

National Certified Peer Specialist Training Self-Assessment Checklist and Test Preparation

INTRODUCTION

To do your best on the National Certified Peer Specialist exam, it is important that you take the necessary time to prepare for the test and develop the skills that will help you take it. The best way to perform well on the exam is to be prepared. First, you need to make the most of your **study skills**. Second, it is helpful to know general **test-taking strategies** to ensure that you will achieve your best score.

The **CONTENT TABLE section** of this document is designed to help you identify core content that may be asked of you on the examination. PLEASE NOTE: this document does not provide study content, rather, it provides the competencies and number of items per competency so you can identify relevant training material and prepare for the exam. Competency is gained through a combination of training and experience. To that end, you must be familiar with the content and you must be able to apply the content to answer specific questions on the exam.

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National Certified Peer Specialist Training Self-Assessment Checklist and Test Preparation

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT & TEST CONTENT

The NCPS exam is a 125-item, multiple-choice test. The test is designed to measure applicant’s competency in the following six performance domains: Foundations of Peer Support; Foundations of Healthcare Systems; Mentoring, Shared Learning and Relationship Building; Activation and Self-Management; Advocacy; and Professional and Ethical Responsibility. Test takers have three hours to complete the exam.

The development of the NCPS exam began with a clear and concise definition of the tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for competent job performance. The FCB works with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in the field to delineate critical job components. The SMT team developing the NCPS credential are all peers.

Once the performance domains and job tasks are established, a validation study is conducted to ensure the performance domains and job tasks actually reflect current practice. Individuals currently providing Peer Specialist services rate each job task for “frequency” and “importance” and provide detailed feedback regarding the adequacy of performance domains and job tasks. This data is analyzed and an Examination Blueprint is established. The Examination Blueprint identifies the number of items per performance domain as well as the number of items per job task within each domain necessary to ensure the exam results reflect the individual competence of the test taker.

Examination questions are written by certified individuals or those otherwise deemed as SMEs in the field. SMEs are trained in item writing best practices and assisted by FCB’s psychometricians when writing questions. All examination questions are written in a multiple choice format with three response options. One of these options represents the BEST response and credit is granted only for selection of this response.

The number of items per domain and job task are presented in both the Content Table of this document and in *Attachment A: NCPS Detailed Exam Blueprint*.



EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS

Recommended Study Goals

1. Read and work through this document, especially the core competency statement and the exam blueprint to focus your efforts.
2. Identify content you currently know and content for which you may need additional training or studying as you prepare for the test.
3. Do additional reading, such as the materials you received in your training courses.
4. Identify good times and best places to study.
5. Set specific, realistic goals to accomplish during study session. Study small amounts of material at a time. For example, *I will cover one module in the review course per night.*

Time Management

- Set realistic goals for what you want to accomplish during each study session and chart your progress.
- Study during your most productive time of the day.
- Study for reasonable amounts of time. Marathon studying is not productive.
- Take frequent breaks because they help you stay focused. Doing some quick exercises (e.g., sit-ups or jumping jacks) can help you stay alert.
- Be consistent. Establish your routine and stick to it.
- Study the most challenging test content first.
- For each study session, build in time to review what you learned in your last study session.
- Evaluate your accomplishments at the end of each study session.
- Reward yourself for a job well done.

Organization

- Establish a study area that has minimal distractions.
- Gather your materials in advance.
- Develop and implement a study plan

Active Learning

- Carefully read the information and then DO something with it.
- **If you have paper documents**, mark the important points with a highlighter, circle them with a pen, write notes about them, or summarize the information in your own words.
- Ask questions. As you study, questions often come into your mind. Write them down and actively seek the answers.
- Create sample test questions and answer them.
- Find a friend who is also planning to take the test and quiz each other.



TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

Focus. Try to block out whatever is going on around you. Take your time and think about what you are asked to do.

Budget your time. Be sure that you allocate an appropriate amount of time to work on each question on the test.

Take a quick break if you begin to feel tired. To do this, relax in your chair, and take a few deep breaths. You may want to stretch. DO NOT get up and walk around during the exam time.

Use positive self-talk. If you find yourself saying negative things to yourself such as “I can’t pass this test,” it is important to recognize that you are doing this. Stop and think positive thoughts such as “I prepared for this test, and I am going to do my best.”

Read the entire question and the possible answer choices. It is important to read the entire question so you know what it is asking. Read each possible answer choice. Do not mark the first one that “looks good.”

