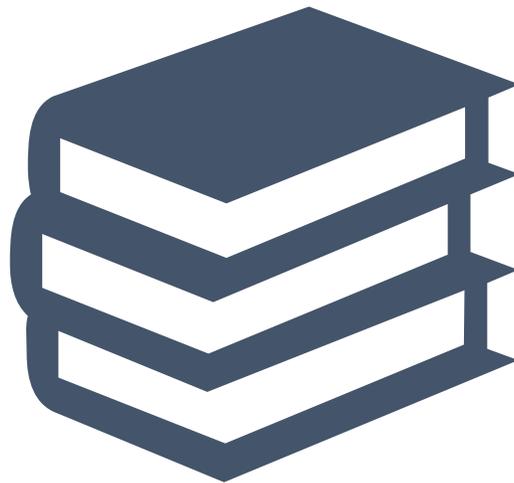**NORTH CAROLINA'S**

CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Approved Courses

Recertification Plan

February 2021

CONTENTS

Purpose of Recertification

In 2015, the NCCPSS developed a new process to review and approve courses for the Program. These approved courses were part of the Program's training requirements, and applicants were required to complete any of the approved and submit their certificate as part of their application packet. The initial plan was to recertify the approved courses after two years of receiving approval. The Program was unable to follow through with the plan to recertify the courses for different reasons. The purpose of recertification is twofold:

- The NCCPSS program added new core concepts that are relevant to the PSS workforce development and service delivery to the following domains:
    - Trauma-informed practice,
    - Cultural competencies,
    - Peer support interactions, and
    - System competencies.
- To provide an opportunity for course owners to reorganize their courses after training for a few years.

The NCCPSS Program approved this recertification plan to serve as a road map to recertify the approved courses.

Recertification Timeline

The NCCPSS Program will recertify courses every five years from the course approval date. There are currently 14 approved courses; four of these courses are past the five years of their last approval. Per the five-year timeline, these four courses are due immediately for recertification. The review team will begin with courses approved in 2015 and 2016 and send a notification to owners of courses approved in 2017. With this strategy, the review team can better manage the workload involved in recertifying all the approved courses.

Recertified Course (Training) Hours

The NCCPSS Program reviewed the CSEG tool and added new concepts to address peer interaction and trauma-informed practice domains. These additions will result in additional content, which will require extra training time. Also, one of the themes during the focus group sessions was limited training hours. CPSS indicated that they wish they had more training hours, and employers reported inadequate

training as a challenge to the effective delivery of peer services. Considering all the above, the Program is increasing the training hours of approved courses to 50 hours. **The course owners must complete at least 40 hours of instruction face-to-face**. To make up the additional training hours, the Program recommends the following:

- The course owner adds more time to the face-to-face training
- The course owner develops pre-work to be completed by training participants before the face-to-face training sessions.
- The course owner develops homework and a plan to evaluate the assignment.

The course owner must include any pre-work or homework and evaluation plan in the recertification packet for review.

Recertification Criteria

The NCCPSS Program currently has 14 approved courses with approval dates between 2015 and 2020. All owners must recertify their courses every five years to keep their status as a NCCPSS approved course. The Recertification Subcommittee recommends the following criteria for recertification:

- The course must be a current NCCPSS approved 40-hour course
- It must have been at least four years since the last course approval date
- The course owner is willing to adhere to the training and trainer policies of the NCCPSS Program and the Course Owner Code of Ethics

Note that certified trainers of approved 40-hour courses have to train the course at least twice a year to keep their status as a Certified Trainer for that course.

The next section outlines the materials and documents to be submitted by the course owner for recertification.

Recertification Packet

The NCCPSS Program requires a course owner to submit a packet for recertification that includes the following:

Recertification Fee:

The course owner will pay a recertification fee of $1,200 for recertification. The Program will use the payment received to reimburse contractors of BHS (CPSS) for course reviews. The compensation covers the amount of time committed to reviewing the course and other technical assistance provided to the course owner during the recertification period. The NCCPSS Program will cover any other additional costs (e.g., postage).

