Peer Support Policies & Procedures

CERTIFIED PEER VISITOR PROGRAM
Amputee Coalition
Peer Support Policies & Procedures: Certified Peer Visitor (CPV) Program

INTRODUCTION

- Preamble
- Program Goal
- Volunteer Value Statement

ARTICLE I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Program Overview
1.2 Who Is a Certified Peer Visitor?
1.3 Certified Peer Visitor Requirements/Screening Criteria
1.4 Characteristics of a Certified Peer Visitor
1.5 Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor Code of Ethics
1.6 Violations of the Code of Ethics

ARTICLE II: CERTIFIED PEER VISITOR TRAINING PROCESS

2.1 CPV Application Process
2.2 CPV Training Class Outline
2.3 CPV Credentials

ARTICLE III: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 CPV Matching Process
3.2 CPV Materials
3.3 CPV Reporting
3.4 CPV Communication

ARTICLE IV: CPV CONDUCT & COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

4.1 Prohibited Behavior/Conduct
4.2 Additional Circumstances
4.3 Complaint Resolution Procedures

ADDENDUMS

1  Criminal Background Checks
2  Certified Peer Visitor Training Process (Timeline)
INTRODUCTION

Preamble
The purpose of the following is to provide guidance and support to those generously donating their time, talents and experience to the Amputee Coalition’s Certified Peer Visitor (CPV) Program.

Program Goal
Improve and strengthen the Peer Support Program’s effectiveness and the program’s reach into the community.

Volunteer Value Statement
Our volunteers are our biggest support group and fundamental to delivering the organization’s mission! The Amputee Coalition is able to use this incredibly dedicated group of individuals to help deliver core programs (such as certified peer visits and the Paddy Rossbach Youth Camp) and to network with others in the community to expand the reach of our resources and impact on those living with limb loss or limb difference.
ARTICLE I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW & CRITERIA

1.1 - Program Overview
No one is potentially in a better position to understand about living life with an amputation or supporting a person with limb loss/difference than someone who has been there. Since 1993, the Amputee Coalition has strived to be a leader in certifying and connecting experienced and well-adjusted volunteers to provide peer visits to people living with limb loss. The Amputee Coalition’s Certified Peer Visitor (CPV) Program provides support for not only individuals who have had an amputation, but also for those affected by limb loss, including that person’s partner/spouse, parents, children and/or caregivers.

1.2 - Who Is a Certified Peer Visitor?
Certified Peer Visitors (CPVs) are trained volunteers who have adjusted well to living with limb loss and are able to provide encouragement and answers from a place, and at a pace, that an individual affected by limb loss can better relate to. CPVs have lived with limb loss for at least one year and believe that peer support and networking with other people affected by limb loss is a vital part of everyone’s recovery process.

Certified Peer Visitors may also be trained if they are family members or caregivers of people with limb loss; once these individuals are trained, they can be available to meet with others affected by limb loss, including partners/spouses, parents, children and/or caregivers.

Certified Peer Visitors are available to meet with people affected by limb loss at any time throughout their recovery and readjustment. The Amputee Coalition encourages people whenever possible to request a peer visit early in their recovery so that the CPV can provide information about their own experiences and offer helpful insight and encouragement during the recovery process.

Certified Peer Visitors are prohibited from providing medical advice, and from providing recommendations about specific products or practitioners, but they are instrumental in answering questions people may have about living life with limb loss. Every effort is made to match a CPV who can closely relate to each individual situation. This includes matching based on age, sex, cause of limb loss, and interests in similar things or activities.

1.3 - Certified Peer Visitor Requirements/Screening Criteria
Individuals must meet all of the qualifications below and must successfully pass the Amputee Coalition’s Certified Peer Visitor Training (see Article 2.1) to be recognized as an Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor (CPV):
- Have experienced limb loss or be someone affected by limb loss (partner/spouse, family member, caregiver)
- Be at least 18 years old to conduct a peer visit individually, or be certified along with a parent or caregiver if between the ages of 10 and 18 to be able to conduct joint supervised visits
- Be at least 12 months post-amputation
- Be able to communicate well with others
Be able to network with healthcare facilities and professionals who serve people affected by limb loss

Be knowledgeable about and supportive of the Amputee Coalition, including the National Limb Loss Resource Center and key publications and materials

Be knowledgeable about basic limb loss statistics, including all amputation levels, and the effects of limb loss

Be willing to authorize and able to pass a criminal background check at your own expense every four years for the duration of your certification

Be able to provide three references, including at least one from a healthcare provider and one from the applicant’s support group leader if that applicant is a member of a support group. References cannot be family members.

