



**SCDMH Certified Peer Support
Specialist Training Information Packet**

Thank you for your interest in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health's certified Peer Support Training program. Enclosed is information on the peer support position, training; costs, location, dates, the core curriculum and continuing education requirements, and accommodations and directions.

South Carolina's peer support initiative began as a collaborative effort between the Department of Mental Health and SC SHARE (Self Help Association Regarding Emotions). The developmental work of this initiative began in 2001. The first Certification Peer Support Specialist Certification (CPSS) Training for SCDMH employees was held in April 2004 at the USC training facility. South Carolina is proud to be the second state in the country to have a Medicaid-billable peer support service for mental health. The State of Georgia was the first to train peer support specialists and developed the service and training model which South Carolina closely follows today.

In the summer of 2008 Medicaid formally approved a peer support service for the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS). Mental Health and DAODAS agreed to work collaboratively on the certification training. The Veterans Administration in Columbia became the third partner in the collective effort to train certified peer support specialists in South Carolina.

Peer Support is a helping relationship between a client and Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) encouraging respect, trust, and warmth. Peer Support empowers clients to make changes and decisions to enhance their lives.

Purpose of Peer Support

The purpose of this service is to allow people with similar life experiences to share their understanding with other clients to assist in their recovery from mental illness and/or substance use disorders. The peer support specialist gives advice and guidance, provides insight, shares information on services and empowers the client to make healthy decisions.

The unique relationship between the peer support specialist and the client fosters understanding and trust in clients who otherwise would be alienated from treatment. The clients plan of care determines the focus of Peer Support Services (PSS).

This service is person centered with a recovery focus and allows clients the opportunity to direct their own recovery and advocacy process. The service promotes skills for coping with and managing symptoms while utilizing natural resources and the preservation and enhancement of community living skills.

The peer support specialist will utilize their own experience and training to assist the client in understanding how to manage their illness in their daily lives by helping them to identify key resources, listening and encouraging clients to cope with barriers and work towards their goals. The peer support specialist will also provide ongoing support to keep clients engaged in proactive and continual follow up treatment.

The peer support specialist actively engages the client to lead and direct the design of the plan of care and empowers the client to achieve their specific individualized goals. Clients are empowered to make changes to enhance their lives and make decisions about the activities and services they receive. The peer support specialist guides the client through self-help and self-improvement activities that cultivate the client's ability to make informed independent choices

and facilitates specific, realistic activities that lead to increased self-worth and improved self-concepts.

Registration: To register yourself or a contact SCSHARE.com to register a candidate.

Training Requirements:

All candidates must complete and send a copy of:

1. The **training application/self assessment** packet should be sent to SC SHARE until further notice
2. The **self assessment** http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/client_affairs/ps_assess.pdf
Completed Application should be mailed SCDMH Division of Community Mental Health Services, Office of Client Affairs Suite 312, 2414 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29202 (**see note above**)
3. All candidates must complete the two weeks of intensive training and pass a written competency exam.

Training Costs:

1. No Cost - There are no costs to SCDMH Mental Health Centers or Facilities for the CPSS Training or materials for candidates they hire however centers are responsible for travel costs and making travel arrangements.
2. Candidates from the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) or the Veterans Administration are responsible for the cost of the manual, \$25.00 (fee subject to change). The fee covers material costs and is subject to change.
3. In-State Rate – Individuals wanting to attend the CPSS Training but who have not been hired by a mental health center or facility and who live in South Carolina may attend the training for \$25.00. The fee covers material costs and is subject to change.
4. Out-of-State Rate - Individuals wanting to attend the CPSS Training and who do not live in South Carolina may attend the training for \$75.00 (fee subject to change). The fee covers material costs and is subject to change.

Training Locations:

Training for peer support certification will be at the South Carolina Department of Mental Health Administration Building 2414 Bull Street, room 404. **Please Note:** Training locations are subject to change. Any change in the training location will be announced.

Training Times:

This is a 40+ hour certification Training program. Class runs Monday through Thursday.

1. On Monday class begins at 11:00am and end at 4:45pm.
2. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday class begins at 9:00am ends 4:45pm

The Job: The job of a peer support specialist is not to replace current clinical mental health staff but to offer additional options to help clients in their efforts to recover by providing a wide range of skill building services. They do this by advocating for effective recovery based services for the people they serve; assisting clients in obtaining services and information that meet their individual needs; informing clients about community and natural supports and how to use them in a recovery process and; assisting clients in becoming empowered through self-advocacy

skills, addressing stigma and discrimination against themselves and their peers all to help clients assume responsibility for their individual recovery. As a result of being a role model the person selected as a peer support specialist needs to be stable and making significant progress in their own recovery.

Hiring Requirements:

The peer support specialist must possess, at a minimum, a high school diploma or GED, and he or she must have successfully completed and passed a certification training program, and he/she must be a current or former client of services as defined by SCDHHS. The criteria for meeting the consumer of services qualification are:

- Have had a diagnosis of mental illness or substance use disorder, as defined by the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and received treatment for the disorder.
- Self-identify as having had a mental illness and/or substance use disorder
- Be in a recovery program

Peer support specialists must have the following experience:

- The ability to demonstrate recovery expertise including knowledge of approaches to support others in recovery and dual recovery, as well as the ability to demonstrate his or her own efforts at self-directed recovery
- One year of active participation in a local or a national mental health and/or substance use consumer movement, which is evidenced by previous volunteer service or work experience
- Peer support providers must successfully complete a pre-certification program that consists of:
 - Forty hours of training. The curriculum must include the following topics: recovery goal setting, wellness recovery plans and problem solving, person-centered services, and advocacy.
 - Additionally, peer support providers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education training annually, of which at least 12 hours must be face-to-face training. All trainings must be approved by SCDHHS or other authorized entity.

Note: For clients in dual recovery, experience with recovery self-help programs for individuals with mental illnesses, substance use disorders, or with co-occurring disorders is particularly valuable.

Qualities & Characteristics

1. Being well established in your own recovery and resiliency possessing skills that enable you to rebound without de-compensating.
2. Be flexible, have good organizational skills. And be self-motivated with the ability to work well independently and in groups.
3. Possess good inter-personal and communication (verbal & written) skills.
4. Exercise good judgment.

Demonstrate Expertise

With respect to the above, a peer support candidate should be able to discuss the following about recovery:

1. Explain what it means to recover from a mental illness.
2. Explain what recovery from mental illness looks like in their life.
3. Explain in detail your recovery efforts and/or wellness plan.
4. Explain the symptoms of your illness, what triggers those symptoms, and what you do to keep yourself well.

5. Discuss how you deal with crisis, symptom recurrence and relapse.
6. Explain the role that a sense of hope and resiliency played in your life.
7. Discuss the types of community supports you have that help you deal with your mental illness.
8. Discuss how stigma has affected you and what you did to learned to deal with it.
9. Discuss what is meant by the “recovery movement”
10. Discuss your experience and/or involvement with others in their efforts to recover from mental illness.
11. Candidates should be familiar with at least one local, statewide or national advocacy organization. e.g.: SCSHARE, NAMI-SC, MHA-SC AA, or NA.

[Please Note: Some have had reservations as to the legality of asking such personal and health-related questions in an interview situation, but SCDMH Human Resources has made it clear that to do so is entirely legitimate precisely because your job-duties as a self-identified employee are dependent on an adequate knowledge and mastery of personal recovery. In fact, if CPSS’s are to be *effective* in empowering other clients in making definite recovery changes in their lives, it is imperative that they be able to demonstrate and articulate these recovery dynamics.]

Continuing Education Requirements:

Section 2 Policies and Procedures – Community Mental Health Provider Manual require that **...peer providers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education training annually of which 12 hours must be face-to-face training. All trainings must be approved by the South Carolina department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) or other authorized entity.** Certification is good for one year following initial course and exam completion. Continuing training requirements begin on the first business day of the month following your initial certification date.

