



MHA National Certified Peer Specialist

Research over the past decades is clear—peer support works. Mental Health America’s new National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS) certification represents the highest standard of excellence in the country.

There are currently over 25,000 certified peer specialists in the country working in many aspects of public behavioral health, but to date there has been very little advancement for peer support in the private sector. Providers and funders in this space indicate the need for a uniform high standard for peer workers. Even providers in the public sector including Medicaid managed care organizations are seeking the very best in peer support. Forty-two states have developed a statewide certification process but their standards vary dramatically. **The MHA National Certified Peer Specialist credential was developed to raise standards and provide uniform quality across the country.**

The NCPS certification is advanced-level peer specialist credential, for a person with a **minimum of 3,000 hours of experience and advanced training in topics related to peer support, whole health, health care systems, trauma-informed care, and adult learning.** In states with certification it is anticipated that applicants for the NCPS will already be certified in order to accumulate the required hours of experience. In those states without certification applicants must have taken an approved training and provided the minimum of 3,000 hours of documented service.

The MHA credential, developed in partnership with the Florida Certification Board (FCB), is a legally defensible certification, developed under the strictest procedures according to the National Commission for Certifying Agencies Standards for Accreditation of Certification. The FCB carefully documents each stage of the certification program development process to demonstrate compliance with industry-accepted standards and practices. Employers can be assured that when they hire an employee with the NCPS credential that they have hired a skilled, competent and certified person proving due diligence in the hiring process.

Peers have a transformative effect on care. Whether in the emergency department, inpatient setting, primary care, or alongside mental health professionals, peers with the MHA NCPS certification have the highest levels of skills, experience, and expertise that can make all the difference.

MHA NCPS PERFORMANCE DOMAINS

Foundations of
Peer Support

Foundations of
Health Care
Systems

Mentoring, Shared
Learning and
Relationship
Building

Activation and
Self-Management

Advocacy

Professional
and Ethical
Responsibilities

CERTIFICATION FEES:

Application: \$225

Exam: \$200

Renewal: \$200

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Getting Certified

STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

- High School Diploma or General Equivalency Degree (HSD/GED) or higher
- 3,000 hours of supervised work and/or volunteer experience providing peer-to-peer recovery support services
- Current state certification with a minimum training requirement of 40 hours OR hold a certificate of completion of an MHA approved training program
- 1 Professional letter of recommendation for certification
- 1 Supervisory letter of recommendation for certification
- Attest to lived experience
- Agree to be bound by the MHA NCPS Code of Ethics
- Pass the MHA NCPS written exam
- Submit all required certification application forms and fees

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

The MHA NCPS credential is awarded for a two year period, and will renew on October 31st of the renewal year. Renewal requires certified individuals to:

- Practice according to the Code of Ethics
- Complete 20 hours of CEUs every 2 years
- Pay the biennial renewal fee before credential expiration

EXAMINATION

The MHA NCPS exam is a 125-item, multiple choice exam of core competency. The FCB has published the MHA NCPS exam blueprint online. This document provides the number of exam items per job task, helping test takers focus their study efforts on the types of information they are expected to know, based on their content-specific training and on-the-job work experience.

The MHA NCPS exam is administered online at testing sites across the country. Candidates have three hours to take the test. The three-hour time-frame does not start until the candidate has checked into the test site and completed a tutorial on how to use the test software.

LEARN MORE

Please visit www.CenterforPeerSupport.org for more information on peer support and certification. Applications are available through www.NationalPeerSpecialist.org