# CHAPTER 53. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR CERTIFIED PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

## SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

### 450:53-1-1. Purpose

This Chapter implements 43A O.S. § 3-326, which authorizes the Board of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, or the Commissioner upon delegation by the Board, to certify Peer Recovery Support Specialists. Section 3-326 requires the Board to promulgate rules and standards for certification of Peer Recovery Support Specialists addressing criteria and fees for certification and renewal, including minimum education requirements, examination and supervision requirement, continuing education requirements, professional standards, and rules of professional conduct.

### 450:53-1-2. Definitions

The following words or terms, when used in this Chapter, shall have the following meaning unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

**"Board"** means the State Board of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

**"Certified Recovery Support Specialists, C-RSS or C-PRSS"** means any person who is certified by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to offer behavioral health services as provided in this Chapter.

**"Commissioner"** means the Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

**"Employed"** means, for purposes of this chapter only, a person that is either working as a paid employee or as a volunteer for the state, a behavioral service provider or an advocacy agency contracting with the state to provide behavioral health services.

**"Exam"** as prescribed by the Department, is an exam individuals must pass to become certified.

**"Consumer"** means an individual, adult or child, who has applied for, is receiving or has received mental health or substance abuse evaluation or treatment services from a facility operated or certified by ODMHSAS or with which ODMHSAS contracts.

**"Department"** or **"ODMHSAS"** means the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

**"Dual relationship"** means a familial, financial, business, professional, close personal, sexual or other non-therapeutic relationship with a consumer, or engaging in any activity with another person that interferes or conflicts with the Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists' professional obligation to a consumer.

**"Recovery"** for purposes of this chapter only refers to a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person a mental health and/or substance abuse diagnosis to live a meaningful life in the community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full potential. The process of recovery leads

individuals toward the highest level of autonomy of which they are capable. Key characteristics of recovery include:

(A) Recovery is self directed, personal and individualized (not defined by treatment providers or agencies);

(B) Recovery is holistic. Recovery is a process through which one gradually achieves greater balance of mind, body and spirit in relation to other aspects of one's life that can include family, work and community;

(C) Recovery moves beyond symptom reduction and relief (i.e. meaningful connections in the community, overcoming specific skill deficits, establishing a sense of quality and well-being);

(D) Recovery is both a process of healing (regaining) and a process of discovery (moving beyond);

(E) Recovery encompasses the possibility for individuals to test, make mistakes and try again; and

(F) Recovery can occur within or outside the context of professionally directed treatment.

**450:53-1-3. Authority of the Commissioner and Department**

(a) The Commissioner or designee shall have the authority and duty to issue, renew, revoke, deny, suspend and/or place on probation certifications to offer peer recovery support services.

(b) The Department shall have authority to:

(1) Receive and deposit fees as required by 43A O.S. § 3-326(C);

(2) Examine all qualified applicants for Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists training and certification;

(3) Investigate complaints and possible violation of the rules and standards of Peer Recovery Support Specialists;

(4) Make recommendations regarding the outcome of formal complaints;

(5) Enforce the recommendations of the formal complaint process.

## SUBCHAPTER 3. PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

**450:53-3-1. Qualifications for certification**

Each applicant for certification as a Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall:

(1) Possess a High School Diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED);

(2) Have demonstrated recovery from a mental illness, substance abuse disorder or both;

(3) Be at least 18 years of age;

(4) Be willing to self disclose about their own recovery;

(5) Be employed by or volunteer with the state, a behavioral service provider or an advocacy agency contracting with the state to provide behavioral health services.

(6) Possess good moral character;

(7) Pass an examination based on standards promulgated by ODMHSAS pursuant to 43A O.S. § 3-326;

(8) Not be engaged in any practice or conduct which would be grounds for denying, revoking or suspending a certification pursuant to this title; and
(9) Otherwise comply with rules promulgated by the Board implementing 43A O. S. § 3-326.

