

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists (KFPSS)

Includes:

Reference Sheet—Abbreviated Version

Definition/Glossary for Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists



Created and approved 2009

Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children, Inc. (KPFC)

Kentucky Family and Youth Movement

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists (KFPSS)

Reference Sheet—Abbreviated Version

This **Code of Ethics** will provide the foundation for Kentucky to establish a family-driven and youth-guided System of Care. The purpose of this code is to define acceptable behaviors, promote high standards of practice and accountability, establish clear expectations and to recognize the dual role Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists play as professionals who have specific tasks because they are also parents of youth with emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use disabilities. This process aspires to select, prepare and sustain parents of youth with emotional, behavioral, mental health and/or substance use disabilities in becoming Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists. KFPSS will provide peer support to other parents as well as work to build a family network within their communities.



The Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist shall:

1. Provide culturally competent, respectful, and individualized peer support services to families that have children with emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use disabilities within their communities and region.
2. Be ever mindful and diligent in representing the employing agency and other Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists.
3. Ensure mutual accountability in order to support sustainability of the family-driven and youth-guided System of Care.
4. Maintain personal and professional accountability as well as accept responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions.
5. Monitor the well-being of themselves and their family by making self-care a top priority. Good self-care will decrease the likelihood of personal family needs negatively impacting their job performance.
6. Be honest and realistic about their needs when working in difficult situations and recognize when, how and who to ask for help.
7. Proactively utilize supervision and coaching opportunities to maintain professional competence and recognize that professional and personal growth is ongoing.
8. Respect and value the opinions, beliefs, strengths and professional roles and responsibilities of professional and community partners.

Definition/Glossary for Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist

Code of Ethics

Coaches teach and reinforce skill development, adaptation of skills, and craft knowledge to fit the personal styles of the KFPSS, and coaching will currently be provided by Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children, Inc. as the statewide family organization.

Code of Ethics “is significant for the professionalization of an occupational group, because it is one of the external hallmarks testifying to the claim that the group recognizes an obligation to society that transcends mere economic self-interest” (Luegenbiehl, 1983).

Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC’s) are publicly funded community services for Kentuckians with mental health, substance use and intellectual disabilities that are provided through Kentucky's fourteen regional MH/MR boards. Regional Boards are private, non-profit organizations established to serve residents of a designated multi-county region.

Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises four components: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (Martin & Vaughn 2007).

Dual relationships are non-sexual dual relationships when a second relationship with a family/youth (client) may cause actual or potential conflicts between the professional duties of the KFPSS and their social, religious or business relationships. These second relationships may be ethical or unethical, problematic or non-problematic which is why the blurring between professional ethics and standards of practice sometimes occurs. It is important for human service professionals to distinguish and to understand what is meant by a boundary crossing and a boundary violation when attempting to understand dual relationship issues. As the name suggests, a boundary violation happens when a KFPSS is involved in a dual relationship that is exploitative, coercive, manipulative or deceptive. Should a conflict of interest occur, the KFPSS could potentially be seen as prejudicial in his/her decision-making (Reamer 2001).

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as we work through it. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are fundamentally connected (Page & Czuba 1999).

Family-driven is one of the core principles and values of a System of Care. Family-driven includes family members, parents, primary caregivers as equal partners at all levels of the systems, including but not limited to individual level (own family), program level (evaluation and committees that decide what is working or not

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists

working in a program), and systems level (committees that set policies/procedures and financial governance) (FFCMH).

A **family network** is a formal or informal infrastructure established by an organized group of family members, parents, primary caregivers that collaborate to provide a united voice and to create a family-driven and youth-guided System of Care.

Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist is a biological parent, adoptive parent, or relative caregiver with permanent legal custody who is raising or has raised a child with an emotional, social, behavioral, and/or substance use disability, and whose child has been a consumer of at least one state-funded service for children with an emotional, social, behavioral, and/or substance use disability. The Specialist will provide mentoring and support to parents/caregivers through various modalities, and will work toward enhancing family involvement within the child-serving System of Care.

