



# 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 training location, accommodations, directions, and the core curriculum training and testing schedule. We look forward to meeting you.

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**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.

The job of a CPSS 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. Peer support specialists are recovery agents in the service settings and communities that they work. They provide and advocate for effective recovery based services for the people they serve. They assist clients in obtaining services and information that meet clients' individual needs. They inform clients about community and natural supports and how to use them in a recovery process. They assist clients in becoming empowered through self-advocacy skills which address stigma and discrimination against themselves and their peers.

### **Certified Peer Support Specials Candidate Characteristics/Qualifications**

The Peer Support Service is provided by self-identified clients of mental health services that can demonstrate their own efforts at self-directed recovery. By definition a CPSS candidate should be a client in recovery from mental illness, with the following experiences and abilities:

- 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 national mental health client movement, which is evidenced by previous volunteer or work experience **Note:** For beneficiaries in dual recovery, experience with recovery self-help programs for individuals with addiction only or with co-occurring disorders is particularly valuable.

In addition to being well established in their own recovery the applicant should be **resilient**. They should possess the personal and community qualities that enable them to rebound from adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other stresses - and to go on with life with a sense of mastery, competence, and hope. A peer support specialist job is a staff position and they should be:

- flexible
- have organizational skills
- be self-motivated with the ability to work well independently or in groups
- possess strong inter-personal and communication (verbal & written) skills
- exercise good judgment

With respect to the above, the qualified CPSS candidate should be able to *demonstrate* by their response to the following recovery questions that they are in recovery from their mental illness.

- 1) What does it mean to recover from a mental illness?
- 2) Explain what recovery from *your* mental illness looks like in your life.
- 3) Explain in detail your recovery efforts and/or wellness plan.
- 4) What are the symptoms of your illness? What triggers those symptoms? What do you do to keep yourself well?
- 5) How do you deal with crisis? with recurrence of your symptoms? with relapse?
- 6) What role has a sense of hope and resiliency played in your life?
- 7) What kind of community supports do you have that help you deal with your mental illness?
- 8) Has the negative stigma that often surrounds having a mental illness affected you? How? How have you learned to deal with it?
- 9) What is meant by the “recovery movement?” What kind of experience and/or involvement do you have with others in their recovery? (They should be familiar with at least one local, statewide or national advocacy organization; 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 their 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.]

### **Training Requirements:**

All Peer Support Specialist candidates must complete two weeks (30 hours) of intensive training and pass a written and oral competency exams to become certified. Certification is required in order to provide and bill the PSS service.

**Training Registration:** Centers are responsible for sending their CPSS candidate to the training. Contact Katherine Roberts, SCDMH Office of Client Affairs (803–898-8304) or [kmr50@scdmh.org](mailto:kmr50@scdmh.org) to register a candidate.

### **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. Centers are responsible for travel costs and making travel arrangements.
2. 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.
3. 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. The fee covers material costs and is subject to change.

**Training Location:**

South Carolina Department of Mental Health  
2414 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29202 Room 323

**Core Curriculum Part I** will include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of the Training	Impact of Diagnosis on One's Self-Image
Role of the CPSS in the SC DMH	Beliefs and Values that Strengthen and Support Recovery
CPSS Job Description	Dissatisfaction as an Avenue for Change
SCDMH Organization	Combating Negative Self-Talk
	Facing Your Fears
CPSS Training Standards	Problem Solving with Individuals
CE Requirements to Maintain Certification	Effective Listening and the Art of Asking Questions
Medicaid Regulation for PSS	Facilitating Recovery Dialogues
Role of Peer Support in Recovery	Introduction to WRAP: Wellness Recovery Action Plan
Telling Your Recovery Story	Creating the Life You Want
Is Recovery Possible Debate/How Negative Messages Are Sent	Review Using the Case Studies from Section 3
Power of Negative Messages/Creating Recovery Environs	
Psychosocial Rehabilitation as the Road to Recovery	

**Core Curriculum Part II Training (Part 11 currently undergoing revisions)**

Medicaid Documentation	Introduction to Addiction and Substance Abuse
Cultural Competence	
Introduction to Diagnosis, Medications, DSMIV and GAF	

**Continuing Education Requirements:**

The Education and Training Advisory Steering Committee for PSS was established to promote the peer support service and develop/clarify implementation and continuing education guidelines for certified peer support specialists. To maintain certification to bill Medicaid for the Peer Support Service the Education and Training Advisory Steering Committee has established the following training hour/continuing education requirements for Certified Peer Support Specialists. Twenty hours yearly are required to maintain billing certification.

Of those:

- A minimum of 12 face-to-face hours are required; approved SCDMH and/or SC SHARE training.

- The remaining 8 hours can be accomplished through video-conferencing, Pathlore computer training, approved conference attendance, and/or approved reading.

**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.

**Pathlore:** includes SCDMH assigned employee curriculums

**Video Conferencing:** The Office of Client Affairs offers video-conference training, new training schedules are sent to each peer support specialists as they are finalized. Each conference counts as 1 training hour. Topics include but are not limited to:

Spirituality and PSS	Navigating services/benefits
Group dynamics	Employment
Recommended reading	Symptoms of mental illness
Partnering with clinicians on the plan of care	Ethics, professionalism and confidentiality
Getting a client motivated especially when they are "stuck"	Power, conflict and resolution – integrity in the workplace
Goal setting	Introduction to substance abuse
Grief	Introduction to computers

**Approved reading:** The Office of Client Affairs has established a "lending library". A list of titles will be sent to all CPSS's in January 2006. Other titles should be submitted for prior approval for continuing education credit.

**Approved Conference Attendance:** All conference titles/subjects should be submitted for prior approval for continuing education credit.

### **Driving Directions to SCDMH:**

From I-20 head east to I-26/I-126 going toward downtown Columbia. Exit off the interstate at the Elmwood Exit. From Elmwood, go to Bull Street and turn left. Then go to Colonial Drive (1<sup>st</sup> light) and turn right. Make the 1<sup>st</sup> left 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 (1<sup>st</sup> light) and turn right. Make the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> right into the SCDMH parking lot.

**OR**

Turn left at the 3<sup>rd</sup> light Colonial Drive. Make the 1<sup>st</sup> left into the SCDMH parking lot.

### **Hotel Accommodations:**

**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) **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.

**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) **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.

**From I-77** - Take I-277 and follow Bull Street into downtown Columbia. Take a right onto Taylor Street. Comfort Suites is located approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile on the right. If you run into Huger, you've missed the entrance and you'll have to circle back.

### **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 (1<sup>st</sup> light) and turn right. Make the 1<sup>st</sup> right 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. Souper Spoon 1212 Hampton Street, Downtown 803-256-0902
5. Lots of fast food places on Elmwood, too!
6. Subway
7. McDonalds
8. Bojangles Fried Chicken
9. Maurice's Barbeque

<b>South Carolina Certified Peer Support Specialist Training Core Curriculum</b>			
<b>WEEK ONE</b>			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Begin 1:30 pm End 5:00 pm	Begin 8:30 am End 5:00 am	Begin 8:30 am End 5:00 pm	Begin 8:30 am End 12:00 pm
<b>WEEK TWO</b>			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	
Begin 1:30 pm End 5:00 pm	Begin 8:30 am End 5:00 am	Begin 8:30 am End 12:00 pm	
<b>TESTING</b> (Choose One Date)			
Begin Written 10:00am		Begin Orals 1:30pm	
Begin Written 10:00am		Begin Orals 1:30pm	

## **Steps to Becoming Certified a Peer Support Specialist at SCDMH**

**First Step:** To find out if a Mental Health Center or Hospital is hiring CPSS's review the SCDMH Website under Career Opportunities/Job Applications.

If a Mental Health Center or Hospital is advertising for a Peer Support Specialists/Human Services Specialists I or II, make contact with their Human Resource Coordinator by sending them your resume. Note: If the center is not advertising you may also send a letter of interest to the center(s) of your choice along with your resume to be kept on file when the center decide to hire.

When you send them a copy of your resume, be sure to include a cover letter describing your interest in a peer support specialist position and why you are suited for such a position.

- A list of the Human Resource Coordinators' addresses and telephone numbers by facility can be found on the SCDMH Web site: [mentalhealth-recovery.com](http://mentalhealth-recovery.com) under Consumer Resources/Peer Support. Or you can contact Katherine Roberts at (803) 898-8304 for a list of their names and contact information.
- Can you be hired at a center where you receive services? It depends on the centers policy. Some centers allow their employees to work where they receive services others don't. CPSS's are subject to the same policies and rules as all other center employees. **Due to potential conflicts we recommend that you make arrangements to receive your care at a different center or privately in the community rather than the mental health center where you receive services.**

**Second Step:** Once you have sent them your resume, call the Human Resources Coordinator at the Mental Health Center where you wish to work and ask them what their application process is and then follow it.

**Third Step:** Ask them for a brief courtesy interview now, even if they aren't hiring immediately. If they say no, ask them when you should check.

**Fourth Step:** If you are hired, you will be sent by your employer to the SCDMH Peer Support Specialist Certification training. **Note: Due to budget cuts, only people who have been hired as Peer Support Specialists or who are presently employed by the mental health system and intend to provide Peer Support Services may attend a Certification Training at no charge.**

**Fifth Step:** Once you are hired and have completed the Certification Training, you must score a 70 or above on the oral and 70 or above on the written tests covering information learned in the training.

**Good Luck!**