



New Mexico Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals

New Mexico Certified Peer Support Worker Code of Ethics

Preface

The New Mexico Credentialing Board for Behavioral Health Professionals (NMCBBHP) has adopted a revised code of ethical conduct to reflect current realities which affect the Certified Peer Support Worker (CPSW). This Code of Conduct was developed to protect CPSWs and the people we serve. In addition, these standards are intended to promote the role of the CPSW with integrity and dignity in New Mexico.

As a CPSW, you have earned a unique and influential role in the New Mexico behavioral health community. Your hard work is a tribute to your resiliency, your recovery journey, and your credential must be protected and nurtured. You have excelled in your recovery; your story, resiliency, and skills can help others seeking recovery from addictions and mental health challenges. The following standards will help you understand the extent and limits of peer support work and your place in the workforce. Deviations from these standards will put your credential at risk.

Competence:

It is your responsibility to keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to the field of recovery. A CPSW must acknowledge their limitation and honor boundaries. Every two years you must demonstrate that effort by obtaining 40 continuing hours of education in behavioral health and addiction, including six hours of professional ethics/code of conduct, and six hours in cultural sensitivity. You can find learning opportunities at the Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement (OPRE), at Universities, the State of New Mexico, at Managed Care Organizations, etc.

Violations of the Code of Ethics:

The following rules have been adopted by the NMCBBHP and must be honored by the CPSW. The NMCBBHP working in tandem with the Office of Peer Recovery and Engagement (OPRE) receives and investigates all complaints reported to us and sanctions up to the revocation of your credentials can occur. Ethical resolution is a critical process and all CPSWs are expected to cooperate with investigations and mutuality resolving violations of the CPSW Code of Ethics.

Recovery First: As a certified professional, it is your responsibility to role-model wellness and recovery and develop a support team and resources to stay in recovery. As a CPSW it is expected that you shall not use any illicit substances or use any medications prescribed to you in ways other they were intended. As a CPSW you are expected to seek professional help should substance use or mental health become an issue. CPSWs in violation of substance use laws will be put in inactive status and investigations shall commence. If you are charged and found guilty of any substance use laws, your certification will be revoked for a two-year period.

Continuation of Care: A CPSW shall not discontinue services to an assigned recipient of service without supervision. Cases are closed when a recipient of services has received the support they need when the recipient states they are no longer interested in the service or if the program requirements have been met. The CPSW shall work closely with their supervisor and/or other members of the clinical team to review cases and determine the next recovery steps. Simply stated, recipients of services may choose to end services at any time; peers must staff the case with their supervisors prior to closing a case.

Confidentiality: A CPSW shall keep all information obtained on assigned recipients confidential, this includes the names, addresses, personal details, and diagnosis of all recipients of service. The CPSW shall always obtain a Release of Information (ROI) from the recipient of peer services when appropriate. Only with an ROI can the CPSW discuss the recipient of service with parents, legal guardians, and service agencies. The CPSW will abide by all Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act laws. Violations of this code can result in serious penalties.

Non-Discrimination: A CPSW cannot discriminate against an individual in need of service based upon race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, color, creed, disability, religious affiliation, political views, national origin, age, socioeconomics, or pathway to recovery.

Professional Integrity: The CPSW must display the ability to carry out professional activities in an honest professional and ethical manner. The CPSW will engender trust, fairness and always strive to represent the facts without bias. The CPSW will work with

their supervisor when personal beliefs present conflicts between personal interests, values and beliefs, and professional responsibilities.

- A CPSW will under no circumstances engage in a romantic/sexual relationship with individuals who have or are receiving peer support services from the CPSW; even if the relationship is consensual. This prohibition extends to electronic (including social media), written, and other nonphysical means of connection.
- A CPSW will not provide peer support services to an individual with whom a prior romantic/sexual relationship or friendship has occurred.
- A CPSW shall not receive gifts valued at over \$25.00 from assigned individuals. It is acceptable for a meal or other one-time token of appreciation to be accepted.
- A CPSW shall not be convicted of any offense related to their recovery, including driving while intoxicated, soliciting drugs or alcohol, or any violent crimes.
- A CPSW shall refrain from bullying and harassment of all kinds, this extends to Facebook and other social media posts.
- A CPSW shall not misrepresent themselves in any way, this extends to professional qualifications, education, certification, accreditation, and employment experience.

Your role as a CPSW: The CPSW is an essential member of the behavioral health team. Often people new to recovery need encouragement to make major changes in their lives. People can be intimidated and confused by the complexities of the mental health system. Your experience as a peer and systems navigator can reassure and inspire recovery and model resiliency. The following are some of the many roles a peer supports provides to their assigned cases.

- With a Release of Information (ROI) you may make appointments and attend visits with clients, when needed, you can also make arrangements for transportation to said appointments.
- With an ROI, a CPSW may communicate with providers, insurance companies, and family members.
- A CPSW shall engage clients in their care, supporting recovery-based approaches and sharing lived experiences.
- A CPSW will work with each client to set personal goals. Goals may include going back to school, regaining custody of children, making amends for broken trust, communication with parole offices, etc. The CPSW provides encouragement, the client does the work.
- A CPSW may conduct nonclinical assessments to determine their client's needs including Social Determinants of Health, quality of care surveys including the

Mental Health Statistical Improvement Project (MHSIP) annual survey. Clinical assessment can only be provided by a licensed clinician.

- A CPSW helps members learn about the medications and provides guidelines for keeping medication schedules, but the CPSW shall not handle medications nor pick up prescriptions for their assigned cases. CPSWs do not give opinions about levels of care, prescriptions, or other elements of treatments plans outside of their credential.
- CPSW services may be offered face to face in the member's home or in a mutually agreed upon location, services may also be offered over the telephone or in electronic formats. Privacy must be taken into consideration when deciding where and when to provide peer support.
- Peer services continue for as long as the client needs the services, or as directed by supervisors. Disenrollment may occur if the client is nonresponsive. Reasons for closing a case must be staffed with a supervisor and recorded in the client's confidential file.
- The CPSW will report any conflict of interest to their supervisors. All member contact must be documented according to the policies of place of employment.

Reporting Responsibilities: All CPSWs are mandated to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation against children, older adults, or other activities which appear suspicious. The CPSW shall cooperate in any investigations pursuant to this code of ethics. Peers will document all contacts with clients, providers, and family members of assigned clients. The CPSW has the duty to inform individuals of their responsibility to report harmful and illegal activities.

CPSW Rights: The CPSW has the ethical responsibility to help each client assigned, however, there are times when personal challenges or triggers prevent the CPSW from providing peer services.

- The CPSW has a right to refuse a case if they feel uncomfortable about the situation or person.
- The CPSW has the right to support from supervisors and other peers
- The CPSW has the right to consistent and accessible supervision
- The CPSW has the right to respect from clients, coworkers, and supervisors
- The CPSW has the right to fully participate in the development of recovery services working in tandem with clinicians.

Safety First: All forms of public service carry a potential for risk. The CPSW must always be always aware of their safety and take precautions to prevent any harm to themselves or others. The CPSW shall practice safety in all situations.

- Peers under not transport clients in their personal vehicles unless allowed by the employer, all state and federal laws apply for lawful transport.
- Peers will keep their phones on during business hours.
- Peers will recommend resources such as Narcan to members who are known to use prescription or otherwise procured narcotics.
- Peers shall not carry firearms while on duty.
- The CPSW will report any threats of violence to oneself or others to law enforcement and their agency.

By signing this document, I agree to New Mexico Certified Peer Support Worker Code of Ethics.