

## Code of Ethics

Certified Peer Specialists represent a new role, dedicated to using knowledge, skills, and personal experience to support others.

Like all professions, Certified Peer Specialists have a Code of Ethics. Simply stated, a code of ethics is a set of principles created by a group (profession) to provide guidelines for the ethical behavior of its members.

"Why have a Code of Ethics? There are many reasons for having a Code of Ethics. One key reason is that it makes the expectations very concrete and clear. While we all may think we have a pretty good sense of what is morally "right," the reality is that what you think is "right" and what I think is "right" may differ. So, we look to the Code of Ethics:

- To define accepted/acceptable behaviors;
- To promote high standards of practice;
- To provide a benchmark for CPS's to use for self-evaluation;
- To establish a framework for professional behavior and responsibility; and
- Occupational identity.

After we discuss the Code of Ethics, you will be asked to sign it as a public declaration of your commitment to follow them during the class, in your relationship with your new "colleagues," and in your future professional work.

## Certified Peer Specialists Code of Ethics Massachusetts

*Written and approved by the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network for the State of Georgia Certified Peer Specialist Training Program – Revised and Updated by members of the Massachusetts Consumer Operated Programs & Activities leadership in 2006. Further revisions were done in the summer of 2008 and summer of 2013, based on survey and other feedback from the field.*

The following principles will guide Certified Peer Specialists in the various roles, relationships, and levels of responsibility in which they function. These expectations also apply to training participants with respect to interactions with their colleagues. **In other words, your professional CPS life starts today**

The CPS Code of Ethics are rooted in the following core principles:

- CPSs will always respect the rights of service users to be self-governing within their social and cultural framework (Autonomy)
- CPSs will always promote the well-being of people we're supporting, understanding that people self-define well-being. (Beneficence)
- CPSs will always be transparent and truthful with the people they support. (Fidelity)
- CPSs will always promote justice and fairness for all people they support. (Justice)
- CPSs will DO NO HARM to people they're supporting. (Non-maleficence)

1. The primary responsibility of Certified Peer Specialists is to help people achieve what they want most in life, their own goals, needs and wants. Certified Peer Specialists will be guided by the principles of self-determination for all.
2. Certified Peer Specialists will maintain high standards of personal conduct. Certified Peer Specialists will also conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery and integrity.

3. Certified Peer Specialists will openly share their recovery stories, and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery.
4. Certified Peer Specialists will, at all times, respect the rights and dignity of the people with whom they work.
5. Certified Peer Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force, or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals with whom they work.
6. Certified Peer Specialists recognize that everyone is different and we all have something to learn from one another. Therefore, Certified Peer Specialists will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate in any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, economic status, mental or physical disability, or any other preference or personal characteristic, condition or state.
7. Certified Peer Specialists will advocate as a partner with those they support that they may make their own decisions in all matters when dealing with other professionals.
8. Certified Peer Specialists will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they support.
9. Certified Peer Specialists will advocate for the full integration of individuals into the communities of their choice and will promote the inherent value of these individuals to those communities. Certified Peer Specialists will be directed by the knowledge that all people have the right to live in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment of their choice.
10. Certified Peer Specialists will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they support.
11. Certified Peer Specialists will never engage in sexual/intimate activities with those to whom they are currently providing support, or have worked with in a professional role in the past year.
12. Certified Peer Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with the people with whom they work.
13. Certified Peer Specialists will not engage in business, extend or receive loans, or accept gifts of significant value from those they support.
14. Certified Peer Specialists will not offer support to another when under the influence of alcohol or when impaired by any substance, whether or not it is prescribed.

I \_\_\_\_\_ fully understand the Code of Ethics and commit myself to carrying out the fourteen principles listed above during my CPS training, and on becoming Certified and obtaining a role as a Certified Peer Specialist.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_