



# **Manual for Certified Peer Recovery Specialist**

## **I. Introduction**

Nigerian Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program provides National certification for individuals who provide direct peer-to-peer support services to others who have mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. Because of their lived experience, Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (CPRSs) can, with specialized training and guidance, draw from their own journey of recovery to inspire hope and provide support to others who are facing similar situations. This document defines the role, purpose, functions, and responsibilities of the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist in Nigeria. The certification defines the minimum standards of competency, which are the knowledge and the skills required of the position.

This certification does not imply that Nigerian Certified Peer Recovery Specialists are qualified to diagnose an illness, prescribe medication, or provide clinical treatment services. Nigerian Certified Peer Recovery Specialists do not provide treatment of any kind. Nigeria's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist program is not an offer of employment or job placement. Certification in no way guarantees employment. Each person certified as a Peer Recovery Specialist should apply for positions available in their community.

## **II. Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Definition**

A Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) is someone who has self-identified as being in recovery from mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders of both mental illness and substance use disorder. To become certified, a CPRS has completed specialized training recognized by the Living Vines Mental Health Foundation on how to provide peer recovery services based on the principles of recovery and resiliency.

Certified Peer Recovery Specialists can provide support to others with mental illness, substance abuse, or co occurring disorder and help them achieve their personal wellness and recovery goals by promoting self determination, personal responsibility, and the empowerment inherent in self-directed recovery. Direct peer-to-peer services can include a variety of support services, such as:

- Assisting in the development of strengths-based individual goals
- Serving as an advocate, mentor, or facilitator for resolution of issues that a peer is unable to resolve on his or her own
- Assisting in the development of recovery goals
- Developing community support
- Providing information on ways to maintain personal wellness and recovery
- Providing information on behavioral health system navigation

### **III. Certification Guidelines**

Each applicant must meet all minimum requirements as outlined by CPRS Guidelines, Standards and Procedures. After Living Vines Mental Health Foundation has reviewed the application, applicants will be sent an email confirming their status and will receive their certificate in the mail.

#### **Certification Standards**

To become certified as a Peer Recovery Specialist in Nigeria, all applicants must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Be at least age eighteen (18) years of age or older;
2. Hold a high school diploma or its equivalent;
3. Have current or past mental illness, substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorder;
4. Self-identify as a person who is in recovery from mental illness, substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorder as part of his or her personal recovery process;
5. Have demonstrated self-directed wellness and recovery for a minimum of 24 consecutive months;
6. Have successfully completed the state's Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training within the past year. If more than one year has passed since taking the training, it must be retaken.
7. Have successfully demonstrated competency through testing and evaluation as required by the state Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training.
8. Complete a minimum of 75 hours of supervised paid or volunteer work within the past year providing peer recovery services with individuals who have mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders.
  - No less than three hours of supervision (one hour for every 25 hours of service provided) from an approved supervisor (see Supervision section in this handbook)
  - Peer recovery services can include providing one-on-one support, leading support groups, and providing recovery education.
  - Examples of recovery education include stress management presentations, presenting tools to deal with triggers, and teaching the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®), among many others.

9. Read, understand, and agree to the following as well as submit these forms:

- Successful completion of the state’s Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Training
- Supervised employment or supervised volunteer work providing peer support services supervised by an approved supervisor (see Supervision section in this handbook)
- The CPRS Scope of Activities
- The CPRS Code of Ethics
- Completed CPRS Application
- Completed Employment/Volunteer Summary by the supervisor
- Three completed professional or personal references

o Two of the three professional or personal references may come from a CPRS.

o Do not use family members, therapists, or psychiatrists as a reference.

#### **IV Certification Procedure**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that all required documents are submitted and completed as accurately as possible. The completed application and other required documents are to be submitted by the applicant via the online application process via [livingvines.co](http://livingvines.co) or In the rare instance that the online application process cannot be accessed, applications can be emailed to [livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co](mailto:livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co) or mailed directly to:

Living Vines Mental Health Foundation

3RD AVENUE 312rd C close house 1 FESTAC TOWN LAGOS NIGERIA

Once an application is received, a status report will be emailed to the applicant at the email address listed on the application. The average application processing time is three weeks. Once complete, each application is reviewed and a certification determination made. Upon successful review, the applicant will receive an email and the certificate will be mailed. If the application is not complete upon receipt, a deficiency letter will be emailed to the applicant. Supporting documentation requested in the letter must be received within ninety calendar days from the date of the deficiency letter before the applicant can be certified. Applications not completed within ninety (90) calendar days after the date of the deficiency letter will be closed. Once an incomplete file has been closed, all applicants must submit a new application and all required documentation.

