



SCDC POLICY

NUMBER: BH-19.17

TITLE: CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROGRAM (CPSS)

ISSUE DATE: July 10, 2025

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY: DIVISION OF **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OUTPATIENT SERVICES**

POLICY MANUAL: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

SUPERSEDES: BH-19.17 (March 12, 2021)

RELEVANT SCDC FORMS/SUPPLIES: 4-2, 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 8-17, 18-68, M-198

ACA/CAC STANDARDS: **5-ACI-1A-17, 5-ACI-1E-05, 5-ACI-6A-04, 5-ACI-6A-20, 5-ACI-6A-23, 5-ACI-6A-42, 5-ACI-6B-12, 5-ACI-6C-03, 5-ACI-6D-05, 5-ACI-5E-11, 5-ACI-5E-12, 5-ACI-5E-13, 5-ACI-5E-14, 5-ACI-5E-15, 5-ACI-7A-01, 5-ACI-7A-03, 5-ACI-7B-15**

STATE/FEDERAL STATUTES: *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), 42 C.F.R. Part 2*

PURPOSE: To provide Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) training and education to inmates prior to their release in an effort to reduce recidivism, increase treatment retention, improve outcomes through employable skills, and to be able to provide fellow inmates with substance use disorders, **as well as inmates with mental illnesses**, and/or at risk for substance use disorders additional support while in the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC). **(5-ACI-5E-13, 5-ACI-5E-14, 5-ACI-5E-15, 5-ACI-6B-12, 5-ACI-7A-03)**

POLICY STATEMENT: It is the policy of SCDC to employ Certified Peer Support Specialists as an adjunct to social, behavioral, and supportive therapies and services, to assist inmates in their own and other's recovery from substance use, **or mental health care** while incarcerated and as a mechanism for successful integration into society while effectively managing their own recovery. **(5-ACI-5E-11, 5-ACI-5E-12, 5-ACI-5E-13, 5-ACI-6A-20, 5-ACI-6A-42, 5-ACI-6B-12)**

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SPECIFIC PROCEDURES:

1. RESPONSIBILITIES:

1.1 The *Peer Support and Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT) Program Manager* or designee will monitor the Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) program to ensure appropriate services are rendered, program standards are maintained, and contractual obligations are met by contracted providers.

1.1.1 The *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee will visit each institution that houses CPSS inmates at a minimum of one (1) time per year and will ensure that each cohort of CPSS inmates are operating in accordance with SCDC policy. During each visit, an evaluation will be conducted of overall program management. The evaluation will include an audit of the following quality assurance indicators:

- Recordkeeping;
- Proof of continued training, if relevant;
- Client observations (group evaluations); and
- Client feedback from surveys or interviews. *(5-ACI-1A-17)*

1.2 The *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee will:

- Document all findings in a report;
- Conduct an exit interview with CPSS inmates and/or contract providers as applicable; and
- Will disseminate a report within thirty (30) days, to appropriate person or persons.

1.3 The Division of Classification and Inmate Records is responsible for ensuring that CPSS inmates are assigned to programs and institutions at the direction of the Division Director of *Behavioral health Outpatient Services* and/or designee.

2. REFERRALS FOR CPSS CERTIFICATION TRAINING: All inmates being referred to become a CPSS must meet program eligibility requirements, to include custody levels for the institution in which training will occur. Any inmates not able to be housed at the institution for training due to custody or security concerns, will require written approval from the Deputy Director of Behavioral Health and Deputy Director of Operations, or designee(s), prior to transfer. Any staff member may request and submit an application to the *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee on behalf of an inmate for the CPSS program.

