

NORTH CAROLINA'S
CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM

Workgroup Self-Governance Guidelines



December 2021



**North Carolina's Certified
Peer Support Specialist Program**

*An initiative of the NC Division of Mental
Health, Developmental Disabilities and
Substance Abuse Services*



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Purpose Of Self-Governance Guidelines

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) established the North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist (NCCPSS) Program Workgroup in 2006. The role of the Workgroup is to provide input on policies for the NCCPSS Program through the Behavioral Health Springboard (BHS) and the NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services (DMHDDDSAS) staff.

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Values of NCCPSS Program

The vision of the NCCPSS Program is 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. The State will accomplish this vision through the collaboration of the NCCPSS Program, the (DMH/DD/SAS), and the NCCPSS Program Workgroup.

Guiding Values for NCCPSS Program

The guiding values of the NCCPSS Program are as follows:

- Individuals with lived experience have an essential role to play in the public mental health/substance use disorder system and are considered peer supporters.
- The roles that are created for peers within the service system should fully utilize the lived experience of the peer supporter, viewing it as a credential that the individual brings to the work that they do.
- Lived experience is necessary and ongoing skill development for peer supporters is essential.
- The recovery environment of the workplace is fundamental to the success of peer supporters and recovery for the individuals served.
- Peer supporters are highly valued members of an agency; therefore, are fully integrated



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members of the mental health/substance use disorder delivery system.

- Equality and respect between peer supporters and traditional professionals must be reciprocal.
- Choice and self-determination are important components in everyone's recovery, including individuals receiving and providing services.
- Self-directed recovery does happen, with or without professional help.



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Membership

1. **Composition**—The Workgroup will consist of CPSS, NCCPSS Program staff, and DMH/DD/SAS staff. There will be a minimum of nine CPSS and a maximum of fifteen CPSS on the Workgroup. The number of NCCPSS Program and DMH/DD/SAS staff serving at any time may vary to meet the needs of the Workgroup.
2. **Qualifications and Representation**-- All voting members must be Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPSS) in NC who have lived in the NC for a minimum of 3 years. CPSS must also have worked, supervised, or volunteered for a minimum of 3 years. Membership should reflect a broad geographic representation of the State and should be reflective of the demographics of the State with regard to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, category of lived experience, military/veteran designation, etc. All BHS and DMHDDSAS members would participate as supporting staff.
3. **Length and number of terms**—There are no term limits to service.
4. **Application/Selection Process** - Persons interested in joining the Workgroup must apply online through the PSS Website (insert link). The following are the steps towards selecting a person to become a member of the Workgroup:
 - The NCCPSS Program staff will compile applications and share them with the Workgroup.
 - A subcommittee of the Workgroup will review applications and submit a list of recommended persons to the Workgroup for further review and to make the selection.
 - The Program staff will engage the selected candidate and coordinate an orientation with members of the Workgroup.
5. **Support** - Members need to obtain their employer's support (as applicable) for their time. All CPSS will be reimbursed for their travel, accommodations, and meals related to in-person meetings.
6. **Orientation** – Persons selected to join the Workgroup will be oriented to the processes and policies of the Workgroup by the NCCPSS Program staff and Workgroup members.
7. **Vacancies**— There are no term limits, and vacancies will be filled as needed.



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8. **Resignation**— Members wishing to resign from the Workgroup should submit this notice to BHS in writing with an effective date.
9. **Termination**— The Workgroup may end the term of a member for causes related to unethical behavior by a two-thirds vote of the Workgroup. A member who has failed to attend three consecutive meetings without contacting BHS with sufficient cause may be deemed to have resigned from the Workgroup.
10. **Officers** - There are no officers for this Workgroup, as it is a non-hierarchical, cooperative governance model. Shared leadership is practiced via a rotating schedule of members who serve as Meeting Facilitator and Meeting Recorder.