#### **IV. CPRS Scope of Activities**

The scope of activities outlines the range of peer recovery services that a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist can provide to assist others in living their lives based on the principles of recovery and resiliency. Certification does not imply that the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is qualified to diagnose an illness, prescribe medication, or provide clinical services and doing so constitutes at minimum a violation of Living Vines Mental Health Foundation Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Code of Ethics.

1. Utilizing unique recovery experiences, the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist shall:
  - Teach and model the value of every individual's recovery experience;
  - Model effective coping techniques and self-help strategies;
  - Encourage peers to develop a healthy independence; and
  - Establish and maintain a peer relationship rather than a hierarchical relationship.
  
2. Utilizing direct peer-to-peer interaction and a goal-setting process, the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist shall:
  - Understand and utilize specific interventions necessary to assist peers in meeting their individualized recovery goals;
  - Demonstrate and impart how to facilitate recovery dialogues through the use active listening and other evidence-based and/or best practice methods;
  - Demonstrate and impart relevant skills needed for self-management of symptoms and prevention of relapse;
  - Demonstrate and impart how to overcome personal fears, anxieties, urges, and triggers; e. Assist peers in articulating their personal goals and objectives for their recovery
  - Assist peers in creating their personal recovery plans (e.g., WRAP®, Declaration for Mental Health Treatment, crisis plan, relapse prevention plan, etc.); and
  - Appropriately document activities provided to peers in either their individual records or program records.
  
3. The Certified Peer Recovery Specialist shall maintain a working knowledge of current trends and developments in the fields of mental health, substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, and peer recovery services by:
  - Reading books, current journals, and other relevant material;
  - Developing and sharing recovery-oriented material with other Certified Peer Recovery Specialists;

- Attending authorized or recognized seminars, workshops, and educational training.
4. The Certified Peer Recovery Specialist shall serve as a recovery agent by:
- Providing and promoting recovery-based service
  - Assisting peers in obtaining services that suit each peer’s individual recovery needs;
  - Assisting peers in developing empowerment skills through self-advocacy;
  - Assisting peers in developing problem-solving skills so they can respond to challenges to their recovery;
  - When appropriate sharing his or her unique perspective on recovery from mental illness and substance abuse disorders and co-occurring disorders with non-peer staff; and
  - Assisting non-peer staff in a collaborative process in identifying programs and environments that are conducive to recovery.

## **V. CPRS Code of Ethics**

These principles will guide Certified Peer Recovery Specialists in the various roles, relationships, and levels of responsibility in which they function professionally.

1. The primary responsibility of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists is to help peers achieve their own needs, wants, and goals.
2. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct.
3. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will conduct themselves in a manner that fosters their own recovery.
4. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will openly share with peers, other CPRS’s and non-peers their recovery stories from mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders as appropriate for the situation in order to promote recovery and resiliency.
5. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists at all times will respect the rights and dignity of those they serve.
6. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will never intimidate, threaten, harass, use undue influence, use physical force, use verbal abuse, or make unwarranted promises of benefits to the individuals they serve.
7. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate in any form of discrimination or harassment based on ethnicity, race, color, pregnancy, creed, veteran’s status, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status, political belief, mental or physical disability, or any other category protected by state and/or federal civil rights laws.
8. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will promote self-direction and decision making for those they serve.
9. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will respect the privacy and confidentiality of those they serve.

10. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will promote and support services that foster full integration of individuals into the communities of their choice.
11. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will be directed by the knowledge that all individuals have the right to live and function in the least restrictive and least intrusive environment.
12. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not enter into dual relationships or commitments that conflict with the interests of those they serve.
13. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will never engage in sexual or other inappropriate activities with peers they serve.
14. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not use illegal substances, misuse alcohol, or other drugs (including prescription medications).
15. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and will share this knowledge with other Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.
16. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not accept gifts of significant value from those they serve.
17. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not provide services, either for employment or on a volunteer basis, without supervision.
18. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will not provide services beyond their qualifications. This includes diagnosing an illness, prescribing medications, or providing clinical services.
19. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists shall only provide services and support within the hours, days and locations that are authorized by Living Vines Mental Health Foundation -approved agency with which they work.