Course Submission and Evaluation Guidelines:

The course owner will complete and submit the new *Course Submission and Evaluation Guidelines* (CSEG) tool. This tool is a revised version of the course owners' CSEG tool used during the initial course approval process. The new CSEG tool has new core concepts added to capture current information and trends in the field. Course owners will ensure that they provide information to address every core concept in the CSEG tool before submitting the recertification packet. ***The CSEG tool includes instructions on how to complete it accurately (see Appendix A).***

Course Instructor's Manual:

The course owner will submit an Instructor manual for review. The course instructor's manual should address all the core concepts identified under each of the NCCPSS Program curriculum's nine domains. Information presented must include citation references to content on each core concept and necessary teaching methods for teaching the concepts to training participants. Thus, the course owner will provide information that addresses each core concept and outline how an instructor will impart these core concepts to the training participants in **ONE** instructor manual. The course owner will ensure that all requirements in the CSEG tool are addressed in the Instructor Manual*.* All course owners must submit **THREE** identical copies of the **ONE** Instructor Manual, each in a **three-ring binder**.

Training of Trainer (TOT) Manual:

The course owner will submit a TOT manual for review. As part of the required documentation for recertification, the course owner must complete the Training of Trainer (TOT) guide. The course owner

will use the NCCPSS guide for adult learning to develop a TOT manual. The review team will thoroughly assess the TOT manual in addition to the Instructor Manual. The course owner will use this tool to conduct current and future course owners' training after the recertification approval (see Appendix B).

Additional Materials:

The course owner will submit other additional documents relevant to teaching the course. The NCCPSS Program requires course owners to have a PowerPoint slide deck for their course and submit the slide deck as part of their recertification package. The course owner will also present any materials such as videos and handouts on a flash drive.

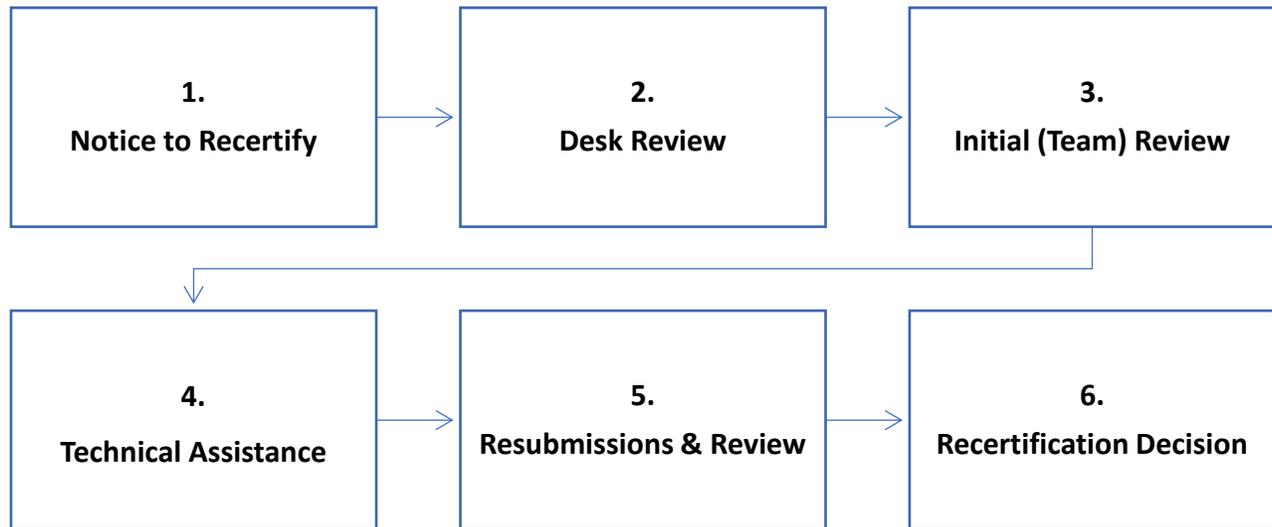**Electronic Copy of Materials:**

The course owner will submit an electronic copy of all materials to the Program at pssregistry@unc.edu. The electronic versions must be in the following formats: MS Word, PowerPoint, PDF, or compatible file types. ***Please do not submit documents through Google Documents.*** Below is a checklist of documents and additional materials to be included in the recertification Packet.