**450:53-3-2. Applications for certification**

(a) Applications for certification as a Peer Recovery Support Specialist shall be submitted to the Department on a form and in a manner prescribed by the Commissioner or designee.

(b) An application shall include the following items:

(1) Application form completed in full according to its instructions;
(2) Application fee shall be submitted in an amount up to $50.00;
(3) Documentation of current status as being employed by the state of Oklahoma, by a behavioral service provider, or advocacy agency contracting with the state to provide behavioral health services;
(4) The employment status verification form(s) from the employer must be sent to ODMHSAS by the employer;
(5) Official high school transcript or General Equivalency Diploma (GED);
(6) Documentation of age; and
(7) Detailed information, as requested on the application, demonstrating recovery from a mental illness, substance abuse disorder or both.

(c) An applicant, who meets the requirements for certification and otherwise complied with the Chapter, shall be eligible for certification.

(d) A complete application must be submitted at least fourteen (14) days prior to attending Peer Recovery Support Specialists training.

(e) Applications shall be submitted and approved by the Department prior to eligibility of taking the C-PRSS training.

(f) Applications shall only be valid for a period up to six (6) months.

**450:53-3-3. Duration of certification**

(a) Certification issued pursuant to this Chapter shall require renewal annually unless revoked. Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists must renew their certification prior to December 31st of the renewal year.

(b) Renewal shall be accomplished by submitting the annual report of continuing education units (CEU's) with accompanying documentation and the renewal fee.

(c) A certification not renewed by the December 31st deadline will be suspended. Submitting required documentation of continuing education units along with required fees within six (6) months of the expiration date shall renew a suspended certification. Certificates not renewed within six (6) months will not be reinstated and shall result in forfeiture of the rights and privileges granted by the certification.

(d) A certification that was not renewed within the period provided and was not reinstated must wait a period of sixty (60) days before reapplying and shall submit a new application.

**450:53-3-4. Fees**

(a) **Application Fee. The application fee** shall be submitted with the application form. The application fee shall not exceed fifty dollars ($50.00).

(b) **Renewal Fee. The renewal fee** shall be submitted with the renewal form and required continuing education documentation. The renewal fee shall not exceed twenty-five dollars ($25.00).

**450:53-3-5. Fitness of applicants**

(a) The purpose of this section is to establish the fitness of the applicant as one of the criteria for approval of certification as a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists and to set forth the criteria by which the Commissioner or designee shall determine the fitness of the applicants.

(b) The substantiation of any of the following items related to the applicant shall be, as the Commissioner or designee determines, the basis for the denial of or delay of certification of the applicant:

(1) Lack of necessary skills and abilities to provide adequate services;

(2) Misrepresentation on the application or other materials submitted to the Department; or

(3) Any action that would otherwise be considered a violation of the rules of professional conduct set forth in this Chapter.

(4) The Department shall obtain document(s) necessary to determine the fitness of an applicant.

(5) The Department may require explanation of negative references prior to issuance of certification.

## SUBCHAPTER 5. PEER RECOVERY SUPPORT SPECIALISTS CERTIFICATION, TRAINING, EXAM AND CEU'S

**450:53-5-1. Peer Recovery Support Specialists minimum education requirements**

The purpose of this section is to delineate the training requirements for the Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists.

(1) The Department shall have the authority and responsibility for providing Peer Recovery Support Specialists training classes a minimum of three times during the year.

(2) Request for attending the certification training must be made to the Department fourteen (14) days prior to the beginning of scheduled classes.

(3) In order to fulfill the certification training requirements, an applicant must attend and complete a forty (40) hour PRSS training block covering various aspects of recovery, ethics and/or boundaries, mental health and substance abuse as specified by the Department.

(4) Applicants must attend the entire forty (40) hour training block. Absences are excused only for emergencies. An absence lasting over one day shall cause the trainee to be subject to retaking the entire forty (40) hour training block at the next scheduled training course.

(5) Applicants are responsible for completing homework during the forty (40)

hour training block.