Provide all necessary information to the Amputee Coalition, including but not limited to, name, email, phone, address, date of birth, level of limb loss, cause of amputation, date of amputation, interests and activities, and the distance willing to travel to conduct a peer visit

Be an individual subscriber to the Amputee Coalition’s inMotion magazine and subscribe to all Amputee Coalition emails to keep apprised of ongoing activities

Not be principally employed in a marketing capacity by a manufacturer of devices or provider of services to people affected by limb loss.

Individuals must meet all of the qualifications above and must successfully pass the Amputee Coalition’s Certified Peer Visitor Training to be recognized as an Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor (CPV). Certifications are renewed on a biennial basis, taking into account the CPV’s recertification, reports of peer visits submitted to the Amputee Coalition, surveys about conducted peer visits, and adherence to standards and practices required by the Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor Program.

1.4 - Characteristics of a Peer Visitor

A role model who has adapted to living well with limb loss.

A sensitive listener who will provide information to the person seeking support to help solve problems, perform daily living tasks, and maintain good health, relationships and effective coping skills.

Explores educational/life skill resources with the person seeking support.

Provides educational, community and Amputee Coalition resources when conducting a peer visit.

Promotes physical activity and mobility safety through participation in rehabilitation therapy sessions and other events and activities.

Encourages a confident integration into family, social, work-related and online activities/environments.

Ability to acknowledge and demonstrate, during certification training and the peer visit, that “the peer visit is not about me; it is about the person I am visiting.”

1.5 - Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitors Code of Ethics

1. Respect the individual.

2. Treat everyone with respect, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, maternity, marital or family status, disability, age or national origin.
4. Do not share information outside the team. Fill out the Amputee Coalition’s Peer Visit Report and submit it to the appropriate Amputee Coalition staff or hospital staff.
5. Respect the beliefs and values of the individual and keep your own beliefs private.
6. Cooperate with members of the individual’s family and healthcare team.
7. Do not recommend surgery, treatments or medications.
8. Do not recommend a healthcare provider, product or manufacturer.
9. Wear only plain clothing, nothing branded that endorses industry entities.
10. Be professional.
11. Be honest and demonstrate trustworthiness.
12. Never handle or accept money or valuables.
13. Wear your current Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor badge.
14. Make sure people know you are a volunteer peer visitor certified by the Amputee Coalition and never let anyone think you are a paid counselor, hospital staff or employee of the Amputee Coalition.
15. Act with integrity and positivity at all times, do not use defamatory statements or engage in negative discussions regarding the Coalition.

1.6 - Violations of the Code of Ethics
If any certified peer visitor is found to be in violation of the items outlined in the Code of Ethics, it will result in corrective action up to and including immediate dismissal and revocation of the status of a Certified Peer Visitor.
ARTICLE II: CERTIFIED PEER VISITOR TRAINING PROCESS

2.1 - CPV Application Process
If an individual meets all the CPV requirements, and there is an available training scheduled, they should complete an online CPV application form, which can be obtained from the Amputee Coalition’s web site. This form must be completed and submitted to the Peer Support Department (PSD) at least two weeks prior to the training. Once the $40 registration fee has been paid to the Amputee Coalition, the PSD will initiate the criminal background check process (see Addendum 1) by sending the candidate an email with a link to complete their check online. When a clean background has been established, the PSD will notify the trainer. The trainer will verify all references. Completed reference forms must then be sent to the Amputee Coalition Peer Support Department no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled training course. (For additional details related to the training process, please refer to Addendum 2).

2.2 - CPV Training Class Outline
To become a CPV, a person with limb loss/difference or a family member must meet all criteria, have a clean criminal history, have good personal references and successfully complete an eight-hour training course offered at one of our partner hospitals/rehab facilities or a support group. The training helps individuals learn to recognize the elements of recovery and how to respond with helpful interventions during different phases of emotional adjustment. Once certified, the new CPV will receive a certificate and identification card, and may begin making peer visits when requested. Certified Peer Visitors are required to biennially update their certification through an online recertification test.