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Member Duties/Expectations

The duties or expectations of Workgroup members generally includes:

- Attending up to eight-day long (in-person and virtual) meetings annually (historically held in the Triangle area).
- Participating in time-limited work subgroups (typically conducted via Zoom or other platforms). Examples of time-limited work subgroups may include peer review of NC CPSS trainers, development of new specialty certification, consultation regarding the certification exam, and others.
- Email correspondence related to feedback and consensus-building regarding the various initiatives undertaken by the Workgroup.

Work Subgroups

The following constitutes the description of Work Subgroups:

- They are project-oriented and time-limited work subgroups may be established by the Workgroup as needed.
- The Workgroup will identify subgroup members to work outside of regular Workgroup meetings to accomplish the identified task(s).
- Non-members may be added to subgroups as needed to accomplish the designated task of the Workgroup.



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Meetings

- **Place** - Meetings generally occur at a site centrally located within the State with overnight accommodations for members who travel to attend meetings. Through funding contracted from DMHDDSAS, the NCCPSS Program reimburses the travel expenses of CPSS members of the Workgroup.
- **Frequency** - Generally, the Workgroup meets quarterly throughout the year. The meeting frequency will be determined based upon recommendations from the Workgroup, with final decisions based upon budgetary parameters by BHS and DMHDDSAS.
- **Agenda** - Agendas are created and distributed before meetings by the NCCPSS Program staff, using the following format:
 - The designated facilitator opens the meeting
 - The PSS Workgroup Comfort Agreement is reviewed at the start of each session and is printed on the Agenda
 - Meeting notes from the previous meeting are reviewed, necessary revisions made, and notes approved.
 - The business carried over from the last meetings is addressed
 - New business is addressed
 - Lunch
 - Meeting schedules are set and/or reviewed. Attendee expense reports are turned in to the NCCPSS Program staff
 - Identification of facilitator and recorder for the next meeting is established and recorded
- **Attendance** - Meetings are open to non-members, but non-members attending should be invited by a member and notify BHS and the Division of their intent to attend. Visiting non-members will be announced to the Workgroup by the invitee before the meeting, along with the reason for the non-member's attendance.
- **Quorum** - A quorum at meetings shall consist of the simple majority of current active CPSS membership (i.e., the membership representing lived experience). The members present (in-



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person and virtual) at a duly called and held meeting at which a quorum is initially present may continue to do business but not make decisions if a quorum is not present due to the withdrawal of members from the meeting. The Workgroup may not reach a consensus for lack of a sufficient number of CPSS at the meeting. An agreement may be postponed if insufficient CPSS members are present for a called meeting to constitute a quorum. Suppose a workgroup member is absent for three consecutive regular meetings without contacting the Program staff with a good cause, then they may be deemed to have resigned from the Workgroup. In such a case, a quorum may be calculated based on those members considered to be active.

- **Rules of Order and Conduct** - Rules of conduct are explained in the Comfort Agreement, developed by the Workgroup. These rules may be updated as needed by the Workgroup.
- **Special or Emergency Meetings** - From time to time, the Workgroup may hold additional meetings beyond the quarterly meetings. These will be announced via email and may be held in person or conference call or webinar (via Zoom).
- **Meeting Minutes/Notes** - Meeting notes are taken by a member designated from the last meeting as the recorder for the current meeting. Also, we will use "closed captioning and live transcript" as an aid to completing meeting notes.



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Governance and Decision-Making

- **Participatory Decision-making** - The Workgroup has also valued a participatory decision-making process for conducting meetings, with rotating member facilitation. Because a facilitator is a content-neutral process advocate, having the shared facilitative meetings makes it possible for all members to participate in discussion and debate fully.

Facilitator Role - A facilitator's job is to help everyone do their best thinking. A facilitator encourages full participation by everyone and promotes mutual understanding and shared responsibility. A facilitator is an individual who is trained to enable Workgroups and organizations to work more effectively, to collaborate, and achieve more than its members could achieve alone. The facilitator is content-neutral. That means the facilitator does not take sides, express opinions, or advocate for a point of view during the meeting. Because the facilitator is content-neutral, the person can advocate for fair, open, and inclusive meetings to accomplish the Workgroup's activities. The facilitator is a process advocate, which means that the person holds the Workgroup members to their guiding values and the ground rules as well as thinking deeply about its assumptions, beliefs, and values. The facilitator can vote on matters but must acknowledge that change in role when doing so.

