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Peer Support Services
Best Practice Standards

Revised January 2025
Idaho Division of Behavioral Health

PEER SUPPORT SERVICES STANDARDS

Certified Family Support Partner (CFSP) Standards

Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) Standards

As of January 2025, Peer Navigation Standards have been removed

Certified Family Support Partner Standards

INTRODUCTION

Certified Family Support Partners (CFSP) are parent or adult caregivers who, through lived experience and specialized training, have acquired an understanding of another parent's situation via the shared emotional and psychological challenges of raising a child living with a mental health illness or a mental health illness with a cooccurring substance use disorder. The relationship between the CFSP and the family being served is mutual, built on a connection and trust not obtainable through other service relationships (e.g., counselor, psychologist, minister) or someone without the shared experience. The CFSP partners with other agencies which serve the child and their family to improve the quality of life and opportunities of recovery for the child in the home, school, and community.

Certified Family Support Partners in Idaho

Certified Family Support Partners are available to youth participants with a mental health illness or a mental health illness with a co-occurring substance use disorder to guide them through the recovery process to live successfully within their communities. As important members of treatment teams, Certified Family Support Partners utilize a strength-based framework that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety and create opportunities for participants to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Guiding Principles

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Mental Health Services (SAMHSA), in conjunction with diverse subject matter experts, identified core competencies for Certified Family Support Partners in behavioral health. These core competencies reflect certain foundational principles identified by members of the mental health consumer and substance use disorder recovery communities. These are:

- Advocacy
- Professional Responsibility
- Mentoring
- Recovery Support
- Cultural Competency

Core competencies have the potential to guide service delivery and promote best practices in family support. They are intended to guide the development of initial and ongoing training that supports family support partners' entry into this field of work.

Certified Family Support Partner (CFSP) Standards

1. Certified Family Support Partner (CFSP)

1.1. Definitions

1.1.1. CFSP has at least one year of lived experience as a parent or an adult caregiver who is raising a child or has raised a child who lives with a mental health illness or a mental health illness with a co-occurring substance use disorder and has successfully navigated the various child-serving systems of care. Lived experience comes from raising a child before their 18th birthday and the lessons learned from raising this child.

1.1.2. CFSP has gained appropriate knowledge, experience, and skills as demonstrated by obtaining certification

1.1.3. CFSP understands and lives by the Idaho Certified Family Support Partner Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

1.1.4. CFSP abides by the Idaho's CFSP Standards.

1.1.5. CFSP engages, educates, guides and supports family members to help them make successful life changes necessary for healthy relationships and living successfully in the community. These changes are determined by the child/youth and family being served.

1.1.6. CFSP is non-clinical and does not diagnose or offer treatment for mental health issues.

1.1.7. CFSP has completed the certification process through the Department's certifying agency and is actively certified as a Certified Family Support Partner.

Special considerations: Eligibility to provide family support partner services may depend on the nature of the employment and whether the CFSP passes a criminal background check. Background checks are the responsibility of the agency or place of employment.

Raising a child who has lived with a substance use disorder only (without presence of a mental health diagnosis) does not qualify the parent or caregiver as a CFSP.

CFSPs provide services for families who are raising a child with a mental health illness or co-occurring disorders. CFSPs do not work with adults who have a mental health illness or co-occurring disorders.

1.2. Training

1.2.1. Entities providing a CFSP training includes the following provisions for conducting a training.

1.2.2. CFSP candidates complete an application for training which includes a personal Lived Experience Essay consisting of challenges, triumphs, problem-solving methods, personal support system and strategies for living with stressors or questions on these topics.

1.2.3. CFSP candidate submits two letters of recommendation with the training application, one from personal source and the other from a professional source (i.e. employment or volunteer work).

1.2.4. Prior to training, a CFSP applicant is screened by the training entity to which the applicant has applied. Screening consists of ensuring that the applicant has met all criteria for a CFSP and has the lived experience necessary. Elements of an appropriate screening are to include a review of the application, a review of the letters of recommendation, and an interview with the applicant in-person, via telephone or via another form of technology that is mutually agreed upon between the applicant and the training entity.

1.2.5. CFSP candidate passes a post-training exam with a score of 80% or higher and successfully demonstrates skill competencies during the training. The exam and competencies are established by the training entity and may be reviewed by the certifying agency.

1.2.6. Accommodations for the exam are provided as deemed necessary by the individual taking the exam. Examples of accommodations include, but are not limited to, extra time, a separate room, and use of a computer.

1.2.7. A Letter of Completion from the training entity.is mailed to the CFSP candidate. The letter states either recommendation for the individual to apply for certification or it provides individualized recommendations for the candidate to complete before moving forward with the certification process.