**450:53-5-2. Peer Recovery Support Specialists certification examination**

Examinations shall be held at such times, at such places and in such manner as the Commissioner or designee directs. The examination shall cover such technical, professional and practical subjects as relate to the practice of a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist.

(1) Certification exams are scheduled approximately one (1) week following the forty (40) hour training block.

(2) Certification exams consist of a written exam covering all aspects of the training block.

(3) An applicant must score at least a seventy-five percent (75%) to pass the exam and be certified. A score of seventy-four percent (74%) or less will result in an applicant being required to test again at the next scheduled test date.

(4) Applicants who fail to complete and pass the certification exam within six (6) months of application must reapply.

**450:53-5-3. Continuing education requirements**

(a) Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists must complete twelve (12) hours of continuing education per year and submit documentation of attendance for the continuing education to the Department annually.

(b) The Department will use the following criteria to determine approval of acceptable CEU courses:

(1) Provides information to enhance delivery of Peer Recovery Support Services; or

(2) Meets the requirements for LPC, LMFT, LBP, LCSW, CADC, LADC, or CME continuing education; or

(3) Is a required undergraduate or graduate course in a behavioral health related field and pertains to direct interaction with consumers (three (3) hours of course work is equal to twelve (12) hours of CEUs); and

(4) At least three (3) of the continuing education hours must be in ethics.

(c) Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall retain documents verifying attendance for all continuing education units claimed for the reporting period. Acceptable verification documents include:

(1) An official continuing education validation form or certificate furnished by the presenter indicating number of CEUs given for the course; and/or

(2) A copy of the agenda showing the content and presenter for the course.

(d) Failure to complete the continuing education requirements and submit the required documentation by the renewal date renders the certification in suspension, and results in the loss of all rights and privileges of a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists. The Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists certification may be reinstated during a period of no longer than six (6) months following the suspension date. If not reinstated the certification shall become null and void.

## SUBCHAPTER 7. RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

**450:53-7-1. Responsibility**

It shall be the responsibility of Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists, in their commitment to assist consumers in regaining control of their lives and recovery processes, to value objectivity and integrity, and in providing services, to strive to maintain the highest standards of their profession. Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall accept responsibility for the consequences of their work and make every effort to ensure that their services are used appropriately. Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonestly, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation. Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall not exploit their relationships with consumers for personal advantage, profit, satisfaction, or interests.

**450:53-7-2. Competence and scope of practice** (a) Peer Recovery Support services are an EBP model of care which consists of a qualified peer recovery support provider (PRSS) who assists individuals with their recovery from behavioral health disorders.

(b) A C-PRSS must possess knowledge about various mental health settings and ancillary services (i.e., Social Security, housing services, and advocacy organizations). Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (C-PRSS) provides peer support services; serves as an advocate; provides information and peer support. The C-PRSS performs a wide range of tasks to assist consumers in regaining control of their lives and recovery processes. The C-PRSS will possess the skills to maintain a high level of professionalism and ethics in all professional interactions. Examples of a PRSS' scope of practice would including the following:

(1) Utilizing their knowledge, skills and abilities the PRSS will:

(A) Teach and mentor the value of every individual's recovery experience;

(B) Model effective coping techniques and self-help strategies;

(C) Assist service recipients in articulating personal goals for recovery;

(D) Assist service recipients in determining the objectives needed to reach his/her recovery goals;

(2) Utilizing ongoing training the PRSS may:

(A) Proactively engage consumers and possess communication skills / ability to transfer new concepts, ideas, and insight to others;

(B) Facilitate peer support groups;

(C) Assist in setting up and sustaining self-help (mutual support) groups;

(D) Support consumers in using a WRAP - Wellness Recovery Action Plan;

(E) Assist in creating a crisis plan/ Psychiatric Advanced Directive as instructed in the PRSS Training;

(F) Utilize and teach problem solving techniques with consumers.

(G) Teach consumers how to identify and combat negative self-talk and fears;

(H) Support the vocational choices of consumers and assist him/her in overcoming job-related anxiety;

(I) Assist in building social skills in the community that will enhance quality of life. Support the development of natural support systems;

(J) Assist other staff in identifying program and service environments that are conducive to recovery;

(K) Attend treatment team and program development meetings to ensure the presence of the consumer voice and to promote the use of self-directed recovery tools.

(3) Possess knowledge about various behavioral health settings and ancillary services (i.e. Social Security, housing services, advocacy organizations);

(4) Maintain a working knowledge of current trends and developments in the behavioral health field;

(A) Attend continuing education assemblies when offered by/approved by the Office of Wellness and Advocacy;

(B) Develop and share recovery-oriented material with other PRSS's at consumer-specific continuing education trainings.

(5) Serve as a PRSS by:

(A) Providing and advocating for effective recovery oriented services;

(B) Assist consumers in obtaining services that suit that individual's recovery needs;

(C) Inform consumers about community and natural supports and how to utilize these in the recovery process; and

(D) Assist consumers in developing empowerment skills through self-advocacy.

**450:53-7-3. Proficiency**

(a) Peer Support: C-PRSS shall practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, state credentials, and appropriate professional and personal experience.

(b) Specialty: C-PRSS shall not represent themselves as specialists in any aspect unless so designated.

(c) Impairment: C-PRSS shall not offer or render professional services when such services may be impaired by a personal physical, mental or emotional condition(s). C-PRSS should seek assistance for any such personal problem(s) with their physical, mental or emotional condition, and, if necessary, limit, suspend, or terminate their professional activities. If a C-PRSS possesses a bias, disposition, attitude, moral persuasion or other similar condition that limits his or her ability to provide peer recovery support services in that event the C-PRSS shall not undertake to provide services and will terminate the relationship in accordance with these rules.

**450:53-7-4. Wellbeing of the people served**

(a) **Discrimination.** C-PRSS shall not, in the rendering of their professional services, participate in, condone, or promote discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion or national origin.

(b) **Confidentiality**. C-PRSS shall maintain the confidentiality of any information received from any person or source about a client, unless authorized in writing by the client or otherwise authorized or required by law or court order. C-PRSS shall be responsible for complying with the applicable state and federal regulations in regard to the security, safety and confidentiality of any counseling record they create, maintain, transfer, or destroy whether the record is written, taped, computerized, or stored in any other medium.

(c) **Dual relationships**. C-PRSS shall not knowingly enter into a dual relationship(s) and shall take any necessary precautions to prevent a dual relationship from occurring. When the C-PRSS reasonably suspects that he or she has inadvertently entered into a dual relationship the C-PRSS shall record that fact in the records of the affected person(s) and take reasonable steps to eliminate the source or agent creating or causing the dual relationship. If the dual relationship cannot be prevented or eliminated and the C-PRSS cannot readily refer the person to another C-PRSS, the C-PRSS shall complete the following measures as necessary to prevent the exploitation of the person and/or the impairment of the C-PRSS's professional judgment:

(1) Consult with the C-PRSS supervisor to understand the potential impairment to the C-PRSS's professional judgment and the risk of harm to the person of continuing the dual relationship.

(2) Fully disclose the circumstances of the dual relationship to the consumer and secure the consumer's written consent to continue providing services.

(d) **Providing services to persons of prior association**. C-PRSS' shall not undertake to provide services to any person with whom the C-PRSS' has had any prior sexual contact or close personal relationship.

(e) **Interaction with former people with whom a C-PRSS has provided services**. C-PRSS shall not knowingly enter into a close personal relationship, or engage in any business or financial dealings with a former recipient of service. C-PRSS shall not engage in any activity that is or may be sexual in nature with a former recipient of service after the termination of the professional relationship. C-PRSS shall not exploit or obtain an advantage over a former recipient of services by the use of information or trust gained during the peer recovery support professional relationship.

(f) **Invasion of privacy**. C-PRSS shall not make inquiry into persons or matters that are not reasonably calculated to assist or benefit the peer recovery support process.

(g) **Referral**.