- **Consensus Decision-making** - As a goal, members shall always seek consensus on issues requiring action, resorting to a vote only as required due to an absence of consensus.
 - In keeping with its commitment to using a consensus decision-making process, the Workgroup seeks to reach decisions by unanimity. However, where timely action is required, and unanimity cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a simple majority vote. In such cases, each member is entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote. Voting shall be done by voice vote. Members shall not be permitted to vote or act by proxy (see appendix A and B).
 - When a matter is taken to a vote, only CPSS may vote.



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Conflict of Interest

- **Purpose** - The purpose of the conflict-of-interest practice is to protect the interests of the North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Program when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a member of the Workgroup, or employee of BHS or the Division, or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This practice is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to governmental organizations.
- **Full disclosure** - It is expected that members will disclose potential conflicts of interest about a matter under discussion. After the disclosure, the Workgroup may discuss how to proceed. To avoid a conflict of interest, Workgroup members must recuse themselves from all deliberations concerning programs or funding for projects with which the person's organization is directly involved. Any voting member of the Workgroup who is directly involved with the development and/or implementation of a proposal or contract to be funded by the DMHDDSUS will declare a potential conflict of interest at each Workgroup meeting when the proposal or contract is discussed. This declaration will be recorded in the minutes and will include refraining from voting on matters pertaining to the proposal or contract. If the conflict of interest presents itself to be ongoing, consideration will be given for removal from the Workgroup.



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Confidentiality

- General Workgroup meeting discussion, agendas, and meeting notes are not for public distribution. However, due to the public sector focus of the work, all documents are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law. Notwithstanding legal public release, the Workgroup will decide which agenda items and discussion topics should be shared beyond the limits of the Workgroup.
- Workgroup members are not to speak on behalf of the Workgroup without expressed designation by Workgroup consensus.

Amendments and Revisions

These procedures may be amended when necessary using the regular Governance and Decision-Making Process outlined in this document.



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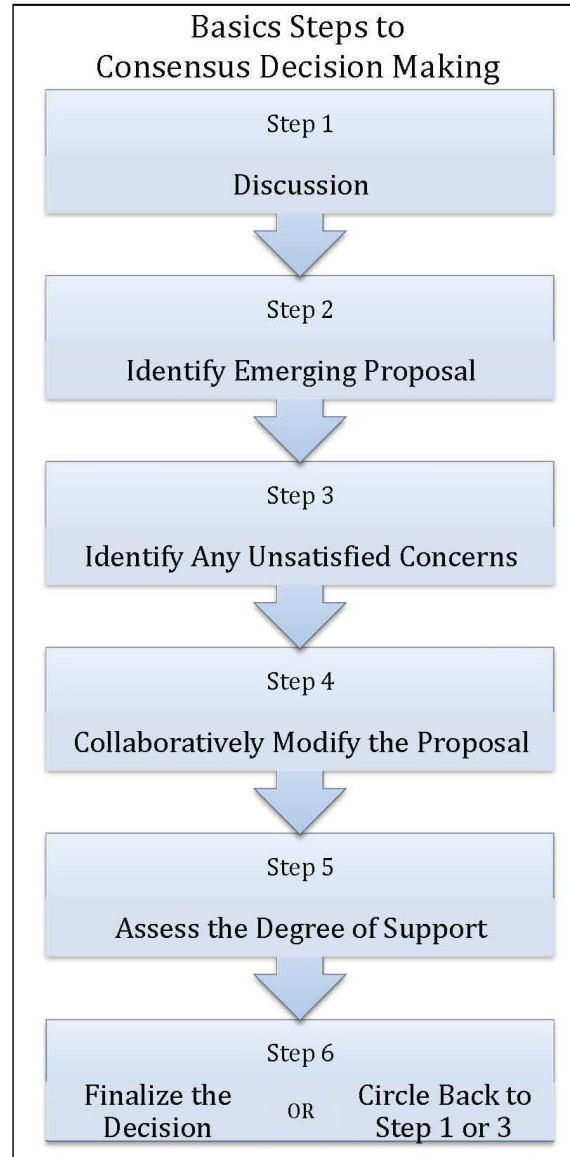
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Appendix A