## **VI. Denial, Suspension, or Revocation of Certification, and Reconsideration**

Certification or recertification as a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) may be granted, denied, suspended, or revoked at the sole discretion of Living Vines Mental Health Foundation as it deems fit. There is no legal right to or interest in being granted certification as a CPRS and being granted certification does not create a legal right to or interest in retaining certification. Although Living Vines Mental Health Foundation may choose to reconsider any decision it makes regarding the denial, suspension, or revocation of a CPRS certification, there is no legal right to reconsideration or to review or appeal Living Vines' decision regarding the same. If the individual is employed or volunteering in a position which requires that they be a certified CPRS, they must immediately notify their employer or the entity for which they are volunteering should their certification be suspended or revoked.

Anyone who is not recognized as a certified CPRS by Living Vines Mental Health Foundation is prohibited from presenting themselves as someone who is certified as a CPRS by Living Vines Mental Health Foundation. Should an application for certification or for recertification be denied or if certification is suspended or revoked, Living Vines shall attempt to notify the individual of its decision by mail addressed to the last physical address and/or email address provided by the

individual. The ability of Living Vines to take any such action is not limited or conditioned on its ability to notify the individual.

Individuals who are applicants for certification or recertification or who are currently certified shall keep Living Vines informed of their current physical address and email address by emailing that information to:

[livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co](mailto:livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co)

When Living Vines denies, suspends, or revokes a CPRS certification or request for recertification, the individual has thirty (30) calendar days during which to request reconsideration by Living Vines should the individual wish to do so. An extension of this deadline may be granted upon a showing of good cause by the individual. All requests for reconsideration or for an extension of time and any supporting documentation the individual wishes Living Vines to consider must be submitted via email to:

[livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co](mailto:livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co).

Living vines will notify the individual of its decision at the physical address and/or email address provided by the individual in their request for reconsideration.

Living Vines will also notify the individual of when they may reapply for certification, if applicable.

## **VII. Certification Renewal Guidelines**

To renew certification status every two years, each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist must: • Complete and submit a Renewal Application;

- Provide documentation of successful completion of continuing education hours as approved by Living Vines;
- Sign a statement certifying that no violations to the Code of Ethics have occurred in the past two years;
- Have the current supervisor sign a statement certifying that the CPRS has not violated the Code of Ethics in the past two years.
- Provide at minimum 25 hours of peer recovery services per year under supervision from an eligible supervisor. See the Supervision Requirement section in this Manual for more information on supervision.
- Submit any other documents required by Living Vines .



## **Certification Renewal Procedure**

Each Certified Peer Recovery Specialist is responsible for maintaining his or her certification and must submit his or her Renewal Application and all other required documentation at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the end of the recertification date. Unless renewed every two years, the certification shall expire on the certification renewal date. Expired certifications can be reactivated within twelve (12) months. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists who wish to reactivate their CPRS status following expired status must complete one hour of continuing education for every month they have been in expired status, not to exceed twenty hours. If certification has expired for more than twelve (12) months, the applicant must retake the CPRS Training.

To obtain a Renewal Application email [livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co](mailto:livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co)

## **VIII. Continuing Education Guidelines**

Continuing education is an ethical obligation for all CPRS, as stated in the CPRS Code of Ethics:

- Certified Peer Recovery Specialists will keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to recovery and will share this knowledge with other Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.
- Continuing education is required for a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to annually renew their certification and must be earned within the annual certification period.
- Continuing education training are not transferable to any other certification period.
- Educational training completed prior to obtaining certification as a Peer Recovery Specialist are not eligible for maintaining certification.
- Continuing Education Standards
- Certified Peer Recovery Specialists must complete twenty (20) hours of continuing education training, seminars, workshops, or college courses per two-year certification period. All continuing education must be approved by Living Vines Mental Health foundation of Mental To gain prior approval, contact us at [livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co](mailto:livingvinesmentalhealthfoundation@livingvines.co)
- A minimum of two (2) hours of continuing education per two-year certification period must be in ethics
- Continuing education focused on clinical treatment will not be accepted. It is a violation of the Code of Ethics for CPRS's to provide clinical treatment.
- Continuing education must be within, but not limited to, wellness and recovery in the fields of mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders.

