

The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board

Code of Professional Ethics

I. The Vermont Recovery Coach Professional Oath

I will do no harm. I will celebrate and support all paths to recovery. I will abide by the ethical codes of recovery coaching. I will listen, motivate, and support others in their recovery and their plans. My work as a recovery coach is about developing the strengths of those whom I am lucky enough to serve.

II. Certification

- A. Currently, a participant shall be considered a Certified Recovery Coach (CRC) in the state of Vermont for two (2) years after successful completion of the Vermont Recovery Coach Academy. Eligible for renewal in perpetuity based on good standing.
- B. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach's certification may be revoked before this time only by a decision of this Certification Board if such a decision is made after a review of alleged violations of these ethical codes of conduct per **Section XI** of this document.

III. Fundamental Ethics and Boundaries

- A. The primary responsibility of recovery coaches is to safely help individuals achieve their own needs, wants, and goals. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all.
- B. Vermont Recovery Coaches must operate under supervision at a recognized recovery resource as defined by the Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board.
- C. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches will maintain high standards of personal conduct.
- D. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches will practice motivational interviewing and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote recovery.
- E. Understand and comply with the "duty of care" reporting requirements as articulated by the IC&RC for PR professionals.
- F. Do not continue working with a participant who consistently crosses boundaries or exhibits any sexual or other harassment behaviors.
- G. Bring all serious issues in question to supervisor before taking any action.
- H. Organizations must have policies in place to protect coaches and participants to avoid future confusion or complications.
- I. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches will, at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.

IV. Standards

- A. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not perform services for clients outside of his or her own area of training, expertise, competence or scope of education and training.
- B. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall obtain an appropriate consultation or suggest an appropriate referral when the participant issue is beyond their area of training, expertise, competence or service.
- C. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach should not in any way participate in discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, socio-economic status, political belief or affiliation, psychiatric or psychological impairment, height, weight or physical ability.
- D. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, physical force or verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.
- E. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach should seek timely assistance for any psychoactive substance abuse or dependence, psychiatric or psychological impairment, emotional distress, or for any other physical health related condition or adversity that interferes with his or her own professional functioning. Where any such condition exists and impedes his or her ability to function competently, a coach must move to an inactive status for as long as necessary or determined length of time by the Organization.
- F. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches should comply with all terms and conditions and limitations of any certification, training, or certificate they hold.
- G. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches should not engage in conduct that does not meet generally accepted standards of practice.
- H. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not reveal confidential information obtained as a result of the peer relationship without prior written consent from the recipient of services, except as authorized or required by law.
- I. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not permit publications of photographs, disclosure of participants' names or any records, or the nature of services being provided without securing all releases from the participant (and/or parent or legal guardian if participant is under the age of 18) unless required by law.
- J. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not discontinue service to a participant, nor shall he or she abandon the participant, without facilitating an appropriate closure of services for the participant or facilitating an appropriate referral to another coach or professional for future services.
- K. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches shall not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.
- L. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches shall not serve in their capacity as a recovery coach for a family member, intimate partner or professional colleague.

V. Unlawful Conduct

- A. After beginning this work, a Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not be convicted of any crime relating to the individual's ability to provide the service as determined by the organization. Individuals with previous involvement with the correctional system are welcome and encouraged to pursue recovery coach certification.

VI. Sexual Misconduct

- A. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches under no circumstances shall engage in sexual activities or sexual conduct with participants, whether such contact is consensual or forced.
- B. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches shall not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with participant's relatives or other individuals with whom the participant maintains a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant or coach.
- C. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches shall not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former recipients.
- D. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual or romantic relationship.

VII. Fraud Related Conduct

- A. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches shall not use misrepresentation in professional qualifications, education, certification, accreditation, affiliations, employment experience or the falsification of references.
- B. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not use a title or document which states a qualification that does not exist and to which they are not entitled.
- C. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not provide the service under a false name.
- D. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not partake in the creation of any false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading advertisement of service.

VIII. Exploitation of Clients

- A. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not develop, implement, condone, or maintain exploitative relationships with individuals and/or family members.
- B. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not misappropriate property from participants and/or family members.
- C. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not enter into a relationship with an individual that involves financial gain to the coach or to a third party resulting from the promotion of sale of services outside of the service relationship.
- D. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not promote to a participant, for the coach's personal gain, any treatment, procedure, product or service.