Reclaiming focuses on a youth and a family's ability to cope in a positive and proactive way with the emotional, social, behavioral, and/or substance use disability that is affecting their lives. It allows the youth and family to have hope and knowledge that they will not only survive, but thrive as they move forward in life.

Supervision will directly be provided by a qualified mental health professional (QMHP) assigned by the community mental health center. A coach and supervisor will work together to teach and support the Specialist.

A **System of Care** is created when systems that frequently serve children and youth with serious mental health and substance use disabilities and their families, including educational systems, the legal system, the judicial system, the child welfare system, the public health system, the legal system, the mental health system, the faith community, the family organization, natural support systems, and families/youth provide care for those youth and families in a coordinated manner. A System of Care should also provide access to comprehensive, community-based, integrated services that are individualized to meet the challenges of children and youth with serious mental health needs and their families.

Youth-guided is one of the core principles and values of a System of Care. Youth-guided includes youth of varying ages as equal partners at all levels of the systems, including but not limited to individual level (their own services which can include the voice and participation of very young children), program level (evaluation and committees that decide what is working or not working in a program which can include middle school and high school-age youth), and systems level (committees that set policies/procedures and financial governance which can include middle school and high school-age youth) (FFCMH).

Resources:

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Luegenbiehl, Heinz C. "Codes of Ethics and the Moral Education of Engineers", *Business and Professional Ethics Journal* 2 (1983): 41-61. Rpt. in Ethical Issues in Engineering. Ed. Deborah G. Johnson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991. 137-154.

Mercedes Martin & Billy Vaughn (2007). "Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Management" magazine, pp. 31-36. DTUI Publications Division: San Francisco, CA.

Page, Nanette & Czuba, Cheryl E. (1999) "Empowerment: What Is It?" *Journal of Extension*. www.joe.org

Reamer, Frederic (2001). *Tangled Relationships*. New York: Columbia University

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists

Preamble

This **Code of Ethics** will provide the foundation for Kentucky to establish a family-driven and youth-guided System of Care. The purpose of this code is to define acceptable behaviors, promote high standards of practice and accountability, to establish clear expectations and to recognize the dual role of a Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist (KFPSS). A Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist is a professional who has specific tasks because they are also parents of youth with emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use disabilities. This process aspires to select, prepare and sustain identified parents in becoming a KFPSS. KFPSS will provide peer support to other parents as well as work to build a family network within their local and state communities.

(Ethics policies of community mental health centers will supersede anything in this document. Intent is not to replace but to complement community mental health centers' policies.)

Purpose and Values

Mission Statement

The KFPSS's will serve to assist communities in the development of Kentucky's family-driven and youth-guided System of Care by: providing a family voice, establishing family networks, empowering families in care, and creating a family-driven and youth-guided infrastructure that is a critical component in a System of Care.

Statement of Values

KFPSS's believe that true, positive outcomes for youth with emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance use disability and their families will occur in a family-driven and youth-guided System of Care. System of Care values support community-based, culturally competent, collaborative efforts that include family and youth voice at all levels: individual treatment, program level, and systems level. KFPSS's also value:

- Family and youth empowerment,
- Hope and belief that all youth and families can reclaim their lives, and
- Dedication, integrity and perseverance in creating a sustainable family-driven and youth-guided System of Care.

Code of Conduct

Section One: Ethical Responsibilities to Families and Youth

KFPSS's shall:

