

Mississippi Department of Mental Health

DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Standards & Requirements

Effective May 1, 2025

Available through:

Mississippi Department of Mental Health
Division of Peer Recovery & Support

IMPORTANT:

This credential is for qualified individuals who are currently employed in Mississippi’s “state mental health system,” as defined in this document. Please review the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional credentialing requirements in this document before submitting an application.

DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Standards & Requirements

General inquiries pertaining to DMH professional credentialing and/or application assistance needs should be directed to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) Division of Professional Licensure & Certification (PLACE). Specific questions pertaining to the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Credentialing Program should be directed to the DMH Division of Peer Recovery and Support.

Contact Information:

Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH)
Division of Professional Licensure & Certification (PLACE)
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239 North Lamar Street
Jackson, MS 39201
601-359-1288 (DMH Main #)
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Chapter One - Peer Support Specialist Professional (PSSP: Adult/Recovery) Application Procedures

The information below includes: **UPDATE APPLICATION/FORMS**

- PSSP General Requirements Overview;
- PSSP General Application Directions
- PSSP Application Packet Checklist; and,
- PSSP Application and Forms.

Before submitting an application. be sure to review the complete description of CPSSP requirements and the complete application process for CPSSP located in Chapters 1 through 10.

PSSP - General Requirements Overview

Requirements to apply for PSSP	Description
Legal Representative	• If applicable, the legal representative must sign the application in addition to the applicant.
Residency	• Applicants must be a resident of Mississippi or relocating within 90 days.
Self-Disclosure	• Applicants must self-identify as current or former recipient of mental health and/or substance use.
Employment	• Must be currently employed or seeking employment at a DMH Certified Provider. For some applicants, employment may not occur until after successful completion of Peer Support Specialist Professional Training.
Education	• The applicant must provide documentation of a minimum of a high school diploma, GED certificate or be at least sixteen (16) years of age and enrolled in a GED program or enrolled in school. • Demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing.
Ethics	• All applicants must read and abide by the <i>DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct</i>. It is the applicant's responsibility to read these principles before signing and submitting the application.
Experience	• The applicant must have a diagnosis and be a current or former recipient of mental health and/or substance use treatment. • Live with a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder.

	• Self-identify as a current or former individual receiving services of mental health and/or substance use disorder treatment in recovery. • Applicant must, within the last three years (not necessarily consecutively), have a minimum of 100 hours of paid or volunteer work or activities in a support or advisory role with adults or transition-aged youth diagnosed with a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. • One year of college or educational experience (within the last three years) can be substituted for the work experience. All experience must be gained prior to applying for certification.
Reference	• Applicant must submit two Reference Forms (one professional and one personal). The references must attest to the individual's ability to perform the role of a Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional.
Exam/Training	• Successful completion of Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional Training, as administered by DMH. • Proficiency for successful completion of Peer Support Specialist Professional examination will be 75% and above. Applicant must provide proof of completion.

CPSSP – General Application Directions

General Application Directions

- Applicants should read all directions and application materials before beginning the application process.
- Certain application forms must be an original signature, as indicated on the form. Copies or faxes are not accepted.
- Please print or type the information requested on the application forms; typing is preferred. Be sure to provide all information requested. Every blank should have a response, even if it is "Not Applicable."
- All submission deadlines reflect the date received by the Division of Peer Recovery and Support, not postmarked dates.
- The Division of Peer Recovery and Support only considers complete applications; all application deficiencies must be resolved.
- Only forms administered by the Division of Peer Recovery and Support may be utilized to apply for certification. Application forms may be changed without prior notice. The most current version should be utilized.

- Once submitted, all application materials become the property of DMH. Application materials will not be returned; the applicant should keep a copy of the application materials, except those under seal.
- All fees pertaining to DMH professional credentialing are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If an application or other credentialing fee is submitted in error, it will not be refunded.
- No application is considered complete without the required fees.
- Processing of an application will cease upon return of a check due to insufficient funds.

Application Time Limits

- Incomplete applications (including unresolved applications held pending by the Review Board for additional information), will be held for two years from the date of receipt; after two years, these applications will be void and destroyed.

Official Transcript

- Official documentation of high school diploma or GED equivalent.
- In rare and extenuating circumstances, other official documentation of GED or high school completion may be accepted at the discretion of the Department of Mental Health (DMH). DMH does not facilitate obtaining documentation.

Verification of Exam/Training Requirement

- A copy of the record documenting successful completion of DMH's Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional Training Program must be submitted to the Division of PLACE after successful completion of the Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional Training.

Chapter Two – General Information

ABOUT THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) administers the public mental health service delivery system in Mississippi. DMH was created in 1974 by an act of the Mississippi Legislature, Regular Session. The statute placed mental health, alcohol/drug use, and intellectual/developmental disabilities programs into one agency. The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is governed by the Mississippi State Board of Mental Health, a nine-member board whose members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate.

More information about DMH can be found on the DMH website at www.dmh.ms.gov or by contacting DMH; contact information is located inside the document cover.

ABOUT THE DMH PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL

Section 41-4-7 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated authorizes the Mississippi State Board of Mental Health (through the Mississippi Department of Mental Health) to certify/license case managers [i.e., community support specialists], mental health therapists, intellectual and developmental disabilities therapists, and others as deemed appropriate by the Mississippi State Board of Mental Health. In 1997, authority was expanded to include the certification/licensure of mental health/intellectual and developmental disabilities program administrators and addiction counselors [i.e., addictions therapists].

In September 2011, the Mississippi State Board of Mental Health authorized the certification of DMH Certified Peer Support Specialist Professionals.

DMH professional credentials are designed primarily for individuals who are not already professionally credentialed and who are employed in Mississippi's state mental health system.

Employment in Mississippi's "state mental health system," as defined in this document, is a mandatory requirement to apply for and hold a DMH professional credential.

The DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional credentialing program is designed to promote the provision of quality Peer Support services in Mississippi's "state mental health system."

Certification attests to an individual's:

- Educational background;
- Relevant work experience;
- Demonstration of mastery of basic knowledge of recovery and resiliency;

- Demonstration of competencies in a set of educational principles and experiences needed to perform the responsibilities of Peer Support Specialist;
- Continued participation in relevant educational activities, through the continuing education (CE) renewal requirement; and, agreement to adhere to the *DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct*.

DMH PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional (PSSP: Adult/Recovery)

- The Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional (PSSP) credential is renewable every two years, if renewal requirements are met.
- If an applicant has completed the Peer Support Specialist Professional Training and is not employed within one year of completion of the training, the applicant must repeat the assessment process.

PROFESSIONAL TITLES

The recognized professional title within the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional credentialing program is:

DMH “Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional” or the abbreviations "PSSP"

STATE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

DMH professional credentials are valid only in Mississippi’s “state mental health system.”

For the purposes of DMH professional credentialing, the “state mental health system” is defined as:

- Programs funded and/or certified by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and/or
- Programs certified/licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health that are operated by the “state mental health system” (i.e., Mississippi Department of Mental Health).

Only individuals employed within the “state mental health system,” as defined in this document (above), are eligible to apply for and hold a DMH professional credential.

UPDATES

This document is updated and revised periodically. It is the applicant/certified individual's (or other interested person's) responsibility to ensure that he/she has the most current version of this document. Affected persons must comply with, and are responsible for, provisions contained in the most current version, including utilization of current application and related forms.

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health does not discriminate because of race, color, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or political affiliation. The Department of Mental Health promotes nondiscriminatory practices and procedures in all phases of state service administration, as well as in programs funded and/or certified/operated by the Department of Mental Health.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health complies with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If requested, special accommodations to aid in the completion of forms or related credentialing matters will be provided.

APPLICATION BOOKLETS

This document and the corresponding application forms are available online. Interested individuals should download a copy from the DMH website. Individuals who need a print copy should contact the DMH Division of Peer Recovery and Support.

[Peer Support Services – Mississippi Department of Mental Health](#)

APPLICATION TIME LIMITS

Initial applications will remain open for two years from date of receipt. During that time, as appropriate, applicants have the opportunity to rectify any deficiencies. Once this time period has passed, incomplete applications, applications containing unresolved deficiencies, and applications which did not result in a credential being awarded will be void and destroyed. Various timelines relating to renewal are covered more fully in the relevant sections of this document.

Be sure to make copies of all application forms before submitting the application. DMH will not return forms to you or anyone else once your application has been submitted.

JURISDICTIONAL LIMITATIONS

This program is limited to the issuance of professional credentialing through the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional credentialing program. Actions of the Division of Professional Licensure and Certification, the Professional Licensure and Certification Review Board, the Department of Mental Health and the State Board of Mental Health should not in any way be construed as a recommendation for or against personnel action.

It is not the intent of DMH to monitor members of other appropriately-regulated professional credentials in Mississippi. Holding a DMH professional credential does not exempt an individual from any other professional certification/licensure required by state law.

FINAL INTERPRETATION

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is responsible for the final interpretation of all matters pertaining to DMH professional credentialing, including (but not limited to) all provisions contained within this document. This interpretation will be considered binding on all applicants and DMH PSSP-credentialed individuals (unless otherwise preempted by the Mississippi State Board of Mental Health).

Any provisions or situations not expressly covered in this document will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of DMH, the Division of PLACE, the PLACE Review Board and, if appropriate, the State Board of Mental Health. Moreover, DMH reserves the right to develop ancillary, internal policies and procedures to work in concert with this document.

Chapter Three - Organization

DIVISION OF PEER RECOVERY AND SUPPORT

The Division of Peer Recovery and Support, which coordinates peer support services at DMH Certified Providers and DMH-operated programs. The purpose of peer support services is to encourage individuals to become and stay engaged in the recovery process and to reduce the likelihood of relapse.

- Promulgates standards and requirements pertaining to Peer Support Professional credentialing;
- Processes applications for Peer Support Professional credentialing and related forms and paperwork;
- Assists the public with information pertaining to PSS professional credentialing;
- Maintains a registry of individuals holding a PSSP professional credential and provides verification of PSSP professional credentials, as appropriate;
- Regulates the use of DMH professional credentialing titles

DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION (PLACE)

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH), Division of Professional Licensure and Certification (PLACE) is responsible for the development and implementation of DMH professional credentialing programs. Major duties of the Division include (but are not limited to):

- Promulgates standards and requirements pertaining to DMH professional credentialing;
- Administers DMH professional credentialing programs;
- Processes applications for DMH professional credentialing and related forms, paperwork and fees;
- Assists the public with information pertaining to DMH professional credentialing;
- Maintains a registry of individuals holding a DMH professional credential and provides verification of DMH professional credentials, as appropriate;
- Regulates the use of DMH professional credentialing titles; and,
- Facilitates Professional Licensure and Certification (PLACE) Review Board meetings and related matters.

PLACE REVIEW BOARD

Composition and Appointment

- The Professional Licensure and Certification (PLACE) Review Board is comprised of seven members when credentialing trends warrant, additional members may be appointed as necessary.
- The term of office is five years; Review Board members may hold consecutive terms.

- Appointments are made by the DMH Executive Director. Attempts are made to ensure adequate representation among disciplines and programmatic types. Review Board members must hold a DMH professional credential in good standing, and at least one Review Board member must also be a DMH Central Office staff representative.
- A Chairperson is chosen by the Review Board from among its members. The Chairperson's term of office is one year. Other Review Board member functions and responsibilities may be assigned by the Review Board or Division, as needed.

Purpose and Powers

- The Review Board reviews applications for DMH professional credentialing and makes recommendations to the DMH Executive Director regarding the awarding of certification.
- The Review Board has the authority to deny applications for DMH professional certification; hold applications pending the submission of additional information; investigate complaints; conduct disciplinary hearings; and impose sanctions, if necessary.
- The Review Board receives and renders decisions regarding special requests pertaining to DMH professional credentialing. The Review Board may stipulate that special request claims be notarized and require supporting evidence to substantiate the request.
- Review Board decisions regarding either the denial of professional certification or disciplinary action may be appealed.
- The Review Board assists the Division of PLACE in developing applicable DMH professional credentialing standards and requirements and engages in continued study of best practices pertaining to DMH professional credentialing with a view of improving standards as needed.
- The Review Board will exercise such powers pertaining to DMH professional credentialing, as provided for in this document.
- The Review Board, in conjunction with the Division of PLACE, may periodically develop and promulgate additional professional standards and requirements and administrative policies and procedures (to work in concert with this document) as it deems necessary for the execution and enforcement of applicable state law and this *Standards & Requirements* document.
- Review Board members are individually exempt from civil liability as a result of any action taken by the Review Board.
- General submissions/requests to the Review Board should be submitted to the PLACE Review Board in writing c/o the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, Division of PLACE (or via email to the Division of PLACE); contact information is located inside the document cover.

Meetings

- Review Board meetings are held at least quarterly at a time and place determined by the Review Board, and at such other times as requested by the Division. Meetings may be called by the Division or Chairperson with 10 days advance notice. The 10-day notice requirement may be waived by agreement of a majority of the Review Board.
- Meeting quorum is a majority of the Review Board members present. If quorum is not present, the meeting will be adjourned until a date designated by the Chairperson or Division of PLACE staff.
- The Review Board only reviews complete applications.
- A Review Board meeting calendar, along with corresponding application deadlines, will be posted on the DMH website and will be provided to state mental health system program Staff Development Officers (SDOs) on an annual basis.
- The Division reserves the right to cancel or reschedule Review Board meetings without prior notice.

Removal of Review Board members

- A Review Board member may be removed from office if found to be in violation of any of the standards contained in this document.
- A Review Board member may be removed from office if his/her certification or licensure is no longer in good standing.
- A Review Board member must be disqualified from any business on which he/she may not make an objective evaluation or decision.
- A Review Board member subject to disciplinary action, as defined in this document, must disqualify himself/herself from any business until the complaint is resolved.
- Action by either the DMH Executive Director or a majority of the Review Board members, with Executive Director approval, is necessary to remove a Review Board member from office.

DMH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The DMH Executive Director, or designee, reviews and approves/disapproves Review Board recommendations to award DMH professional credentials to individual applicants.

The DMH Executive Director, or designee, reviews and makes decisions regarding Review Board actions relating to the denial of a DMH professional credential (if appealed by the applicant/certified individual) and/or the imposition of sanctions (if appealed by the certified individual).

The DMH Executive Director, or designee, reserves the right to amend or repeal any standard or requirement contained in this document (or adopt a new standard or requirement), with appropriate prior notice. In this event, the DMH Division of PLACE will send notification of the directed change(s) to the last known address of each registered DMH PSSP-credentialed individual. The promulgated change(s) will be effective whether received by the person entitled to notice or not. Notice will also be given to state mental health system program directors or staff development officers. Change(s) made under this provision will be incorporated into the existing *Standards & Requirements* document in a timely manner.

STATE BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH

During the administrative appeal process, an applicant/certified individual may appeal the decision of the DMH Executive Director to the State Board of Mental Health.

During the disciplinary appeal process, a certified individual may appeal the decision of the DMH Executive Director to the State Board of Mental Health.

The State Board of Mental Health, as the authorized entity under applicable state law to promulgate state mental health system credentialing programs, reserves the right to amend or repeal any standard or requirement contained within this document (or adopt a new standard or requirement) without prior notice. In this event, the DMH Division of PLACE will send notification of the directed change(s) to the last known address of each registered DMH-credentialed individual. The promulgated change(s) will be effective whether received by the

person entitled to notification or not. Notice will also be given to state mental health system program directors or staff development officers. Change(s) made under this provision will be incorporated into the existing *Standards & Requirements* document in a timely manner.

Chapter Four – Certification Requirements

CERTIFIED PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

PSSP

In order to be eligible to apply for the **Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional credential (PSSP)**, **an individual must meet ALL of the requirements listed below:**

- **Residency;**
- **Lived Experience Requirement;**
- **Employment Requirement;**
- **Education Requirement;**
- **Ethics Requirement;**
- **Self Disclosure;**
- **References; AND ;**
- **Exam/Training Requirement.**

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS - CATEGORIES & DESCRIPTIONS

Residency Requirement

- The applicant must reside in the State of Mississippi or be in the process of relocating to the state within 90 days.

Experience Requirement

- Must be a current or former recipient of mental health and/or substance use treatment.
- Live with a serious mental illness and/or substance use diagnosis.
- Self identify as a current or former individual receiving services of mental health and/or substance use or intellectual or developmental disability services
- Applicant must, within the last three years (not necessarily consecutive), have a minimum of 250 hours of paid or volunteer work or activities in a support or advisory role with

adults or transition-aged youth diagnosed with a serious mental illness, intellectual and developmental disability, and/or a substance use disorder

- One year of college or educational experience (within the last three years) can be substituted for the work experience. All experience must be gained prior to applying for certification.

Employment Requirement

- The applicant can participate in the Peer Support Specialist Professional Training, but must be employed at a Mississippi “state mental health system” program for certification.

Education Requirement

- The applicant must have a high school diploma, GED certificate, or be at least sixteen (16) years of age and enrolled in a GED program or enrolled in school.
- The applicant must demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing.
- In rare and extenuating circumstances, other official documentation of GED/high school completion may be accepted at the discretion of the Department of Mental Health. DMH does not facilitate obtaining documentation.

Ethics Requirement

All applicants must read and abide by the *DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct* as well as the Department of Mental Health Operational Standards for Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, and Substance use Community Service Providers Part V, Section C – Ethical Conduct. It is the applicant’s responsibility to read these principles before signing and submitting the application. The applicant should keep a reference copy.

Self-Disclosure Requirement

- Individual must self-identify as current or former recipient of mental health and/or substance use or intellectual or developmental disability services and demonstrate a minimum of six (6) consecutive months in self-directed recovery within the last twelve (12) months.

References

- The applicant must submit two professional references of support. The references must attest to the individual’s ability to perform the role of a Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional.
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Exam/Training Requirement

- Successful completion of Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional Training, as prescribed by DMH.
- Proficiency for successful completion of Peer Support Specialist Professional examination will be 75%. Applicant must provide proof of completion.

Chapter Five – Certification Phases

APPLICATION PHASE

- Individual submits a complete application packet.
- Complete applications are forwarded to the PLACE Review Board. The Review Board reviews all applications, evaluates materials against established criteria and makes recommendations to the DMH Executive Director. Applicants are notified in writing if more information is needed.

Each regularly-scheduled PLACE Review Board meeting has a corresponding deadline for receipt of complete application materials. Review Board meetings may be cancelled without prior notice.

A Review Board meeting calendar will be posted on the DMH website and provided to program Staff Development Officers (SDOs) on an annual basis.

To obtain a copy of the PLACE Review Board meeting calendar, visit the DMH website, or contact the Division of PLACE.

- The Executive Director reviews the PLACE Review Board recommendations and approves or disapproves each application for professional credentialing.
- Each applicant is subsequently notified in writing of the status of his/her application. The possible outcomes are:
 - 1) **Approval** - Individual is awarded the credential.
 - 2) **Hold Pending** - The Review Board may request additional information from the applicant before rendering a decision/recommendation.
 - 3) **Denial** - The Review Board may deny applications for credentialing for the following reasons, including, but not limited to: lack of appropriate employment; failure to pay required fees; lack of appropriate educational recruitment; lack of appropriate experience; failure to complete successfully any or all credentialing requirements; failure to acquire necessary continuing education hours; unacceptable practice of the applicant; violation of the *DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct*; conviction of a crime which is a felony under federal or state law; and/or, declaration of mental incompetence by the court.

CERTIFICATION PHASE

Certification (PSSP)

Once credentialed, the PSSP will receive a credential award letter, followed by a certificate. The credential award letter will outline:

- The length of certification, including the PSSP expiration date; the PSSP expiration date is made to coincide with the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional two-year renewal deadline. PSSP renew every two years by the renewal deadline. Full certification timelines are addressed in Chapter Six.
- The PSSP renewal requirements; renewal requirements are outlined in Chapter Seven.

Individuals who have been awarded full certification are expected to abide by the professional responsibility provisions in Chapter Eight.

CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE

Professional Identification

Individuals who make successful application for certification will be awarded a full certificate attesting to the title of “Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional” (CPSSP). CPSSP is renewable every two years.

Certificates

Wall certificates issued by the DMH remain the property of DMH and must be surrendered upon request.

DMH intends that each individual hold only one certificate per professional title. DMH does not provide multiple original wall certificates.

Certificates issued by DMH reflecting credentialing as a PSSP are valid for a maximum two-year Certification Period established by the Division. The issuance date is indicated on the certificate. Full certification timelines are addressed in Chapter Six. Full certificates are renewable.

Individuals holding a DMH professional credential who are currently practicing in the state mental health system should maintain a copy of proof of certification in their personnel file.

Upon separation from state mental health system employment, the credentialed individual should notify the Division of Peer Recovery and Support accordingly, as outlined in Chapter Nine. Unless the separating individual is reemployed with another state mental health system program or requests and receives an appropriate credential status change, the certificate is invalid.

Replacement Certificates

Only individuals in good standing who are currently employed in the state mental health system (or in Inactive Status) may request a replacement certificate.

Upon written (or email) request, an individual may be allowed one replacement certificate at no charge for any of the following reasons:

- Printing Error;
- Damaged/Destroyed;
- Lost;
- Never received; or,
- Legal Name Change.

If the request is due to a legal name change, along with the request, the individual should submit a copy of legal documentation of the name change. The request should indicate the new name as it should appear on the replacement certificate. Name changes reported at the time of a new application do not have to be accompanied by a request or a copy of the legal documentation; this exemption does not apply to renewal applications.

If an individual makes more than one request for a replacement certificate, the Division reserves the right to impose the certificate replacement fee.

Once the new replacement certificate is issued, the previous certificate immediately becomes invalid. Possession and utilization of two certificates for fraudulent purposes is grounds for disciplinary action, including possible loss of credentialing.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL

The terms of administrative appeal are only applicable to the application process.

An applicant aggrieved by a decision regarding the initial, upgrade or renewal application for professional certification has the right to appeal to the DMH Executive Director. The applicant must notify the Division and provide any supplemental application information within 30 calendar days of the mailing of the application review results.

The DMH Executive Director or designee will review the application and supplemental information, if provided, and notify the applicant of the results of this review within 30 days.

An applicant aggrieved by the DMH Executive Director's final decision may then appeal to the State Board of Mental Health. Appeals to the State Board of Mental Health must be made within 30 calendar days of the mailing of the DMH Executive Director's final decision; the appeal must be made and conducted in accordance with established Board policy.

Chapter Six – Certification Timelines

PSSP– CERTIFICATION LENGTH & TIMELINES

- The PSSP credential is renewable, as long as renewal requirements are met.
- The PSSP certification begins on the day the certification is issued. This date is located on both the credential award letter and the original PSSP certificate.
- PSSP are on a two-year certification cycle. Upon achieving certification, a PSSP's expiration date is made to coincide with the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional renewal deadline.
- PSSPs interested in maintaining the credential renew every two years by the renewal deadline.

Chapter Seven – Renewal

RENEWAL GENERAL INFORMATION

- Individuals holding PSSP are required to renew **every two (2) years** on a certification schedule established by the Division of Peer Recovery and Support.

RENEWAL DEADLINE

- **The renewal deadline is September 30th** (or closest prior working day) of each two-year certification period.
- **Renewal deadlines will be every two years** - September 30, 2025, September 30, 2027, etc.*
- Qualified individuals will renew their certification on or before the established renewal deadline in order to maintain Current or Inactive Status.
- Individuals who fail to renew by the established deadline will have their credential automatically changed to Lapsed Status. Lapsed Status means the credential is expired, and the individual no longer holds the credential.

RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

Employment Requirement

Renewing individuals must either continue to be employed in the “state mental health system” or hold Inactive Status.

An individual who is no longer employed in the state mental health system at the time of renewal no longer meets the employment criteria for DMH professional credentialing. Unless the individual holds Inactive Status, he/she may make a request to change his/her certification status category. Certificate status information is located in Chapter Nine.

Continuing Education (CE) Requirement

PSSP must complete all in-service training required by their employing agency, AND

A minimum of at least 16 hours of educational trainings, seminars, workshops, or post-secondary courses must be completed each recertification period. Examples of eligible course content are listed below. This list is not exhaustive; any course that builds knowledge and skills necessary to perform a job task is eligible for training credit.

Recovery in the Fields of Mental Health and Co-Occurring Disorders

Examples:

- ☐ Crisis Management
- ☐ Mental Health Disorders
- ☐ The Impact of Diagnoses
- ☐ Understanding Mental Health Treatment
- ☐ Mental Health in Rural Settings

Peer Support Services Promoting Recovery and Resiliency

Examples:

- ☐ Peer-Directed Recovery
- ☐ Illness Management and Recovery
- ☐ Wellness Recovery Action Plan
- ☐ Person-Centered Planning
- ☐ Relapse and Recovery
- ☐ Suicide Prevention

Assisting Peers in Starting and Sustaining Self-Help Groups

Examples:

- ☐ Building Self-Esteem
- ☐ Recovery Stories
- ☐ Mental Illness and Substance Use
- ☐ Relapse Prevention

Self-Directed Recovery and Resiliency

Examples:

- ☐ Stress Reduction
- ☐ Recognizing Workplace Burnout
- ☐ Identifying Relapse Triggers
- ☐ Conflict Resolution in the Workplace
- ☐ Coping with Transference of Feelings

Cultural Competency, Grief and Spirituality

Examples:

- ☐ Culture Differences and Beliefs
- ☐ Grief and Loss
- ☐ Grief and Recovery
- ☐ Spirituality and Recovery

The Impact of Beliefs and Values on Recovery

Reporting the Continuing Education Requirement

Documentation of successful completion of continuing education hours (e.g., training records, staff development printouts, official college transcripts, conference certificates, etc.) should be housed with the Staff Development Officer (SDO) at the individual's current place of employment and/or maintained by the applicant. The renewing individual should also keep a copy.

As part of the renewal process, each renewing individual is asked to attest to the fact that he/she has obtained the required number of appropriate continuing education hours.

Unless randomly-selected for audit, renewing individuals in Current Status do not submit CE documentation to the Division of PLACE. *Individuals in Inactive Status must report CE activities at the time of renewal.*

For DMH credentialing purposes only, CE documentation should be maintained for one year following the conclusion of the given renewal year.

RENEWAL APPLICATION

Prior to the renewal deadline, each certified individual will be sent a renewal notice to his/ her self-reported home and/or email address.

In addition to the general renewal directions found in this document, the renewal notice will include specific, current instructions on how to renew. Specific directions in the current year's renewal packet, along with specific directions provided on each renewal form, must be followed.

Each person who wishes to renew his/her certification must submit a renewal application packet to the Division of Peer Recovery and Support by the established deadline (which includes all required forms and fees).

Failure to receive a renewal notice does not relieve the individual from the renewal requirement. Individuals should keep their addresses/contact information updated with DMH.

RENEWAL AUDIT

Following the conclusion of each renewal period, DMH reserves the right to audit randomly-selected renewed individuals to determine compliance with the continuing education requirement. The audit process will include a 10 percent sample of randomly-selected renewed individuals.

If an individual is randomly selected for audit, both the individual and the program SDO will be notified. Along with the notification, detailed instructions for audit procedures will be provided.

If randomly selected for audit, the renewed individual (in conjunction with the program SDO) will be required to submit to DMH documentation to validate successful completion of the renewal continuing education requirement. (Examples of sufficient documentation would include, but are not limited to: training records, staff development printouts verified by the SDO, conference certificates, and official college transcripts). This documentation must be submitted within a prescribed deadline.

In the case of noncompliance, the audited individual will have up to six months to comply, during which time the credential will be placed in Suspended Status (covered more fully in Chapter 10); the individual will be unable to practice with his/her credential during the period of suspension. Failure to comply within six months will result in the automatic loss of credentialing.

SPECIAL REQUESTS DURING RENEWAL

Inactive Status Request: An individual who is not employed in the state mental health system at the time of renewal may want to request Inactive Status. Individuals must initiate this request by the established renewal deadline and submit all required renewal forms, materials and fees.

Retired Status Request: An individual who has retired from state mental health system employment at the time of renewal may want to request Retired Status. Individuals must do so by the renewal deadline.

Relinquished Status Request: An individual who no longer wants to hold the credential may request Relinquished Status. Individuals must do so by the renewal deadline.

Certification status information is covered more fully in Chapter Nine. In addition to the information in Chapter Nine, instructions on making special requests at the time of renewal will also be included in the current renewal packet; interested individuals should contact the DMH for assistance.

CERTIFICATE RENEWAL

Each individual who successfully renews his/her Current PSSP credential may continue to use the title of “Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional” and practice as such for the next four-year certification period.

Each individual who successfully renews his/her Inactive PSSP credential may continue to use the appropriate title behind his/her name; however, he/she must not practice as a Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional during the next four-year certification period (until he/she returns to Current Status).

The terms of administrative appeal are applicable to the renewal process.

CERTIFICATE EXPIRATION

Renewal Deadline

- The renewal application packet and fee are due on or before September 30th (or closest prior working day, as prescribed in the current renewal notice) of the given renewal year.
- Any certified individual wishing to request Inactive, Retired or Relinquished Status at the time of renewal must submit the request so that DMH receives it by the established renewal deadline. Otherwise, without proper renewal, the individual's credential will automatically be changed to Lapsed Status.
- Unless successfully renewed, an individual's certificate ceases to be valid after September 30th at the end of the certification period.
- Any certified individual for whom DMH has not received a renewal application packet (or a special request) by September 30th will be expired; his/her certification status will automatically be changed to Lapsed Status.

“Late Renewal”

- Between October 1st and October 31st (or closest prior working days, as determined by DMH), professional certification which has lapsed due to failure to renew may be rectified upon submission of all required renewal forms, materials, and payment in full of the Renewal Fee PLUS payment of a Late Renewal Fee.
- All problems with renewal applications (or special requests submitted at the time of renewal) must be resolved by October 31st (or closest prior working day, as determined by DMH).
- Incomplete renewal applications or renewal applications with unresolved deficiencies received by the renewal deadline may be maintained on file through October 31st (or closest prior working day) to allow individuals an opportunity to resolve problem(s). After October 31st (or closest prior working day, as determined by DMH), these credentials are expired and automatically changed to Lapsed Status if the deficiencies were not satisfactorily resolved by this date - no exceptions.
- The certification of any individual who has not successfully completed either renewal or a special request by October 31st (or closest prior working day, as determined by DMH) is expired. The status of any such individual's credential will automatically be changed to Lapsed Status.

Beginning November 1st

On and after November 1st, an individual who failed to renew or successfully make a status change remains in Lapsed Status and will not be allowed to renew.

Following the conclusion of renewal season, each state mental health system program will be provided a list of program employees whose credentials lapsed.

Chapter Eight - Fees

FEE SCHEDULE

- **Peer Support Specialist Training fee :** **As administered by DMH**

DMH may prescribe appropriate, non-excessive fees for the web-based training component to cover administrative costs; this fee is subject to change.

- **Renewal Fee:** **\$20.00** (subject to change at renewal)

This fee is due with the submission of the renewal packet; this fee is subject to change at the time of renewal and is reflected in the current renewal notice.

- **Late Renewal Fee:** **\$25.00**

In addition to the renewal fee, this additional fee is assessed when an individual has allowed his/her certification to lapse after the prescribed renewal deadline but wishes to renew during a brief “late renewal” time period.

- **Certificate Replacement Fee:** **\$25.00**

If an individual makes more than one request for a replacement certificate, DMH reserves the right to impose the certificate replacement fee. Refer to Chapter Five for more information.

- **Reinstatement Fee:** **\$50.00**

This fee is assessed when an individual makes a request to reinstate his/her certification.

- **Mailing Label Fee:** **\$35.00**

This fee is due with the request for mailing labels. This fee is applicable per category of professional credentialing. Mailing label requests will be processed within 14 working days of receipt; DMH reserves the right to refuse any request for mailing labels.

- **Returned Check Fee:** **\$25.00**

This fee may be imposed by DMH for any check returned due to insufficient funds. Once a return check fee is imposed, remittance to correct the problem will only be accepted via money order.

GENERAL FEE PROVISIONS

- **All fees pertaining to DMH professional credentialing are nonrefundable and nontransferable.**
- If an application or other credentialing fee is submitted in error, it will not be refunded.
- Fees are subject to change, with appropriate prior notice.
- Fees are not prorated.
- Fees must be paid in full in a manner prescribed and accepted by DMH. Check or money orders must be made payable to the Mississippi Department of Mental Health. **Cash is not accepted.**
- Fees are subject to deposit upon receipt; checks are not held for deposit.
- No application, renewal application, etc., is considered complete without the required fees.
- Processing of an application, renewal application, examination registration and/or any associated credentialing activities, etc., will cease immediately upon return of a check due to insufficient funds. Associated credentialing activities (e.g., crediting of successful examination attempts and/or future ability to register for examinations/reexaminations) will be immediately discontinued until the problem has been satisfactorily corrected by a deadline prescribed by the Division of Peer Recovery and Support.
- An individual or program whose check has been returned due to insufficient funds may remedy the situation by paying the appropriate fee PLUS the Returned Check Fee by money order only (by a deadline prescribed by DMH).

- Employers may pay multiple employees' credentialing fees with one check. The check and associated applications/renewal applications, etc., must be submitted together - no exceptions. The employer must clearly identify and match each person and purpose the check covers with the corresponding check. Otherwise, DMH reserves the right to return the fee/materials to the program.

Chapter Nine – Professional Responsibilities

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

- DMH professional credentials are valid only in Mississippi’s “state mental health system.” DMH Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional may only use the title if actively employed in the state mental health system (*or in Inactive Status*).
- Certified Peer Support Specialists Professional are certified to provide services involving application of the principles, methods and procedures of Peer Support Specialist Professional’s service provision within Mississippi’s state mental health system.
- The principles, methods and procedures of Peer Support Specialist Professionals are expected to be in compliance with the *DMH Operational Standards for Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, and Substance use Community Service Providers*. The standards can be found in Chapter 42.1 and activities 42.2.
- DMH Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional, should only practice within the boundaries of their credential(s) held.
- This certification does not qualify an individual to provide services outside this scope of practice or in private practice. Practicing beyond the scope of practice may lead to sanctions.
- A person issued a certificate by the Department of Mental Health may use the title appropriate to his/her category of professional certification while in the employ of a state mental health system program (*or while in Inactive Status*).
- Professional identification is directly affected by employment. DMH PSSP-credentialed individuals who experience a change in or separation from state mental health system employment are expected to follow the relevant guidelines noted in the section, Reporting Changes in Vital Information.

REPORTING CHANGES IN VITAL INFORMATION

Credentialed individuals are required to notify DMH within 14 working days of a change in legal name, address or employment.

Name Change

Each credentialed individual should ensure that his/her current wall certificate bears his/her current legal name. An individual whose legal name has changed is expected to request a new certificate reflecting the new name. Once the new certificate is generated, the previous certificate is invalid.

To request a name change, the individual should submit a written/email request for a name change, along with a copy of legal documentation of the name change. The request should indicate the new name as it should appear on the replacement certificate. Name changes reported at the time of a new application (i.e., upgrade or renewal application) do not have to be accompanied by a request or copy of the legal documentation.

Only individuals in good standing who are currently employed in the state mental health system (*or in Inactive Status*) may request a replacement certificate.

Address Change

An individual whose email address, mailing address and/or telephone number has changed is expected to contact DMH with the new information.

Employment Change

Upon separation of the credentialed individual from state mental health system employment, the individual's DMH professional credential will become null and void unless he/she provides notification of reemployment in the state mental health system or requests and receives an appropriate credential status change, as covered in the "Separation From State Mental Health System Employment" section below.

Notification of a change in place of employment (**not job title**) must be submitted in writing/email by either the credentialed individual **OR** the place of employment from which the credentialed individual is separating.

An individual who is either leaving state mental health system employment or changing to a new state mental health system program should follow the requirements under "Separation From State Mental Health System Employment" below.

SEPARATION FROM STATE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM EMPLOYMENT

It is the credentialed individual's responsibility to keep track of his/her employment situation (and the potential for notification of separation of employment via the separating employer), accordingly.

Once DMH receives written/email notification of separation from employment (as outlined above), DMH will allow the individual a period of **up to 45 business days from the date of notification** to pursue one of the following options:

- 1) **If the individual has become employed with a new "state mental health system" program**, the individual should update his/her employment information by submitting a new Verification of Employment Form from the new place of employment.

- 2) **If the individual IS NO LONGER EMPLOYED in the “state mental health system,”** the individual may request a status change for his/her credential. Status change options include:

- Request Relinquished Status (available to provisional and full certification);
- Request Extended Status (available only to provisional certification);
- Request Inactive Status (available only to full certification); and,
- Request Retired Status (available only to full certification).

More information on credentialing statuses and how to obtain a status change is listed under the “Credential Status Change Requests,” “Provisional Certification Status Categories” and “Full Certification Status Categories” sections below.

During this 45-day period, unless employed in a state mental health system program and in good standing, individuals in this situation are not allowed to practice.

At the end of the 45-day period, if no appropriate action is taken by the credentialed individual to either: 1) update his/her employment or 2) request an appropriate status change, the credential will expire and be changed to either Lapsed or Defaulted Status, as appropriate; this is an automatic process – no notification by DMH will be made. Lapsed and Defaulted Status mean the credential is expired, and the individual no longer holds the credential.

Status change requests initiated by the credentialed individual are subject to Review Board approval.

If a DMH PSSP-credentialed individual has a question about what to do if he/she has left state mental health system employment, the individual should contact DMH for assistance at the earliest indication of such separation.

DMH PSSP-credentialed individuals must be aware that notification of separation of employment may come from either the separating employer OR the credentialed individual. DMH **does not** notify a certified individual when a separating employer has made this notification. **The certified individual is held to the 45-day time frame, regardless of whether the notification of employment separation came from the certified individual or the separating employer.**

CREDENTIAL STATUS CHANGE REQUESTS

Credentialed individuals needing to make a status change request should submit the request in writing (or via email) to DMH, along with any pertinent supporting information. Applicable credentialing timelines must be met. Individuals needing assistance regarding status change requests should contact DMH for assistance. Contact information is located inside the document cover. **Status change requests initiated by the credentialed individual are subject to Review Board approval.**

CERTIFICATION STATUS CATEGORIES

The following status categories are applicable to individuals holding certification as a Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional (PSSP).

Current Status

An individual holding certification which is in good standing (including timely submission of all forms, fees, changes of information, etc.) and without sanctions will be considered to be in Current Status.

An individual whose credential is in Current Status is able to practice within the scope of practice of this credentialing program and the ethical standards/principles.

In order to maintain Current Status, a PSSP is expected to notify DMH in writing (or via email) within 14 working days of a change in vital information such as name, address, employment, etc. The name of a person whose credential is in Current Status will appear on any list produced by DMH if he/she is Current at the time the list is produced.

Inactive Status

The Review Board may grant Inactive Status to a fully-certified individual who is leaving employment in the state mental health system and who wishes to maintain the credential.

Inactive Status will only be granted to a fully-certified individual who is in good standing (Current Status) at the time of the request.

To pursue Inactive Status, the certified individual must submit a written/email request to DMH Division of Peer Recovery and Support. The request will be presented to the Review Board.

In the request, the fully-certified individual should request Inactive Status, provide an explanation as to why the status change is needed and indicate a specific time period for the inactivity. Documentation which supports the request may be submitted along with the request. The Review Board may verify the circumstances surrounding the request.

Individuals granted Inactive Status must meet renewal requirements, including payment of required fees and completion of required continuing education requirements. Otherwise, the certified individual's credential will lapse.

An individual in Inactive Status is allowed to continue to use the professional title behind his/her name, but is not allowed to practice.

A person in Inactive Status may be returned to Current Status upon submission of a written/email request, along with an appropriate Verification of Employment Form reflecting current employment within the state mental health system.

Lapsed Status

Lapsed Status means the fully-certified individual's credential has expired and is no longer valid. A fully-certified individual's credential may lapse for any of the following reasons, including but not limited to:

- Failure to renew professional certification according to established timelines;
- Failure to make a special request, according to established timelines and obtain an appropriate certification status;
- Review Board's determination of failure to submit a satisfactory request for a status change;
- Failure to comply with the terms of the status change request approved by the Review Board; and/or,
- Separation from state mental health system employment without appropriate status change.

Lapsing from the program immediately overrides any other status category held by a fully-certified individual. Upon lapsing, the individual immediately ceases to hold certification.

Retired Status

The Review Board may grant Retired Status to an individual who has retired and is no longer employed in the state mental health system. Retired status is intended for individuals who have ceased working because they have either reached the age of retirement or have accumulated the number of work years to retire.

In order to pursue Retired Status, the individual (upon retirement) must submit a written/email request to DMH. DMH will present the request to the Review Board. In the request, the individual should request Retired Status and indicate the date of retirement. The Review Board may verify the circumstances surrounding the request. The individual granted Retired Status is no longer required to meet renewal requirements/fees and is permitted to keep his/her certificate.

Relinquished Status

A fully-certified individual who determines that he/she no longer needs/wants to hold and maintain professional certification may submit a written/email request to the Review Board requesting Relinquished Status. The Review Board may verify the circumstances surrounding the request. Once approved for Relinquished Status, the individual no longer holds the credential. The individual's certificate is null and void.

CERTIFICATION REINSTATEMENT

A Peer Support Specialist Professional whose full certification has expired within the past three years, as determined by DMH's records (Relinquished, Retired or Lapsed Status) and who expired in good standing, may reactivate his/her certification by requesting reinstatement, paying

the reinstatement fee, paying past renewal fees (including late charges) and submitting documentation of continuing education credit as determined by DMH or the Review Board. Reinstatement of certification is determined on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of DMH and the Review Board. Individuals interested in reinstatement should contact DMH for additional information. Fees are subject to change. Reinstatement is not available to provisionally-certified individuals.

During a renewal year, an individual desiring reinstatement must wait six months before applying for reinstatement.

Beyond three years, post-expiration, total reapplication is required.

CREDENTIAL VERIFICATION & REPORTING

Upon request, DMH reports specific information about DMH PSSP-credentialed individuals. The fields of information which may be shared with individuals making inquiry are:

- Name;
- Type of certification;
- Certificate number;
- Date of issuance;
- Date of expiration;
- Credential status; and,
- Whether or not formal disciplinary action has been taken against the individual.

During renewal season, DMH reserves the right to hold such verification requests until all credentialing records are up-to-date, post renewal.

Chapter Ten – Complaints & Disciplinary Action

GROUND FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Individuals holding provisional or full certification must conduct their activities and services in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, these *Standards & Requirements*, the *DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct*, and any other applicable rules/regulations.

An individual holding provisional or full certification may be subject to disciplinary action if the Review Board finds that he/she is guilty of any of the following or has knowledge of the following and has not reported such to the Division of PLACE. Grounds for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Negligence in the practice or performance of professional services or activities;
- 2) Engaging in dishonorable, unethical, unprofessional conduct of a character likely to deceive, defraud, or cause harm in the course of professional services or activities;
- 3) Engaging in lewd conduct in connection with professional services or activities;
- 4) Obtaining a Department of Mental Health certificate or renewal certificate by fraud, deceit, material deception or other misrepresentation;
- 5) Perpetrating or cooperating in fraud or material deception in obtaining or renewing professional credentialing or attempting the same;
- 6) Being convicted of any crime which has a substantial relationship to the professionally credentialed individual's activities and services or an essential element of which is misstatement, fraud, or dishonesty;
- 7) Being convicted of any crime which is a felony under federal or state law;
- 8) Engaging in or permitting the performance of unacceptable services personally or by assistants working under the credentialed individual's supervision due to the credentialed individual's deliberate or grossly negligent act or failure to act, regardless of whether actual damage is established;
- 9) Treating any person differently or detrimentally because of race, color, creed, age, gender, religion, national origin, disability or political affiliation;
- 10) Engaging in false or misleading advertising;
- 11) Revealing confidential information except as may be required by law;
- 12) Failing to inform a client of the fact that the client no longer needs the services of the credentialed individual;
- 13) Performing services for compensation or representing oneself as a DMH PSSP-credentialed professional while holding a certificate in Defaulted, Lapsed, Relinquished, Suspended, Surrendered, or Revoked Status;
- 14) Attempting to utilize the certificate issued by the Department of Mental Health for private practice or for services outside the scope of practice;
- 15) Engaging in any conduct considered by the Review Board to be detrimental to the profession; and/or,
- 16) Engaging in any conduct considered by the Review Board to be in violation of the *DMH Peer Support Principles of Ethical and Professional Conduct*.

[CPSS-Ethical-and-Professional-Conduct-2.pdf](#)

COMPLAINTS & INVESTIGATION

All complaints concerning a DMH PSSP-credentialed individual's professional service or activities must be received by the Division of PLACE.

All complaints concerning a DMH PSSP-credentialed individual must be submitted in writing, signed by the individual making the complaint, and notarized. The individual lodging the complaint should also include his/her contact information. The complaint should include the charges set forth with such clarity as to inform the Division of Peer Recovery and Support, the PLACE Review Board and the certified individual of the issue involved. Complaints lodged with insufficient information may be unable to be addressed by the Review Board.

The Division of PLACE will log each complaint by recording the following information:

- 1) The DMH PSSP-credentialed individual's name;
- 2) The name and contact information of the complaining party;
- 3) The date of the complaint;
- 4) A brief statement of the complaint; and,
- 5) Disposition or attempts at settlement.

Substantial, jurisdictionally-appropriate complaints, as determined by the PLACE Review Board, will be investigated and evaluated by the Review Board, with consult, as needed, with the DMH Legal Division. A copy of all communications pertaining to complaints/investigations will be forwarded to the DMH attorney. The Review Board, with DMH Legal Division consult, as needed, will determine the necessity of a disciplinary hearing.

NOTICE OF COMPLAINT & DISCIPLINARY HEARING

Upon determination that a hearing is needed, the Review Board will notify the DMH-credentialed individual that a complaint has been received and that a disciplinary hearing will be held.

The DMH PSSP-credentialed individual shall be notified at least 30 calendar days before the date of the disciplinary hearing. Notification will be considered to have been given if the notice was personally received by the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual or if the notice was mailed "certified, return receipt requested" to the last known address as listed with the Division of PLACE.

The notice will inform the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual of the facts which are the basis of the complaint and which are specific enough to enable the credentialed individual to defend against the complaints. The notice of the complaint and the disciplinary hearing shall also inform the credentialed individual of the following:

- 1) The date, time and location of the disciplinary hearing;
- 2) That the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual may appear personally at the disciplinary hearing and may be represented by counsel;

- 3) That the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual shall have the right to produce witnesses and evidence on his/her behalf and shall have the right to cross-examine adverse witnesses and evidence;
- 4) That the Rules of Evidence do not apply;
- 5) That the disciplinary hearing could result in sanctions being taken against the DMH-credentialed individual;
- 6) That the Review Board will, in writing, advise the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual of any sanction(s) to be imposed and the basis for the Review Board's action; and,
- 7) That disposition of any formal complaint may be made by consent order or stipulation between the Review Board and the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual.

The disciplinary hearing will be an informal hearing and will be presided over by the Review Board Chairperson.

The Review Board will provide written notification to the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual as to any sanction(s) being imposed and the basis for the Review Board's action. This notification will be considered to have been given if the notice was personally received by the DMH-credentialed individual or if the notice was mailed "certified, return receipt requested" to the last known address as listed with DMH.

If disciplinary action is taken against an individual, his/her employer (along with any applicable third party) will be notified by DMH.

All disciplinary hearing procedures are matters of public record and shall be preserved pursuant to state law. The final disposition of any disciplinary hearing will be recorded in Board minutes.

SANCTIONS

The Review Board may impose any of the following sanctions, singly or in combination, when it finds that a DMH PSSP-credentialed individual is guilty of any of the offenses referred to in the "Grounds For Disciplinary Action" section of this chapter:

- 1) Issuance of a letter of official reprimand to the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual;
- 2) Refusal to renew a certificate;
- 3) Restriction or limitation of the individual's scope of practice;
- 4) Suspension of the certificate for any period of time;
- 5) Revocation of the certificate;
- 6) Approval of the individual's request for surrender of professional credential; and/or,
- 7) Assessment of reasonable costs for inquiries, disciplinary hearing(s) and/or complaint resolution.

DISCIPLINARY STATUS CATEGORIES

Disciplinary status categories are applicable to individuals holding any level of credentialing available through the DMH Peer Support Specialist Professional Certification Program.

Limited

- 1) The Review Board, as a result of disciplinary action as defined in this chapter, may choose to restrict or limit a certified individual's practice.
- 2) To return to Current Status, an individual in Limited Status would be required to meet all requirements as determined to be necessary by the Review Board and/or DMH Executive Director.

Suspended

The Review Board, as a result of disciplinary action as defined in this chapter, may choose to invalidate an individual's certification for any period of time.

An individual's certification may also be suspended due to noncompliance with the CE renewal requirement, as determined by the audit process described in Chapter Seven.

- 1) The individual's certificate shall be turned over to the Division for the period of suspension.
- 2) To return to Current Status, an individual in Suspended Status would be required to meet all requirements as determined to be necessary by the Review Board and/or DMH Executive Director.

Surrendered

- 1) The Review Board, as a result of disciplinary action as defined in this chapter, may choose to request the surrender of an individual's certificate.
- 2) In addition, the certified individual may request Surrendered Status. However, the certified individual's request for Surrendered Status is subject to the approval of the Review Board and/or DMH Executive Director.
- 3) The surrendered certificate shall be turned over to the Division of Peer Recovery and Support.
- 4) To return to Current Status, an individual in Surrendered Status would be required to meet all requirements as determined to be necessary by the Review Board and/or DMH Executive Director.

Revoked

- 1) The Review Board, as a result of disciplinary action as defined in this chapter, may revoke an individual's certification.
- 2) Once professional certification is revoked, the individual must return his/her certificate to the Division of Peer Recovery and Support.

- 3) Following the period of revocation established by the Review Board, the individual may reapply for certification by repeating the application process, meeting all current professional certification requirements, in addition to any additional requirements determined to be necessary by the Review Board and/or DMH Executive Director.

DISCIPLINARY APPEAL

Following a disciplinary hearing, a DMH PSSP-credentialed individual aggrieved by a decision of the Review Board related to the disciplinary action/sanctions shall have the right to appeal to the DMH Executive Director. The credentialed individual must notify the Division of PLACE within 15 calendar days of the mailing of the written notification of the Review Board's action. The DMH Executive Director shall review the DMH PSSP-credentialed individual's case and notify the credentialed individual of the results of this review within 30 days.

A DMH PSSP-credentialed individual aggrieved by the DMH Executive Director's decision regarding the appeal may then appeal to the State Board of Mental Health. Appeals to the State Board of Mental Health must be made within 30 calendar days of the mailing of the DMH Executive Director's final decision; the appeal must be made and conducted in accordance with established Board policy.

Glossary

The following **terms and definitions** apply to the DMH Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional credentialing program:

- **Applicant:** An individual who has submitted a complete application packet for DMH professional credentialing
- **Approved Educational Institution:** An institution of higher learning which is accredited by a regional accrediting body
- **Audit:** Random selection of renewed individuals for the purpose of determining compliance with the continuing education (CE) renewal requirement
- **Board:** The Mississippi State Board of Mental Health
- **Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional:** CPSSP provide non-clinical peer support that is person-centered, recovery and resiliency focused. CPSSP is a self identified individual receiving (past or present) of mental health services who has successfully completed DMH approved Certified Peer Support Specialist Professional training and certification examination.
- **Certificate:** The document issued by DMH attesting to an individual's DMH professional credential
- **Certification Period:** Individuals holding full certification are on a two-year certification schedule, referred to as the "certification period." Qualified PSSPs and renew every two years by the renewal deadline.
- **Continuing Education (CE) Hours:** Educational/training activities required for renewal which are designed to increase the professional proficiency of an individual holding a DMH professional credential; one Continuing Education Hour (CE) consists of 60 consecutive minutes of training
- **Credential(ing):** A generic term referring to any or all levels of DMH professional certification
- **Division of Peer Recovery and Support:** which coordinates peer support services at DMH Certified Providers and DMH-operated programs.
- **Division of PLACE:** The Department of Mental Health, Division of Professional Licensure and Certification (PLACE)
- **DMH:** The Mississippi Department of Mental Health

- **DMH Executive Director:** The Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health

- **DMH Operational Standards for Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, and Substance use Community Service Providers:** Manual published by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health which establishes and promulgates required operational standards for programs receiving DMH certification
- **Immediate family member:** Spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, child or stepchild.
- **Legal Representative:** A personal representative with legal standing (as by power of attorney or the executor of a will).
- **Peer Support Service:** Peer Support Services are person centered activities that allow individual receiving services/family members the opportunity to direct their own recovery and advocacy processes. Peer Support is a helping relationship between peers and or family member that is directed toward the achievement of specific goals defined by the individual. Peer Support Services include a wide range of structured activities to assist individuals in their wellness and recovery/resiliency, education, employment, crisis support, housing, social networking, development of community roles and natural supports, self determination and individual advocacy.
- **PLACE Review Board/Review Board:** The Professional Licensure and Certification (PLACE) Review Board
- **Staff Development Officer (SDO):** State mental health system program employee(s) who is responsible for maintaining staff development records and assisting in the verification of ongoing continuing education for renewal applicants. The SDO also serves as a liaison between the program and the Division and as a resource to his/her program concerning DMH professional credentialing. The SDO is appointed by the Program Director; a record of SDO appointments is maintained on file by the Division.
- **Supervisor (Peer Support Specialist Professional):** An individual credentialed according to the standards and guidelines determined by DMH. Prior or immediately upon acceptance in a Peer Support Supervisory position, this individual will be required to receive basic Peer Specialist training specifically developed for supervision within the Peer Support Specialist program, as provided by DMH.
- **State Mental Health System:** The network of programs in Mississippi which receive funding and/or programmatic certification by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and/or programs certified/licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health that are operated by the state mental health system (i.e., Mississippi Department of Mental Health)

SOURCE: Section 41-4-7 of the MS Code of 1972, annotated.