Use what you know. Draw on what you have learned from your training, your on-the-job experience, and during your study sessions to help you answer the questions.

Think logically. If you have tried your best to answer a question but you just aren’t sure of the answer, use the process of elimination. Look at each possible answer choice. If it doesn’t seem like a logical response, eliminate it. Do this until you’ve narrowed down your choices. If this doesn’t work, take your best educated guess. It is better to mark something down than to leave it blank.

Check your answers. When you have finished the test, go back and check your work.

No trick questions. The NCPS exam does not contain trick questions. Trick questions test the test takers ability to take a test, not his or her knowledge base. If you believe the question is a trick question, go back, re-read the question and do your best to answer the question as it is presented. If you believe that there are two possibly correct answers, but one rarely occurs in practice, it is best to pick the answer that most commonly occurs or is experienced.

You may want to view this video that reinforces the study tips presented earlier.

Video: Study Less, Study Smart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23Xqu0jXlfs>



GUIDELINES FOR ANSWERING MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- 1. Formulate your own answer before reading the options.**
 - Focus on finding an answer without the help of the alternatives.
 - This process will increase your concentration.
 - Doing this will help you exercise your memory.
- 2. Eliminate unlikely answers first.**
 - Quickly eliminating two alternatives may increase your probability to 50/50 or better.
 - Find the false item – one usually stands out and you can eliminate it.
- 3. Select numbered answers from the middle range, not the extremes.**
 - For example, if the height of a mountain is requested, eliminate 20,000 feet (high), and 3,000 feet (low). Then choose between 8,000 feet and 11,000 feet.
- 4. Select answers that are longer and more descriptive.**
 - Longer (true) answers stand out and contain more detail.
 - Shorter (false) answers are created quickly as throw aways.
 - Descriptive detail is given to help you identify the truth.
- 5. Similar answers give you a clue! One of them is correct, the other is disguised.**
- 6. Watch out for "NOT TRUE" or "EXCEPT" questions.**
 - Remember to reverse your procedure and eliminate truth.
 - Use the true-false methods described earlier and find the false alternative.

TEST ANXIETY

Does this sound like you? You've studied hard, and you think you have a grip on the material. But then the day of the test comes. Suddenly, you blank out, freeze up, zone out, or feel so nervous that you can't respond to those questions you knew the answers to just last night. If this sounds like you, you may have a case of test anxiety — that nervous feeling that people sometimes get when they're about to take a test. It is normal to experience some stress when preparing for and taking a test. It is what helps motivate us to study and try our best. Some students, however, experience anxiety that goes beyond normal test "jitters." If you feel you are suffering from test anxiety that is keeping you from performing at your best, please speak to your clinical supervisor or colleagues, who can direct you to resources to help you address this problem.

Here is a video to help you understand and manage test anxiety. It is about adult learners who go back to college, but their feelings about taking exams address test anxiety in general.

Video: Test Anxiety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FsgwLWdSS8>



CONTENT CHECKLIST

The following section is divided into six separate tables, by performance domain. Each table starts with the name of the performance domain and the total number of questions on the exam related to this domain. The actual table is a chart for you to guide your study efforts. Each table is divided into three columns. Column one provides the core competency statement. Column two provides the number of items on the exam that are directly related to the core competency. Column three is for you to complete as you review existing training materials and other resources to help you study for the exam.

As you study, remember this is an 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, healthcare systems, trauma-informed care, and adult learning. FCBs expect that you will need to seek out relevant training and education materials, beyond any training you have completed for state certification or other purpose, and engage in self-study to prepare for the test.

Each exam item is written to one of the following three competency levels: Recall, Comprehension and Application.

Recall questions ask you to remember facts, principles or other information that was previously learned or experienced. Recall questions tend to be very fact based. Approximately 35% of the exam items are recall items.

Comprehension questions ask you to demonstrate that you understand the meaning of a fact, principle or other information. Comprehension questions tend to ask you to explain or describe information or concepts beyond a definition. Approximately 50% of the exam items are comprehension items.

Application questions ask you to use the facts, principles, concepts, or other information that was previously learned or experienced to respond to a particular situation. Approximately 15% of the exam items are application items.

