Vision for Peer Support in North Carolina

To develop a qualified Peer Support Specialist workforce that has the support, access, credibility, competency, respect, and the valued role within the mental health and substance use disorder service delivery system to positively impact the lives of individuals experiencing mental health and addiction challenges. This is accomplished through the NC Certified Peer Support Specialist Program.

North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists are:

- People living in recovery with mental health and/or substance use disorders
- People who provide support to others who can benefit from their lived experience
- People who live in recovery with family, friends, a home, and meaningful work (paid or **volunteer**)
- People who have completed the necessary requirements to achieve state certification
- People who have adopted the values, ethics, and responsibilities necessary to provide support to others with mental health and/or substance use disorders

Introduction

This Training of Trainers (TOT) course submission/ evaluation document is designed to support the assessment of NC Certified Peer Support Specialist (NC-CPSS) TOT course materials presented to UNC Behavioral Health Springboard (BHS) and the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, /Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (NC DMH/DD/SAS) for review.

The course provider is required to show that their training focuses on the skills and knowledge required of all TOT courses as established by the North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Training Work Group. Only graduates of UNC BHS-approved NC CPSS TOT training programs are eligible to register as certified trainers with UNC BHS by NC DMH/DD/SAS.

The TOT will provide trainers with skills on managing the classroom environment and ensuring effective delivery of the teaching methods identified in the course. Different situations require different methods, and course providers will have different models of how people learn and how to teach the required content.

Purpose of the North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Training of Trainers Manual

The purpose of this course, the Peer Support Training of Trainers Curriculum, is to support and guide trainers, both new and experienced, in updated, effective knowledge for the optimal and efficient growth of the Peer Support population in North Carolina. This work began with a crew of PSS's hard work applying their blood, sweat equity, and tears and will be reviewed periodically in the coming years. We strive to synthesize ancient knowledge with the newest understandings and technologies for Peer Support's ever-uplifting circle in the State.

How to Use this Document

This evaluation document is designed to help the TOT Manual evaluator establish whether the course owners have addressed the skills and topics identified by providing content on the core content established for the NC PSS TOT tool. The TOT tool requires course owners to use this document to specify the precise location(s) in their TOT (i.e., page numbers and paragraphs) a particular topic is addressed.

TOPICS	TRAINER REQUIREMENTS	Course Developer: Where Demonstrated in TOT Manual	Course Reviewer: Comments
Module Design	It is unnecessary to teach the 5**0 hours (40 hours must be face-to-face instruction)** course in five or more consecutive 8 hour days. However, classes should not be spread out over more than 4 weeks. The development of student critical thinking skills in an essential goal of the course as well as knowledge of course content. Students may need time to digest and learn the more complex skills and abilities presented. The course will be delivered as the developer submitted to the North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Training Work Group. Curriculum developers are responsible for maintaining the fidelity of their trainers to the curriculum as designed.		
Adult Learners	Research supports several key assumptions about adult learners. Consider the following: 1. *Adults' motivation for learning is based on needs and interests.* Their needs and interests should be the starting point. 2. *Adults have a life-centered orientation to learning*. Their instruction should be based on life situations, rather than random content matter. 3. *Experience is the adult learner's richest resource*. Your students have much experience to bring to the discussion you lead. 4. *Adults are self-directed*. Your role is to get your learners thinking and figuring out concepts together with you and the other learners. 5. *You will need to be ready* to accommodate differences in style and pace of learning. 6. The training environment should *be* welcoming so that all learners feel safe to participate. 7. The training presentation should *be engaging*.		

