

Idaho Peer Support Specialist Training Guide



Peer Support Specialist Training Guide

Greetings! We're glad you're interested in working as a certified peer support specialist (CPSS). Because of their own personal recovery experiences, CPSSs are uniquely qualified to support the recovery of others. It is very rewarding to help others find hope and empowerment in their recovery from mental health and mental health/substance use co-occurring disorders. However, it is not the right job for everyone, and you must be ready to take on both its rewards and challenges. This guide is intended to familiarize you with the field of peer support, Peer Support Specialist Training, and things to consider before you make the decision to apply for and attend the training. **BEFORE submitting a training application, please read this guide carefully and completely to ensure you are pursuing a career that is a good fit for you. Please take the self-assessment at the end of the guide as well.**

What is Peer Support?

Peer support is the process of people who have personal lived experience with mental illness or mental illness with co-occurring substance use disorder offering their peers encouragement, hope, and understanding to support their recovery. It is a powerful process that is based on the belief that mental health recovery is possible for everyone. Peer support focuses on strengths, recovery goals, hope, and trust. It eliminates the “you don't know what it's like” feeling that many people may be experiencing with other mental health services they are receiving. A certified peer support specialist (CPSS) who has first-hand experience of their own mental health or co-occurring recovery process truly understands its challenges. CPSSs are able to effectively offer constructive feedback, establish trust, and role model recovery for their peers. They know what it's like to experience mental illness and overcome the confusion, loss, and grief that often results. Because of this, CPSSs can be integral to a person's recovery process by offering consistency and support during their recovery journey. The inclusion of peer support in the behavioral health system promotes mental health recovery for all!

Who are Certified Peer Support Specialists?

Certified peer support specialists (CPSSs) are individuals in recovery from mental illness or mental illness with co-occurring substance use disorder who use their personal recovery experience to support the recovery of others. They know firsthand what recovery is all about because they themselves have experienced their own recovery process. CPSSs have successfully completed Peer Support Specialist Training, passed a comprehension exam, and been certified in the state of Idaho. Sharing mental health recovery experience is at the root of providing effective peer support and we encourage training applicants to be comfortable doing so prior to applying to the training. This process can be very liberating for individuals who have kept their story to themselves and/or feel that it carries stigma. CPSSs help *bust* this stigma by becoming employees of a behavioral health organization, role modeling recovery, sharing their invaluable lived experience, and offering support during face-to-face meetings with their peers. The results are incredible for both the CPSS and the peers they work with. Working as a CPSS is a very rewarding profession, but it can also be stressful at times and is not for everyone. Please read on to learn about some of the challenges presented by the peer support profession that you will want to be aware of.

What Does “Recovery” Mean?

You will see the word “recovery” throughout this training guide and we would like to clarify that we are referring to recovery from mental health challenges or mental health challenges co-occurring with substance use disorder. We think about recovery as an ongoing process that is unique for each person. Applicants must have at least one ongoing and continuous year in strong mental health or co-occurring recovery before applying to Peer Support Specialist Training. Individuals who have personal experience solely in recovery from addiction are not eligible for this training.

Idaho Peer Support Specialist Training

The training is a blast! Peer Support Specialist Training is for individuals who would like to become certified to work as CPSSs in the behavioral health workforce. Idaho’s training is 40 hours in length and is facilitated by certified peer support specialists who are in recovery. It involves group discussion, practicing peer support in pairs, reading aloud, and plenty of time for questions. The Idaho Peer Support Specialist Training is specifically designed for individuals who have lived experience with mental illness and a recovery process, are very well grounded in their recovery, practice self-care regularly, and have a genuine desire to work in this field. The training teaches skills and content universal to peer support and provides an understanding of the resources and systems unique to Idaho. Each training group has a maximum of 24 trainees and the training curriculum covers topics such as:

- Stages in the Recovery Process
- The Role of Peer Support in Recovery
- Relationship Building
- Using Your Recovery Experience as a Recovery Tool
- Trauma Informed Care
- Problem Solving
- Ethics and Boundaries
- Effective Communication
- Setting Recovery Goals
- Igniting the Spark of Hope
- Combating Negative Self Talk
- Self-Advocacy

