

CODE OF ETHICS FOR CRSS PROFESSIONALS

A code of ethics is a set of guidelines which are designed to set out acceptable behaviors for members of a particular group, association, or profession. The CRSS code of ethics serves to:

1. Protect consumers of recovery support services
2. Set a professional standard
3. Increase confidence in the profession
4. Identify core values which underlie the work performed
5. Create accountability among CRSS professionals
6. Establish occupational identity and maturity

	ETHIC	IMPORTANCE
1	CRSS professionals will, when appropriate, openly share their stories of hope and recovery and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote their recovery and resilience.	Science has shown that having hope is integral to an individual's ability to recover. Hearing stories of recovery helps people develop hope, particularly when those stories are relevant to others' lives and helps them to identify supports for their own recovery.
2	CRSS professionals will practice safe and healthy disclosure about their own experience through general sharing focused on providing hope and direction toward recovery.	The experience of recovery and what is helpful is different for each person. Sharing one's recovery story can promote hope, but must not be prescriptive.
3	CRSS professionals will maintain high standards of personal conduct and will also conduct self-care in a manner that fosters their own recovery.	As a role model, a CRSS professional's integrity and health choices influence the practices of persons served.
4	CRSS professionals will fairly and accurately represent themselves and their capabilities to individuals they serve and to the community.	The goal is to get a person to the right source of support for their current need. Damage occurs when a professional misrepresents what services they are qualified to provide.
5	CRSS professionals will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and openly share their knowledge.	Persons served deserve to make choices based on the best information possible. Information and understanding regarding

		mental health recovery is ever evolving and expanding.
6	CRSS professionals will not abuse substances under any circumstances.	As a role model, a CRSS professional's integrity and health choices influence the practices of persons served.
7	CRSS professionals will provide services to meet the identified needs of the individuals they serve as indicated within their service plan. They will avoid providing services that are unnecessary or not capable of producing the desired effect.	Persons served deserve individualized services with demonstrated effectiveness.
8	CRSS professionals shall only provide service and support within work hours and locations approved by the agency.	Persons must be afforded protection from abuse, misconduct and conflicts of interest which are more likely to occur outside the scope of professionally sanctioned hours and settings.
9	CRSS professionals will be guided by the principle of consumer self-determination while also considering the needs of others and society. The primary responsibility of CRSS Professionals is to help individuals they serve achieve their goals, based upon their needs and wants.	While personal responsibility and individual choice are cornerstones of recovery, these are balanced by the need for support and safety not only of the individual, but of others and the greater society.
10	CRSS professionals will advocate for the full involvement of individuals they serve in communities of their choice with services in safe and least restrictive environments possible.	Recovery is the process by which persons with mental illnesses live, work, learn and participate fully in their communities. All individuals have the right to live in a safe and least restrictive environment.
11	CRSS professionals must not discriminate against individuals based on race, religion, age, sex, disability, ethnicity, national ancestry, sexual orientation or economic condition.	Individuals have the right to be treated with equality and esteem.
12	CRSS professionals will never intimidate, threaten, harass, financially exploit, use undue influence, physical force or verbal	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of

	abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.	power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals.
13	CRSS professionals will avoid relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of individuals they serve, impair professional judgment, imply a conflict of interest, or create risk of harm to individuals they serve. When dual relationships are unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the professional to seek supervisory consultation to conduct him/herself in a way that does not jeopardize the integrity of the helping relationship.	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals.
14	CRSS professionals will never engage in romantic or sexual/intimate activities with the individuals they serve. They will not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior romantic or sexual relationship.	The real and perceived power between a human service professional and the persons they serve creates an imbalance of power that is advantageous to the professional and disenfranchising to the person served. This removes the possibility for a genuine consensual relationship. Relationships of this type also cloud the professional's needed objective judgment, which reduces the quality of services the person deserves.
15	CRSS professionals will not accept gifts of significant value from individuals they serve. They do not loan, give, or receive money or payment for any services to, or from, individuals they serve.	Even when providing peer support services, the CRSS professional is at least implicitly in a position of power as a staff person and must be careful how that influence or perceived authority might place pressure upon individuals to give. A gift of significant value from a consumer is essentially payment for a service that is already being paid for by other means. Receiving a gift from an individual may also

		unintentionally impact the treatment of that individual and other persons served in an unfair manner.
16	CRSS professionals will, at all times, respect the rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality of those they support. CRSS Professionals will respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and interactions.	Individuals have rights, including the right to privacy, and CRSS professionals should not only honor, but advocate for the necessity and enforcement of such rights.
17	CRSS professionals have a duty to inform appropriate persons when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to an individual they are serving or other identifiable person. CRSS Professionals working in the human services field are mandated reporters of abuse, neglect and exploitation.	The professional has a duty not only to protect persons served, but also other individuals and society at large.
18	CRSS professionals will avoid negative criticism of colleagues in communicating with individuals they serve and other professionals.	CRSS professionals must use their influence for constructive purposes and not engage in activities that detract from the recovery support of persons with mental health challenges. Persons served benefit from a thoughtful, team based approach where their welfare is the primary concern.

Adapted from the Peer Specialist Code of Ethics and Professional Standards by Colorado's Northeast Behavioral Health Partnership (2011)