1.2.8. CFSP training includes, at a minimum, the following competency areas:

1.2.8.1. overview of mental illness and substance use disorders in children and their effects on the brain;

1.2.8.2. advocacy skills used in multiple systems (children's behavioral health system, education and special education systems, child welfare system and juvenile court system);

1.2.8.3. ethics (boundaries, confidentiality, HIPAA, etc.);

1.2.8.4. the awareness of risk factors in participants' behaviors and the ability to access appropriate services;

1.2.8.5. the use of interpersonal and professional communication skills;

1.2.8.6. stages of change: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance;

1.2.8.7. motivation and empowerment;

1.2.8.8. parenting special needs children and family dynamics;

1.2.8.9. the recovery process;

1.2.8.10. the effects of trauma and use of the trauma-informed care approach;

1.2.8.11. wellness and natural supports;

1.2.8.12. family-centered planning;

1.2.8.13. boundaries and self-care;

1.2.8.14. cultural sensitivity;

1.2.8.15. Idaho's children's mental health system of care;
1.2.8.16. the child and family team and how to be a team player;
1.2.8.17. how to tell your story and use your story to help others;
1.2.8.18. workplace dynamics and process;
1.2.8.19. CFSP's role and duties on the job;
1.2.8.20. relationship building;
1.2.8.21. recovery plans; and
1.2.8.22. local, state and national resources.

1.2.9. Additional preferred CFSP training topics may include:
1.2.9.1. ways the CFSP role can eliminate/reduce myths about behavioral health diagnoses;
1.2.9.2. stigma reduction as a part of CFSP's language and actions; and
1.2.9.3. skills related to eliciting change.

1.2.10. Training is 40 hours of face-to-face instruction or virtual training if necessary. Training bodies are separate from the certifying agency.

1.2.11. The certifying agency is responsible for reviewing and evaluating training to ensure compliance with competencies.

1.2.12. Curriculum includes all types of learning methods, including role-playing scenarios as a key element of building skills.

Special considerations: As best practices evolve in the field of peer services; training competencies may need to change. These changes are determined by a review process conducted by State Behavioral Health Authority. This ensures communication and best practices between training entities and the certifying agency.

1.3. Trainer Qualifications

1.3.1. CFSP trainer is a CFSP and holds a current Idaho certification (See Special Considerations).

1.3.2. CFSP trainer has a background in, knowledge-base and understanding of the role of a CFSP, the CFSP Code of Ethics, how an agency utilizes a CFSP, navigation of mental health service systems and other adult social service systems, and a thorough understanding of the CFSP certification process in Idaho.

1.3.3. CFSP trainer has knowledge and skills in supporting others (e.g., listening skills, problem-solving skills, advocacy skills, being a peer supporter).

1.3.4. CFSP trainer has skills in adult learning, teaching/presenting, planning/organizing, adhering to set protocols, customer service, effective communication skills and professionalism.

1.3.5. CFSP trainer participates in ongoing education regarding adult learning and training skills as outlined in 3.3.4. and is knowledgeable of current trends in the field of CFSPs.

1.3.6. CFSP trainer is able to pass a background check.

Special considerations: Best practice recommends that one trainer meets all qualifications; however, in the event that a qualified trainer candidate has no practical experience as a CFSP or no practical experience in facilitating learning, then consideration is given to a co-training

approach, whereby one trainer has CFSP experience, and another trainer has teaching or learning facilitation experience.

1.4. Certification

1.4.1. Certification as a Family Support Partner is issued by the Department's certifying agency.
1.4.2. CFSP meets the minimum qualifications and requirements for Certification.
1.4.3. CFSP is at least 18 years of age.
1.4.4. Professionals reporting to hold certification status as a CFSP maintain documentation of said certification.
1.4.5. CFSP is responsible for ensuring that the certifying agency has all current documentation necessary for satisfying the certification criteria.
1.4.6. CFSP is responsible for maintaining all necessary documentation for renewal and submitting it to the certifying agency for renewal.
1.4.7. CFSP is responsible for providing the certifying agency with any changes in CFSP's name, address, telephone number and email address.
1.4.8. CFSP is responsible for knowing when their certificate expires and for submitting all necessary documents for renewal to the certifying agency prior to the expiration date.
1.4.9. Employers of CFSPs are responsible to check with the centralized certification agency to ensure that a CFSP whom they wish to hire has current certification status as a certified CFSP in Idaho.
1.4.10. The certifying agency tracks certifications and continuing education status of Idaho's CFSPs.
1.4.11. CFSP certification is renewed annually by the certifying agency. CFSP meets the following requirements for renewal:
    1.4.11.1. Current certification through the certifying agency as a CFSP and in good standing with the certifying agency;
    1.4.11.2. Ten hours of continued education related to the competency areas including at least one (1) hour of ethics.
    1.4.11.3. CFSP follows the renewal procedure put forth by the certifying agency.
1.4.12. A CFSP in good standing may request an inactive status.
    1.4.12.1. Request is due to an inability to meet recertification requirements related to a decline in physical, mental health or extenuating circumstances.
1.4.13. The certifying agency maintains discretion to deny, revoke or suspend certification or recertification.
1.4.14. Applicants request reciprocity to provide CFSP services in Idaho meets the Requirements.
1.4.15. The certifying agency oversees the Family Support Partner certification processes, including initial, renewal, reciprocity, revocation, inactive status, reactivation, and evaluation of training for meeting certification requirements.
1.4.16. The certifying agency oversees the approval of all certification materials,

including application forms, required documentation and continuing education.