Training Eligibility Requirements

You must meet **ALL** of the following requirements to be eligible to attend the training:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Identify as a person in recovery from mental illness or co-occurring disorders
- Have at least one (1) continuous year in recovery from mental illness or co-occurring disorders
- Provide two (2) letters of reference from individuals who have been involved in your mental health recovery journey
- Have the ability to pass a background check for purposes of employment
- Have a high school diploma, GED, or higher education and the ability to provide documentation of your education when applying for certification
- Be willing to share your experience with mental illness and recovery with coworkers and peers
- Have a genuine desire and commitment to help others with their own recovery
- Feel comfortable reading, writing, and using a computer
- Be willing to work productively as a team member with other mental health provider staff
- Ability to access reliable transportation for attending work and visiting peers’ homes
- Read and understand this Peer Support Specialist Training Guide
- Read and agree to abide by the Idaho Certified Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics

You are not eligible for this training unless you have personal experience with mental health or co-occurring recovery and are strong in your recovery. Your training application responses should reflect this lived experience. Certified peer support specialists are effective because they share lived experiences with others. If you do not have this background or if you do not feel strong in your recovery, please do not apply for the training. Individuals who have lived experience solely in addiction and do not identify as being in recovery from mental health challenges are not eligible for this training.

If you are currently working as another type of provider in the behavioral health field e.g. social worker, CBRS, or case manager, you must be prepared to work authentically in the scope of a peer support specialist. This means providing peer support from a place of having “been there”, rather than using any clinical education you may have received prior to attending Peer Support Training.

Background Checks

Passing a criminal background check is required in order to work with vulnerable adults and will most likely be a condition of employment as a certified peer support specialist in Idaho. We encourage you to confirm that you are able to pass a criminal background check prior to applying to this training; however, we do not require you to submit your background check with this application. Your background check will be conducted by your future employer. Please visit the Criminal History Unit website at <https://chu.dhw.idaho.gov> and contact them at 208-332-7990 or crimhist@dhw.idaho.gov if you have questions about your ability to pass a background check. **Note that you may not be able to pass a background check if you have had a felony in the last 5 years even if it is not a disqualifying offense. You can read additional information about background checks, including the waiver process that is now available, by clicking the link at the bottom of our resources page at www.idahopeersupport.com/resources.

Application Process

Application to Peer Support Specialist Training does not guarantee acceptance. The application process includes an electronic application, two letters of reference from individuals who have been involved in your mental health recovery process, a 40-minute telephone interview, and reference checking. In order to be considered for the training, applicants must complete the application in full, meet all eligibility requirements, and submit their application and letters of reference. There may be a larger number of applications than the number of training seats available. The eligibility requirements listed above, application and letters of reference, and phone interviews are used to determine the most viable applicants. If you would like to be added to the waitlist for a training that we are no longer accepting applications for, you must submit an application for a future training and select to be added to the waitlist within the application. Please do not email to request to be added to the waitlist. The best way to be a strong waitlist applicant is to submit your application as soon as possible including both letters of reference. Application instructions and the electronic training application can be found at www.idahopeersupport.com/training. Please read all application instructions and training requirements on the website before applying.

Letters of Reference

Your application will not be complete until it is accompanied by two (2) letters of reference from individuals who have been involved in your mental health recovery process. Letters of reference must be submitted using the instructions found at www.idaho peersupport.com/references. The letters must be written and signed by individuals who have been part of your mental health recovery process. Please ask your references to indicate their relationship to you, describe how they have been a part of your mental health recovery, and why they believe you are qualified to share your lived experience with others on a recovery journey. The letters may be written by a current or former counselor or mental health service provider, employer, teacher, volunteer supervisor, clergy, or friend/family member who can speak to your strength in recovery. You can submit your letters of reference with your training application if you have them at the time you apply, or your letters can be submitted after your training application if needed. Letters cannot be submitted via email. Please direct your references to www.idaho peersupport.com/references so they can submit their letters, or you can upload your letters of reference using this link if they have been provided to you. Your application will not be complete until your letters of reference have been submitted, and we prefer for your letters to be submitted by the time of your phone interview.