You can think of these three levels as:

“Do you know it?” (Recall)

“Do you understand it?” (Comprehension)

“Can you apply it/do it?” (Application)

Foundational Principles

The NCPS credential was developed with the understanding that nationally accepted ethical values and practice guidelines for peer support must serve as the foundation of this credential. As such, all NCPS core competencies and associated test items carry a shared expectation and understanding that the job tasks will be performed in a manner that reflects these foundational principles.



Domain: Foundations of Peer Support

There are a total of **26** items on the exam related to Foundations of Peer Support. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training or Content |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Describe the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health conditions. | 2 | |
| 2. Develop a working knowledge of the terms “peer support”, “peer”, and “recovery” as established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the International Association of Peer Specialists (iNAPS). | 2 | |
| 3. Develop a working knowledge of the recovery process, stages of change, and recovery capital. | 2 | |
| 4. Develop a working knowledge of the SAMHSA and iNAPS guiding principles, practice guidelines, and core values of peer support. | 2 | |
| 5. Describe how peer support is shifting care from an illness model to a recovery model. | 2 | |
| 6. Develop a working knowledge of the holistic nature of recovery as it pertains to physical, behavioral, social, spiritual, and environmental determinates of health. | 2 | |
| 7. Compare and contrast the concept of recovery as it is used across behavioral and physical health environments. | 2 | |
| 8. Compare and contrast the current role of peer support services in public healthcare systems vs. the emerging market for peer support services in private/commercial healthcare systems. | 2 | |
| 9. Explain how peer support services can help individuals address barriers to recovery (such as stigma or social isolation) and learn to navigate complex healthcare and other human service systems. | 3 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training or Content |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| 10. Explain the impact of trauma on an individual's physical and behavioral health. | 3 | |
| 11. Explain the core principles of trauma-informed care. | 2 | |
| 12. Describe how to provide peer support services that reflect trauma-informed care principles and strategies. | 2 | |

Domain: Foundations of Healthcare Systems

There are a total of **26** items on the exam related to Foundations of Healthcare Systems. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material as a means to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “whole health”, “wellness”, and “holistic healthcare”. | 2 | |
| 2. Describe a variety of healthcare settings and how peer support services can be integrated in these settings, including primary care settings, in-patient settings, emergency departments, crisis stabilization, mobile crisis teams, respite, psychosocial rehabilitation, outpatient behavioral health programs, peer-run programs, and the professionals who may serve in these settings (i.e., psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary care physicians.) | 2 | |
| 3. Understand the role of healthcare professionals that may be members of an individual's care team, including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary-care doctors/nurses, specialty-care doctors/nurses, community health workers, case managers, and other professionals. | 2 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 4. Describe a variety of traditional (such as CBT, DBT, Medication Management, etc.) and non-traditional healthcare services (such as yoga, nutritional management, music, art or drama therapy, etc.). | 2 | |
| 5. Describe how to assist other healthcare team members to learn about the process of recovery, the concept of resiliency, and the relationship between person-centered, self-directed care and achievement of whole health goals. | 3 | |
| 6. Develop a working knowledge of actions and techniques that will assist the individual to identify, use, and strengthen their natural resiliency skills when dealing with symptoms and stressors. | 3 | |
| 7. Develop a working knowledge of the social determinates of health and how these factors can impact an individual's health and well-being. | 2 | |
| 8. Develop a working knowledge of primary risk factors and the associated prevention/early intervention strategies that will help the individual navigate risk and promote health and well-being. | 2 | |
| 9. Describe how to learn about different therapeutic/clinical treatment modalities included in the individual's care plan in order to tailor peer support services to help the individual achieve whole health goals. | 2 | |
| 10. Develop a working knowledge of common methods to pay for healthcare services (including public and private/commercial payers and appeals processes) in order to help the individual navigate and choose between options. | 2 | |
| 11. Develop a working knowledge of available healthcare benefits for individuals living with debilitating behavioral health conditions in order to help the individual navigate and choose between options. | 2 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| 12. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of medical language and chart/record documentation standards in order to communicate effectively with members of the care team and help the individual understand clinical situations and/or terminology. | 2 | |