	8. The training should be *presented in a respectful manner*, where learners have an opportunity to share their experiences. (*Effective Adult Learning*, University of Washington, School of Public Health)		
Teaching Adults	The basic rules of good communication are fairly universal, and many of them apply to most teaching situations. Here are some things to consider when you are teaching adults: • *Learn enough about your students to know what they bring or don't bring to the classroom.* Adults are busy people who don't want their time wasted. Focus on what they want and need to know, always emphasize the professional value and applications of what they are learning. • *Link new ideas with information they already know and with their interests.* Adults bring a lot of experience to the training. A good trainer uses examples that link new information to current and previous experiences of the adults. • *Focus on the most relevant information.* Adults don't want to be buried under a mountain of extraneous material. Related stories that add interest are good motivators, but too much extraneous material gets both the teacher and the learner off track. • *Present complete and accurate information.* Adults want to be well informed. They want to learn all the information and skills they need to perform their jobs better. Summaries are helpful but oversimplified, watered-down information is not.* • *Use teaching methods that give adults a chance to share their knowledge and experience.* Include discussions, ask questions, and have participants answer one another's questions.		
Teaching Experienced Learners	One of the challenges you may face as a trainer is to make the learning meaningful for people who have experience and who already know and skillfully apply some or many of the concepts presented in the course. The content is extremely applicable to experienced students, but at a different		

level and with a different emphasis than for new people who are learning the "what's" and "how's" of their job. In contrast to "tell me how," experienced workers will be seeking new ideas and will want to clarify information and procedures, improve skills, address specific issues and solve nagging problems.

You will do a better job of teaching experienced learners if you modify presentations and develop activities to address their specific needs and purposes. Here are some tips and ideas to help you modify instruction for experienced workers:

- The activities and methods used in the curriculum are meant to allow all learners to apply the concepts they are learning. Present real life situations and problems related to the content and invite participants to apply information to address those situations and problems. You might ask experienced workers to develop tools or strategies to teach new learners about the service system. Or you might ask them to present some problems they have had navigating the system and describe how they overcame them. Case studies/vignettes are another good instructional tool that allows experienced learners to apply what they know.
- Experienced learners will benefit from exploring other perspectives. One strategy is to ask them to play "devil's advocate" to argue the opposite position (philosophy, practice, and attitude) from one they would normally defend. You may want to conduct a debate between individuals or teams as a strategy to challenge thinking and promote exploration of new ideas. To stimulate thinking from other perspectives, also consider asking learners to describe a situation, process, or solution the way they think someone else (e.g., family member, co-worker, another agency representative) might present it.

Leading a Discussion	Discussion is best suited for topics that can support a wide range of opinions or for questions that have more than one answer. The instructor's main tasks as discussion leader are to: • Establish a safe learning environment where the individual can learn what real strengths he/she has to become a peer support specialist • Set the tone • Clarify the purpose • Establish the rules/comfort agreement • Keep the discussion interactive and focused on the topic You can do this by asking stimulating questions, adding comments, modeling good listening skills and discussion behaviors, and periodically calling on participants to give examples and opinions, and different points of view. Classroom discussions can become complaint sessions. Students who are anxious or frustrated will look for reassurance from others in the same boat or will look for answers from you. Some discussion **of this** kind is okay if it helps students learn how to do their jobs better, but you should guard against using class time to debate issues and review problems that can't be resolved in a classroom setting. If a student seems to need individual help, arrange to work with that student one-on-one or suggest that the student seek supervision from experienced workers.		
Giving and Receiving Feedback	Many changes in behavior are the direct result of feedback from others. Giving and receiving feedback can be an important tool in the learning process. Some characteristics of useful feedback are: • *It is descriptive rather than evaluative.* Evaluative language may put a person on the defensive. Descriptive language describes specific behavior and can help someone make a positive change.		

"We are being rude to each other" is an evaluative. "We are not following our comfort agreement to not interrupt each other" is descriptive.

- *It is specific rather than general.* Helpful feedback focuses on a particular issue or behavior rather than broad, general issues. Statements are specific, rather than sweeping generalities. "You're not giving others a chance to participate in this discussion" is specific. "You're dominating" is general.
- *It considers the needs of both the receiver and the giver.* Be honest and open when giving feedback but be sure to think about how the person receiving the feedback is feeling. If you say too much the other person may stop listening.
- *It addresses behaviors that can be modified.* It is frustrating to hear about shortcomings over which you have no control. It does no good, for example, to tell someone he has a horrible singing voice if there's nothing he can do about it.
- *It is solicited rather than imposed.* Feedback is most useful when someone has asked for it or when it is part of a standardized evaluation procedure. Think about those times you wanted to say, "Who asked you?" Someone was probably giving you feedback you didn't want or need at the time.
- *It is well-timed.* Feedback is most effective if it is given soon after the behavior. Sometimes, however, it is better to wait until the person is ready to "hear" the feedback. A stressed or angry person may not be in a frame of mind to accept or process feedback, no matter how important or helpful it might be.
- *It is checked for clear communication to be sure the receiver has heard the intended message.* One way to check for clarity is to have the receiver rephrase the message to be sure the receiver's version matches the sender's.