CPV trainings are offered, as needed, at partner hospital and rehab facilities. Partner facilities will typically host one to two trainings each year. Trainings are also offered at the request of support groups that are willing to host a training. Every year, the Amputee Coalition conducts a CPV training in conjunction with its annual National Conference.

2.3 - CPV & CPV Trainer Credentials
Individuals who successfully complete the CPV training course will receive a certificate and identification badge with expiration date. CPV certification is valid for two years from the date of certification. For those individuals trained as a CPV as well as a CPV trainer, the trainer certification date will be used for a recertification timeline. Trainers must facilitate a minimum of one class every two years to maintain their trainer certification. Volunteers will be notified via email by the Amputee Coalition when it is time to recertify. Once recertification has been successfully completed, an updated ID card will be sent through the mail. Individuals may attempt the recertification test up to three times in one year. CPVs who do not recertify will not receive peer visit referrals, be eligible to receive outreach materials free of charge, have access to mobile Support App or be able to conduct peer visits on behalf of the Coalition until recertification is complete. This must occur within 60 days from the date of expiration. In the event that the individual fails to pass or does not recertify within 60 days from date of expiration, the individual must attend a live CPV training course before conducting peer visits on behalf of the Coalition. This process will be monitored by the Director of Support & Outreach.
ARTICLE III: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 - CPV Matching Process
When an individual requests a peer visit through the Amputee Coalition, the Amputee Coalition will match the individual to a CPV based on location, level of amputation, cause of amputation, gender and age. The Amputee Coalition will then contact the CPV via email, phone or through the Amputee Coalition Support App. The CPV should always contact the individual within two days of confirming the ability to conduct the visit. The peer visit should be conducted within five to seven days. If you are unable to conduct the visit, please notify the Coalition as soon as possible so an alternate CPV can be located.

Certified Peer Visitors may also receive referrals through local hospital partners, rehab facilities, support groups, etc. These visits should be reported as well (see Article 3.3).

3.2 - CPV Materials
Newly certified peer visitors will receive one CPV tote bag upon completion of their CPV training. The materials in the tote bag (Your New Journey folder, First Step, inMotion, and brochures) should be reviewed with the individual you are visiting. This bag and the materials are to be left with the individual after the initial visit. A CPV is eligible to receive an additional supply of tote bags and materials once the Peer Visit Reports have been submitted to the Amputee Coalition (see Article 3.3).

3.3 - CPV Reporting
Peer visit reporting enables the Amputee Coalition to provide helpful resources to new amputees and maintain funding for the program. The Peer Visitor Report form is located on our Web site and can be submitted electronically via the Web, through the Support App, by email or postal mail. Reports submitted through the postal service should be mailed to the Knoxville, Tennessee office. CPVs are required to complete and submit reports for every peer visit conducted (initial or follow-up). These reports should be submitted within 30 days from the date of the initial or follow-up visit.

*If a CPV agrees to conduct a peer visit referred from any source outside of the Coalition and does so as an Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor, a CPV report form must be submitted.*

3.4 - CPV Communication
CPVs are required to keep the Amputee Coalition informed of any changes to their contact information (i.e., email address, phone number, physical address). CPVs who do not respond to email and phone communications after one month of attempted contact are considered to have left the program and will be marked as “inactive” until contact is re-established.
ARTICLE IV: CPV CONDUCT & COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

4.1 - Prohibited Behavior/Conduct
Due to the severity of the implications of not adhering to the following conduct, noncompliance of any of the following rules of conduct will result in immediate dismissal from the Certified Peer Visitor Program, revocation of all current credentials, and, when necessary, legal steps will be taken.

- The CPV will not represent the Amputee Coalition without the express approval of a member of the leadership team or the President & CEO. This includes: representation at functions and events; form letters to members, volunteers and/or other board members; donation and/or sponsorship requests, fundraisers; media representation; legal representation; or any other type of representation not preapproved.
- The CPV will not conduct any type of event: fundraiser; request for donations, services, supplies, sponsorship, information and/or assistance of any kind in the name of the Amputee Coalition without preapproval by the Director of Development or designated member of the leadership team.
- The CPV will not receive any type of personal or monetary compensation for their role at the Amputee Coalition.
- The CPV will not recommend a healthcare provider, product or manufacturer - NO EXCEPTIONS. A CPV may offer a list of local providers to an individual during a visit, but should never discuss personal opinions or experiences with providers.
- The CPV will wear only plain clothing, nothing branded. Neutrality is essential to the success and integrity of the CPV Program. Branded clothing, ID badges, business cards, etc., are prohibited.
- The CPV will never use their Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitor credentials to gain access to patients with the intent to market for any provider/manufacturer/product, to act on behalf of a licensed professional, or to interfere with the treatment/recovery process.
- The CPV will represent the Coalition with integrity and positivity and will not use defamatory statements or engage in negative discussions regarding the organization.
- The CPV will not openly engage with any devotee group.