Phone Interviews

Upon submission of the electronic training application, you will receive an email with a link to sign up for your phone interview. Please click the link, sign up for a time that works for you, and mark it on your calendar. The phone interview will last about 40 minutes and will be a chance for us to get to know you and your qualifications. It is a casual conversation and you will be speaking with a certified peer support specialist who is in recovery. We look forward to speaking with you!

Selection Priorities

When a larger number of applications are received than the number of available training spots, applications are evaluated based on the following priorities in order to make trainee selections. In addition to the strength of answers on the application, strength of qualifications demonstrated during the phone interview, quality of reference letters and chronological order of application submission, the following priorities are considered when making trainee selections:

- Strength of genuine lived experience with mental illness and strength in recovery
- Ability to live and work in underserved communities where there is greatest workforce demand
- Demonstration of one's genuine desire and commitment to provide peer support services

Training Cost

The training fee is \$495. This cost includes all training materials but does not include travel, accommodations, or lunch. There are no scholarships available at this time, and we encourage each applicant who has a relationship with an employer, Vocational Rehabilitation, or a private sponsor to inquire about financial assistance to attend the training if they are not able to pay out of pocket. If you are currently employed and will need to take time off work to attend the training, please discuss this with your supervisor and obtain required permissions before applying. You will not be compensated for lost wages due to taking time off work, and you will not be permitted to leave training early to go to work or attend appointments.

Strength and Understanding of Recovery

Trainees must demonstrate consistent strength in recovery and an understanding of the recovery process throughout the training. In addition to the comprehension exam described below, training facilitators use an assessment of strength and understanding of recovery to determine each trainee's qualifications to become a certified peer support specialist. Trainees who do not demonstrate strength in recovery, an understanding of the recovery process, and the ability to connect with others will not be eligible to apply for peer support specialist certification. Should training facilitators determine that a trainee is not eligible for certification, the trainee will receive a letter stating the reasons they are not eligible for certification and suggestions for improvement if applicable. Depending on the circumstance, the trainee may have the opportunity to attend Peer Support Specialist Training again in one year if desired and will be required to complete the application process again including a phone interview and submission of two current letters of reference. Refunds will not be granted to trainees who are determined to be ineligible for certification based on the facilitators' evaluation. The following competencies are evaluated for each trainee:

- Trainee demonstrates strength in recovery throughout the training
- Trainee demonstrates an understanding of the recovery process
- Trainee understands self-care and practices it throughout the training
- Trainee demonstrates effective use of interpersonal and professional communication skills and communicates effectively with other trainees and training facilitators
- Trainee works well in a group, with a partner, and independently
- Trainee interacts regularly with the group, is able to let other individuals speak, and displays curiosity and connection when working with a partner
- Trainee shows self-awareness, takes personal responsibility, practices insight, and displays a positive attitude throughout the training
- Trainee is able to share their lived experience appropriately and relevantly to relate to peers
- Trainee demonstrates the ability to connect with others and form peer to peer relationships
- Trainee is mindful of and shows respect for fellow trainees and staff
- Trainee is receptive of constructive feedback from instructors to facilitate the learning process
- Trainee follows directions, navigates training material, and asks for help if/when needed
- Trainee is alert, engaged, present, and participates willfully in 5 full days of class
- Trainee attends all training sessions in full and is punctual throughout the week

Training Exam

Training facilitators assess attendance, participation, and demonstration of the competencies listed above to evaluate trainees on their readiness to become a certified peer support specialist. Those who successfully demonstrate their strength and understanding of recovery, comprehension of the training material and competencies above, actively participate, and attend 100% of the training sessions are eligible to take the training comprehension exam on the last day of training. If a trainee does not successfully pass the comprehension exam with 80% or greater, they must retake the exam within 4 weeks of training completion and steps for doing so will be provided. If the trainee fails to retake the exam within the allotted time period, they must retake the training in order to retake the exam. Individuals must attend 100% of training sessions and pass the training exam with a score of 80% or greater to be eligible for peer support specialist certification in Idaho.