2.1 Required documents include:

- Completed application;
- Proof of High school diploma or GED; *5-ACI-7B-15*
- Submission of a one (1) page writing sample on the topic of why the individual wants to be a CPSS, as well as demonstrating leadership skills, value system, and peer work completed;
- Self-identification as a person in recovery, with *two (2) years* of recovery as defined by:
 - Sustained physical sobriety, by self-report, from all illicit and mind-altering substances;
 - *Two (2) years* with no major disciplinary convictions;
 - *One (1) year* with no administrative resolutions;
 - At least six (6) consecutive months in general population, *or residing in a sober living unit (SLU); or currently completing an addiction treatment unit (ATU) program or Outpatient Program for Substance Use; or engaged in peer support groups*
- Two *(2)* letters of recommendation from staff, with at least one (1) of them by institutional staff;
- Willingness to be re-assigned to a different *institution* program, *or unit*, if needed;
- Agree to respect and observe the Recovery Training Academy Code of Ethics;

2.2 The *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee will review all applications *two (2) months prior to the training*. Upon review of the applications a date and time will be coordinated with the Division

Director of Addiction Recovery Services, a qualified SCDC designee, and/or contracted provider to interview potential CPSS inmates before the end of the month in which they were reviewed. Final selections must be approved by the *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee.

3. SCREENINGS FOR CPSS CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

3.1 All inmates considered for the CPSS program will submit to a face-to-face interview with the Division Director of *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager, the MAT peer support team, and the institutional peer support team*, designee, or contracted provider.

3.2 All inmates will be required to pass a *sixteen (16) panel* urine drug screen before admission to the CPSS program.

3.3 Any inmate who is maxing out, being paroled, furloughed, or otherwise released from SCDC custody within six (*6*) months of the CPSS training completion date will not be considered.

3.4 Any inmate whose medical issues would limit their function in the training and/or as a CPSS will need to be screened by a licensed medical provider to ensure they are medically stable for the program.

3.5 Any inmate receiving mental health care *or addiction recovery services* must be evaluated and cleared by a qualified mental health professional (QMHP) *or addiction treatment provider*, and *be substantiated* by clinical documentation.

4. PARTICIPATION IN CPSS CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

4.1 Although the CPSS program is voluntary, all components of the training are mandatory. Any inmate that is unable to participate in all aspects, will be removed from the training program.

4.2 All inmates are required to follow all SCDC policies and are subject to disciplinary actions during training.

5. DISCHARGE/TERMINATION FROM CPSS CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

5.1 Inmates may be discharged or terminated for any one (1) or more of the following reasons:

- Failure to successfully complete CPSS training program;
- Administrative reason(s), i.e., court, medical appointments;
- Failure to participate/comply with program requirements;
- Institutional disciplinary violations; or
- Parole.

5.2 In all cases, program staff are required to document such actions on SCDC Form 4-6, "Discharge Summary," and enter appropriate information into the offender management system (OMS), *or other tracking system*, within ten (10) working days of the discharge/termination. In cases where successful completion is noted, appropriate discharge planning is required and must be documented as a permanent part of the inmate's electronic health record (EHR).

5.3 It will be the responsibility of the service/training provider to submit to the Warden and *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager*, or designee, in writing, the name, SCDC number, and reason for inmate's removal from the program.

5.3.1 EXCEPTION: If it is determined that an inmate poses a threat to the security and custody of the institution, or for disciplinary reasons, the Warden or designee may remove an inmate from the program. In all cases, relevant details prompting removal will be documented and made a permanent part of the inmate's record.

6. READMISSION TO CPSS CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

6.1 All requests for readmission will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In all cases of unsuccessful completion, an inmate requesting readmission will not be considered for *twelve (12) months* after the discharge/termination date. Approval for readmission to the CPSS program will be the responsibility of the *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee. Additional documentation may be requested to substantiate the request for re-admission.

7. CERTIFIED CPSS WORK ASSIGNMENTS/DUTIES:

7.1 Upon successful completion and graduation of the program, the CPSS inmate will be returned to their referring institution, or to another institution or program based on need at the time of graduation.

7.2 All inmates performing any duties as a CPSS will be supervised by the contracted provider or designee and will be expected to perform tasks, assignments, and other duties identified as peer support functions. *(5-ACI-6B-12)*

7.3 All CPSS inmates will be required to facilitate support groups at least weekly, institutional and security concerns permitting.