Domain: Mentoring, Shared Learning and Relationship Building

There are a total of **21** items on the exam related to Mentoring, Shared Learning and Relationship Building. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Effectively and appropriately share relevant parts your own recovery story, and, with permission, other stories of recovery to convey and inspire hope that recovery is possible in a manner that keeps the focus on the individual receiving services, not the peer specialist. | 2 | |
| 2. Describe how to establish, negotiate, and maintain appropriate interpersonal limits and boundaries that are necessary to promote effective peer support services. | 2 | |
| 3. Assist the individual to articulate their personal strengths, needs, preferences, and goals related to health, home, education, purpose, and the larger community. | 3 | |
| 4. Use shared-learning strategies and other adult learning techniques to help the individual learn about available health, wellness, and recovery supports and services. | 2 | |
| 5. Use shared-learning strategies and other adult learning techniques to help the individual learn the life skills they identify as necessary to achieve their whole health goals. | 2 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| 6. When possible, effectively use technology to engage and provide peer support services to individuals living in rural or remote settings or experiencing other barriers to traditional “face-to-face” interaction. | 2 | |
| 7. Use effective communication skills that demonstrate acceptance, respect, empathy and non-judgement in order to learn what the individual receiving services has to say about their life, their strengths, and their hopes for recovery in order to tailor peer services, as necessary, to help the individual engage in the recovery process and achieve their whole health goals. | 3 | |
| 8. Recognize and understand your own personal values, culture, and spiritual beliefs; how they may contribute to your own judgments, biases, and beliefs about others; and how to respond if they inhibit your ability to effectively serve another individual. | 2 | |
| 9. Recognize and respect the individual’s personal values, culture, and spiritual beliefs and how these play a role in achieving their whole health goals. | 3 | |

Domain: Activation and Self-Management

There are a total of **25** items on the exam related to Activation and Self-Management. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “activation” and “self-management” of whole health goals. | 2 | |
| 2. Assist the individual to develop decision making strategies and function as an active member of his or her own recovery team, to include the selection of traditional and non-traditional recovery strategies, supports, and providers. | 3 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| 3. Assist the individual to identify and take actions necessary to develop behaviors that support achievement of their whole health goals. | 2 | |
| 4. Help the individual learn how to access and navigate formal and informal community resources and services. | 2 | |
| 5. Help the individual to anticipate and avert or safely manage any re-experience of symptoms of his or her condition(s) to ensure continued wellness. | 3 | |
| 6. Help the individual to respond to any setbacks on their recovery journey as an opportunity for learning additional techniques or strategies to achieve and maintain their whole health goals. | 3 | |
| 7. Identify indicators that the individual may be re-experiencing symptoms of his or her condition(s) and provide early intervention strategies to avert crisis and/or the need for intensive services. | 2 | |
| 8. Assist the individual to develop and activate self-management plans, advanced directives, recovery prevention strategies, and crisis prevention strategies. | 2 | |
| 9. Provide on-going support to assure the individual is engaged in long-term, recovery-oriented self-management. | 2 | |
| 10. Provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that the individual may find useful in achieving their whole health goals. | 2 | |
| 11. Help the individual learn how to locate and evaluate the effectiveness of online activation tools and resources like phone apps, twitter feeds, discussion boards, and interactive programs. | 2 | |



Domain: Advocacy

There are a total of **9** items on the exam related to Advocacy. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant rights and laws to ensure that the individual's rights are maintained. | 2 | |
| 2. Promote self-determination and person-centered services when communicating with other members of the individual's care team. | 2 | |
| 3. Help the individual develop self-advocacy skills. | 3 | |
| 4. Identify and communicate gaps in the service system to supervisors or others in a position to respond to the unmet needs of individuals being served. | 2 | |

Domain: Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

There are a total of **18** items on the exam related to Professional and Ethical Responsibilities. Column 1 provides each competency under this domain. Column 2 provides the number of items on the exam per competency. In Column 3, record the relevant training or content material to direct your study efforts.

| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event/Curriculum |
|--|---------------------|---|
| 1. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws. | 3 | |
| 2. Document service provision in accordance with agency policies and procedures. | 2 | |
| 3. Perform all job duties in accordance with federal and state rules and regulations. | 3 | |
| 4. Perform all job duties in accordance with published codes of ethics and professional conduct for credentialed peer support specialists. | 3 | |



| Competency | # Exam Items | Relevant Training Event/Curriculum |
|--|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 5. Seek supervision as necessary and appropriate to competently perform the job duties of a peer support specialist in a manner that reflects the guiding principles and core values of the peer support movement, regardless of employer. | 2 | |
| 6. Practice personal safety and self-care. | 3 | |
| 7. Understand and explain the peer specialists' scope of service (i.e., know what you can and cannot do as a credentialed peer specialist). | 2 | |