(1) If C-PRSS determine that they are unable to be of professional assistance to a client, the C-PRSS shall not enter a professional relationship. C-PRSS shall refer people to appropriate sources when indicated. If the person declines the suggested referral, the C-PRSS shall terminate the relationship.

(2) C-PRSS shall not abandon or neglect current recipients of service in treatment without making reasonable arrangements for the continuation of such treatment.
(3) When an C-PRSS becomes cognizant of a disability or other condition that may impede, undermine or otherwise interfere with the C-PRSS's duty of responsibility to the current client, including a suspension of the C-PRSS's certification or any other situation or condition described in these rules, the C-PRSS shall promptly notify the recipient of service and the facility in writing of the presence or existence of the disability or condition and take reasonable steps to timely terminate the relationship.

**450:53-7-5. Professional standards**

(a) It shall be the responsibility of Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists (C-PRSS), in their commitment to peer support, to value self-determination, and in providing peer services, and to strive to maintain the highest standards of their profession.
(b) C-PRSS shall accept responsibility for the consequences of their work and make every effort to ensure that their services are used appropriately.
(c) It shall be unprofessional conduct for a C-PRSS to violate a state or federal statute, if the violation directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the C-PRSS or if the violation involves moral turpitude.
(d) C-PRSS shall not render peer recovery support services while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

**450:53-7-6. Reimbursement for services rendered**

Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall practice Recovery Support Services only if employed by the State, by behavioral health services providers or an advocacy agency contracting with the state to provide behavioral health services. Reimbursement for services rendered will not be collected outside of the agency's system of service reimbursement.

**450:53-7-7. Failure to comply**

A Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists who does not comply with the Rules of Professional Conduct shall be guilty of unprofessional conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

**450:53-7-8. Personal Problems and Conflicts**

(a) Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists shall refrain from initiating an activity when they know or should know that there is a substantial likelihood that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their work-related activities in a competent manner.
(b) When Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they should take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance, and determine whether they should limit, suspend, or terminate their work-related duties.

## SUBCHAPTER 9. ENFORCEMENT

**450:53-9-1. Enforcement**

(a) ODMHSAS may deny the certification of any person to be a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists who fails to qualify for, or comply with, the provisions of this Chapter.

(b) ODMHSAS may reprimand, suspend, revoke or deny renewal of the certification of a person who fails to qualify for or comply with the provisions of this Chapter.

(c) In the event ODMHSAS determines action should be taken against any person certified under this Chapter, the proceeding shall be initiated pursuant to the rules of ODMHSAS as set forth in Oklahoma Administrative Code, Title 450, Chapter 1, Subchapter 5 and the Administrative Procedures Act.

**450:53-9-2. Reasons to deny, revoke or suspend certification**

(a) The Department may deny, revoke, suspend or place on probation any certification issued pursuant to the provisions of 43A O.S. § 3-326 to a Peer Recovery Support Specialist, if the person has:

(1) Engaged in fraud or deceit in connection with services rendered or in establishing needed qualifications to the provisions of the law;

(2) Engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined by the rules established by ODMHSAS;

(3) Engaging in negligence or wrongful actions in the performance of his/her duties; or

(4) Misrepresented any information required in obtaining a certification.

(b) No certification shall be suspended or revoked, nor a Peer Recovery Support Specialist placed on probation until notice is served upon the Peer Recovery Support Specialist and a hearing is held in conformity with 450:1-1-1, et. seq.

## SUBCHAPTER 11. GRANDFATHERING

**450:53-11-1. Grandfathering**

(a) Upon request, individuals Credentialed as Peer Recovery Support Specialists by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services as of June 1, 2009 through the effective date of this Chapter shall be issued Certification as a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist as provided in this Chapter.

(b) Upon request, individuals Credentialed as Peer Recovery Support Specialists by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services from December 1, 2004 through May 31, 2009 that have demonstrated providing peer support in their employment, volunteerism or advocacy to others as peers shall be issued Certification as a Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist as provided in this Chapter.