CPSS Certification Process

BPA Health is currently the certifying body for Idaho's peer support specialists. Each individual who successfully completes the training must complete the certification process in order to be employed as a CPSS. Additional certification information can be found on BPA Health's certification website at www.idahopecert.com. Please familiarize yourself with the following certification process:

- 1) You must first successfully complete Peer Specialist Training before applying for certification. After completing training, you will be eligible to apply for peer support specialist certification through BPA Health using the [application for 6-month CPSS certification found here](#).
- 2) If your application is approved, you will receive a certification from the Peer and Family Support Certification Committee that is valid for 6 months. The Certification Committee has up to 30 days to review and approve your application. This means you may have to wait up to 1 month to provide peer support after completing your application for certification. While waiting to receive your certification, you can be interviewing for jobs and doing on-the-job orientation. You cannot bill for peer support services until after you have received proof of certification from BPA Health.
- 3) After receiving your 6-month certification, you will be a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS). You will then use the next 6 months to accrue 100 hours of work experience if you hold a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field OR 200 hours of work experience if you have a high school diploma or GED but do not have a bachelor's degree or higher in a human services field. You must also receive 20 hours of supervision by a degreed professional in a human services field who holds supervisory capacity at their organization. Please note the peer support provided during this time can be billed for and **you can be a paid employee** as long as you have received your initial 6-month certification. You can apply for an extension of time if you need more than 6 months to accrue your 20 hours of supervision and 100-200 hours of work experience. The Certification Committee understands it may take longer than 6 months to accrue hours and grants extension requests as needed.
- 4) Once completed, your supervisor will submit verification of your 100-200 hours of work experience and 20 hours of supervision using the [Supervision and Work Experience Verification Form found here](#). More than one form may be submitted if you work at more than one location.
- 5) Once your hours of supervision and work experience are approved by the Certification Committee, you will be granted a full 1-year CPSS certification.
- 6) You will then continue to provide peer support and earn 10 hours of [continuing education](#) annually with at least 1 hour in ethics to maintain your certification.
- 7) You will apply for annual certification renewal by submitting the [Certification Renewal Application found here](#) along with your continuing education certificates of completion. It will be your responsibility to renew your certification each year before it expires.

CPSS Job Setting

CPSSs work in a variety of professional settings including but not limited to mental health agencies, psychiatric state hospitals, the Department of Health and Welfare, and peer-run organizations. CPSS jobs may be part time or full time and offer wages ranging from approximately \$13 to \$23 per hour. CPSSs are typically paid by the “billable hour”. For purposes of understanding the concept of the “billable hour”, please take note of the following terms:

- A “CPSS” is a certified peer support specialist who has been trained and certified.
- A “peer” is an individual that a CPSS is working with.
- The terms “billable unit”, “billable hour”, and “billable time” refer to the time that a CPSS spends face-to-face with a peer.

Please apply knowledge of these terms when reading the following explanation of what it means to be paid by the “billable hour”.

Most Idaho mental health agencies are paid for the services they provide by billing through Optum which is the organization that manages outpatient behavioral health benefits for Idaho Medicaid members. Optum reimburses the agency after services are provided. Because of this model, CPSSs are typically paid by the “billable hour”. This means they are paid for the time they spend face-to-face with a peer. Each agency chooses how much they pay CPSSs per hour of time they work with a peer.

During the times CPSSs are not face-to-face with peers, they have other responsibilities such as completing progress notes, making phone calls, commuting to meet with peers, and attending staff meetings. The rate of pay for these activities may be lower because it is not measured in billable time the way face-to-face peer support meetings are. Each agency chooses how much they compensate during the time that is *not* spent face-to-face with peers but is spent doing other work.