Special considerations: All documents submitted to the certifying agency are subject to review and verification.

A clinician or professional person may hold certification as a CFSP; however, a CFSP working with a particular family or child as a CFSP provider cannot also be the clinician (i.e., other professional, service roles noted in 3.8.13 in this standard) who is providing any other services to that same child or family. In other words, an individual cannot be the CFSP provider and the clinical/professional provider of the same child or family to avoid an ethical conflict and/or power differential.

1.5. Reporting Changes to the Certifying Agency

1.5.1. CFSP reports changes in name, address, telephone number and email address.
1.5.2. CFSP reports a change in supervisor's name.
1.5.3. CFSP reports a change in employment status.
1.5.4. CFSP reports a violation in Code of Ethics.

Special considerations: Failure to report changes may result in not receiving up-to-date information from the certifying agency.

1.6. Complaint Procedures

1.6.1. The complainant may file a written complaint with the Certification Agency.
1.6.2. If there is a complaint regarding a CFSP, the written complaint is to be sent to the certifying agency.

Special considerations: If the complaint is regarding a agency, utilizes CFSPs to provide services, a written complaint is sent to the certifying agency.

1.7. Grievance Procedures

1.7.1. Applicant may file a grievance when there is one of the following reasons to do so: being denied certification, questioning the outcome of the certifying agency, or applicant is subject to an action by the certifying agency that they deem unjustified.

1.8. Provision of Family Support Services

1.8.1. CFSP services may be provided to all participants who are in need of such services.
1.8.2. Participant and/or family member outcomes expected during and after a CFSP works with the family include, but are not limited to:
1.8.2.1. ability to identify and use wellness tools;
1.8.2.2. increased social skills;
1.8.2.3. demonstrated ability to live more independently;

1.8.2.4. re-engaging with support systems that may have been lost;
1.8.2.5. improvement in child's educational goals;
1.8.2.6. improved quality of life;
1.8.2.7. less stress;
1.8.2.8. sense of purpose;
1.8.2.9. increased empowerment;
1.8.2.10. belief that recovery is possible;
1.8.2.11. increased self-esteem;
1.8.2.12. demonstrated ability to self-advocate; and
1.8.2.13. increased participation in community, school and positive recreational activities.

1.8.3. Services are non-clinical and designed to help the caregiver in navigating the recovery process for the child. Services provided by the CFSP include, but are not limited to:
1.8.3.1. advocating for the needs of the family;
1.8.3.2. teaching family members and participant how to develop self-advocacy and problem-solving skills;
1.8.3.3. mentoring the participant and family members to instill a sense of hope;
1.8.3.4. role modeling behaviors, attitudes and thinking skills needed for resiliency and coping;
1.8.3.5. helping family members identify and utilize their strengths;
1.8.3.6. role modeling the facilitation of collaborative relationships;
1.8.3.7. coaching participant and family about the importance of collaborating with the Child and Family team, regarding development and implementation of child's treatment plan and recommendations;
1.8.3.8. assist family members in identifying and connecting to services and community resources;
1.8.3.9. assist family members in articulating their needs and goals in preparing for meetings as well as service plans;
1.8.3.10. provide family-based programs such as classes on parenting special needs children if the CFSP has had the appropriate training in this area;
1.8.3.11. teach caregivers how to document all activities that pertain to the child's appointments, meetings, needs, goals, and strengths; and
1.8.3.12. assist in preparing for the child's transition to adulthood.

1.8.4. These services are delivered primarily face-to-face, and secondarily by telephone or text or telehealth options, including web-based secure applications.

1.8.5. CFSP shares their personal story when appropriate for the benefit of the family with whom they are working.

1.8.6. CFSP, in collaboration with the family and the Child and Family Team (CFT) and any other professionals for which the family gives consent, assists in developing an individualized family-centered service plan that includes a

description of the family's goals, timeframes for meeting these goals, and the interventions that assist in meeting the goals.

1.8.7. Frequency and Length of Service:

1.8.7.1. The frequency by which a CFSP meets and works with the family and the length of this service is determined by the CFT (i.e. clinician, parents/caregivers, child and CFSP) and evidence-based practices.

