



Comprehensive Health and Family Services



South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board (SCPSCB)

About Us

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board (SCPSCB) was chartered to serve as a Mental Health Resource of South Carolina that operates publicly as Comprehensive Health and Family Services and is governed by a Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

Officers

President: **Dr. Jerome Yelder, Sr. PhD, MBA, MP-BC, MAC, NCPRSS, CPSS**

Vice President: **Bonnie C. Pate, Executive Director of SC SHARE**

Secretary: **Regina Davis, AA CPSS**

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Shanna A. Jefferson, MSW, CFSW, LCSW, LISW-CP

Destination Greatness, PLLC and Independent Contractor with CHFS Management Services Corp.

Richard Wade, BS CPSS

Lakeysha Henry, CRSC CPSS

Wayne Burgess, CPSS

Brenda Cooper, BS CPSS

Our Mission

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board mission is to identify, train, certify and provide ongoing support and education to consumers of mental health services, to provide peer support as part of the South Carolina mental health service system and to promote self-determination, personal responsibility and empowerment inherent in self-directed recovery. We strive to improve the quality of life for South Carolinians living with behavioral health challenges by taking a leadership role in statewide and local initiatives that create positive change in the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

Peer support specialists are in demand across systems and sectors. Despite peer support's rapid growth and success in improving lives and outcomes, peers support specialists remain underutilized and underpaid and often lack opportunities for career advancement. What's more, the lack of a uniform, high standard across the US has prevented peer support from expanding to work with commercial health insurance, private health systems, and practitioners. This means many people who want to stay in the field often leave due to a lack of opportunities and living wages.

Goals

- Host an annual peer conference that promotes recovery and wellness, and identifies the top priorities of consumers of behavioral health services statewide.
- Promote employment with emphasis on quality jobs that foster true independence.
- Offer training opportunities for peers, including the Certified Mental Health Peer Specialist and Whole Health Wellness Coaching.
- Support the development of new peer leaders through the CHFS Learning Institute.
- Support peer access to transportation.
- Support the expansion of Recovery Through the Arts and the Double Trouble in Recovery program.
- Promote peer supports and wellness, including the Peer Support, Wellness, and Respite Centers.

Certification Board and Maintenance of Certification

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board and our program for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) are instrumental to the integrity of peer support specialist practitioners. They provide a trusted credential that is important to consumers and relevant to peer specialist provider services. We offer membership to all Certified Peer Specialist, upon membership approval each member will be assigned a certification number by the board of directors which will be listed in a statewide data base on our website for consumers and potential employers to view. We also assist Peer Specialist in getting their National Provider Identification (NPI) number for Medicaid Reimbursement. Membership requirement you must be a Certified Peer Support Specialist in good standing. All members are required to pay an annual membership donation fee of \$25.00 for Maintenance of Board Certification directory listing which will be listed in statewide data base for the public to review.

Peer Specialist Certification is a voluntary process, and demonstrates a peer support specialist's exceptional expertise as a peer specialist provider.

The SCPCSB program is a system of ongoing professional development and practice assessment and improvement. It challenges peer specialists to focus on the continuous development of their skill set, especially those skills that enable them to function effectively in interprofessional teams, integrated systems of care, and community settings.

Peer Specialist Certification was peer-developed, externally validated programs which serve as important markers for a higher standard of care. They reflect the critical core peer specialist values of compassion, patient-centeredness, and a passion for education. Consumers, physicians, health care providers, insurers, and quality organizations look for these markers as the best measure of a peer specialist's knowledge, experience and skills to provide quality health care within a given specialty.

The Certification Process Steps

SCPCSB Certification involves a rigorous process of testing and peer evaluation that is designed and administered by peer specialists. Through collaboration with our board members, standards for initial certification and keeping certification current through SCPCSB MOC are determined for continuous professional development as well as improvements to patient care.