4.2 - Additional Circumstances
- If the Certified Peer Visitor is a paid employee of a provider clinic or manufacturer, a signed agreement must be submitted to the Amputee Coalition by the CPV and their immediate supervisor that expresses a clear understanding and adherence to this code of ethics in the CPV’s employee capacity.
- Any paid roles by a Certified Peer Visitor to conduct a peer visit must keep their paid role separate from the volunteer role of providing a peer visit and must adhere strictly to this Code of Ethics.
4.3 - Complaint Resolution Procedures

While we hope that volunteering with the Amputee Coalition is a positive experience for all CPVs, we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong. As an organization, we are committed to ensuring that our volunteers and members of our community alike are treated fairly and that all expectations of conduct are upheld. This procedure will ensure consistency in our response to problems and resolving them, and will set out what should happen if a problem arises, if the CPV files a complaint, or if someone makes a complaint against the CPV.

All complaints will remain confidential and will only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue. The Amputee Coalition will keep confidential records of the complaint reporting and resolution process. Reporters will be protected and remain anonymous. Retaliation of any sort will not be tolerated.

Part A - Complaint Initiation by a CPV

Stage I: Informal Complaint
The Amputee Coalition values the power of communication. All initial complaints, whether concerning a member of staff, the organization, or another volunteer, should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be resolved this way.

Complaints should be raised with the Director of Support & Outreach. If the complaint concerns this person, the complainant should contact the President & CEO of the Amputee Coalition. Please email peersupport@amputee-coalition.org advising that you are a CPV and that you would like to have an informal discussion about your concern(s). An informal call or meeting will then be arranged.

It is our goal that this stage result in mutually agreed actions to resolve the complaint.

Stage II: Formal Complaint
If the CPV is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage I, a formal complaint may be submitted. This complaint should be written within seven days following the informal discussion. This complaint should be documented on a Complaint Reporting Form (will be sent by Peer Support Department via email) and submitted to the Director of Support & Outreach. If the complaint concerns this person, the complainant should contact the President & CEO of the Amputee Coalition.

The Amputee Coalition will acknowledge formal complaints within seven days. The investigation process and notification of outcome will occur within 30 days from the date of complaint. As part of this process, the CPV will be offered an opportunity to meet with relevant Coalition staff and committee members (as appropriate).

Stage III: Opportunity to Appeal
If the CPV is not satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process, they have the right to appeal to the CEO. At this stage, the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed by the CEO. A final decision will be made by the CEO. This decision will be communicated in writing to the CPV and will be maintained in the CPV’s record.

Updated: December 2019
Part B - Complaint Against a CPV

Stage I: Informal Discussion
If there is a complaint against a CPV, the complainant will be asked to complete and submit a
Complaint Reporting Form to the Amputee Coalition. The form will be sent to the director of
Support & Outreach and reviewed with the Peer Visitor Advisory Committee. Together, the
director of Support & Outreach and the Advisory Committee will evaluate the incident,
allowing the CPV to voice his/her perspective, and determine the appropriate course of
action.

If the CPV refuses to participate in this stage, the CPV will be asked to discontinue
volunteering with the Certified Peer Visitor Program and credentials will be revoked.

Stage II: Written Notification of Investigation
If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage I, the CPV may be issued a written statement
outlining the reason for the complaint and the concern(s) that have been raised. The CPV may
also be offered an opportunity to attend a formal meeting or conference call.

During this process, the CPV’s credentials may be temporarily revoked. If the complaint is
unfounded, the CPV may return to conducting peer visits immediately. If the complaint is
founded, the CPV may be subject to corrective action, up to and including dismissal from all
volunteer activities.

A written notification of outcome will be sent to the CPV upon completion of the
investigation.

