

NORTH CAROLINA
CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Course Domains & Core Concepts



Behavioral Health Springboard (BHS)
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**NORTH CAROLINA CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM
TRAINING CORE CONCEPTS**

	Domains	Core Concepts
1	Commitment to Personal Recovery: PSS demonstrate a commitment to <i>their own personal recovery</i> by showing that they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understand the concepts of personal wellness and how these concepts apply to the PSS. B. Understand the reasons for, and methods used, to self-monitor their own wellness. C. Can define and demonstrate how to communicate (written, verbal, etc.) to the right people (e.g., supervisor, sponsor, etc.) when issues of personal wellness interfere with the PSS's ability to do their job. D. Can define and use person-first recovery language at all times to support personal recovery and empowerment. E. Can show an understanding of how the PSS's personal wellness impacts agency standing in the community. F. Know the effect of their personal limits on their own wellness, and how to maintain their personal wellness.
2	Relationship Building: PSS demonstrate an understanding of the concepts necessary to develop and maintain healthy relationships with the people they serve, within the agency they work in, other agencies, and their community, by showing that they:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understands how to develop and maintain trust and the importance of being trustworthy. B. Understands the possible consequences of the impact of failure to maintain trust. C. Understand and can demonstrate the ability to listen empathetically without judgment and accept the individual as he or she is right now. D. Understand and can demonstrate the importance of clear verbal and nonverbal communication skills and how different situations may require different communication skills. E. Understand and can demonstrate the process of active listening, especially the use of open-ended questions. F. Support the development and maintenance of community-wide regard for individuals served, and PSS can define and use person-first recovery-oriented language at all times. G. Understand and can demonstrate the importance of developing and maintaining mutual respect and genuineness in building personal connections. H. Understand and can demonstrate the importance of developing, maintaining and practicing unconditional positive regard in building personal connections.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Understands when and how to share their personal experience and when to listen to offer hope and acceptance. J. Understands the importance of sitting comfortably with silence to offer hope and acceptance in recovery. K. Understand the importance of being able to practice unconditional positive regard at all times L. Can communicate with the person served, coworkers, community members, etc., the importance and creation of a wellness identity, by stripping away the old "illness identity" through open sharing and challenging viewpoints. M. Can define and communicate alternatives to prevent hospitalization and to support individuals served in the community whenever possible. N. Can promote a recovery environment in the community, including home and the workplace.
3	<p>Peer Support Interaction: PSS demonstrate an understanding of the concepts necessary to support the people they serve, by showing that they:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Can define and demonstrate outreach and engagement skills with individuals served, being aware of issues such as gender, culture, etc., to begin building a professional peer relationship. B. Can demonstrate skills to support the individual served to develop a wellness identity to support the person's goals and dreams. C. Understand their role as a PSS and the role of others in accordance with a variety of plans to support the individual served during a crisis. D. Can define, model, and mentor recovery values, attitudes, beliefs, and personal actions to encourage wellness and resilience for the person's served. E. Can explore with the person's served, the importance and creation of a wellness identity full of potential and possible futures by stripping away the old "illness identity" through open sharing and challenging viewpoints. F. Can promote an individual's opportunity for personal growth by identifying teachable moments for building relationship skills to empower the individual and enhance personal responsibility. G. Understand, model, and share, a variety of decision-making tools to encourage a person's ability to make informed choices. H. Can assist the person's served to re-establish themselves as a valued member of the community by providing examples of healthy social interactions and facilitating familiarity with and connection to the local community.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Understand and explore with the person served how to navigate reentry from long-term hospitalization, incarceration, or other congregate living situations that have left the peer with few or no natural supports or connections in the community (Daily Living Skills or other independence deficits, issues with guardianship, housing or employment challenges, etc.) J. Can discuss what is and is not peer support and how it is different from other therapeutic professional relationships, with person's served, team members, and the wider community. K. Can define the term "mutuality" and understand the importance of maintaining mutuality in their relationship with peers served. L. Can provide examples of how mutuality in a peer relationship can prevent or dispel power differentials and allow the opportunity to enhance the peer relationship. M. Understand the importance of discussing, documenting, and continuously defining obligations around "safety" and "support" with the person served. N. Understand the importance of discussing, documenting, and continuously defining what constitutes support with the person served. O. Can build and preserve the professional peer relationship by exploring what has worked and not worked in the past to identify effective peer support interactions. P. Understand the importance of the PSS being present with the person, including the ability to sit with discomfort and staying in their role as a peer when confronted with a person's ability to feel safe. Q. Can recognize and appropriately respond to emergencies to include physical and behavioral health crisis. R. Understand the importance of being knowledgeable and following an employer's emergency response procedure. S. Understand the importance of PSS working and behaving in ways that make them appear competent, reliable, and respectful (professional).
4	<p>Systems Competencies: PSS demonstrate an understanding of the concepts necessary to support the people they serve and the agency they work in, by showing they:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Have a basic knowledge of the history, including N.C. history, of the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Consumer/ Survivor Movement and its relationship to social justice to include, at a minimum: Civil Rights Movement; Olmstead Decision; Americans with Disabilities Act; Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Deinstitutionalization; MH Parity and Addiction Equity Act; history of peer support; NC Department Of

