of individual and group structured activities.
 - Staff is required to be with the group throughout the entire duration of the service.
 - Direct contact between the individual and the practitioner during the service is intermittent, that is:
 - at the beginning: to clarify the tasks and skills being addressed
 - during: to monitor and provide feedback at various intervals; and
 - at the end: to debrief.
- Co-facilitating a group is not considered a Structured Skill Development service.
- The service is provided in structured settings, e.g. work-ordered day, an activity-center format or replicated community settings.
- Structured Skill Development may not be used to provide vocational training. The purpose of the Structured Skill Development is not to teach an individual vocational skill.

However, programs often may use Structured Skill Development tasks that are in line with the individual's vocational interests.

- The individual may not be paid or receive any compensation for participating in the Structured Skill Development service. Staff may have the role of both overseeing the activity and the teaching of skills. However, the primary (visually identifiable) function of the staff must be the teaching of skills to overcome a barrier related to a person's mental illness and not the completion or supervision of the activity.

Regulatory Requirements

The regulations define *Structured Skill Development and Support* as a:

“service designed to assist individuals in developing instrumental skills for performing common life roles associated with group membership, work and education, parenting or living environments. The focus of structured skill development is to develop skills through a process of teaching, practice, and feedback in community environments replicated at the program site. The modality for teaching these skills is a combination of individual, group and structured activities. It is often provided in structured club-like settings such as a work-ordered day or an activity-center format, where staff employs supportive counseling, mentoring and skill development techniques to assist the individual in completion of essential tasks.” [14. New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (NYCRR).§.512.5.t]

The purpose of Structured Skill Development is to provide opportunities for individuals to learn and practice skills needed to overcome a mental health barrier that may be an obstacle to successful attainment or retention of a community life role or life role goal.