

Peer Review Guide

A peer of the individual who is being assessed may be asked for an opinion about the actions of that individual¹. The peer's opinion would include the type of decisions they would have made, and what actions they would have or not have carried out, if faced with the same situation that the individual was dealing with during the event leading up to a patient being harmed or nearly harmed. Peers may also be helpful sources of information about standards or rules that govern the types of decision and actions that were undertaken and may provide perspective about how often most people adhere to them. Peers' explanations may help an assessor understand system factors that interfere with workers' ability to follow standards or rules.

A peer review may be used early on to determine whether to proceed with a just assessment process (Decision 1), or later at Step 3 (assess motivation for noncompliance) to interpret a complex situation where there were multiple system factors that importantly affected an individual's decision and actions.

For the peer review to be fair, the following approach is recommended:

1. Involve peers who have similar training and experience as the individual being assessed.
2. Select peers who do not have obvious biases. For example, this could be a strong personal connection (positive or negative) with the patient or the individual under assessment.
3. Select peers who do not know about the case. If this is not possible or practical then the peer should be coached to not consider the patient's outcome in their responses.
4. Provide peers with the same information (no more and no less) that the individual had at the time they were making decisions and taking or not taking actions. Peers should also be given the context of the situation including the known system factors that were in effect at the time.
5. Ask peers:
 - a. what is normally involved in completing the task(s) that are being assessed?
 - b. how are these tasks normally completed?
 - c. what is the range of acceptable actions to complete the task(s) in question?
 - d. how are things usually done in this workplace?
 - e. what actions would they have taken in the situation and under the same circumstances with which the individual was faced?
 - f. what do they think of the decisions and actions taken by the individual being assessed?²
6. Questions should be open-ended and not leading. It should not be obvious from the way questions are asked that there is an expected answer.
7. Peers should be coached to consider that there is no single 'correct' answer

¹ It is recommended that that at least two and preferably more peers are involved so an assessor understands if there is a range of opinions about the tasks that are being assessed and the decisions made and actions undertaken.

² The peers should not be told what decisions were made or action(s) were taken / not taken by the individual.

If peers do not endorse or support in any way, the decisions made (or not) and/or actions that an individual took then the assessor may be dealing with actions that were **unacceptable**. If this is so, then an assessor may wish to explore further i.e. double-check, with the peers about their opinions to ensure they were properly understood.