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board offer the below board certification:

- (1) Peer Support Specialist (PSS) Training and Certification**
- (2) Mental Health Peer Specialist (MHPS) or (VMHPS) Training and Certification**
- (3) Certified Family Partner Program**
- (4) CFP Supervisor Training**
- (5) Juvenile Justice (Endorsement Training)**
- (6) Special Education (Endorsement Training)**
- (7) Wraparound Process (Endorsement Training)**

(1) Peer Support Specialist (PSS) Training and Certification

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Have lived experience with a mental health condition, substance use issue, or both
- Have a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma
- Be willing to appropriately share your recovery story
- Be able to demonstrate current self-directed recovery
- Pass criminal history and registry checks (link when live) Next Steps Once you finish reviewing this information, complete the self-assessment below, and sign the acknowledgement, you will be able to apply for the Core training described in Step 2 above. Self-Assessment
- To become a peer specialist must complete a training program and pass written exams. Peer specialists have the opportunity to be aware of and openly share what they have learned in the recovery process.
- How have you handled disclosing to other people that you have faced behavioral health challenges?
- What has helped you move from where you were to where you are now? What did you do? What did others do?
- What have you learned about yourself in your recovery?
- What strengths have you have developed?
- What do you do on a regular basis to help yourself feel well?
- What are some of the beliefs and values you have or have developed that help strengthen and support your recovery?
- How has facing individual challenges impacted your life?
- How might you handle sitting in another's discomfort?
- What part does a sense of hope or resiliency play in your life and your recovery?
- What are some words you would use to describe this?
- How have you dealt with difficult setbacks?
- What external supports do you use, and how do they help you? The peer specialists training draws strongly on a person's lived experience and recovery journey. This training can be intense and emotional, and peers are encouraged to carefully examine if they are prepared for this next step and have the necessary resources necessary to complete the training and examination process. Please take the time to gauge your agreement with the following statements as a way to decide if peer specialist training is right for you at this point in your life.
- I am willing to disclose to my colleagues and peers that I have struggled with behavioral health challenges. I understand that in doing so, I help educate others about the reality of recovery.
- I have the time needed to participate in a challenging course of study.
- I have taken and completed formal schooling, adult education classes, have a GED or high school diploma.
- I am able to travel away from my home for multi-day trainings.
- I feel ready to be involved in a class that requires active participation.
- I am able to participate in a full 8-hour training day
- I am able to discuss my own recovery story and experience with others
- I can listen to others' stories and feel empathy for their experience, even when it parallels painful experiences from my past.

- I can arrange for my own transportation needs. Agreement with these statements does not necessarily predict program completion, but they can help you make the decision about whether you are ready for training now.

(2) Mental Health Peer Specialist (MHPS) or (VMHPS) Training and Certification

Steps for peers to become certified to bill Medicaid

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification has implemented a new peer support benefit for the state Medicaid Program. There is a specific training and certification process that must be followed for peers to be eligible to bill Medicaid. Once certified, individuals will have the credential of “Mental Health Peer Specialist” (MHPS) this credential does not mean a peer is a clinician, rather than the designation of Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS). SC SHARE peer specialist training will be eligible to apply for this new certification.

Steps below:

The following is a summary of the steps for this new training and certification process. You must complete each step, in order, to be eligible for certification.