## **Continuing Education Verification Procedure**

The information below is required to confirm successful completion of approved continuing education hours:

- Certificate of attendance or completion
- Certified Peer Recovery Specialist's name
- Certificate signed by the instructor, trainer, or supervisor
- Training date
- Number of continuing education hours

OR

- Screenshot of evidence of attendance for webinar
- If no certificate is included, screenshot the webinar:
- Try to select a slide/page with the name of the webinar, presenter, and date or add the information manually
- Print the screenshot, have supervisor sign and date it, and add the start and end time of the webinar
- Sign the document and include it with the other certificates when submitting renewal application

OR

- College or university courses in behavioral-health related subjects
- A syllabus signed by the professor with a copy of grades for the course, or
- Transcript showing course and grade

## **IX. Supervision Requirement**

To be certified, a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist, as either an employee or a volunteer, must be under supervision. The amount, duration and scope of supervision of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists may range from direct oversight to periodic care consultation.

Supervisors of CPRS's will adhere to the following core principles:

1. Supervisors of CPRS are trained in quality supervisory skills.
2. Supervisors of CPRS's understand and support the role of the CPRS.
3. Supervisors of CPRS's understand and promote recovery in their supervisory roles.

4. Supervisors of CPRS's advocate for CPRS's and for peer support services across the organization and in the community.
5. Supervisors of CPRS's promote both the professional and personal growth of the CPRS within established human resource standards.

A supervisor of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists shall meet the following criteria:

1. TRAINING: Complete supervision training that includes understanding how to support the role of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists.
2. EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE: Fulfill at least one of the following criteria:

A. Be a current CPRS with at least 6,000 hours of experience working as a CPRS and have regular, on-going consultation with a mental health professional or qualified alcohol and drug abuse treatment professional,

**Or**

B. Be a mental health professional or qualified alcohol and drug abuse treatment professional in accordance with acceptable guidelines and standards of practice as defined by the body.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR CPRS**

### **Employment**

- 500 hours of volunteer or paid experience specific to the domains. The applicant must be currently providing peer recovery support services.
- Volunteer and part-time experience is acceptable if it is provided under direct supervision. Actual time spent in a supervised substance abuse or mental health internship, or practicum may be applied toward the employment requirement.
- Supervised work experience must be in the four CPRS domains

### **Supervision**

- 25 hours specific to the domains. Supervision is a formal or informal process that is administrative, evaluative, clinical, and supportive. It can be provided by more than one person, it ensures quality of care, and extends over time.
- Supervision includes observation, mentoring, coaching, evaluating, inspiring, and creating an atmosphere that promotes self-motivation, learning, and professional development. In all aspects of the supervision process, ethical and diversity issues must be in the forefront.

**Education**

- High school diploma/GED.
- Completion of the 72 hour CPRS Training Curriculum.

**FEES**

- Pass the IC&RC Peer Recovery Specialist Examination.

Fees Certification: \$175 (fee must accompany application and materials)

Exam Cancellation: \$50

**EXAMINATION INFORMATION****Type:**

This credential requires successful completion of an IC&RC exam which is offered as an on-demand computer based exam administered at an approved testing site. Candidates will be notified by Living Vines once application for certification is approved, on how to register for the computer based exam.

**Dates:**

The IC&RC exam is offered on-demand at approved testing centers thereby allowing candidates to test on a date and time convenient for them. Candidates will receive information from Living Vines on registering for on-demand testing once application for certification is approved.

**Content:**

The IC&RC Job Analysis for this credential identified domains which make up the questions in the exam. Within each domain are several identified tasks that provide the basis for questions in the exam.

**Special Situations:**

Individuals with disabilities and/or religious obligations that require modifications in exam administration may request specific procedure changes, in writing, to Living Vines no fewer than 60 days prior to the scheduled exam date. With the written request, candidates must provide official documentation of the disability or religious issue. Contact Living Vines on what constitutes official documentation. Living Vines will make arrangements for appropriate modifications to its procedures when documentation supports this need.

**Cancellation/Rescheduling Policy:**

The exam fee of \$50 will be forfeited unless a minimum of 10 days notice is given to Living Vines to cancel a reservation.

**PR Domains**

1. Advocacy
2. Mentoring/Education
3. Recovery/Wellness Support
4. Ethical Responsibility