- **12 hours of Face-to-Face Training:** Approved trainings include but are not limited to SCDMH Case Management Training, SC SHARE WRAP and Recovery for Life training, SCDMH Office of Client Affairs trainings developed for CPSS’s, Quarterly Multi-Cultural Affairs Committee Lunch and Learn sessions. In light of budget constraints Video Conferencing: offered through the Office of Client Affairs counts as face-to-face training.
- The remaining **8 hours** can be accomplished through; Pathlore computer training, or approved conference/workshop attendance (Pathlore: includes SCDMH assigned employee curriculums all conference or workshop titles/subjects should be submitted for prior approval for continuing education credit).

SCDMH peer support specialists are required to submit the proof of continued training hours to the Office of Client Affairs in order to receive a letter certifying their continued authorization to bill Medicaid for peer services at the South Carolina Department of Mental Health. A copy of the letter will be sent to the centers credentialing and/or quality management officer. For a detailed explanation on the recertification process go to:

http://www.state.sc.us/dmh/client_affairs/recertification_procedure.pdf

While all non-SCDMH peer specialists are welcomed and encouraged to attend continued training courses offered through the SCDMH Office of Client Affairs and will issue proof of attendance/completion upon request the Office of Client Affairs does not assume the responsibility for recertification for non SCDMH or their contracted affiliates.

Driving Directions to the SCDMH Administration Building

From I-20 head east to I-26/I-126 going toward downtown Columbia. Exit off the interstate at the Elmwood Exit. Elmwood ends at Bull Street turn left onto Bull. Proceed down Bull Street to the first light - turn right onto Colonial Drive. Take the first left on Colonial Make into the SCDMH parking lot.

From I-26/I-126 - Exit off the interstate at the Elmwood Exit. From Elmwood, go to Bull Street and turn left. Then go to Colonial Drive (1st light) and turn right. Make the 1st left into the SCDMH parking lot.

From I-77 - From I-77 get on I-277 and go to the end. It becomes Bull Street. Turn left at the second light between SCDMH and DSS. Take the 1st right into the SCDMH parking lot.

Hotel Accommodations: (These two were chosen because of there proximity to SCDMH Administration building but accommodations are at the discretion of the candidate)

1. Riverside Inn – 111Knox Abbott Drive, Cayce, SC, Phone: (803)-939-4688 or 866-4688 to make direct billing arrangements. Again, each center is responsible for making all arrangements for hotel and transportation. (Time from SCDMH approximately 7 minutes)

o **Driving Directions: From I-26/I-126** - Take the Huger Street exit off I-126. Go to Blossom Street and make a right at the light. Go over the Blossom Street Bridge into Cayce. Blossom Street becomes Knox Abbott after you cross the Bridge go one-half mile. Riverside Inn is on the left. **From I-77** - Take I-277 and follow Bull Street into downtown Columbia. Take a right onto Gervais Street. Go to Huger Street turn left. Go to Blossom Street and make a right at the light. Go over the Blossom Street Bridge into Cayce. Blossom Street becomes Knox Abbott after you cross the Bridge go one-half mile. Riverside Inn is on the left.

o **Driving Directions from the Riverside Inn to the Training Site – SCDMH.** Turn right out of the hotel parking lot and go back over the Blossom Street Bridge. Turn left on Huger Street and follow till the end - it merges onto Elmwood Ave. Follow Elmwood Ave to the end and turn left onto Bull Street. Stay in the right hand lane go to the first light and turn right onto Colonial Drive take an immediate left in the SCDMH Administration Building parking lot.

2. Comfort Suites Hotel - Address and Location: Comfort Suites Hotel, 501 Taylor Street. Columbia, SC 29201, Phone: (803) 744-4000 to make direct billing arrangements. Again, each center is responsible for making all arrangements for hotel and transportation. (Time from SCDMH approximately 7 minutes)

o **Driving Directions: From I-26/I-126 and I-20-** Comfort Suites is the first hotel entering downtown Columbia from I-126. Take the Huger Street exit off I-126. Since the hotel is located on the corner of Huger and Taylor, and Taylor is a one-way street and can't be turned onto from Huger, go down to the next street which is Hampton and turn left there. Go up a block and turn left. You'll then be on Wayne. The first cross street is Taylor. Make a left onto Taylor and you'll see the hotel immediately on your right. Turn into the hotel at that point. If you run into Huger, you've missed the entrance and you'll have to circle back.