- (1) **Review the online orientation materials below and complete the self-assessment.** You must acknowledge at the end that you have reviewed the materials. This will enable you to apply for training on the Core Principles of Peer Support (“Core” training).
- (2) **Apply and take the Core training.** Complete the application and submit along with payment by credit card. Application for the Core training is not a competitive process; all eligible applicants are accepted. The current fee is \$125 (no refunds). The Core training is a 6-7 hour, facilitated and interactive webinar. You must register at least one week prior to the next scheduled training. Once your application and payment are received by SC Peer Specialist Certification Board, you will be sent an email with instructions for logging onto the training. At the end of the Core training is a short knowledge assessment. Once you complete and pass the knowledge assessment you will be able to apply for supplemental training.
- (3) **Apply for the supplemental training in either mental health or substance use peer support.** The training to become an MHPS (Mental Health Peer Specialist) or VMHPS (Veterans Mental Health Peer Specialist) are both a competitive process. If you are accepted, you will be sent an invoice for payment by credit card and information about the training. The current registration fee is \$150.00. The supplemental training is a five day, 40 hour, classroom style training held in various cities around the state. Refer to our training calendar for details. At the end of the supplemental training, you will get an email with a link to take an online knowledge assessment. Once you complete and pass the knowledge assessment you will receive instructions for downloading and printing a confirmation that you have successfully completed all the steps in the training process. You will need this document to apply for certification.

Mental Health Peer Specialist Certification Program Competencies

During our 2 week course, participants will learn the following additional competencies:

- Practical assessment skills and basic knowledge of mental health and substance use disorders
- Supporting skills to assist a consumer to develop skills identified in the approved Individual Recovery Plan
- Documentation of services provided including preparation of progress notes
- Computer skills
- Unique role of the peer, using self as a therapeutic presence
- Ethics and professionalism
- Recovery and Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP) or similar planning
- Advocacy skills, and
- Cultural competency and sensitivity

(3) Certified Family Partner Program

A Certified Family Partner (CFP) is a parent or guardian who has lived experience raising a child with mental, emotional or behavioral health challenges and who has at least one year successfully navigating a child serving system.

The Certified Family Partner is trained to use this experience to help other parents/guardians for the purpose of educating, role modeling and providing hope related to the recovery process.

Currently, most Certified Family Partners work in community mental health centers, although there are a growing number in private and public hospitals, residential treatment centers, juvenile justice centers, and other settings. Family partners work to give voice to, and promote recovery and resiliency within, families of children with mental, emotional and behavioral health challenges. They work to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental health in schools, faith communities, state agencies and communities.

How to Be Trained

To obtain certification as a Certified Family Partner (CFP) one must complete an intensive 4-day training followed by an exam that assesses competency skills needed by successful family partners. The training is offered at least twice a year. At this time, only English language courses are available; however, we are exploring options to offer Spanish language training and materials. Further information on the training view **CFP training application**.

The curriculum was originally developed by stakeholders and based on resources from several other states. The material is undergoing revision to include updates and ensure that the training is trauma informed.

Once certified, family partners must earn at least 20 CEUs every two years to maintain their certification. The program is administered according to the policies in the **Certified Family Partner Policy and Procedures Manual**.

SCPCB also offers a one-day course for CFP supervisor that is highly recommended.

(4) CFP Supervisor Training

This unique one-day training introduces current and prospective supervisors of Certified Family Partners (CFPs) to the value of this vital profession, the core competencies CFPs are trained in, their Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and especially the services they provide.

Family partner support services provided by Certified Family Partners significantly increases engagement and hope for the families served. Family partner support services are an invaluable adjunct to clinical services.

Also covered in this training is information about:

- What appropriate supervision of CFPs includes,
- How to plan supervision for a highly mobile workforce that spends much of its time in the field,
- Special considerations in supervising newer family partners, and
- Key areas to focus on for successful supervision of family partners.

Reciprocity

Family partners who have taken certification training in another state or who have passed the national certification exam administered by the Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health may apply for a certification through SCPSCB. If it is determined that the other training and certification is comparable to that provided by SCPSCB, the individual will be certified for the lesser of 1) their certification period from the other state, or 2) twenty-four months. The individual must meet the same requirements as other Certified Family Partners to be eligible to be recertified.

(5) Juvenile Justice (Endorsement Training)

The Juvenile Justice Endorsement training is a two-day training provided to Certified Family Partners providing support to families whose youth are involved or at risk of being involved with the Juvenile Justice system.