Here is an example: a CPSS speaks with a peer on the phone about a question the peer has. The CPSS must document the call with the peer in their file. The phone call and documentation does not take place face-to-face so it cannot be classified as “billable time.” So how does a CPSS get paid for their time spent talking to the peer on the phone and writing mandatory documentation? Some agencies compensate office hours at a lower rate of pay than “billable time”. Other agencies may provide a specified number of hours per week at a lower rate of pay for CPSSs to make phone calls or write notes. The amount of time and rate of pay for both face-to-face peer support and time spent doing other related work will vary from agency to agency. When they interview for jobs, CPSSs should ask about the rate of pay for note writing, phone calls, commuting, and all other time spent working that is not “billable time”.

Please note that education on compensation, billing, documentation, and policies and procedures is *not* included in the Idaho Peer Support Specialist Training because these are unique to each agency. These are all important topics to ask about during a CPSS job interview, and employers should review these topics with you when you are hired.

Challenges for Certified Peer Support Specialists

Working as a CPSS is incredibly rewarding, but also comes with challenges. Please make yourself aware of potential challenges in order to determine if this profession is right for you.

- Being paid by the billable hour can present challenges for CPSSs because they cannot be paid in the event a peer cancels or doesn't show up for their appointment. For this reason, pay for CPSSs can vary from month to month. Providing appointment reminders can help mitigate this issue along with any other strategies a CPSS determines with their supervisor's support.
- CPSSs may encounter a lack of employer understanding about peer support. Peer support services are very new in Idaho's mental health agencies and many staff members may be unclear about the role of the CPSS. This can create frustration for CPSSs and CPSSs sometimes feel they do not receive the support they would like to have in their workplace. CPSSs should inquire with prospective employers to determine if the work environment will be supportive. Suggested questions for potential employers include:
 - How long has your peer support program been established?
 - What will my specific role be?
 - What are your expectations for the peer support specialists working here?
 - How will I receive supervision? How often is one-on-one supervision provided?
 - How will I be compensated for non-billable work tasks?
 - Do you offer mileage reimbursement?
 - How do you refer individuals to the peer support program?
 - How do peer support specialists participate in staff meetings?
 - Do you have policies and procedures specific to the peer support program?
- CPSSs must determine how to set a schedule that works for them, learn new computer skills for entering notes into peers' electronic health records, and learn about their agency's policies and procedures. It is up to the CPSS to find what works for them to accomplish this.
- Working as a CPSS involves many tasks other than providing peer support. CPSSs do a lot of commuting to meet with peers in the community, use a computer to document notes on each of the peers they work with, make phone calls and send emails, communicate with coworkers, participate in staff meetings, attend supervision, and complete paperwork. It is important to make sure you are comfortable with these types of tasks as they will be a big part of your job.
- CPSSs often meet with peers in their homes, and some peers may be in living situations that are reflective of challenging personal circumstances. CPSSs must be prepared to practice non-judgement when encountering living environments that are different from their own.
- Building relationships and trust with peers, upholding **boundaries**, and practicing self-care while supporting peers can also be challenging. **DRAWING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES IS ESSENTIAL FOR CPSSs**. CPSSs may work with individuals experiencing significant symptoms of mental illness and encounter peers in crisis at times. CPSSs also experience the grief and loss that sometimes accompanies close relationships with individuals experiencing mental health challenges.

It is important for applicants to understand these challenges to determine if the peer support profession is the right fit. Despite possible challenges, working as a certified peer support specialist is undoubtedly rewarding and wonderful benefits result for peers, CPSSs, and the behavioral health system. Peers are supported in their recovery by CPSSs sharing their story, CPSSs are supported in their recovery by sharing the incredibly valuable lived experience they have, and the behavioral health system furthers its trend toward recovery-based approaches. It's an amazing concept!