- 1.01 Follow policies and practice codes of their employer in regard to responsibilities to families and youth
- 1.02 Speak and act in ways that honor the dignity and value of every individual
- 1.03 Demonstrate respect for the cultural values and beliefs of families and refrain from imposing their own values and beliefs
- 1.04 Respect the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians for their children and work to establish a truly collaborative relationship with families
- 1.05 Be mindful of the imbalance of power in the relationship and refrain from exploiting that imbalance
- 1.06 Provide the meaning and limits of confidentiality to families and youth and ensure that families and youth understand the obligation to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities
- 1.07 Seek supervision regarding dual relationships. By the nature of the roles and responsibilities of the KFPSS's, dual relationships can be difficult to avoid. The KFPSS shall refer to employer's policy regarding dual relationships and provide documentation with such situations. The KFPSS shall take steps to protect youth and families and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries
- 1.08 Refrain from any form of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment in relationships with clients and families
- 1.09 Maintain and secure all information as required by laws, regulations, agency procedures and confidentiality guidelines
- 1.10 Use accurate and respectful language in all communication to and about families and youth
- 1.11 Follow employer and Medicaid guidelines in billing for services
- 1.12 Provide information about services and/or opportunities and the family's and youth's right to refuse them
- 1.13 Provide services and represent themselves within the boundaries of KFPSS duties
- 1.14 Inform families and youth regarding any extended absence or departure from current employment setting and provide options for continuation of services for the families and youth.

Section Two: Ethical Responsibilities to Employer

KFPSS's shall:

- 2.1 Abide by the policies and practice codes of their employer
- 2.2 Be a diligent steward of the resources of the employing agency

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists

- 2.3 Assist in developing improved policies and procedures of the employing agency for the efficiency and effectiveness of their services
- 2.4 Not directly or by implication claim professional qualifications that exceed actual qualifications or misrepresent an affiliation with any institution.

Section Three: Ethical Responsibilities to Other Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist

KFPSS's shall:

- 3.1 Respect one another and support the integrity and well being of peers
- 3.2 Honor all communication with other KFPSS's with the highest professional regard and confidentiality
- 3.3 Exercise extreme caution when communicating via the internet or other electronic means
- 3.4 Be aware that their personal and professional choices affect the image of **ALL** KFPSS's, and therefore, must hold themselves to a high ethical standard in order to sustain the infrastructure of a family-driven and youth-guided System of Care

Section Four: Ethical Responsibilities to Professional and Community Partners

KFPSS's shall:

- 4.1 Work with an interdisciplinary team, participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of families and youth using family-driven and youth-guided principles and perspective
- 4.2 Seek to establish collaborative relationships with professional and community partners
- 4.3 Treat partners with respect, courtesy and fairness
- 4.4 Exercise good stewardship of resources in decision-making and activities
- 4.5 Respect and value the opinions, beliefs, strengths and professional roles and responsibilities of professional and community partners

Section Five: Ethical Responsibilities Related to Supervisors / Coaches

- 5.1 KFPSS's shall seek educational, consultation and training experience to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness in working with diverse populations
- 5.2 Coaches of specialists are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries, and providing coaching only within their areas of knowledge and competence
- 5.3 Coaches of specialists shall perform coaching duties in a manner that is fair, respectful and in partnership with the employing agency supervisor
- 5.4 KFPSS's shall proactively utilize supervision and coaching opportunities in an efficient and responsible manner that includes aspects of his/her personal development plan and agency evaluation goals

Code of Ethics of the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialists

Section Six: Ethical Responsibilities to Self

KFPSS's shall:

- 6.1 Maintain personal and professional accountability as well as accept responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions
- 6.2 Monitor the well-being of themselves and their family by making self-care a top priority. Good self-care will decrease the likelihood of personal family needs negatively impacting their job performance
- 6.3 Be honest and realistic about their needs when working in difficult situations and recognize when, how and who to ask for help
- 6.4 Maintain professional competence and recognize that professional and personal growth is ongoing
- 6.5 Expand and develop awareness of personal attitudes and beliefs affecting cultural values and biases and strive to attain cultural confidence.

Implementation of the Code

Since the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist will be hired through Kentucky's community mental health centers, the employing agency supervisor can utilize this Code of Ethics in regular supervision and in the ongoing, employee evaluation process. Coaches will also be able to provide consultation to the KFPSS on ethical issues as well as share those concerns with the employing agency supervisor. With the help of the supervisor and coach, the Kentucky Family Peer Support Specialist will create a corrective action plan to address the specific concerns. If the issue/s persists, then the employing agency supervisor shall follow the agency's personnel disciplinary action protocol.