Item to Submit	3 Hard Copies	1 Electronic
Course Instructor's Manual		
Course Submission and Evaluation Guidelines (CSEG) Tool		
Training of Trainer (TOT) Manual		
Course PowerPoint Slide Deck		
Other Training Materials (Handouts, Homework, Videos, etc.)		

The next section describes the recertification process. This process explains the course owner's expectations and responsibilities, the review team's role, and the NCCPSS program staff's function from start to end regarding the approved 50-hour course recertification.

<center>**Recertification Process**</center>

The NCCPSS Program the process outlined below for recertification of the approved courses. The process will begin when the course owner receives a notification to recertify and end with the decision. Below is the description of the steps in the process.

1. **Notice to Recertify**	**2.** **Desk Review**	**3.** **Initial (Team) Review**
4. **Technical Assistance**	**5.** **Resubmissions & Review**	**6.** **Recertification Decision**

1. **Notice to Recertify:**

The NCCPSS Program staff will send a notification to a course owner of an approved course about the upcoming recertification one year before the fifth anniversary of the course approval date. BHS staff will send a letter to the course owner (email and certified mail) that outlines the process, documents (materials) to submit for recertification, and the date to acknowledge receipt of the notification. The Program will also include in the letter the date by which the Program must receive the recertification packet (6 months from the date of acknowledgment of receipt of notification letter). To ensure that the course owner received the notification, they must acknowledge reception of the information and advise the program of their intention to recertify through an email or regular mail by the date specified in the notification letter. The Program will consider no acknowledgment of reception and intent to recertify from a course owner the same as a notice NOT to recertify their course. In that case, the Program will post the expiration date of that 40-hour approved course on the PSS website after the expiration of the specified date (see chart below).

Chart 1: Timeline between Notification and Expiration

Action/Months (Before Expiration of Approval Date)	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Notification Letter	■											
Acknowledge Receipt & Send Intent to Recertify		■										
Preparation of Recertification Packet			■	■	■	■						
Submit Recertification Packet							■					
Submit Recertification (after extension)								■				
Course Expiration Date Posted on Website									■	■	■	■

Courses Due to Recertify:

There are currently four courses that are past due to recertify and a couple coming up due. The approved courses below will have different timelines than the one outlined under the notice to recertify. The review will develop a timeline that provides enough time to the course owners, ensuring that the course recertification is done swiftly to get the Program back on the above timeline. Below is the list of courses approved in 2015 and 2016 and their approval dates:

No.	Approved 40-Hour Course	Approved Date
1	Take Your Heart to Work (Gin Monroe)	August 31, 2015
2	Vaya Health PSS Course (Vaya)	October 12, 2015
3	Recovery Milestones: A PST Journey 40 Hour (Cardinal Innovations Healthcare)	January 29, 2016
4	NC - HOPE PSS Certification Training Program (VOICE Therapeutic Solutions)	January 29, 2016
5	Peer Employment Training (RI)	April 7, 2016
6	Peer Academy 40 Hours Course (PRN)	June 7, 2016

To ensure that the review team spreads the workload evenly (considering their other responsibilities), the timeline outlines each course's specific date to submit their recertification packet. Thus, the Program staff will send a letter to each of the above courses with a date to submit their recertification packet. This plan will focus on the urgent need to get back to the proposed recertification notification and review timelines.

2. Desk Review:

The Program staff will complete a preliminary desk review of the course before the initial assessment. The significance of the desk review is to ensure that:

1. The course owner used the new CSEG tool to organize and present information in the format established by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.

2. The course owner cited the correct content for **ANY** three of the newly added core concepts and specified teaching methods for these core concepts to be selected and used for all courses recertifying.

