

The Vermont Recovery Coach Code of Ethics

Preamble: This is the formal code of ethics for Vermont Recovery Coaches. It has been approved by Recovery Vermont and by IC&RC for those seeking national certification. Adoption of these ethics is just one of the requirements for national certification. However, it applies to all Vermont coaches at all times – whether certified or not.

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 Vermont Certified Recovery Coach's certification may be revoked by a decision of The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee if such a decision is made after a review of alleged violations of these ethical codes of conduct per Section XII 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 Recovery Coaches will be guided by the principle of self-determination for all. Vermont Recovery Coaches only exercise evidence-based practices.

B. Vermont Recovery Coaches must operate under supervision at a recognized recovery resource. No recovery coach shall be allowed to work as an individual or an independent contractor.

C. Vermont Recovery Coaches will maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

D. Vermont Recovery Coaches practice motivational interviewing and will likewise be able to identify and describe the supports that promote recovery.

E. Vermont Recovery Coaches are not included explicitly in statute to serve as mandated reporters. However, any questions about specific instances of concern should always be shared with one's supervisor. Many coaches may be working in contexts that make them mandated reporters. The onus is on the coach and their employer to determine their status and accept that the law(s) supersede any guidelines here.

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. Recovery resource employers must have policies in place to protect coaches and participants to avoid future confusion or complications.

I. Vermont Recovery Coaches will, at all times, respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.

J. Vermont Recovery Coaches will, at all times, maintain strict professional boundaries between themselves and their clients.

IV. Standards

A. A Vermont Recovery Coach shall not perform services for clients outside of recovery coaching.

B. A Vermont Recovery Coach shall maintain a strictly boundaried, professional relationship with their clients.

C. A Vermont 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 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 Recovery Coach should comply with all terms and conditions and limitations of any certification, training, or certificate they hold.

F. A Vermont Recovery Coach should not engage in conduct that does not meet generally accepted standards of practice.

G. A Vermont Recovery Coach shall not reveal confidential information obtained as a result of the coaching relationship without prior written consent from the recipient of services, except as authorized or required by law.

H. A Vermont 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.

I. A Vermont 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.

J. A Vermont Recovery Coach shall not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.

K. A Vermont Recovery Coach shall not serve in their capacity as a recovery coach for a family member, intimate partner, or professional colleague. Nor for any other individuals who fall into a close circle of acquaintance. The term close "circle of acquaintance" is used here as a commonsensical term to provide the Coach, the Coach's supervisor, and The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee with general guidance.

V. Unlawful Conduct

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

VI. Sexual Misconduct

A. Vermont Recovery Coaches under no circumstances shall engage in sexual activities or sexual conduct or sexual talk with participants, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

B. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or contact with participant's relatives or other individuals with whom the participant maintains a close personal relationship as there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the participant or coach.

C. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or contact with former recipients.

D. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not provide services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual or romantic relationship.

VII. Fraud Related Conduct

A. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not use misrepresentation in professional qualifications, education, certification, accreditation, affiliations, employment experience or the falsification of references.

B. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not use a title or document which states a qualification that does not exist and to which they are not entitled.

C. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not provide the service under a false name.

D. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not partake in the creation of any false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading advertisement of service.

VIII. Exploitation of Clients

A. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not develop, implement, condone, or maintain exploitative relationships with individuals and/or family members.

B. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not misappropriate property from participants and/or family members.

C. Vermont Recovery Coaches 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. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not promote to a participant, for the coach's personal gain, any treatment, procedure, product or service.

E. Vermont Recovery Coaches 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. Vermont Recovery Coaches 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

Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not recommend resources 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 Recovery Coaches will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of each participant.

XI. Impairment

A. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall not engage in recovery coaching if an impairment, (such as relapse) interferes with their ability to appropriately and ethically perform their recovery coaching duties. Disciplinary action ranging from temporary suspension of certification to permanent revocation of certification may be taken by The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee.

B. Should an impairment (such as relapse) which interferes with a Vermont Recovery Coach's ability to appropriately and ethically perform their recovery coaching duties occur, the coach is encouraged to address this through rapid self-reporting to The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee. Temporary suspension of certification is probable, and revocation is possible. The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee will take the speed, transparency, and accountability of self-reporting into account when making certification suspension or revocation decisions. The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee will help develop a course of action for the coach to get back to recovery coaching in cases of certification suspension. Self-reporting should be made through the official "Vermont Certified Recovery Coach, Code of Ethics Violation Claim Form."

C. Vermont Recovery Coaches should seek timely assistance for themselves from their supervisor for any minor health-related condition or adversity that interferes with his or her own professional functioning.

XII. Cooperation with Investigation/Reporting Violations

A. Vermont Recovery Coaches should cooperate in any investigation related to The Vermont Recovery Coach Code of Ethics.

B. Vermont Recovery Coaches shall report violations of conduct of their own or other Vermont Recovery Coaches to The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee per the procedures outlined in this document.

XIII. Procedure for Enforcement and Appeals

The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee uses a formal process customary to most credentialing bodies. The process includes notice, an opportunity

to respond, the committee's review, and an opportunity to appeal if sanctions are rendered. The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee's determination could include sanctions to the credential status, such as revocation or suspension of the credential.

Note: The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee cannot provide legal advice under any circumstances.

The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee 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 Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee for disciplinary review. "In writing" is defined as filing a Vermont Certified Recovery Coach, Code of Ethics Violation Claim Form to The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee. When a claim of alleged violation is thus received, The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee evaluates the claim to ensure it:

- Was submitted within six (6) months of the alleged violation. (The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee 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 Vermont Recovery Coach Code of Ethics, 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 claim does not meet these criteria (or is otherwise not actionable as determined by the The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee), 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 Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee 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 Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee for Disciplinary Review.

Please note, if a complaint has been submitted to another agency (e.g., a governmental agency, or law-enforcement), The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee 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 Committee 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 a Vermont Certified Recovery Coach Code of Ethics Violation Claim, and the potential for sanctions, the claim review process by The Vermont Recovery Coach Certification Committee typically takes between four months and one year to reach a resolution. The timeline is increased in cases involving legal representation of the certificant or candidate, third party determinations, evidence and disclosure issues, appeals, and translation.