o **From I-77** - Take I-277 and follow Bull Street into downtown Columbia. Take a right onto

Taylor Street. Comfort Suites is located approximately ¾ mile on the right. If you run into Huger, you've missed the entrance and you'll have to circle back.

o **Driving Directions from the Comfort Suites Hotel to the Training Site - SCDMH**

Exit from the hotel parking lot, turn onto Taylor, staying the far right lane. When you come to Huger, turn right onto Huger. Stay in the right lane and take the Elmwood exit. Take Elmwood to Bull Street. Turn left onto Bull Street. Then go to Colonial Drive (1st light) and turn right. Make the 1st left into the SCDMH parking lot.

Affordable Eateries in the Nearby Area

1. Carolina Bagel Café and Coffee House 1469 Sumter Street, Downtown 803-748-9393
2. Lizard's Thicket 818 Elmwood, Downtown 803-779-6407
3. No Name Deli 2042 Marion at Elmwood, Downtown 803-252-0480
4. Lots of fast food places on Elmwood, too!
 - o Subway
 - o McDonalds
 - o Bo jangles Fried Chicken
 - o Maurice's Barbeque

CPSS APPLICATION

Name:

E-Mail: _____ Phone or Cell:

1. Are you client of: (check only one) ___Mental health services ___Addiction disorders services ___Both
2. Highest Level of education attained. _____
3. Have you been hired to be a certified peer support specialist? ___Yes ___No If yes, where? (Agency, name address, phone) and who will be supervising you? (Name & contact information)
4. Were you referred to this training by either mental health or substance use treatment staff? ___Yes ___No (If yes, who referred you: Agency & employee, name address, phone)
5. Have you completed and/or taught any mental health recovery training and/or led support groups? (i.e. Recovery for Life I or II, WRAP, NAMI In Our Own Voice) ___Yes ___No
6. Have you completed and/or taught any addictions training and/or led support groups? (i.e. Medicine Wheel and 12 Steps for Recovery Coaches, Science of Addiction and Recovery Trainings, Our Stories Have Power...A Media Workshop for Recovery Advocates, Favor, led A.A. or N/A or other 12-step groups) ___Yes ___No
7. Have you attended and/or spoke at any conferences on mental health and/or addictions? ___Yes ___No

8. Do you regularly attend any community based support groups? (i.e. A/A. N/A., NAMI, SCSHARE) ___Yes ___No

Answers to the following questions weigh heavily on determining who is accepted into training. Candidates should be knowledgeable about recovery principles and have through understanding of their own recovery.

9. Why do you want to become a certified peer support specialist and what you think makes you a good candidate to work with people who have mental illness, addiction disorders or both?

10. Describe/define what being in recovery and/or sobriety means to you.

11. Peer Support Specialists must be willing to share their recovery/sobriety story for the benefit of others. Please describe at least one example of how you have done this.

12. What skills do you bring to this position? {Note: Medications and mental health scheduled appointments are more example of compliance than recovery skills.}

13. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way (for example; convincing someone that recovery was/is possible).

14. Give a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

15. We all have to deal with conflict in our lives, describe how you generally deal with conflict with in yourself or with another person.

16. If you were to have a mental health crisis /addiction relapse describe how you would handle it.

Peer Support Readiness Assessment

The job of a peer support specialist is to help instill the hope of recovery from mental illnesses, addiction disorders or both, in part by being able to demonstrate or model recovery skills they have learned. A peer specialist must be aware of, able to publicly describe &role model to others the things that they learned that helped them to recover.

To you help decide if you are ready for peer support certification training, please answer the questions below making a check mark for “YES”. Answering “YES” means you are willing & prepared to give a detailed response.

Please read and think about each question carefully before answering. Answering “Yes” to all 16 questions will not guarantee a spot in a CPSS Training Class. This is what is expected of a CPSS, and are designed to help you determine if you ready for training. Leaving the question blank or answering “No” simply lets you know what you need to work on before you come to training.