- E. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not accept any gifts/favors/free services of substantial (as determined by a reasonable person test) monetary value, or gifts that impair the integrity or efficacy of the service relationship.
- F. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not accept fees or gratuities for services from a person who is entitled to such services through an institution and/or organization by which the coach is employed.

IX. Assisting Unqualified/Unlicensed Practice

A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall not refer participants to a person or service that he or she knows or should have known is not qualified by training, experience, certification or license to perform the delegated professional responsibility.

X. Confidentiality

Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of each participant.

XI. Cooperation with Investigation/Reporting Violations

- A. Vermont Certified Recovery Coaches should cooperate in any investigation conducted pursuant to the Ethical Code of Conduct of their organization.
- B. A Vermont Certified Recovery Coach shall report violations of conduct of other Vermont coaches to the appropriate disciplinary authority.

XII. Procedure for Enforcement and Appeals

The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board uses a formal process customary to most credentialing bodies. The process includes notice, an opportunity to respond, committee review, and an opportunity to appeal if sanctions are rendered. The Board determination could include sanctions to the credential status, such as revocation or suspension of the credential.

NB, The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board cannot provide legal advice under any circumstances.

The Board shall consider alleged violations at their regularly scheduled meetings (or in extraordinary circumstances in special meetings). Alleged violations must be in writing submitted to the Board for disciplinary review. "In writing" is defined as a direct written communication sent to the Board or its representatives in paper or electronic format that outlines the alleged violation(s). When a notice of alleged violation is thus received the Board evaluates the Notice to ensure it:

- Was submitted within six (6) months of the alleged violation. (The Board has the discretion to extend the deadline if doing so would not impede the ability of the subject of the notice to respond),

- Could be a violation of the Code of Professional Ethics of the Vermont Recovery Coach Certification, and
- Has sufficient evidence to support the violation(s).
- Is from a clearly attributed author. Anonymous complaints shall not be considered except under extreme and extenuating circumstances involving personal safety—these cases must contain serious, substantial, and attributable additional evidence and substantiation.
- As a reminder, all parties in ethical complaints shall remain confidential while the investigation is ongoing.

If the Notice does not meet these criteria (or is otherwise not actionable as determined by the Disciplinary Review), then no action will be taken and the person filing the Notice will be informed.

If the Notice does meet the above criteria, the certificant or candidate will receive a copy of the Notice typically within 30 days of the Board receiving the Notice. The certificant or candidate will have the opportunity to send a written response to the Notice within 15 days of receiving the Notice. The case documents are then sent to the Board for Disciplinary Review.

Please note, if a complaint has been submitted to another agency (e.g., a governmental agency, or law-enforcement), the Board may (but is not required to) postpone processing of the Notice until the final determinations have been issued.

Subjects who are issued consequences as a part of Disciplinary Review have thirty days to submit a written request for appeal. Subjects must submit a written appeal. Below are some guidelines to consider when submitting an appeal:

- Include a clear description of why you think the underlying decision was in error;
- Include a clear description of what you believe should have been the appropriate determination based on all facts presented;
- Include a clear description of additional relevant evidence you are submitting that you believe might impact the underlying decision. Only new information should be submitted as part of the appeal documentation; the appeal committee will already have access to all of the evidence underlying the original Disciplinary Review decision;
- If your written appeal was prepared by someone else (e.g., an attorney), please clearly indicate the individual's full name, title, and affiliation.
- Stick to the facts of the case that are documented and avoid appealing to emotion.
- The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board encourages you to limit your appeal documentation to only evidence that is relevant to the underlying case. Great weight is given to appeal evidence that clarifies and illuminates underlying facts of the case or that demonstrates corrective actions you have taken to mitigate the matter.
- Compile all of the documents into one PDF with page numbers.

Timeline for Disciplinary Process

Due to the nature of the review and the potential for sanctions, Disciplinary Review matters typically take between four months and one year to resolve. The timeline is increased in cases involving legal representation of the certificant or candidate, third party determinations, evidence and disclosure issues, appeals, and translation.

The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Board
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