



North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists Program Code of Ethics and Conduct Violation Guidelines

OVERVIEW:

The North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist (NCCPSS) Program, and the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services (DMH/DD/SUS), adopted this Code of Ethics and Conduct to establish professional and personal behavioral conduct required from all North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS). A CPSS offers support based on their own life experiences and vows to uphold the stated Values and Code of Ethics and Conduct, demonstrating ethical dedication as peers with lived experience.

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT VIOLATION GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines are used to address violations of the NCCPSS Code of Ethics and Conduct for Certified Peer Support Specialists in North Carolina. The certifying entities will use these guidelines, along with the number and severity of the violations, to determine sanctions. These guidelines are not considered all-inclusive, as there may be violations not addressed or sanctions that have not yet been identified for a specific violation. The certifying entity reserves the right to make modifications under certain circumstances in the absence of sanctions. Below are the standardized ethical norms and expectations for North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists:

SECTION I: Personal Boundaries			
Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
1.1	CPSS will work and exhibit behavior when representing as a CPSS that is defined within their scope of practice as stated by the code of ethics and their employing agency. They will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters wellness, recovery, and resiliency. CPSS will accept responsibility for continuing education and professional development as part of their commitment to providing quality services.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense and Completion of up to 20-hours approved training. Retake and pass the Peer Support Specialist certification exam before reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
1.2	CPSS will not provide services or present themselves as a CPSS under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or illicit drugs. They will take personal responsibility for seeking support and report any changes in their recovery journey to their employer(s) and the NCCPSS Program. Recovery can include engagement in their own personal self-care and community care until they can again provide support to other peers again.	Up to one-year suspension; and If in substance use recovery, proof of relapse prevention efforts (i.e. letter of documentation showing successful completion of a treatment program and/or plan for continuing care.) Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.

1.3	<p>CPSS will not engage in conduct prohibited by state, federal, or local law, including laws prohibiting the use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.</p> <p>CPSS will report any charges obtained while certified to the NC CPSS Program staff. They will then submit documentations of all dispositions.</p>	<p>Up to one-year suspension based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>If in substance use recovery, proof of relapse prevention efforts (i.e. letter of documentation showing successful completion of a treatment program and/or plan for continuing care.)</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
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SECTION II: Professional Standards/Boundaries

Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
2.1	<p>CPSS will support people in making their own choices and honoring self-determination. They will avoid relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of persons engaging in services, impair professional judgement, imply a conflict of interest, or create risk of harm to those supported.</p> <p>CPSS will not provide services to individuals they have any type of relationship with to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family - Past or present sexual relationships - Friendships 	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 10-hours approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
2.2	CPSS will engage in a relationship of mutual responsibility where power is shared and the Peer Support Specialist and the persons engaging in services are equally responsible for maintaining a peer relationship that is mutually beneficial.	<p>Up to 90-day suspension and proof of completion of up to 10-hours of approved training.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.3	CPSS shall not discriminate against others on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, or mental or physical differences. They shall not discriminate against others on the basis of any other preference, personal characteristic, condition, state, or cultural factor protected under Federal, State, or local law.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 8-hours approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.4	CPSS will not take peers to their homes; there is no exception. They will maintain appropriate boundaries and strive to provide a safe environment to prevent harm to persons served.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 10-hours approved training.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.

		Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.	
2.5	CPSS will use a person-centered, strength-based approach, acknowledging that every person has skills and talents they can use to better their lives. They will work within their scope of practice as defined by this Code of Ethics and their employment agency.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 8-hours approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.6	CPSS will remain aware of their skills and limitations and will not provide services or represent themselves as an expert in areas for which they do not have sufficient knowledge or expertise. They will provide services per the policies defined by their employment agency, including hours, days, and authorized locations.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 8-hours approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.7	CPSS will remain current regarding new developments in recovery, resiliency, and wellness; they will become familiar with resources for self-sufficiency, including benefits, employment opportunities, and supports, to better serve their peers.	<p>Up to 90-day suspension and proof of completion of up to 8-hours of approved training.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.8	CPSS will maintain a relationship where the CPSS and the persons engaging in services are equally responsible for a mutually beneficial peer relationship.	<p>Up to 90-day suspension and proof of completion of up to 8-hours of approved training.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.9	CPSS will be responsible for supporting people in using their voices to advocate for the principles of human dignity, self-determination, and empowerment. CPSS will promote self-sufficiency in the wellness, recovery, and resiliency journey.	<p>Up to 90-day suspension and proof of completion of up to 8-hours of approved training.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.</p>
2.10	CPSS will support the recovery process for the peer, allowing the peer to direct their own process through choice and shared power.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense and proof of completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.</p>	<p>Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or</p>

			Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.
2.11	CPSS will conduct themselves in a way that does not jeopardize the integrity of the peer-to-peer relationship.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense and proof of completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.	Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.
SECTION III: Confidentiality and Privileged Communication			
Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
3.1	CPSS will respect the rights, dignity, privacy, and confidentiality of peers at all times. Confidential information will only be shared with a prior written agreement from the person served if authorized or required by law.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and/or Completion of up to 10-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
3.2	CPSS will be transparent and inform peers that confidential information may be shared for reasons such as safety, employer policies, state and federal laws violations, mandatory reporting, etc.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and Completion of up to 10-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
SECTION IV: Exploitation			
Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
4.1	CPSS will support peers, and practice honest, and direct communication, in a respectful and culturally relevant manner. CPSS will work with peers without conflict to resolve challenges with care and compassion.	Up to 90-day suspension and proof of completion of up to 8-hours of approved training.	Up to six-month suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification; and/or Completion of up to 20-hours approved training.
4.2	CPSS will follow organizational policies and guidelines regarding giving and receiving gifts. However, if a CPSS is not working with an organization they	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.

	will follow the Code of Ethics and Conducts policy. CPSS will not lend, give, or receive money, gifts, or payment for services from peers unless they meet the standards of professional guidelines.	Completion of up to 10-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.	
4.3	CPSS will not engage in exploitive relationships with coworkers or those they support to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with application for reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
4.4	CPSS will recognize the unique nature of the peer relationship and seek supervision and/or peer support services, as necessary, to maintain appropriate boundaries with persons engaging in services.	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and Completion of up to 8-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
SECTION V: Fraud Related Misconduct			
Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
5.1	CPSS will not secure certification/recertification, or assist another peer to secure certification/recertification, by fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation. This includes, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a false statement on any application for certification. • Withholding information on any application for certification. • Impersonating another peer or permitting another peer to use their certification for the purpose of providing peer support services. • Plagiarism of applications or certification documents. 	Up to one-year suspension; and Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training. Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
5.2	CPSS will act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity and follow organizational and	A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.

	NC CPSS Program policies and resist influences that interfere with professional performance. This includes fraud, waste, or abuse in the delivery of peer support services whenever an individual is representing themselves as a CPSS.	<p>of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	
5.3	CPSS will maintain the authenticity and integrity of their role. It is critical to the effectiveness of peer support services. They will remain knowledgeable of their skills and limitations, and not provide services or represent themselves as an expert in areas for which they do not have sufficient knowledge or expertise.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
SECTION VI: Sexual Misconduct			
Section #	Code of Ethics	Minimum Sanction(s)	Maximum Sanction(s)
6.1	CPSS will not engage in romantic or sexual/intimate activities with individuals they are serving (peers), whether consensual or forced. They will not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior romantic or sexual relationship at all, no length of time will make this null or void.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.
6.2	CPSS will not engage in exploitive relationships with coworkers or peers they support, or previously supported.	<p>A minimum of 3 months with an up to six-months suspension of Peer Support Specialist certification based on severity of offense; and</p> <p>Completion of up to 20-hours of approved training.</p> <p>Valid proof of completion of continued education must be submitted along with the application for reinstatement of certification.</p>	Permanent revocation of Peer Support Specialist certification.

ATTESTATION AGREEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge and accept that I have fully read, understood, and will adhere to the NCPSS Program Code of Ethics and Conduct Violation Guidelines. I understand and accept that signing this document indicates that:

- I will adhere to and accept any sanctions for violating the Code of Ethics and Conduct outlined by the NCCPSS Program or designated entity defined by DMH/DD/SUS.
- I cannot renew my certification until any pending investigation for violating the Code of Ethics or Conduct is resolved.
- I will adhere to this as a binding contract for my PSS certification, and violating the Code of Ethics and Conduct Violation guidelines could result in the above sanctions and/or revocation of my PSS certification.

Name:	
Signature:	Date: