

## **CRSS Roles and Responsibilities**

The Illinois Department of Human Services-Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH) recommends that providers abide by all laws, regulations, rules, and the Codes of Ethics for each profession providing services. Practical tasks that are listed after each category are intended as potential examples only, and do not reflect recovery support specialist duties in their entirety. Tasks will vary in accordance with agencies and programming. Please consult with your supervisor regarding specific duties. Refer to the Certified Recovery Support Specialist or the Certified Peer Support Specialist Codes of Ethics for additional guidance.

## **Category 1. Engages Peers in Collaborative and Caring Relationships (Ethics 1, 4, 11-15)**

- Present ourselves professionally and authentically.
- Practice person-centered and recovery-oriented care.
- Develop and implement active listening skills.
- Demonstrate genuine respect and acceptance.
- Establish professional, trusting, and respectful relationships with boundaries.
- Treat all individuals with equity and esteem.
- Recognize personal responsibility and address issues that can compromise the integrity of the peer relationship.

### **Practical tasks may include, but not limited to:**

- Developing a comfort agreement during group sessions to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.
- Reviewing and setting boundaries with an individual seeking services who may have asked you for money.
- Demonstrating culture competency and humility when working with individuals from different cultural groups.

## **Category 2. Provides Support (Ethic 8)**

- Validate individual experiences and emotions.
- Inspire hope and change through sharing lived experience.
- Create a safe and supportive space for individuals.
- Assist individuals in identifying and developing healthy relationships.
- Assist individuals in identifying and creating support systems.
- Utilize a strengths-based approach to wellness and recovery.
- Provide support services in approved settings during work hours.

### **Practical tasks may include, but not limited to:**

- Validating the emotions and life experiences shared by individuals seeking services.
- Assisting a person in creating a list of current social supports.
- Guiding a person in identifying their strengths to develop personal goals.
- Helping a person to schedule an appointment during work hours so that you can attend and support them.

### **Category 3. Share Lived Experience (Ethics 1 & 2)**

- Recognize when it is appropriate to share personal recovery stories.
- Be mindful of the information you share and how it may affect you and the individual receiving services.
- Describe personal efforts made to maintain recovery and wellness.

#### **Practical tasks may include, but not limited to:**

- Sharing your stories with individuals about your personal experiences with setting goals for yourself.
- Asking a person if they are open to hearing feedback that may help support them.
- Describing how sharing your story has impacted your recovery journey.

#### **Category 4. Personalizes Peer Support (Ethic 7)**

- Demonstrate cultural humility and respect towards peers and their families.
- Apply principles of individual choice and self-determination.
- Recognize multiple pathways of recovery.
- Help individuals develop appropriate skills to work towards attainable individual goals.

#### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Helping an individual with creating a vision board for reaching goals.
- Supporting an individual in developing a harm reduction plan.
- Searching for a provider that offers services to individuals in their native language.
- Educating family members on how to support an individual in crisis.
- Preparing an individual for a job interview by practicing mock interviews.

### **Category 5. Supports Recovery Planning (Ethic 9)**

- Recognize the Stages of Change.
- Support individuals at different points of their recovery and wellness journey.
- Assist individuals in identifying basic needs for maintaining their wellness.
- Research and identify applicable resources.
- Utilize Motivational Interviewing skills for thorough communication.

#### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Asking open-ended questions to individuals in crisis.
- Reviewing Stages of Change with individuals and helping them identify where they are at.
- Helping an individual create a shopping list before taking them to the store.
- Attending a neighborhood resource fair to learn more about available services in the community.

## **Category 6. Links to Resources, Services, and Supports (Ethics 4 & 5)**

- Develop and maintain up-to-date information on community resources and services (i.e., housing, re-entry, employment.)
- Assist peers in identifying and selecting appropriate support services.
- Accompany individuals to community activities and appointments (Varies by agency and programming)
- Refer individuals to additional supportive services.
- Develop and implement effective outreach strategies.
- Understand and address barriers that individuals may face when accessing support services.
- Assist individuals with self-advocacy.

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Creating a binder with information about local resources and supports.
- Arranging a meeting for individuals to meet with an intake specialist at an outpatient program to learn more about the requirements.
- Helping an individual prepare questions for their health provider before their next appointment.
- Practicing self-advocacy skills with individuals when requesting accommodations at their work or school.
- Assisting an individual with literacy challenges in completing an application for housing.
- Completing warm handoffs (in-person introductions) of individuals working with new providers.

## **Category 7. Provides Information about Skills Related to Health, Wellness, and Recovery (Ethic 5)**

- Educate individuals about health, wellness, recovery, and recovery supports.
- Assist individuals through navigating systems of care.
- Educate family and other supportive individuals chosen by the person served on recovery and supports available.
- Support the development of healthy choices and behaviors based on individual choice.
- Organize and lead peer recovery support groups.
- Recognize the importance of a holistic approach to wellness and recovery.

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Leading a mental health literacy group focused on wellness and recovery.
- Accompanying an individual to their appointment regarding public benefits.
- Hosting a weekly support group for family and friends of individuals in recovery.
- Praising an individual who has developed healthier habits to maintain a chronic health condition.
- Connecting with a local yoga studio and inviting an instructor to speak to a peer recovery group about the benefits of yoga to physical, mental, and spiritual health.



## **Category 8. Helps Peers to Manage Crises (Ethic 9)**

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals to address crisis.
- Familiarize ourselves with agency/program safety protocols.
- Educate individuals on managing elevated emotions and actions.
- Know when to take action if an individual expresses suicidal ideation.
- Assist individuals in creating crisis safety plans, advance directives, and other prevention tools.
- Connect individuals to additional support services as needed.

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Assisting an individual with completing a Psychiatric Advance Directive (PAD) after a recent hospitalization.
- Making a “toolbox” available to individuals that includes fidget toys/spinners, stress balls, clay/putty, adult coloring books, paint supplies, self-help books, journals, etc.
- Sharing our story including steps we take to maintain wellness during a crisis.
- Creating a list of available crisis services including Living Rooms, Mobile Crisis Teams, 988, warmlines, etc.

## **Category 9. Values Communication (Ethics 16-18)**

- Ensure clear understanding of information provided by individuals seeking services, families, colleagues, etc.
- Document information as required by program/agency.
- Abide by rules and regulations of confidentiality and respect other's right to privacy.
- Report instances of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as mandated by law.
- Conduct appropriate conversations with colleagues and those receiving support services.

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Reviewing a brochure that includes program requirements with an individual for a residential treatment program and answering clarifying answers.
- Documenting all interactions with individuals receiving services to ensure medical records are always up to date.
- Consulting with a colleague on how to support an individual facing difficult challenges.
- Calling the DCFS Hotline to report suspected child abuse after an individual provides details of an incident involving a child in their home.
- Having an honest conversation with an individual about respecting professional and/or personal boundaries.

## **Category 10. Supports Collaboration and Teamwork (Ethic 7)**

- Collaborate with team members and other providers to ensure appropriate services and support are in place to meet the individual's need.
- Engage with families and other natural supports.
- Build partnerships with community programs and agencies to increase opportunities for individuals.
- Address conflicts between an individual and their provider.

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Meeting with an individual's treatment team to discuss recent changes in behavior pattern (i.e., missing appointments, stopped medication, etc.)
- Advocating for an individual who feels they may benefit from increased sessions with their therapist.
- Hosting a Family/Friends Night where individuals can celebrate their recovery journey with loved ones.
- Meeting with a local business owner about offering job opportunities to individuals in recovery.
- Assisting an individual with contacting their provider to discuss concerns with their medication.

## **Category 11. Promotes Leadership and Advocacy (Ethic 10)**

- Assist individuals in developing self-advocacy skills.
- Advocate for an individual's needs with treatment team, family, supportive services, etc.
- Participate in efforts to end stigma, prejudice, and discrimination surrounding mental health, substance use disorders (SUD), and recovery.
- Educate colleagues about the recovery process and recovery support services.
- Maintain positive reputation with professional and recovery community.

### **Practical Tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Creating a handout with self-advocacy tips.
- Meeting with an individual and their family to discuss benefits of attending local support groups.
- Leading a community informational session on understanding recovery.
- Encouraging colleagues to use person-centered language in the workplace.
- Connecting with peers in the field through trainings and other professional development opportunities.

## **Category 12. Promotes Growth and Development (Ethic 3)**

- Recognizing the limits of our responsibilities and seeking support when needed.
- Using supervision as a time of mentoring, reflection, and learning.
- Recognizing signs of distress/burnout and knowing when to seek support.
- Practicing and educating individuals about the importance of self-care.
- Regularly participating in CRSS/CPRS trainings for professional development and CEU (Continuing Education Units) requirements.
- Understanding your personal values and acknowledging biases, judgements, and beliefs.
- Maintaining certification status (Renewal deadlines, yearly dues, CEUs, etc.)

### **Practical tasks may include but are not limited to:**

- Asking a colleague for help with a project that is overwhelming us.
- Creating a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) for work.
- Utilizing supervision to discuss an incident that may have compromised your values.
- Creating and completing monthly Continuing Education Unit (CEU) tracker.
- Providing an individual with a self-care worksheet and discussing ways they can implement these behaviors.

### **Sources**

## **Defining Peer Worker Job Roles and Tasks: A Tool for Developing and Using Job Descriptions**

<https://peerrecoverynow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-JUL-12-prcoe-define-job.pdf>

## **SAMHSA Core Competencies of Peer Workers in Behavioral Health**

[https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs\\_campaigns/brss\\_tacs/core-competencies\\_508\\_12\\_13\\_18.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/brss_tacs/core-competencies_508_12_13_18.pdf)

## **CRSS Code of Ethics**

[https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27894/documents/mental%20health/Recovery/CRSS/2020/06302020-CODEofETHICS\\_FOR\\_CRSS\\_PROFESSIONALS.pdf](https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27894/documents/mental%20health/Recovery/CRSS/2020/06302020-CODEofETHICS_FOR_CRSS_PROFESSIONALS.pdf)

## **Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) -Division of Mental Health (DMH): Recovery Services**

<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=36696>