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		<p>Justice settlement 2012; Eugenics/Sterilization; The Vermont longitudinal study of persons with mental illness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B. Support the individual in navigating systems (medical, social services, legal, etc.) through activities such as: accompanying him or her; coaching on court protocol; promoting timely appearance, proper dress, behavior, and speech for each unique setting. C. Understand the process of working with their team/co-workers/ supervisor, to provide support to individuals who show a need to be referred to other resources and services. D. Understand the importance of being able to support each individual in accessing community resources by facilitating familiarity and connection to the local community to achieve desired integration. E. Can promote self-advocacy by facilitating each individual's education about his or her human and legal rights. F. Understand the importance of empowering an individual by supporting the person to exercise their human and legal rights. G. Understand the importance of job responsibilities defined within an agency. H. Understand the reasons for adhering to agency policy, procedures, and code of conduct. I. Can provide complete, accurate, and timely documentation in recovery-oriented language for all services provided in a manner that is consistent with agency, state, and federal requirements in order to obtain compensation, maintain medical records, and demonstrate quality of care. J. Understand the critical importance of maintaining, securing, and keeping confidential personal medical information and records in adherence to federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations (HIPAA, CFR 42). K. Can report pertinent observations and events in accordance with their role as a PSS and agency/team requirements, to improve service delivery and to help the individual achieve their goals.
5	<p>Ethics and Boundaries: PSS demonstrate application of the <i>North Carolina Certified Peer</i> Support Specialist Code of Ethics in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understand legal responsibilities around mandatory reporting around abuse and neglect of children, adults with disabilities and older adults, etc.). B. Understand and can apply ethical decision-making around boundaries or limits of the PSS relationship with others (i.e. colleagues, parents and family members, people served, etc.)

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	everyday activities by showing that they:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C. Understand and can apply NC PSS code of ethics to decision making and boundaries and limits of PSS relationship with others D. Understand their role in supporting the choices of persons served i.e. PSS are not acting coercively.
6	Substance Use Disorders: PSS demonstrate an understanding of the concept of addiction as a disease vs. moral failure by showing that they:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understand that there are many paths to recovery and resilience and can identify examples. B. Understand return to use (formerly referred to as "relapse") can be a component of recovery and may be a stage in the change process. C. Can assist in planning for prevention of return to use and a renewed commitment to wellness. D. Understand the importance of reassuring the person served of their ongoing commitment to support him/her non-judgmentally if "return to use" occurs. E. Have knowledge of the prevalence of co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health challenges.
7	Trauma-Informed Practice: PSS demonstrate an appreciation for the role and influence of trauma on behavioral health by showing that they:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Can define trauma and identify possible sources of, and coping mechanisms associated with trauma (e.g. fight, flight, or freeze). B. Understand that people react differently to the same trauma. C. Can recognize short- and long-term effects of trauma (e.g. Adverse Childhood Experiences Study findings). D. Understand and discuss strategies to guard against secondary (vicarious) trauma and compassion fatigue E. Understand that trauma and healing can be affected by cultural differences including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, language, and family history. F. Understand and discuss how experiences within various systems may have traumatized the person served, (e.g. experiences within the Substance Use or Mental Health Treatment systems of care. Experiences with law enforcement and/or the judicial system) G. Understand the following six guiding principles of trauma informed care as developed by the CDC and SAMHSA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Safety ii. Trustworthiness & transparency. iii. Peer support.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Collaboration & mutuality. v. Empowerment & choice. vi. Cultural, historical & gender issues <p>H. Understand the prevalence of Traumatic Brain Injury, Acute Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</p> <p>I. Understand how Traumatic Brain Injury, Acute Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder impacts mental health challenges and substance use disorders.</p>
8	<p>In Support of Service Members and Families: PSS demonstrate an understanding of the military as a unique culture with different subcultures by showing that they:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Recognize and can address the stigma associated with having behavioral health challenges in the military. B. Understand how to navigate resources available specifically for military members and their families.
9	<p>Cultural Competence/Awareness: PSS demonstrate a respect for cultural differences and can cultivate successful approaches to diversity by showing that they:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understand the need to continue to improve their awareness of self and their value systems. B. Have knowledge of strategies to recognize and address one's own implicit bias. C. Understand unstated institutional cultural norms in workplaces, communities, and society, and how those norms lead to inequities. D. Maintain a working knowledge of the history, culture, beliefs, values and needs of diverse individuals and communities.