We suggest that you check out the recovery programs available at your mental health center, SCSHARE, MHA-SC, NAMI-SC or FAVOR. Being grounded in your own recovery is the best step you can take to help others become grounded in theirs.

- Are you willing to disclose to clients, staff and the general public that you have been diagnosed with a mental illness, or both mental illness and addiction?
- Can you describe in detail what has helped you to move from where you were to where you are now? What did you do? What did others do?
- Can you describe what you have had to overcome to get where you are today?
- Can you describe what you have learned about yourself and what we call recovery? Can you describe some of the strengths you have developed?
- Can you describe some of the things that you do daily to keep yourself on the right path?
- Can you describe what your diagnosis means, how it impacted your life and what things you did to change that?
- Can you describe the purpose of your medications, any side effects you experienced and plans you developed to deal with them? If you do not take medications leave blank
- Can you describe some of the beliefs and values you have or have developed that helps to strengthen support your recovery and why do you believe they do?
- Can you describe some of the things you have found helpful in combating negative self-talk?
- Do you have any type of written wellness plan? Can you describe what it was like to put one together and how it has helped you?
- Do you believe that you could talk to a person to help them understand recovery or try to convince someone who did not believe in recovery that it is possible?

- Can you describe the role that a sense of hope and resiliency played in your life, your recovery?
- Can you describe some of the community supports you have and how they help you deal with your mental illness/addiction?
- Can you describe how you deal with crisis? With recurrence of your symptoms? With relapse?

- Have you ever lead a group? What did you like about it?
- Do you have experience with support organizations like SC SHARE, NAMI-SC, MHA-SC, A.A., N.A. or FAVOR? Can you discuss how they supported/helped your recovery efforts?

Recovery Story Guidelines

Prior to attending the certification class all candidates will be required to send a written story of recovery and documentation of at least one public presentation of your story. A recovery story is simply an accounting or recounting of your experiences with mental illness and/or mental illness and substance abuse. They are meant to offer hope and inspiration to others who are experiencing similar issues while at the same time celebrating how far you have come.

Your story should include the following information:

- What were some of the early indications that you were beginning to have difficulties?
- How would you describe (briefly) yourself and your situation when you were at your worse?
- What helped you move from where you were to where you are now? What did you do? What did others do?
- What have you had to overcome to get where you are today?
- What have you learned about yourself and what we call recovery? What are some of the strengths you have developed?
- What are some of the things that you do to keep you on the right path?

Stories should:

- Include your name
- Have a title
- Preferably be typed
- Grammatically correct

Four hours of certification training will be granted to candidates who successfully complete the recovery story requirements, even if their application must be held over to another certification class due to class size limitations.

Public Presentation Requirements

All peer specialists must self-identify as a essential part of their job. Publically disclosing your recovery story goes a long way in reducing stigma and proving that treatment works. Acceptable venues include:

NAMI Education Meetings

- Mental Health of America Functions
- SC SHARE Functions
- SCDMH Staff In-services
- Veterans Organizations
- Religious or other Community Civic Organizations

If you have questions about other organizations or meeting that are acceptable please contact the Office of Client Affairs at SCDMH 803-898-8304

Public Presentation Documentation

Candidate:

Title of Presentation:

Presentation Date:

Time started/stopped (minimum acceptable time presenting is 20 minutes):

Name of organization, and contact person:

Signature: _____ Phone Number: _____

Formal/Voluntary Work Experience Please document/describe at least one year of active participation in a local or a national mental health and/or substance use client movement or 100 hours of formal or voluntary experience related to mental health, community or public service. Name the agency and/or advocacy organization you work for either as a paid employee or volunteer and what you did while working there.

Agency Name	Job	Length of Service

Application Documents

Before sending your information be sure you have included:

- Application**
- Readiness Assessment**
- Formal/Voluntary Work Experience**
- Emergency Contact Information**
- Recovery Story**
- Letters of recommendation (2)**

Please return forms to:

SCSHARE 427 Meeting St. West Columbia, SC 29169 or SCDMH Office of Client Affairs
SCDMH -Suite 312, 2414 SCDMH Bull Street, Columbia SC 29202