Basics of consensus Decision-making (*From The Basics of Consensus Decision-Making by Tim Hartnett, Ph.D.*)



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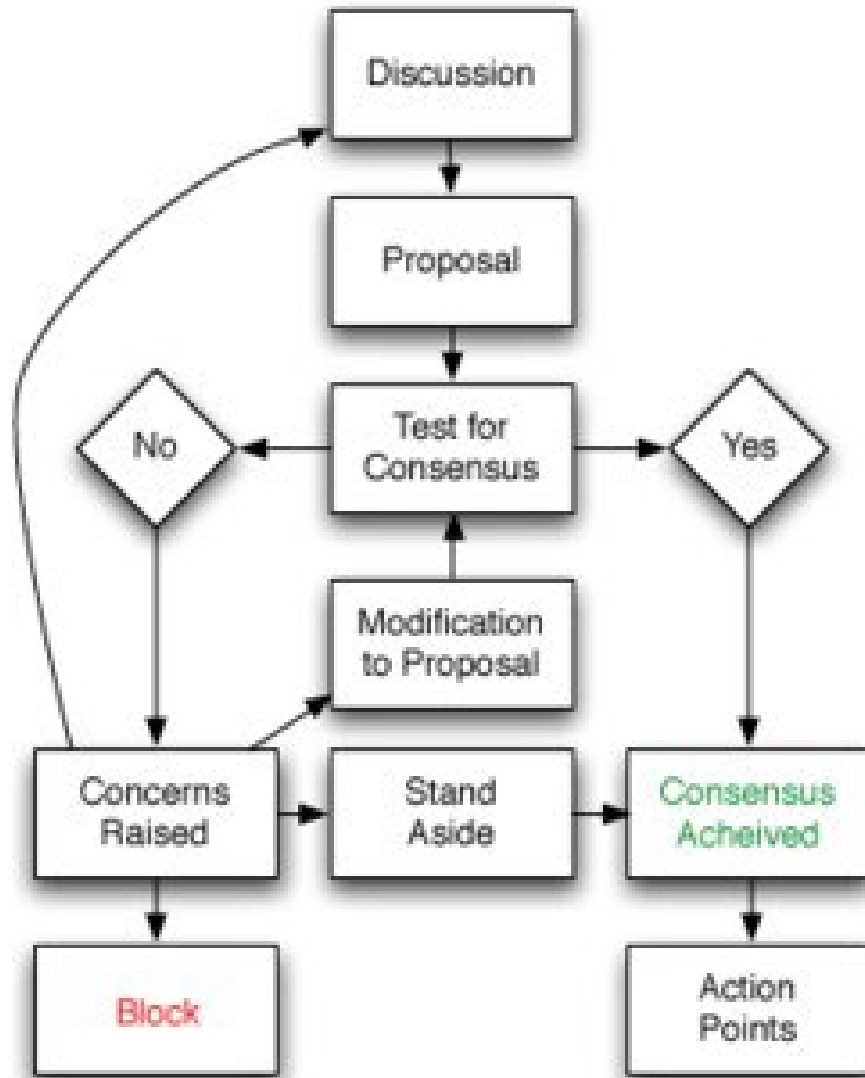
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Appendix B

Consensus Decision-making Model (<https://www.consensusdecisionmaking.org/articles-consensus/#ConsensusBasics>)



Webster's dictionary defines consensus as "agreement of the majority in sentiment or belief" and by the Oxford dictionary as "general agreement." For group facilitators, a consensus is most useful as a term describing the process of making decisions collaboratively. Thus, a consensus-oriented process is one in which people work together to reach as much agreement as



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possible. Unanimity (or unanimous consent) is more specific. It refers to the outcome of a vote showing all members are agreed. Consensus is the process. Unanimity is one possible result of a consensus process.

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