	• *Both giver and receiver have opportunities to check for accuracy with others in a group.* The receiver can ask others if they agree with the feedback to see if the opinions expressed by one person are shared by others. Sometimes feedback is a reflection of one person's particular bias or point of view, rather than an opinion shared by others. Individual opinions are a valid and valuable form of feedback, but they should be kept in perspective.		
Assessing Learner Involvement	Pay attention to behavioral cues to determine if your learners are involved in the training. Cues such as palm on chin, staring into space, drumming fingers are clues that the person is not involved. You can ask questions, stand near the person, or ask the person to do something as ways of breaking through. If nothing works, you may want to speak privately to the person. Consider the necessity of a break if multiple learners are displaying these cues.		
Interactive Presentations	Presentations often can be linked directly to activities. You are encouraged to use all of the materials in creative ways to make the sessions as compelling and relevant as possible. Long lectures are not recommended; rather we suggest that trainers use open-ended questions to stimulate discussion.		
Conducting Activities	Activities are often used in two ways: either to introduce a content topic or to provide practice and application of a skill or concept. Activities can be used independently; however, they are usually more meaningful if used together with presentations. Sample responses for some activities may be included to help you prepare training and conduct activities.		
Activity Handouts	Activity handouts explain or give directions for the activity. They may be used as guidance for activities intended to reinforce the learning experience by providing ways to apply concepts and practice skills.		
Doing Small Group Activities	Some kinds of learning or skill practice are best accomplished in small groups that allow participants to interact in ways they cannot in larger groups. Here are some guidelines for managing small groups:		

	• Form groups of 3 or 4 people per group (limit group size to 5 or 6 people at the most) for best interaction. Some examples of ways to form groups are:
	    ○ Have learners count off by 3's or 4's, and then ask all participants with the same number to form a group.
	    ○ Distribute strips of colored paper, and form groups according to colors.
	    ○ Ask learners to join a group according to their interest in a particular topic.
	• Appoint a person (or have the group choose a person) to take notes and report outcomes.
	• Be sure the group knows its assignments.
	• Post assignments on a board or flip chart, or give written instructions so groups can refer to them throughout the activity.
	• Set time limits, and from time to time announce the amount of time remaining. For example, "There's about a minute of work time left," or "Try to finish in the next two minutes."
	• Consider seat rotation throughout the training
	Restructure groups and encourage learners to choose different partners throughout the course to make sure that learners don't get locked into roles within a group and that people have opportunities to work with different participants.		

Making Role Play Work	Role play is a popular strategy to help a people practice skills, especially those involving communication and interaction. It is also known to be a useful tool to help people change behaviors and attitudes. Role play works because it allows people to try out skills and responses in relatively safe ways, over and over, as needed. Here are several ways to help ensure successful role play:		

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	• State the purpose of the role play so participants know exactly what is expected and can focus attention and energy on practicing specific skills. • Give both role players and observers specific tasks and instructions. • Give examples so participants know how to begin. Emphasize the purpose again and help get the role play started by suggesting specific things to do or avoid doing. • Prepare participants to give and receive meaningful feedback. Review the guidelines for getting and receiving feedback (see above.) Be sure to stress the purpose and usefulness of feedback as a learning and teaching tool. • Do role plays after participants have had a chance to get to know the instructor and one another. • End the role play activity with a discussion so participants can review what they've learned.	
Handouts	Handouts summarize large amounts of information in an easy-to-read format. Encourage students to refer to handouts and charts during presentations and to use them to complete some activities.	
Slides	Slides may help organize presentations, but slides do not replace discussion and other interactivity in the training session. You should not read the slides in place of making a presentation. Consider using participants to read aloud key slides.	
Using Audio Visual Equipment	Good visuals and media can add a lot to any classroom experience but using audiovisual equipment can be the instructor's biggest headache. The following suggestions can help you avoid some common audiovisual equipment problems: • Try out equipment before the class session. • Position equipment so that it projects a large, clear image on the screen. • Practice using slides.	