Stage III: Opportunity to Appeal
If the CPV is not satisfied with the outcome, the right to appeal to the CEO is available. At
this stage, the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed by the CEO. A final decision
will be made by the CEO. This decision will be communicated in writing to the CPV and will
be maintained in the CPV’s record.
Addendum 1: Amputee Coalition CPV Criminal Background Check Process

As of January 1, 2018, a new element was added to the certification (and recertification) process for Amputee Coalition Certified Peer Visitors: background checks. The healthcare community often requires volunteers to pass a background check prior to having contact with vulnerable people, and our board and committees agree that we should add this layer of professionalism and security for the people we serve.

After a thorough search, we have selected Sterling Volunteers to provide this service. We are confident they will safeguard your personal information just as we do. There is no cost to the CPV for an initial background check; for recertification, the cost is $17.50 (every four years). We are asking that each individual cover this cost. Of course, the results of the background check are yours and background check documentation can be used elsewhere, too.

We count on you to deliver high-quality peer visits based on your training and personal passion, and we know that a background check will only increase the positive perception of the CPV program with hospital groups and the community we serve. We’ve added Frequently Asked Questions below to help clarify the details.

Certified Peer Visitor Background Checks: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why were background checks added?
A: Like most healthcare organizations, we are committed to the professionalism and training of our volunteers. This is one aspect that is becoming more and more common: asking people who are visiting vulnerable adults and children to have a background check. It builds trust and confidence in the program even before you step through the door or call on the phone.

Q: I can’t afford this cost. Are there any funding options?
A: Please let us know if this is the only barrier to your working with us. We do not have a formal funding process, but we need your feedback as we implement this program.

Q: Do I have to use a certain background check company?
A: Yes. We have researched several to be sure that your information is guarded and kept confidential. Sterling Volunteers will contact you by email to start the process and receive payment for the background check (if applicable). Your identifying information (like your Social Security number) will not be transferred to the Amputee Coalition. We will have access to your background check, housed in the background check company’s secure systems, but will not store or share the information as part of the CPV registration process.

Q: I’ve never had a background check. What is included? What would disqualify me?
A: These background checks will include items like checking for criminal history and predator registration. We will always consider the severity and how recent any incident is. Typically, things like a felony conviction will disqualify an applicant.
Addendum 2: Amputee Coalition CPV Training Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPV Trainer/Host</th>
<th>Amputee Coalition Peer Support Department (PSD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8-12 Weeks in Advance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set date for the training and notify the Peer Support Department (PSD) to provide date, location, trainer(s) and capacity.</td>
<td>Confirm date and locate a trainer(s) (if needed). The PSD will notify host of selected trainer(s) within two weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise the training and collect applications.</td>
<td>Assist in advertising by displaying the class details on the Coalition’s training calendar as well as social media (as applicable).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4-8 Weeks Prior to Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40 registration fees must be paid to the Amputee Coalition Staff Accountant. Trainer/Host decide if class fees are paid by CPV candidates or supported by host/sponsor. Credit card payments can be made via phone by calling 888/267-5669 x8106.</td>
<td>Accounting will notify PSD when invoice has been paid. PSD sends background check email (from third party) to applicants once registration has been paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainer(s) conduct reference checks on applicants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify the PSD of final number of participants by application deadline (two weeks prior to class date)</td>
<td>Notify trainer(s) of background clearances, once received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify participants of approval to attend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Weeks Prior to Class (Minimum)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit applications and completed references to the PSD. Scan and email is preferred.</td>
<td>Review documentation. Prepare certificates, manuals and handouts for shipment. PSD will begin preparing training materials for shipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1-2 Weeks Prior to Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review shipment to ensure accuracy and completeness. Notify the PSD of any additional needs.</td>
<td>Ship materials to trainer(s)/host.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review curriculum, videos, and slides.</td>
<td>Follow-up with trainer(s)/host to confirm receipt of materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact venue to confirm details (if applicable). Follow up with participants to ensure attendance.</td>
<td>Email the Pre-Training Packet to all participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post Training</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit all course documentation to the PSD. Scan and email preferred.</td>
<td>Review documentation, update records in database, follow-up with new CPVs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact the PSD with any concerns/questions.</td>
<td>Ship ID badges, business cards, and tote bags to new CPVs if did not receive at the end of training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update and distribute CPV lists for local hospital partners &amp; support groups (as applicable).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PSD = Peer Support Department*