NCPS Detailed Exam Blueprint

The NCPS exam is a 125 item, multiple choice exam assessing knowledge and skills across six performance domains and 55 competencies, as follows:

1. Foundations of Peer Support (12 competencies)
2. Foundations of Healthcare Systems (12 competencies)
3. Mentoring, Shared Learning and Relationship Building (9 competencies)
4. Activation and Self-Management (11 competencies)
5. Advocacy (4 competencies)
6. Professional & Ethical Responsibilities (7 competencies)

The following table provides the number of items per performance domain and a further breakdown of the number of items in each domain by competency.

| Foundations of Peer Support = 26 Items Total | Items per Competency |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Describe the civil and human rights foundations from which the peer support movement arose, including issues related to prejudice, discrimination, and stigma associated with behavioral health conditions. | 2 |
| 2. Develop a working knowledge of the terms “peer support”, “peer”, and “recovery” as established by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the International Association of Peer Specialists (INAPS). | 2 |
| 3. Develop a working knowledge of the recovery process, stages of change, and recovery capital. | 2 |
| 4. Develop a working knowledge of the SAMHSA and INAPS guiding principles, practice guidelines, and core values of peer support. | 2 |
| 5. Describe how peer support is shifting care from an illness model to a recovery model. | 2 |
| 6. Develop a working knowledge of the holistic nature of recovery as it pertains to physical, behavioral, social, spiritual, and environmental determinates of health. | 2 |
| 7. Compare and contrast the concept of recovery as it is used across behavioral and physical health environments. | 2 |
| 8. Compare and contrast the current role of peer support services in public healthcare systems vs. the emerging market for peer support services in private/commercial healthcare systems. | 2 |
| 9. Explain how peer support services can help individuals address barriers to recovery (such as stigma or social isolation) and learn to navigate complex healthcare and other human service systems. | 3 |
| 10. Explain the impact of trauma on an individual’s physical and behavioral health. | 3 |
| 11. Explain the core principles of trauma-informed care. | 2 |
| 12. Describe how to provide peer support services that reflect trauma-informed care principles and strategies. | 2 |



| Foundations of Healthcare Systems = 26 Items Total | Items per Competency |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “whole health”, “wellness”, and “holistic healthcare”. | 2 |
| 2. Describe a variety of healthcare settings and how peer support services can be integrated in these settings, including primary care settings, in-patient settings, emergency departments, crisis stabilization, mobile crisis teams, respite, psychosocial rehabilitation, outpatient behavioral health programs, peer-run programs, and the professionals who may serve in these settings (i.e., psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary care physicians.) | 2 |
| 3. Understand the role of healthcare professionals that may be members of an individual’s care team, including psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, primary-care doctors/nurses, specialty-care doctors/nurses, community health workers, case managers, and other professionals. | 2 |
| 4. Describe a variety of traditional (such as CBT, DBT, Medication Management, etc.) and non-traditional healthcare services (such as yoga, nutritional management, music, art or drama therapy, etc.). | 2 |
| 5. Describe how to assist other healthcare team members to learn about the process of recovery, the concept of resiliency, and the relationship between person-centered, self-directed care and achievement of whole health goals. | 3 |
| 6. Develop a working knowledge of actions and techniques that will assist the individual to identify, use, and strengthen their natural resiliency skills when dealing with symptoms and stressors. | 3 |
| 7. Develop a working knowledge of the social determinates of health and how these factors can impact an individual’s health and well-being. | 2 |
| 8. Develop a working knowledge of primary risk factors and the associated prevention/early intervention strategies that will help the individual navigate risk and promote health and well-being. | 2 |
| 9. Describe how to learn about different therapeutic/clinical treatment modalities included in the individual’s care plan in order to tailor peer support services to help the individual achieve whole health goals. | 2 |
| 10. Develop a working knowledge of common methods to pay for healthcare services (including public and private/commercial payers and appeals processes) in order to help the individual navigate and choose between options. | 2 |
| 11. Develop a working knowledge of available healthcare benefits for individuals living with debilitating behavioral health conditions in order to help the individual navigate and choose between options. | 2 |
| 12. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of medical language and chart/record documentation standards in order to communicate effectively with members of the care team and help the individual understand clinical situations and/or terminology. | 2 |



