



SB 212 A – Oregon Youth Authority Agency Bill

2023

Support SB 212 A

SB 212 A is an agency bill that helps support appropriate confidentiality in peer support conversations in OYA.

What the bill does

SB 212 A supports and defines OYA's peer support model in the following ways:

- Creates definitions for the various roles and terms within a peer support program.
- Creates limited confidentiality around peer support communications.
- Provides language of what and when communications are no longer protected.
- The – 1 Amendment in House Judiciary, will add county juvenile department staff to the bill.

Background

The work OYA staff do can be taxing, draining, and traumatic. Peer Support Members provide crisis intervention intended to be a short-term helping process, among colleagues. They engage peers with efforts to stabilize and mitigate a crisis response, and to help them foster a natural resiliency through:

1. Stabilization – help them to get a safe space (emotionally, physically or mentally), get back to familiar routine, meet their basic needs (cup of coffee, meal train, etc.).
2. Acknowledge the Crisis - help them reduce symptoms, engage them, find a quiet place to talk and listen and establish a social support.
3. Facilitate Understanding – acknowledge what they are feeling, their reaction is a normal response to the event.
4. Encourage Effective Coping Skills - self-care, being with family, talking to their pastor, etc.
5. Referrals - help facilitate access to continued care by referring to counseling if requested or needed.

Here are some examples of the types of circumstances that staff have dealt with in recent years:

- There have been nine youth deaths in the community the last two years, between homicide, suicide, and overdose. (These include youth who were recently under OYA supervision as well as current youth).
- Youth who was very ill and in the hospital for extended periods of time.
- Supporting youth when the youth's family member is very ill or injured and in the hospital.
- Family (specifically child) who has significant medical issue.
- Family death due to COVID or major illness.



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Development of the Peer Support Program

The program began to take its current form in the Community Services division several years ago, after a youth overdose at program. Staff were supported by the local supervisor and team, but it was a significant event. The impact reached far beyond the assigned Juvenile Parole and Probation Officer (JPPO) to other OYA staff. Many people reached out wondering how to help or support their colleagues. The idea began from there – to have a team in place that can be intentional and proactive around supporting needs of their colleagues.

Two supervisors began to develop it, then applied for and were awarded a grant from DPSST to form the structure, build and train a team. We now have 13 trained team members across all areas of Community Services. The team has been active in reaching out to and supporting team members, and there are procedures in place. As it grows, employees are proactively reaching out to these peer supports. We also have employee support structures in facility services.

For more information contact:

[Christine Kirk](#)

Public Policy and Government Relations Manager

Oregon Youth Authority

503-881-9571