	- Write clearly on flip charts. - Have an extension cord on hand (duct/electrical tape can also be helpful) - If you are planning to show something from the internet, have a "Plan B" in case you can't access it.		
Tips For Training	Think about what works for you in training. What makes learning meaningful, engaging, interesting, or entertaining? Chances are that what works for you works for others, too, so when planning your training ask yourself what you would like to have happen if you were sitting in the learner's seat. The answer will put you on track to make your instruction meaningful for your students. In search of effective training techniques, many trainers have discovered that there is little (next to nothing) a group of motivated students won't try. This discovery does not mean you should do wild and crazy things just for the sake of the "thing," but it does suggest that you should feel free to be creative.		
Tip 1: Believe what you say	One of the best ways to sell your ideas is to believe them yourself. Your conviction will be apparent and your credibility will increase by leaps and bounds.		
Tip 2: Be yourself	There is rarely a need to be formal in a training setting, so it is okay, even preferable, to talk to your class the same way you would talk to a colleague or friend. If you feel free to be yourself, you will relax and enjoy the experiences. So will your learners.		
Tip 3: Capitalize on pre-presentation "Jitters"	It is natural to get a little nervous when speaking in front of a group (large or small). Use the boost of adrenaline that comes with nervousness to help you get primed and ready to go. Change your mindset to think of pre-class jitters as a kind of excitement that can help you do a better job. Practicing before the class can be helpful to reduce presentation jitters.		

Tip 4: Establish relationships with your learners	It is very helpful to get to know your learners and to establish relationships early in the training. Your first interaction will set the tone for the next few hours, so you should make every effort to set the tone you want to maintain. It's a good idea to get things started by asking questions to motivate the peers to talk about themselves. You will not only discover valuable information about the people you are teaching but will communicate the message that you are interested in your learners.		
Tip 5: Find out what learners want to learn	You can ensure successful training by finding out what your learners want to learn. A good trainer addresses learners' needs first. There are many ways to find out what your learners want to learn: ask them, review objectives and ask them to add to the list, or invite them to write their objectives on a flip chart at any time during the training. Once you know what your audience wants to learn, you can address their needs within the structure of your existing training. For example, you can make your examples fit their expressed learning needs or ask learners to give examples and let the group problem solve together.		
Tip 6: Use Props	As a trainer, you have the responsibilities of a stage performer to get attention and have an impact. For the parts of the training job that are performance-based, it makes sense to borrow some ideas from the theater – costumes and props can add interest and have an impact. For example, rather than talking about how life stressors can be a heavy burden, hand out stones and ask learners to put a stone in their pockets each time you mention a stressor in their lives. The stone prop will speak for itself.		
Tip 7: Use metaphors	Metaphors as learning activities can stimulate creative thinking and help learners make discoveries by experiencing something at one level, then linking their experience and insights as another level to the content of the lesson. For example, if you ask teams to move a ping-pong ball from one jar to another within 6 minutes without using their hands or feet, you give them the experience of solving the problem, which you then link to		

	teamwork and problem-solving strategies they use in their work. The ping-pong ball problem is a metaphor for work-related situations in which workers have constraints, limited resources, and deadlines. The links and applications become clear when you process the activity and talk about who did what and why and what worked or didn't.		
Tip 8: Make participation a goal	Learners learn by doing and they like to participate, so trainers should create lots of opportunities for them to take an active role. Discussions, activities and role plays are good strategies that help create an interactive, participatory learning environment. Structure your lessons to encourage participation: set up a debate, break into small groups, arrange seating in a circle, step back and let others lead.		
Tip 9: Change the pace	Trainers can learn a lot from children's television about keeping a group of learners alert and energetic. Sesame Street has developed an art form of ever-changing rhythms and visuals to get and hold attention. You don't have to be as dynamic as Sesame Street, but you should try to change your style and energy level every 10 minutes. Move around the room, do an activity, ask a question, surprise your group, or change the tempo of your delivery to keep their attention.		
Tip 10: Give out prizes	People of all ages love prizes, and just about anything from clearance items to hotel shampoo samples may make good prizes. Prizes captivate and motivate, especially if they're given out in the spirit of fun and humor.		
Tip 11: Move the furniture	The arrangement of the room can help or hinder training. Consider arranging furniture to accomplish your training objectives. If you want to promote interaction, arrange seating so that participants can see one another. If you want to focus attention on a presentation in the front of the room, arrange seating theater style. Unless the seats are nailed to the floor, you should make an effort to change seating for different purposes throughout the day.		

