

**Proposal for the Code of Ethics for Wisconsin Peer Specialists to be Aligned with the Certified Parent
Peer Specialist Code of Ethics**

Rationale for Code of Ethics for Certified Peer Specialists Change:

When the role of Certified Peer Specialists was first developed and conceptualized in Wisconsin, the context for the development of the Code of Ethics was deeply connected to the idea that Certified Peer Specialists would be working in the context of formal services where there may have been more policies which defined the ethics and code of conduct much further than the current Code of Ethics does. Since that time, Certified Peer Specialist's employment opportunities have expanded to non-traditional services, in fact there have always been "non-traditional" service contexts for the role of peer specialists. The Code of Ethics for Certified Peer Specialist must address all contexts of Certified Peer Specialist to include such service contexts as Peer Respite, advocacy services, as well as consumer operated programs where there may be no formal intake or discharge of peers who are being supported.

There have been several incidents for which other Certified Peer Specialists have heard about regarding sexual contact or romantic relationships with supported peers within days or a few weeks of the supported peer receiving services from "non-traditional" or traditional mental health service settings. This understandably has a number of Certified Peer Specialists concerned for the well-being of the supported peer and for the professional image of the profession as a whole. Technically since the Code of Ethics only addresses sexual or romantic involvement with current peers in support, the Certified Peer Specialists involved in these situations did not violate their Code of Ethics. This is not the standard of practice most Certified Peer Specialists want for their profession nor is it best practice for the profession.

Therefore:

It is proposed that the Code of Conduct for the Wisconsin Certified Peer Specialists to be aligned with the Wisconsin Certified Parent Peer Specialist Code of Conduct which clarifies a length of time in which it would be considered unethical for the Parent Peer Specialist would to be involved intimately or financially with a current supported parent peer.

Current Certified Peer Specialist Code of Conduct:

8. I will never engage in any sexual/intimate activities with peers I support. While a peer is receiving services from me, I will not enter into a relationship or commitment that conflicts with the support needs of the peer.

The proposed language is to read:

8. I will not engage in sexual or any form of intimate activities with any peers I am currently serving, and for a minimum of one year after my peer services end. I will also not enter into dual relationships or commitments that may conflict with the interests of the peers such as buying or selling items, services, or goods.

Respectfully submitted by on May 20, 2016 to the Peer Specialist Committee of the Recovery Implementation Task Force.

Karen M. Lane
Advocacy Specialist, DRW
CPS