The training explores prevention and early identification strategies for CFPs to utilize with the families they serve, and provides a better understanding of the complex juvenile justice process.

Each participant receives tools to help guide their families along the continuum of services in the SC Department of Juvenile Justice System.

The training examines the impact of Juvenile Justice involvement on the family and how the CFP can support them in developing a partnership with those involved with their youth.

The training provides participants with the opportunity to have their questions answered by a Statewide subject matter experts in the field of juvenile justice. The training will provide 12 CEUs.

(6) Special Education (Endorsement Training)

Three-day training to assist the Certified Family Partner in understanding how to assist a family who may find their child/youth struggling in school. This training explores the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians, a comparison of the education laws as they pertain to accommodations and special education, and how to assist the parents/guardians in writing the appropriate requests to a school or district.

The training provides an understanding of the tiered instruction approach used in South Carolina, examining Response to Intervention, Section 504 and IDEA. The CFP will gain an understanding of the qualifying disabilities for Special Education, and the development of an Individualized Education Plan, as well as, providing tools to assist families to appropriately advocate for their child's successful education. The participant will receive 15 CEU credits.

(7) Wraparound Process (Endorsement Training)

Two-day training which provides a comprehensive understanding on the role of the CFP with a family engaged in the wraparound process to gain successful outcomes for their youth and family.

The Wraparound endorsement training for Certified Family Partners (CFPs) is a two-day training which provides a comprehensive understanding on the role of the CFP with a family engaged in the wraparound process. The training covers wraparound both within and outside the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) waiver program. Because it was developed specifically to address the role of the CFP in the Wraparound process, it covers some different information than what is covered in the National Wraparound Institute training.

This training is interactive, covering the principles and values of wraparound, the specific role of the Certified Family Partner with the family and as part of the treatment team, specifically looking at how the CFP can effectively participate and assist the family, and explores the components of each of the four phases of wraparound with a checklist of CFP responsibilities to assist the family through each phase.

The training provides opportunities to explore actual family scenarios using the wraparound process. The CFP will gain skills in assisting the family to understand how to identify and use their strengths toward successful outcomes. This includes coaching tips to encourage the family to use their voice to make informed choices, drive the process and their plan; as well as, step-by step tools to use with the family to assist the process.

Participants receive 12 CEU credits.

South Carolina Peer Specialist Certification Board

Questions and Answers About the New Medicaid Reimbursement Credentials

1. What new credentials are being issued?

Note: These credentials are only for those peers wanting to work in Medicaid reimbursable settings.

Mental Health Peer Specialist (MHPS), for a person with lived experience in recovery from a mental health condition and working with clients with a mental health setting.

2. I don't work in a setting that bills Medicaid. Am I required to get one or both of these credentials?

If you are working as a Peer Specialist in a non-Medicaid billing setting, you are not required to get these credentials.

3. What is the cost to grandfather into the MHPS?

SC Peer Support Certification Board charges a \$60.00 fee to grandfather one credential, and an additional fee of \$20 per each additional credential.

4. I hold a PRSS and want to know if I can grandfather into both credentials?

You can only grandfather into the credential you are currently certified in. If you hold the PRSS you qualify to grandfather for the RSPS. If you hold the CPSS from SC SHARE, you qualify for the MHPS credential.

5. When would my credential(s) expire?

Grandfathered credentials will expire on the date your original certification would expire. For instance, you were issued a CPSS and it expires December 2019, then your grandfathered MHPS would expire on the same date. After that, all credentials expire 2 years after their issue date. That would allow you to renew both credentials on the same date. The same for the MHPS credential; if your SC SHARE expiration date is December 2019, your recertification date will stay the same. You will be required to verify the 20 CEU renewal training hours and criminal background check.

