



Ethical Standards for Certified Peer Recovery Specialists

The Addiction Profession Certification Board, Inc. (APCB, Inc.) expects all CPRS to adhere to its Ethical Standards. All applicants for certification will need verify that they have read and understood this statement of ethical standards.

Specific Principles: Certified Peer Recovery Specialists give non-clinical assistance to help fellow peers in their recovery from alcohol and drug use related problems through Advocacy, Mentoring and Education, Recovery and Wellness Support, using the established ethical principles and training. They may be in their own recovery, been an affected family member, friend or others using their own experiences in combating drug and alcohol problems. Peers are defined as any anyone requesting help for a drug and alcohol problem.

Principle 1: Non-Discrimination: The CPRS shall not discriminate against peers based on race, religion, age, gender, gender identity, disability, national ancestry, sexual orientation, or economic condition.

A. The CPRS shall avoid bringing personal or professional issues into the peer recovery relationship. Through an awareness of the impact of stereotyping and discrimination, the CPRS guards the individual rights and personal dignity of clients.

B. The CPRS shall be knowledgeable about disabling conditions, demonstrate empathy and personal emotional comfort in interactions with peers with disabilities, and make available physical, sensory, and cognitive accommodations that allow peers with disabilities to receive services.

Principle 2: Responsibility: The CPRS shall espouse objectivity and integrity, and maintain the highest standards in the services the CPRS offers.

A. The CPRS shall maintain respect for institutional policies and management functions of the agencies and institutions within which the services are being performed, but will take initiative toward improving such policies when it will better serve the interest of the client.

B. The CPRS as a mentor and educator, has a primary obligation to help others acquire knowledge and skills in dealing with the accepted tenets of Recovery Wellness and Support .

C. The CPRS who is aware of unethical conduct or of unprofessional modes of practice shall report such inappropriate behavior to the appropriate superiors or authority.

Principle 3: Competency: The CPRS shall recognize that the profession is founded on national standards of competency which promote the best interests of society, of the client, of the member and of the profession as a whole. The CPRS shall recognize the need for ongoing education as a component of professional competency.

A. The CPRS shall recognize boundaries and limitations of their competencies and not offer services or use techniques outside of these professional competencies.

B. The CPRS shall recognize the effect of impairment on professional performance and shall be willing to seek appropriate treatment for him or herself or for a colleague. The CPRS shall support peer assistance programs in this respect.

Principle 4: Legal and Moral Standards: The CPRS shall uphold the legal and accepted moral laws, regulations or codes which pertain to professional Certified Peer Recovery Specialist conduct.



A. The CPRS shall be fully cognizant of all federal and New Jersey laws governing the practice of Peer Recovery services.

B. The CPRS shall not claim either directly or by implication, professional qualifications/affiliations that they do not possess.

C. The CPRS shall ensure that products or services associated with or provided by the CPRS or means of teaching, demonstration, publications or other types of media meet the ethical standards of this Code.

Principle 5: Public Statements: The CPRS shall honestly respect the limits of present knowledge in public statements concerning the four domains of Peer Recovery: Advocacy, Mentoring and Education, Recovery Wellness and Support and Ethical Responsibility. The CPRS shall at all times maintain the strict confidentiality regarding the identity of and treatment of peers consistent with federal and state law in making any such public statements.

A. The CPRS, in making statements to clients, other professionals, and the general public shall state as fact only those matters which have been recognized within the standards of Peer Support. All other opinions, speculations, and conjecture concerning the nature of Peer Recovery, its natural history, or any other matters which touch on the subject of alcoholism and drug abuse shall be represented as less than scientifically validated.

B. The CPRS shall acknowledge and accurately report the substantiation and support for statements made concerning the nature of Peer Recovery. Such acknowledgement should extend to the source of the information and reliability of the method by which it was derived.

Principle 6: Publication Credit: The CPRS shall assign the credit to all who have contributed to any published material and for the work upon which the publication is based.

A. The CPRS shall recognize joint authorship and major contributions of a professional nature made by one or more persons to a common project. The author who has made the principal contribution to a publication must be identified as first author.

B. The CPRS shall acknowledge in footnotes or in an introductory statement minor contributions of a professional nature, extensive clerical or similar assistance and other minor contributions.

C. The CPRS shall in no way knowingly violate the copyright of anyone by reproducing material in any form whatsoever. This involves direct violation of copyright as well as the passive assent to the violation of copyright by others.