7.4 All CPSS inmates will be required to document all group and individual sessions on SCDC Form M-198, "Structured Daily Activity Log," to demonstrate five hundred (500) hours of work performed as a CPSS. Copies of SCDC Form M-198 will be made and retained by the contracted provider or designee. *(5-ACI-6B-12)*

8. REMOVAL OF CPSS WORK ASSIGNMENTS/DUTIES OR CERTIFICATION:

8.1 Any CPSS can be removed from duty as a CPSS for the following reasons:

- Failure to follow any directive by the contracted provider or designee may result in removal as a CPSS and may include disciplinary action.
- Reoccurrence of substance use by omission or confirmed UDS.
- At the request of the CPSS if they no longer want to work in that role.
- Disciplinary infractions occurring while performing or attempting to perform CPSS duties or any infraction related to substance use.
- Housing reassignment to a restricted housing unit (RHU) for any period of time as a result of a disciplinary infraction, or investigation, unless unfounded.
- Placement on the crisis protocol or admission to Gilliam Psychiatric Hospital (GPH), *MUSC Lancaster BHU*, or other outside psychiatric hospitalization.

8.2 Any removal of a CPSS from their CPSS duties related to a disciplinary infraction or investigation will be for no less than a twelve (12) month period. During this time, the inmate will need to demonstrate ability to be reinstated in their job and role as a CPSS to a contracted peer support provider.

8.3 Any reinstatement will need to be made to the *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee in writing demonstrating the actions and steps taken to correct the issue that warranted removal and how it will not be repeated again in the future.

8.4 If continued instances of removal from CPSS duties is warranted, or if there are instances of substantiated substance use or substance trafficking, the *Peer Support and MAT Program Manager* or designee will review on a case-by-case basis to determine appropriate interventions and if revocation recommendation to the credentialing body is warranted.

8.5 It will be the responsibility of the contracted provider or designee to notify the institutional classification department to have the inmate seen by the job board to be reinstated in the system before resuming CPSS duties.

9. CLINICAL RECORDKEEPING:

9.1 Contents of Clinical Records: All direct service staff (contract or SCDC) under the supervision of the **Peer Support and MAT Program Manager** or designee are required to maintain individual clinical records on each program participant. It will be the responsibility of each program supervisor/contracted service provider to establish an appropriate and acceptable recordkeeping protocol. All recordkeeping protocols must be approved prior to implementation by the **Peer Support and MAT Program Manager**. The specific clinical record documentation required may include, but is not limited to: **(5-ACI-5E-14)**

- SCDC Form 18-68, "Staff Memoranda" (to be used for narrative progress notes);
- SCDC Form 4-2, "Expectation of Participation;"
- SCDC Form 8-17, "Specified Inmate Drug Testing;"
- SCDC Form 4-5, "Statement of Client's Rights and Confidentiality;"
- SCDC Form 4-4, "Consent for Release of Information;" **(5-ACI-1E-05, 5-ACI-6D-05)**
- Individual/encounter notes (EHR); and
- Group notes (EHR).

9.2 Clinical Records Maintenance and Security: Each program must establish and utilize a clinical records maintenance system. This will ensure that inmate clinical records are accessible when needed, but are maintained and stored with appropriate security measures to ensure the confidentiality of the records. Maintaining records in a single location will present fewer problems in terms of staff time and record security. Therefore, it is a requirement that all programs develop a centralized record system.

9.3 Records Retention: After **inmates'** discharge from the CPSS program, inactive files should be forwarded to the **Peer Support and MAT Program Manager**. Please refer to the SCDC Intranet site for the retention schedule for these records. **(5-ACI-6A-04)**

9.4 Confidentiality: Program staff members are required to be familiar with **HIPAA**, Federal Regulations regarding Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient (inmate) Records (42 CFR, Part 2) and comply with SCDC Quality Assurance Administrative and Fiscal Standards regarding record maintenance. **5-ACI-6C-03**

10. DEFINITIONS:

Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) Program - Program to credential an inmate with long-term sobriety, **or mental health stability** to facilitate groups **based** on addiction and recovery, **or mental health**, based on shared living experiences.

SIGNATURE ON FILE

s/Joel E. Anderson, Interim Director

Date of Signature

ORIGINAL SIGNED COPY MAINTAINED IN THE OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT.