



Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) Training Program Information

The Council's Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) Training Program consists of 54 hours of instruction designed to meet the current educational requirements for the CRS credential as set forth by the Pennsylvania Certification Board (PCB).

The 54 hours meet specific requirements of education in the domains specified by PCB.

- Recovery Management: 18 hours
- Education & Advocacy: 12 hours
- Professional Ethics & Responsibility: 6 hours
- Confidentiality: 6 hours
- Relevant to Field of Addiction: 12 hours

The Pennsylvania Certification Board requirements for the CRS credential can be found in full at: https://www.pacertboard.org/sites/default/files/applications/PCB_CRSApplication.pdf.

The Council's CRS Training has been informed by its experience in designing and implementing Peer-Based Recovery Support Services through the use of Certified Recovery Specialists.

All trainings are provided by content expert Council staff members; many trainers are directly involved in the design and provision of The Council's Peer-Based Recovery Support Services.

Description of Training Topic Modules

The following provides a synopsis of each training module.

Foundations of Recovery

This session provides historical context for the development of recovery oriented systems of care and describes steps and ongoing efforts in this transformation. Participants review a working definition of recovery and key principles in recovery transformation. Participants have an opportunity to discuss their own witnessing of recovery, as well as identify ways in which they can move the recovery transformation forward.

Defining Peer Recovery Support Services

Along with Foundations of Recovery, this session provides the basis for the remainder of the sessions. Participants receive an overview and detailed examples of four major types of peer-based recovery support services and how they can be integrated into any stage of recovery, from engagement through sustaining and growing recovery. Participants practice matching individual needs to an array of appropriate support services.

Many Pathways to Recovery

There are as many different pathways of recovery as there are people. The CRS must be open and knowledgeable about various pathways to recovery that are available for those they serve. A discussion of multiple pathways will include a review of styles of recovery, temporal contexts, cultural considerations, varieties of mutual aid groups, and more. The goal is to help the CRS help others construct and access pathways that will best serve the needs of the individual as the recovery process unfolds.

Communications Skill Building for Individuals and Groups

Effective communication skills are crucial to an individual's success as a CRS. The likelihood of positive change is greatly influenced by the manner in which we communicate. This session provides strategies for successful communication with both individuals and groups. Motivational interviewing principles and skills are reviewed and practiced. Session topics also include group facilitation skills, dealing effectively with group behaviors and dynamics, and conflict resolution.

Science of Addiction and Recovery

Many people live with the disease of addiction, but do not necessarily understand the basis of addiction in the brain. Equally important are strategies for supporting the brain in recovery from the effects of addiction. This session aims to provide participants with the skills to explain brain functioning during addiction and recovery to individuals and family members to help them understand behaviors during addiction and activities that support recovery.

Trauma Concerns and the Recovery Process

Many people have faced a history of trauma and the resulting psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual impact. This is particularly true of individuals with substance use disorders in that the use of substances can be a reaction to trauma, and the use of substances puts one at higher risk for trauma. This session defines how trauma can impact the recovery process. It aims to make participants trauma-informed, and includes a discussion of avoiding vicarious trauma.

Defining the CRS Role

Utilizing current core competencies and practice standards, this session explores the key knowledge, skills, and characteristics that an effective CRS possesses. The session provides an overview of the role and tasks of a Certified Recovery Specialist. It helps participants distinguish among the CRS role and other recovery-related roles, such as counselor or sponsor.

Facilitating Recovery Planning

In this highly interactive, hands on session, participants are introduced to a Recovery Plan document – the living document that individuals create to guides them through action steps to achieve self-determined goals in the recovery process. Topics include assessing, utilizing, and enhancing recovery capital, techniques used in recovery planning, and monitoring and evaluating the Recovery Plan.

Family Impact of Addiction

Addiction is often called a “family disease” because of the tremendous impact on family and other loved ones. Family healing needs to occur as well as individual recovery. This session focuses on family systems to detail the impact of addiction on the family and provides participants with strategies, resources, and support to work with families as well as the identified individual in recovery.

Message, Media, and Advocacy

More than ever, individuals in recovery are choosing to speak up and put a face and voice on recovery. This session provides an overview of the media’s role in recovery advocacy and helps participants create effective recovery messaging not only for media, but to employers, co-workers, participants and others. Strategies for advocating for recovery will be discussed, as well as the intersection between advocacy and anonymity.

Basic Concepts of Ethics in Peer Culture

A firm understanding of ethics is crucial in any helping professional. This session reviews the roles that peer providers play in the development and delivery of ethical services, and presents the collective experiences of organizations that have been providing peer-based recovery support services. Participants leave with a greater understanding of complex ethical and boundary issues, and how they can be handled.

Values, Ethics and Boundaries in Peer Culture

A continuation of Basic Concepts in Peer Culture, in this session participants work hands-on with realistic case studies to solve ethical dilemmas. It allows participants to define and understand professionalism, examine their own work-related values, and beliefs, and create personal action plans for ethical and professional conduct.

The Evolving Role of Self-Disclosure

Over the years, the addiction treatment and recovery field has had different views on the role of self-disclosure. This session will provide a historical overview of the use (or non-use) of self-disclosure in these professions. Participants will discuss the significance of self-disclosure in the recovery process and appropriate uses of self-disclosure in the CRS role.

Ethics & Self-Care for the CRS

Self-care is an ethical responsibility for the CRS. If the CRS does not take care of self, there can be little hope of effectively assisting others. This session will provide concrete self-care strategies for the CRS. By identifying one's own "stress style" and effective self-care modalities, participants develop their own personalized self-care plan.

Confidentiality Values and Principles

Part one of confidentiality training reviews the basics of confidentiality regulations, including federal and state laws governing confidentiality policies and practices, and defines terms associated with confidentiality. It stresses how confidentiality is applied to peer-based recovery support services.

Implementing Confidentiality Practices

The companion session to Confidentiality Values and Principles, this session focuses on putting the knowledge of principles and regulations to practical use. It provides examples of policies and procedures that organizations utilize to ensure confidentiality for participants and makes use of interactive case studies to illustrate confidentiality issues and practices in the arena of peer support.

Introduction to Emotional & Social Intelligence, Rational-Emotive & Cognitive Behavioral Theories

Since how we think (cognition), how we feel (emotion) and how we act (behavior) are highly interconnected, understanding this process is fundamental to successfully coaching persons in recovery. Rational-Emotive (REBT) & Cognitive Behavioral Theories (CBT) are evidence-based practices that have proven effective in working with people recovering from substance use disorders. Participants will gain an understanding of how emotional intelligence, rational-emotive & cognitive behavioral theories are effective coaching tools in identifying, enhancing and motivating people in recovery to change behaviors in support of sustaining long-term recovery.



Coaching in Recovery

Recovery Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people who are in or who are considering recovery from substance use disorders to produce extraordinary results in their personal lives, careers, businesses, or organizations—while advancing their recovery from addiction. The focus is on coaching the client to create and sustain intentional, meaningful and purposeful lives. Participants will gain an understanding of the process of coaching a person in recovery by identifying the strengths of a client, establishing a rapport and developing a co-creative, proactive relationship designed to guide a person through the challenges associated with living life on life's terms.

Exam Study Preparation Session

This three hour session provides a chance for participants to take a practice CRS credentialing exam and offers study and test-taking tips and strategies. This session is typically led by Certified Recovery Specialists who have successfully passed the exam and are actively working in the field. This session does not carry PCB credits.