| Mentoring, Shared Learning and Relationship Building = 21 Items Total | Items per Competency |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Effectively and appropriately share relevant parts your own recovery story, and, with permission, other stories of recovery to convey and inspire hope that recovery is possible in a manner that keeps the focus on the individual receiving services, not the peer specialist. | 2 |
| 2. Describe how to establish, negotiate, and maintain appropriate interpersonal limits and boundaries that are necessary to promote effective peer support services. | 2 |
| 3. Assist the individual to articulate their personal strengths, needs, preferences, and goals related to health, home, education, purpose, and the larger community. | 3 |
| 4. Use shared-learning strategies and other adult learning techniques to help the individual learn about available health, wellness, and recovery supports and services. | 2 |
| 5. Use shared-learning strategies and other adult learning techniques to help the individual learn the life skills they identify as necessary to achieve their whole health goals. | 2 |
| 6. When possible, effectively use technology to engage and provide peer support services to individuals living in rural or remote settings or experiencing other barriers to traditional “face-to-face” interaction. | 2 |
| 7. Use effective communication skills that demonstrate acceptance, respect, empathy and non-judgement in order to learn what the individual receiving services has to say about their life, their strengths, and their hopes for recovery in order to tailor peer services as necessary to help the individual engage in the recovery process and achieve their whole health goals. | 3 |
| 8. Recognize and understand your own personal values, culture, and spiritual beliefs; how they may contribute to your own judgments, biases, and beliefs about others; and how to respond if they inhibit your ability to effectively serve another individual. | 2 |
| 9. Recognize and respect the individual’s personal values, cultural, and spiritual beliefs and how these play a role in achieving their whole health goals. | 3 |
| Activation and Self-Management = 25 Items Total | Items per Competency |
| 1. Develop a working knowledge of the concepts of “activation” and “self-management” of whole health goals. | 2 |
| 2. Assist the individual to develop decision making strategies and function as an active member of his or her own recovery team, to include the selection of traditional and non-traditional recovery strategies, supports, and providers. | 3 |
| 3. Assist the individual to identify and take actions necessary to develop behaviors that support achievement of their whole health goals. | 2 |
| 4. Help the individual learn how to access and navigate formal and informal community resources and services. | 2 |
| 5. Help the individual to anticipate and avert or safely manage any re-experience of symptoms of his or her condition(s) to ensure continued wellness. | 3 |
| 6. Help the individual to respond to any setbacks on their recovery journey as an opportunity for learning additional techniques or strategies to achieve and maintain their whole health goals. | 3 |



| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 7. Identify indicators that the individual may be re-experiencing symptoms of his or her condition(s) and provide early intervention strategies to avert crisis and/or the need for intensive services. | 2 |
| 8. Assist the individual to develop and activate self-management plans, advanced directives, recovery prevention strategies, and crisis prevention strategies. | 2 |
| 9. Provide on-going support to assure the individual is engaged in long-term, recovery-oriented self-management. | 2 |
| 10. Provide access to a range of activation and self-care tools and resources that the individual may find useful in achieving their whole health goals. | 2 |
| 11. Help the individual learn how to locate and evaluate the effectiveness of online activation tools and resources like phone apps, twitter feeds, discussion boards, and interactive programs. | 2 |
| Advocacy = 9 Items Total | Items per Competency |
| 1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant rights and laws to ensure that the individual's rights are maintained. | 2 |
| 2. Promote self-determination and person-centered services when communicating with other members of the individual's care team. | 2 |
| 3. Help the individual develop self-advocacy skills. | 3 |
| 4. Identify and communicate gaps in the service system to supervisors or others in a position to respond to the unmet needs of individuals being served. | 2 |
| Professional and Ethical Responsibilities = 18 Items Total | Items per Competency |
| 1. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with state and federal laws. | 3 |
| 2. Document service provision in accordance with agency policies and procedures. | 2 |
| 3. Perform all job duties in accordance with federal and state rules and regulations. | 3 |
| 4. Perform all job duties in accordance with published codes of ethics and professional conduct for credentialed peer support specialists. | 3 |
| 5. Seek supervision as necessary and appropriate to competently perform the job duties of a peer support specialist in a manner that reflects the guiding principles and core values of the peer support movement, regardless of employer. | 2 |
| 6. Practice personal safety and self-care. | 3 |
| 7. Understand and explain the peer specialists' scope of service (i.e., know what you can and cannot do as a credentialed peer specialist). | 2 |

