Peer recovery support service (PRSS) programs require an ethical framework for service delivery. In most cases, simply “importing” a professional code of ethics is not effective. There is a difference between the professional-client relationship and the relationship of the peer leader and the peer being served that warrants an ethical framework specifically tailored to PRSS.

1. **Code of Ethics**

Does the PRSS program have guidelines, policies, procedures, and practices related to ethics that are consistent with recovery and peer values that protect both providers and recipients of peer services?

- Has a written and visibly posted code of ethics and related written policies and procedures.
- Uses a participatory process to: a) clarify program values, b) develop and revise its code of ethics, and c) set policies and practices related to ethics.
- Ensures that the code of ethics is specific to and appropriate for the recovery community that is served.
- Has methods to track and document patterns of ethical dilemmas, to explore ethical dilemmas organizationally and programmatically.

2. **Ethics Training and Support**

Does the PRSS program ensure that training and guidance are provided on the implementation of ethical guidelines?

- Conducts a comprehensive orientation and ongoing training for new staff, peer leaders, and peer service providers covering ethics-related topics, including relational power, and power dynamics, using scenarios of critical peer incidents as a training method.
- Conducts meetings as necessary, for staff and peer leaders, in which ethical dilemmas are explored in a supportive and judgment-free manner that promotes both learning opportunities and accountability.
- Uses learning sessions to explore sound approaches to ethical dilemmas as identified by peer leader(s).
## 3. Confidentiality

The PRSS program has guidelines, policies, procedures, and practices related to maintaining confidentiality of personal information.

- Has a clear internal reporting process for staff and peer leaders to report on any breaches of confidentiality rules or situations, possibly requiring mandatory reporting.
- Provides an orientation for staff and peer leaders regarding rules of confidentiality and mandatory reporting.
- Provides advanced training on confidentiality.
- Provides means for peer providers to maintain confidentiality.

## 5. Boundary Setting

The PRSS program provides supervision, support, and learning opportunities to help staff and peer leaders address boundary-related conflict before, during, and after it happens.

- Has written guidelines regarding setting and keeping boundaries.
- Facilitates regular dialogue on boundary issues and how to negotiate and navigate multiple and shifting roles.
- Provides training on boundary issues.

## Recommendations

- Use locked cabinets for record storage.
- Provide space for private discussion between peer leaders and peers.
- Form an ethics committee or workgroup that meets regularly to address ethical challenges as they arise.
- Create a form for staff members and volunteers to sign indicating that they have read the policies.
- Provide training and guidance with specific information on 42 CFR Part 2 Federal Confidentiality laws and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), when required.