

The North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics

The North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics was developed by a workgroup consisting of North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists, Supervisors, and other stakeholders over a three-day meeting held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This code outlines uniform standards and expectations to North Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialists in the workplace. These ethical standards are intended to offer clear boundaries in the workplace for Peer Support Specialists.

Disclaimer

The North Carolina Certified Peer Support Certification indicates the person retaining this certificate has successfully completed the requirements established by the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. These requirements may be located on the NC CPSS website for further review.

All ethical issues shall be governed by policies and procedures established within the hiring entity and are not the responsibility of the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.

VALUES

- People have the right to be treated with dignity and have their individual human rights respected.
- Self-directed recovery is possible for everyone, with or without professional help.
- Sharing our recovery experiences fosters mutual relationships, reduces isolation, inspires hope, and strengthens the ongoing recovery process.
- Individuals have the capacity to live the full and meaningful lives they envision for themselves.
- People have the right to make their own choices about their treatment even if others think their decisions are wrong.
- Peer Support values the importance of community building and natural supports (family, church, NA, AA, friends, etc).

CODE OF ETHICS

- Attention to self-recovery is critical to the performance of duties as a Peer Support Specialist(s) (PSS). When changes in recovery occur, the Peer Support Specialist will take personal responsibility to seek support.
- PSS are honest in their interactions; keeping it simple, keeping it real.
- PSS relationships are mutual learning experiences.
- PSS have a responsibility to help individuals find their own voices and to advocate for the principles of human dignity, self-determination, and empowerment.

- PSS honor commitments made to peers.
- In dealing with peers, PSS strive to always explore and ask open ended questions rather than making assumptions. PSS explore alternatives and options with peers rather than giving advice.
- PSS support people to make their own choices, honoring self-determination. The PSS does not put his/her agenda ahead of the peer's agenda.
- PSS negotiate within the relationship with peers in order to facilitate peer choice and shared power.
- PSS avoid power struggles and favoritism.
- PSS will not exploit, devalue, manipulate, abuse, neglect, or ignore a peer.
- PSS and peers will not loan or borrow anything from each other; especially not money.
- PSS will not establish romantic relationships with peers and will refrain from intimate or sexual activity with peers.
- PSS avoid dual relationships; when they are unavoidable, appropriate boundaries are established within the relationship with the support of the supervisor.
- PSS will not violate a peer's confidentiality except when required by law.
- Accepting or giving gifts, if allowed by the agency, must be clearly related to the peer's recovery process.
- PSS do not take peers to their homes; any exception to this must have written agency approval.
- PSS do not hire peers to work for them if they are currently receiving services from their agency.
- PSS's documentation in the agency record is person-centered and done with the peer whenever possible.
- PSS take responsibility for their own professional development and are proactive about expanding their knowledge and honing their skills with continuing education and training.
- PSS have a responsibility to educate themselves about available community resources and to establish helpful contacts in the community.
- PSS do not make medical diagnoses.