Principle 7: Peer Welfare: The CPRS shall promote the production of the public health, safety, and welfare and the best interest of the peer as a primary guide in determining the conduct of all Credentialed Professional's

A. The CPRS shall disclose their Code of Ethics, professional loyalties, and responsibilities to all peers.

B. The CPRS shall terminate Peer Recovery relationship when it is reasonably clear that the peer is not benefiting from the relationship.

C. The CPRS shall hold the welfare of the peer paramount when making any decisions or recommendations concerning referral Recovery Wellness procedures or termination of Recovery Wellness training.

D. The CPRS shall not use or encourage a peer's participation in any demonstration, research or other non-treatment activities when such participation would have potential harmful consequences for the peer or when the peer is not fully informed of the potential consequences..

E. The CPRS shall take care to provide services in an environment which will ensure the privacy and safety of the peer at all times and ensures the delivery of safe and private services.

Principle 8: Confidentiality: The CPRS working in the best interest of the peer shall embrace, as a primary obligation, the duty of protecting the peer's rights under confidentiality law and regulations and shall not disclose the identity of the peer or confidential information acquired in teaching, practice or investigation without an appropriately and voluntarily executed consent or authorization from the peer or the peer's legal guardian.

A. The CPRS shall provide the peer his/her rights regarding confidentiality, in writing, as part of informing the peer in any areas likely to affect the peer's confidentiality. This includes the recording of the interview, the use of material for insurance purposes, the use of material for training or observation by another party.

B. The CPRS shall make appropriate provisions for the maintenance of confidentiality and the ultimate disposition of confidential records. The CPRS shall ensure that data obtained, including any form of electronic communication, are secured by the available security methodology. Stored data shall be limited to information that is necessary and appropriate to the services being provided or is required by law and be accessible only to *appropriate* personnel.

C. The CPRS shall adhere to all federal and New Jersey laws regarding confidentiality and the CPRS responsibility to report recovery information in specific circumstances to the appropriate authorities.

Principle 9: Peer Relationships

It is the responsibility of the CPRS to safeguard the integrity of the peer recovery relationship and to ensure that the peer has reasonable access to effective treatment. The CPRS shall provide the peer and/or guardian with accurate and complete information regarding the extent of the potential professional relationship. The CPRS shall inform the peer and obtain the peer's agreement in areas likely to affect the peer's participation including the recording of an interview, the use of interview material for training purposes, and/or observation of an interview by another person.

A. The CPRS shall not engage in professional relationships or commitments that conflict with family members, friends, close associates, or others whose welfare might be jeopardized by such a dual relationship.

B. The CPRS shall not exploit peer relationships with current or former peers for personal gain, including social or business relationships.

C. The CPRS shall not under any circumstances engage in sexual behavior with current or former peers.

D. The CPRS shall not accept as peers for recovery wellness services anyone with whom they have engaged in sexual behavior, nor any family members or spouses. .

Principle 10: Inter-professional Relationships

- A. The CPRS shall treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith and shall afford the same to other professionals.
- B. The CPRS shall refrain from offering professional services to a peer in a counseling or peer recovery relationship with another professional except with the prior knowledge and consent of the other professional or after the termination of the peer's relationship with the other professional.
- C. The CPRS shall cooperate with the APCB, Inc. Ethics Committee and promptly supply necessary information unless constrained by the demands of confidentiality.
- D. The CPRS shall not in any way exploit relationships with, employees, students, research participants or volunteers.

Principle 11: Remuneration

The CPRS shall not establish any financial arrangements in professional practice other than employment or contract with licensed agencies providing the required supervision.

- A. The CPRS shall not engage in fee splitting. The CPRS shall not send or receive any commission or rebate or any other form of remuneration for referral of clients for professional services.
- B. The CPRS in the practice of Peer Recovery, shall not at any time use one's relationship with peers for personal gain, except as may be established by an employment or contractual relationship with a licensed agency.

Principle 12: Societal Obligations

The CPRS shall, to the best of their ability actively foster the principles of choice of service for all human beings of any race, religion, age, gender, gender identity, disability, national ancestry, sexual orientation, or economic condition whose lives are impaired by alcoholism and drug abuse.

I further understand that the CPRS is not a private practice credential and is not allowed to work independent of an approved prevention, treatment or recovery organization that provides approved supervision to the CPRS. Furthermore, I understand that as CPRS I may not charge or collect any fees from any client, peer or other for my services, except as may be established by an employment or contract relationship with a licensed agency.

The Addiction Professionals Certification Board, Inc. (APCB, Inc.) wishes to thank the National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) for the development of these core Ethical Standards and for permission to use amended versions.