Training Readiness

Please consider the following questions as you make your decision about applying to the Idaho Peer Support Specialist Training:

- Do you have personal lived experience with mental illness and a strong recovery process?
- Do you know what a peer support specialist does? Is this something you want to do?
- Are you able to pass a background check for purposes of employment?
- The training provides frequent breaks, but is intensive and can be fatiguing. Do you have the energy to stay focused and alert for 100% of the training?
- If you are traveling, you must be out of town for the entire week plus travel time. Are you prepared to spend that much time away from home and work?
- You must attend all 5 days of training in full or you will not be eligible to take the comprehension exam. Are you ready to make this time commitment?
- The training is highly interactive and requires activities that involve working in small groups and pairs, practicing peer support, group discussion, and reading aloud. Are you comfortable participating in these types of activity?
- Have you attended formal classes recently? If not, how will you adjust to the training setting?
- You will be participating in group discussion and sharing elements of your own recovery experience. Are you comfortable participating in a group and sharing your story with others?
- The training teaches attendees how to support others in their recovery. Do you have strength in your own recovery to consistently role model it for others?
- Are you practicing daily self-care?
- Do you have a strong support network?
- Are you prepared to draw boundaries with your peers and keep your own recovery a priority?
- Are you ready to enter the workforce if it has been a while since you have worked?
- Are you comfortable being paid by the billable hour and the challenges it may present?
- If you have SSDI benefits, do you know how much you are able to work and earn each month?
- Do you feel ready to work as part of a team and independently?
- There will be additional steps you will need to take to complete your peer support specialist certification. Do you know what this involves and are you willing to pursue this process?
- You will need to complete continuing education requirements to renew your certification each year. Are you willing to make this commitment to ongoing education?
- CPSSs do a lot of commuting in the community for work. Are you comfortable with this?
- Aside from providing peer support, completing paperwork and documentation and using a computer is part of the CPSS role. Does that feel like a good fit for you?
- You may work with individuals who do not fully understand the peer support role. Will you be comfortable advocating for yourself if needed?

Peer Support Specialist Training provides the pathway to a career that allows you to share your personal recovery experience in a professional setting. Being a CPSS is an amazing profession and we understand this guide feels heavy at times. We feel it is important to be transparent about challenging aspects of the job so you can make an informed decision to apply to the training. We encourage you to consider this decision carefully and welcome your application if this feels like a good fit for you!

Please take the following self-assessment to learn more.

Peer Support Specialist Self-Assessment

Be sure to read this Peer Support Specialist Training Guide in full before completing this self-assessment. This exercise will help you think about the pros and cons of attending the Peer Support Specialist Training and pursuing a career in peer support. It is important to think about your readiness to attend the training and whether or not working as a certified peer support specialist (CPSS) will be a good fit for you.

Strength in Recovery

I feel strong in my recovery from mental illness or co-occurring disorders.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I have a deep understanding of my own recovery process.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I role model mental health recovery for others.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I have a variety of tools and strategies I use to promote my own recovery.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I actively practice self-care and personal boundaries.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I reach out for help and support when needed.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I recognize my triggers and actively address them.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I have successfully kept up with regular weekly commitments for the last year (work, school, responsibilities, parenting, etc.).	Yes	No	Sometimes
I am willing to share my own recovery experience with my coworkers and peers.	Yes	No	Somewhat

I can listen to others' stories with curiosity and interest, even when they are different from my own or similar to my past experiences.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I have considered how working as a CPSS may affect other parts of my life including my own self-care and recovery.	Yes	No	Somewhat

Commitment to Training

I can commit to attending the training in full.	Yes	No	Maybe
I have supportive friends, family, and others who I can reach out to if needed.	Yes	No	Maybe
I have people in my life who support my desire to become a certified peer support specialist.	Yes	No	Maybe
I have personal skills and tools I will use to work through difficult emotions that may arise during training.	Yes	No	Maybe
I am willing to be an active participant in a group for five consecutive 8-hour days.	Yes	No	Maybe
I am able to organize my needs for a full week of training (transportation, lunch, child care, pet care, wellness needs).	Yes	No	Maybe
I am willing to share my story and listen to the stories of others during the training.	Yes	No	Maybe