1.8.7.2. The frequency and length of service are periodically re-evaluated depending on the intensity of the CFSP services needed. The higher the intensity and frequency of the services, the more often a re-evaluation occurs.

1.8.8. CFSP performs activities with a participant, and not for or to the participant so that the child and the family can regain control over their own lives.

1.8.9. CFSP is under the direct supervision of a CFSP Supervisor.

1.8.10. CFSP refers child and family to the appropriate resources if they are unable to benefit from CFSP services.

1.8.11. CFSP, working within an agency, adheres to the documentation requirements of the agency.

1.8.12. CFSP provides CFSP services according to the CFSP Code of Ethics and the Division of Behavioral Health's CFSP Standards.

1.8.13. To avoid role ambiguity and/or conflict of interest, a CFSP does not fulfill other service roles (therapist, counselor, case manager, CBRS/PSR, CPRP, CFSP, RC/CRC/CPRC, nurse, physician, clergy, etc.) to participants to whom they are providing CFSP services; nor do they practice outside the scope of their CFSP training.

Special considerations: CFSP services augment other professional treatment services. Services that a CFSP does not perform include: counseling/therapy, drug testing, diagnosing of symptoms and disorders, prescribing, acting as a legal representative, participating in the determination of competence, and providing legal advice. CFSPs empower caregivers and youth to use their voices and participate in all aspects of treatment and recovery.

A CFSP may not work at the same agency in which they also have a child receiving services or they are a participant receiving services.

1.9. Organizational Readiness & Responsibilities

1.9.1. Organizational Readiness is preparing an organization or agency for the employment of a CFSP; ensuring that staff members understand the purpose of CFSPs and how CFSP duties enhance the organization's mission, including any unique issues to employing CFSPs.

1.9.2. Agency establishes a readiness plan that includes criteria by which the agency hires, supervises, and works to maintain CFSPs.

1.9.3. Agency ensures supervisors have been trained in best practices for Peer Supervisor in accordance with SAMHSA standards.

1.9.4. Agency engages in educational opportunities for all staff that prepare them

to better understand the strengths and opportunities offered by the CFSP.

1.9.5. Agency adheres to Idaho's CFSP standards and all other agency -related standards and supports the CFSP Code of Ethics.

1.9.6. Agency trains staff members in the purpose and value added by CFSPs.

1.9.7. Agency ensures that all CFSPs are supervised by a CFSP supervisor and that the services rendered by the CFSP are under a comprehensive, individualized, child-centered and family-driven plan.

1.9.8. CFSP supervisors are designated by each agency that employs CFSPs.

1.9.9. Agency utilizes trauma-informed care principles when employing CFSPs.

1.9.10. The certifying agency tracks certifications and continuing education status of Idaho's CFSPs.

1.9.11. Agency does not employ or utilize participants who are receiving services at their agency as a CFSP for that agency.

1.9.12. Agency develops a written job description that specifies the duties and responsibilities of the CFSP within that agency.

1.9.13. Agency does not request that a new CFSP develop their CFSP or peer program for the agency.

Special considerations: CFSPs and agencies hold ethical responsibilities. Concerns regarding dual relationships raise important ethical considerations when staffing an agency. Providers are not to employ current participants as a CFSPs. Hiring a former participant as a CFSP could also present difficulty for the CFSP and staff. Several of the issues that arise from this practice include privacy and access to records, access to treatment services for the CFSP if needed, and residual power differential among staff.

1.10. Ethics and Professional Conduct

1.10.1. CFSP adheres to the CFSP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct requirements while performing duties of a CFSP.

1.10.2. CFSP completes at least one annual ethics training, provided by either an employer or via other avenues that are recognized by the certifying agency.

1.10.3. Agencies that employ CFSPs provide accessible opportunities for ethics training to all service-providing staff members, including CFSPs, at least annually.

1.10.4. Agencies that employ CFSPs provide ongoing supervision around ethics.

1.10.5. Agencies document completion of ethics training in each employee's file, including each CFSP's file.

1.10.6. CFSP keeps personal documentation of completed ethics training as required by the certifying agency.

1.10.7. CFSPs conduct themselves in a professional manner adhering to these standards, the rules of confidentiality, and the policies and procedures of the agency/organization in which the CFSP is employed.

Special considerations: A clinician or professional person may hold certification as a CFSP; however, a CFSP working with a particular family or child as a CFSP provider cannot also be the clinician or professional person who is providing any other services to that same child or family.

In other words, an individual cannot be the CFSP provider and the clinical/professional provider of the same child or family at the same time.

Additional considerations: Agencies that employ Certified Family Support Partners adhere to this standard and any applicable Standards put forth by the State Behavioral Health Authority.

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