After the desk review, the Program staff will determine if the course is ready to be mailed to the initial review team. If the course passes the desk review, the Program staff will ship the materials to the initial review team. If the course does not pass the desk review, the Program staff will send the packet back to the course owner for corrections and resubmission within 30 calendar days. If the course does not pass the desk review for the second time, the Program will post the course expiration date on the website**.**

3. Initial (Team) Review:

The initial recertification review will mirror the initial course review process used during the original approval. Three people (one Program staff from BHS, one from NC DMH/DD/SAS, and a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS), a BHS Contractor) will constitute the review team. First, the team will complete an independent review of the course. After the team reviews the curriculum individually, they will convene to discuss and harmonize the findings. The team will ensure that the content cited addresses each domain and core concept(s) established by the DMHDDSAS and the teaching methods are adequate to teach the core concept.

The team will have 60-90 business days from receipt of hard copies of the course to complete the initial review and send a report to the course owner. The team will email the course owner if they cannot complete the first assessment within the stated timeframe. At the end of the initial review, the team will send a comprehensive report by email to the course owner, indicating approved and unapproved concepts and the rationale for not supporting a particular core concept. This email also extends an offer to the course owner to schedule an appointment for technical assistance.

4.   Technical Assistance:

The review team will provide technical assistance to course owners during the recertification process. The course owner has two conference calls (via Zoom) for technical assistance to discuss the initial review reports and any other technical assistance needed if requested by the course owner. The review team may also assess and provide additional conference calls via Zoom on an as-needed basis. The course owner may also send emails to the review team to ask general questions or seek clarification on the review report.

5.   Resubmission of Modifications & Review:

After the initial review, the course owner has two opportunities to make revisions and corrections identified in the review report. Resubmissions of these corrections or responses to deficiencies stated in the review report will be submitted to the Program using the same protocol for the first submission. The program staff will ship copies of the modified course to the review team members for independent reviews. After the individual study, the team will convene to discuss the modifications to ensure the course owner addressed the review report's issues. The review team will send the review report to the course owner through an email. If the team cannot approve a course, the review team will send a review report to the course owner on the outstanding issues. If this is the first resubmission, the course owner has another opportunity to address all of the concerns raised in the review report. The course owner may request technical assistance to resolve these corrections. *The review team will assess the work needed to complete recertification and make any accommodations.*

6.   Recertification Decision:

The review team will make recommendations for approval or denial of recertification. The Program staff will notify the course owner by email of the recertification decision. If the course is recertified, the course owner will send two bound copies of the final instructors' manual and one copy of the course participant manual to BHS. Upon receipt of the manuals, the Program staff will send a recertification approval packet (certificate and other documents) to the course owner by mail.

After recertification is approved, the Program will update the course description posted on the website and work with course owners to ensure they adhere to the NCCPSS Training and Trainer Policies.

After Recertification

The NCCPSS Program will implement the following steps post recertification approval:

- An updated course description on the PSS website

- Provide technical assistance

These actions will ensure that the course postings are updated, and course owners receive technical assistance.

PSS Website Update:

The Program staff will update the course posting on the website with any new information. To update the course information on the website, the owner will submit in a word document:

- An updated course description on the PSS Website

- A brief biography for each certified trainer (if not currently posted on the website)

- Any other information

The course owner must submit these documents by email when they receive the email with the recertification decision.

Technical Assistance:

The Program will review courses and provide technical assistance to all NCCPSS approved courses. These observations will be unannounced and conducted in line with the guidelines outlined in the "Protocol for NCCPSS Technical Assistance" (Appendix C). After the review, the Technical Assistance Team will write a report to the Program. Program staff will send a copy of the written report to the course owner via email. The course owner may request a conference call to discuss the observation report if they have any questions.

Conclusion

The NCCPSS Program has designated the review team to work with approved course owners when due for recertification. Having a seamless recertification process is central to the Program's commitment to enhancing courses and training quality. Thus, the recertification of courses and other ongoing projects will help develop a workforce with the credibility and competency for the peer support specialist role.