6. What supervisor certification are they grandfathering in?

There was not a Peer Supervisor Certification previously. In order to supervise RSPS or MHPS a person must be a Qualified Peer Supervisor and meet those requirements. A person who has at least two (2) years of experience supervising peer specialists, within the five (5) years prior to the date this rule is initially effective, may apply to SC Peer Support Certification Board to be grandfathered into peer specialist supervisor credential provided they meet the other requirements.

7. I currently work in the VA system and see mental health and substance abuse patients with my current CPSS, but it is not billed through Medicaid due to military medicine. Would I need to get both MHPS and RSPS?

Public Law 110-387 requires that peer specialists in VA be certified by either a VA approved or state approved certification process. Not holding the current state approved certificate could result in VA peer specialists being reassigned to a non-peer specialist position or loss of employment.

8. I have CPSS and work in Mental Health arena as well as in a supervisory role with Recovery Coach Training of Trainers through the State. I am not currently conducting training but wanted to know if that qualifies as a supervisor certification that can be grandfathered in.

If your job as supervisor in the mental health arena was supervising CPSS peers, then you would qualify to be a supervisor for the MHPS employees.

If you are an approved trainer, you can grandfather into that provided you use the curriculum approved by SCPSCB and meet the other requirements.

9. I am currently an approved Recovery Coach Trainer and want to know if I can continue using the same approved curriculum?

The curriculum has been modified for RSPS and MHPS for training entities that will be training for those credentials. You can continue to train using the same curriculum but it would not meet the standard of “using only SCHHSC approved curriculum”

10. What is the scope of practice for a RSPS or MHPS?

A. A peer specialist provides peer specialist services as described below relating to Services provided:

1) All peer specialist services must be recovery oriented, person-centered, relationship focused, and trauma informed.

2) Peer specialist services may include:

a. recovery and wellness support, which includes providing information on and support with planning for recovery;

b. mentoring, which includes serving as a role model and providing assistance in finding needed community resources and services; and

c. advocacy, which includes providing support in stressful or urgent situations, and helping to ensure that the recipient's rights are respected.

3) Services may be provided individually or in a group.

4) Participation in peer specialist services is voluntary.

B. A peer specialist may also provide mental health rehabilitative services that are within the peer specialist's knowledge and abilities.

11. Where can I find an approved training to become a RSPS or MHPS?

SC Peer Support Certification Board will be posting training entities approved by us on our website. You can also look up Qualified Peer Specialist Supervisors on our website.

12. What kind of background check is required and is this fee covered by the application fee?

Applicants are required to get a background check that must be completed no more than 30 days prior to SC Peer Specialist Certification Board receiving the application, even if you recently were required to have a background check by your employer. Background checks will be done through Verified Volunteers. The results of the background check will be sent back to the applicant and a copy included in the application package. The fee for the background check is not covered by the application fee – it is the applicant's responsibility to pay \$19.00 for the background check fee.

13. Since there are two certification entities, do I have to get certified by both, or can I just pick one entity to apply to?

You will only get certified by one entity.

14. Will a certification issued by one entity be recognized by the other one?

Yes, but the certification will be verified if trying to renew.

15. Will SPSCB publish ethical standards for both RSPS and MHPS to supplement the high-level guidelines included in the training rules?

Yes, SCPCSCB will publish ethical for both to supplement the high-level guidelines. They are on the SCPCSCB application forms and the ethical standards were adapted for both credentials.

16. Will SCPCSCB publish a process for submitting an ethics complaint against either an RSPS or an MHPS?

Yes, they are in SCPCSCB's standards and there is a link on the web site to file an ethics complaint.

17. I am beginning my certification training, is there a specific order in which the training has to be completed?

- (1) Complete online self-assessment and orientation;
- (2) Complete the core peer services training (about an 8-16 hour training) and related knowledge assessment;
- (3) Complete the SUD Recovery Coach or mental health peer training (approximately 46 hours);
- (4) Completion of 250 supervised work experience hours.

We realize this is a big change and there will be more questions. If you can send in questions by email to contact.us@chfsserv.com we will update this list promptly.