	The room should be set up in a way that maximizes participation and interaction between participants. If there is enough room, using a "U" shape is preferable, as no one looks at someone else's back and participants can see everyone except for some people in their own row. Make sure there's enough room for people to comfortably step away from their seats to stretch or step out of the room. It's also important to ensure that anyone with a physical disability can easily navigate in the room and have easy access to the materials. This may require copying materials in advance, producing them in large print or Braille, etc.		
Tip 12: Make your visuals large and bold	"I hope people in the back of the room can see this," is not an acceptable training remark. All of your visuals should be large enough for all to see. Slides, for example, should have a limited number of words in 28-point or larger type. Small words or numbers photocopied from a textbook should not, repeat, NEVER, be used as a slide. Remember that graphics really help communicate a message, so use graphs, charts, and pictures whenever possible.		
Tip 13: Get the most out of your flip chart	Flip charts can easily be overused and abused. When you use one, write (print) neatly or ask someone to do it for you. Use colors for emphasis and interest, e.g., blue for titles, green for key words. Underline key points with highlighters for emphasis. Don't forget to tape completed pages to the wall so you can refer to them later. Use flip charts interactively by asking people to post comments throughout the training. Post-it notes can be used for this purpose. Review the post-it comments periodically and address them with the group. You can also use flip charts as a "parking lot" for questions you can't or don't want to answer right then.		
Tip 14: Simplify	There are usually many ways to deliver a message. When it comes to training, a simple message works best. Use "key concepts" to guide your		

	presentation. Build on key ideas with concrete examples to link the message to its practical application.		
Tip 15: Include an action plan	Training should not end when the session ends. Learners should go home with a plan of action to apply what they have learned in your class. Ask participants to develop an action plan and prepare a self-addressed envelope. Copy completed actions plans before they leave the training and mail them a copy a few weeks later as a reminder and motivator.		
Tip 16: Use humor	Humor in training can lift spirits, energize a group, and relieve tension. You do not have to be a stand-up comic to add humor to your training. It is usually sufficient to be playful and react in ways that help a group relax and smile. If you happen to have a talent for making people laugh, use it.		
Tip 17: Tell stories	**Add relevant tip.** Stories are powerful tools to get and hold attention. Think about the many times you have sat up in your seat when someone said "I want to tell you a story." The personal nature of stories draws the listener into the "sharing" of experiences. Stories are a great way to give examples, make a point, create a mood, or stimulate an emotional response based on your personal experience.		
Tip 18: Expand your repertoire	Keep yourself motivated by learning and trying new techniques and activities. Attend workshops and conferences about training and talk to other trainers to get new ideas. Borrow ideas from TV, journals, and web sites. Challenge yourself to continuously improve.		
Dealing With Training Problems	In spite of your best efforts to have everything run smoothly, you may run into difficult situations or challenging people. Instructors must be prepared to handle common people problems that might occur in training or classroom situations. However, we must acknowledge some of the peers in your class may have experienced various types of trauma which may affect the way they participate in class. Please be mindful that it may be difficult for them share their story. Developing a "Comfort Agreement" is very helpful. Here are some typical problems and ideas for handling them.		