Job Readiness

I read the Peer Support Specialist Training Guide and feel that pursuing this training and profession is a good fit for me.	Yes	No	Maybe
I have spoken with CPSSs about what they like about their job and some of the challenges they experience.	Yes	No	I will do this
I am ready to enter the workforce if I haven't worked in a while.	Yes	No	N/A
I am prepared to draw boundaries with my peers when needed and keep my own recovery a priority while working as a CPSS.	Yes	No	Maybe

I have a genuine desire to provide peer support using my own lived experience to support the recovery of my peers.	Yes	No	Sometimes
I am motivated to attend training based on my desire and qualifications rather than on the suggestion of my supervisor or challenges in my current CBRS or case management role.	Yes	No	N/A
I understand the differences between peer support and other behavioral health services and feel I can provide genuine peer support if I have been in a different job role.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand what it means to be paid by the billable hour and I am comfortable being compensated this way.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that working as a CPSS involves more than just providing peer support and I am willing to do other required job tasks such as completing paperwork and commuting.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that I may work with individuals who do not fully understand the peer support role and I am willing to advocate for myself and the peers I work with.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that I need to feel comfortable using a computer to work as a CPSS and I may need to learn new computer programs with the help of my supervisor in order to do my job.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that I may work with peers who are experiencing crisis and/or severe mental illness at times and I am comfortable with this.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand I will work with peers who have diverse cultural and religious beliefs and I will regard them with respect.	Yes	No	Maybe
I am comfortable using my own vehicle to do a large amount of commuting to meet with my peers in the community.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that my employer may not provide health insurance or gas reimbursement for my work-related commutes.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand that CPSS jobs are often part time and I am comfortable with this.	Yes	No	Maybe
I understand the CPSS certification requirements and I am willing to pursue certification after I have completed training.	Yes	No	Maybe

Idaho Certified Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct

Peer support is a helping relationship between certified peer support specialists and the peers they work with. The primary responsibility of certified peer support specialists is to help those they serve achieve self-directed recovery. They believe that every individual has strengths and the ability to learn and grow. As such, certified peer support specialists are committed to providing and advocating for effective recovery-based services for the people they serve in order for these individuals to meet their own needs, desires, and goals.

1. Certified peer support specialists seek to role-model recovery.
2. Certified peer support specialists respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.
3. Certified peer support specialists respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.
4. Certified peer support specialists openly share their personal recovery stories with colleagues and those they serve.
5. Certified peer support specialists maintain high standards of personal conduct and conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.
6. Certified peer support specialists never intimidate, threaten, or harass those they serve; never use undue influence, physical force, or verbal abuse with those they serve; and never make unwarranted promises of benefits to those they serve.
7. Certified peer support specialists do not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, or mental or physical disability.
8. Certified peer support specialists never engage in sexual/intimate activities with colleagues or those they serve.
9. Certified peer support specialists do not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.
10. Certified peer support specialists do not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.
11. Certified peer support specialists do not abuse substances under any circumstances while they are employed as a certified peer support specialist.
12. Certified peer support specialists work to equalize the power differentials that may occur in the peer support/peer relationship.
13. Certified peer support specialists ensure that all information and documentation provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge.
14. Certified peer support specialists keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery, and openly share this knowledge with their colleagues and those they serve.
15. Certified peer support specialists remain aware of their skills and limitations, and do not provide services or represent themselves as expert in areas for which they do not have sufficient knowledge or expertise.
16. Certified peer support specialists do not hold a clinical role and do not offer primary treatment for mental health issues, prescribe medicine, act as a legal representative or provide legal advice, counseling, therapy, social work, drug testing, or diagnosis of symptoms and disorders.

Certified peer support specialists must complete at least one hour of ethics training per year and maintain personal documentation of completed ethics training.

Certified peer support specialists must understand and comply with Idaho's Certified Peer Support Specialist Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct. A Code of Ethics violation is the failure to do so. Individuals who have violated the Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct will follow the process for corrective action put forth by the certifying body approved by the Idaho Division of Behavioral Health.

We look forward to your application if you feel the training is a good fit for you.

Please let us know if you have questions after reading this guide and the application instructions found at www.idahopeersupport.com/training.

We would be happy to help!

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