Problem 1: Some participants don't contribute	Solutions: • Ask questions to involve participants who have said very little. • Use teaching methods that involve everyone. For example, have every person in the group comment or ask everyone to write an answer. • Call on a reluctant participant by name to answer or comment. • Assign the reluctant participant the role of group reporter. • Remember to be mindful of trauma. **Explain the activity to participants. Check to be certain all participants are comfortable with the planned activity. Allow anyone reporting a concern to excuse themselves during the exercise. Invite them back in once the activity is concluded.** Reassure the participants that confidentiality will be adhered to and that it is safe to share.		
Problem 2: Some participants contribute too much	Solutions: • Use strategies to control contributions. For example, stop the speaker and say, "Let's hear a few other opinions," or "And now let's continue with…." • Praise the contribution and ask for contributions from others. For example, "Your ideas are very helpful. Now, who has another idea?" • Ask direct questions to involve others. For example, "Franklin, what did your group decide?"		
Problem 3: Some participants don't follow directions	Solutions: • Restate the directions. It is possible that the participant missed some of the directions. • Check for understanding **from participants**. Perhaps the participant didn't quite understand what you were instructing them to do. One way to check for understanding is to ask the person if they have any questions about the activity.		

	• Check to see if there is a particular problem. Perhaps the participant doesn't have all the materials or is VERY uncomfortable doing the activity. (Remember to be mindful of trauma.) • Work with the participant or the participant's group. Sometimes having the trainer as a guide helps launch an activity successfully. • Motivate the participants. Explain why the activity is important and give examples of its on-the-job applications.		
Problem 4: Tired participants	Solutions: • Take a short break. Exercise can re-energize a tired group. Get participants up and moving to give them a spark of energy. • Change the pace of your instruction. Something new and different can stimulate interest and make participants more alert. (Be mindful that some people take medications that can cause drowsiness.) • Get people actively involved. Do an activity that will directly involve participants. • Make the room colder. Lowering the temperature may sound strange, but it works. A warm room, especially after lunch, can make people feel sleepy. • Give out prizes. Awarding prizes will change the pace and spark interest. You can give prizes for lots of different things. For example: best tie, first two people back in the room after a break, most recent birthday or the person who remembers "x" (you name "x"). Consider giving chocolate prizes late in the day for a quick energy boost.		
Problem 5: Latecomers	Solutions: • Start on time at the beginning of the day and after every break. (Use a timer or alarm.) • Praise people who arrive on time. Your praise will let others know that being on time is important.		

	• Begin with something very interesting (e.g., story, joke, answer to a brain teaser, prize) after each break. Everyone will soon catch on and want to be on time.		
Problem 6: Excessive Talkers	Solutions: • Change the pace. If you don't get their attention and hold it, someone or something else will. Talkers may be telling you they are tired or bored. • Do an activity that separates the talkers. Sometimes participants sit next to their best friends and have a lot to say to one another. • Stand near the talkers. No need to say anything, just stand near them. • Consider seat rotations for the entire group in this situation. • Ask the talkers to stop. If the subtle techniques mentioned above don't work, you may need to make a direct appeal. Make your appeal private, quiet, and polite. Explain that their talking is distracting.		
Problem 7: Participants using electronic devices	This training is delivered face-to-face because it is seen as the best way to prepare peers for their work as Peer Specialists. Learner use of cell phones, tablets, and computers during class is not allowed. (Suggest in the comfort agreement that they leave the room if there is an urgent matter that they must attend to via phone call or text.) Solutions: • At the beginning of class, ask that all electronic devices be turned off. • If a person is using a device, stand near them. No need to say anything, just stand near them. • During a break, ask the person to put the device away during class.		
Before the Class	• Read the content readings. • Answer any reading questions. • Highlight key points and write notes in the margins.		

	• Think of examples that will help students relate what they are learning to their jobs. Write your examples in the margins for easy reference. • Prepare activities. • Prepare slides and other materials you will use.		
During the Class	• Go over class rules. • Give a brief overview (topics, schedule, methods) • Introduce each presentation in some compelling way, i.e., trigger activity, study questions, examples. • Lead activities. • Do process evaluation. (Use activities and discussions to measure the success of the instruction. Are learners interested? Are learners getting it?)		
At the end of each day	Record students' feedback and your observations so you can make adjustments for the next class (e.g. what's working/what's not).		

Submitted by:

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Course Owner signature   **Date**

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Printed name