

MHRT/C CERTIFICATION COMPETENCY DOMAINS

The Mental Health Rehabilitation Technician/Community (MHRT/C) certification program is a competency-based program developed in the early 1990s, which established educational standards for community based mental health workers in response to deinstitutionalization and the development of the community mental health system. Over time, much has changed in the behavioral health field including the complexity of this community-based position, as well as the qualifications of the individuals seeking to fill these roles. The Maine Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, in partnership with University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service and other key stakeholders, re-evaluated the MHRT/C program to ensure its relevancy and responsiveness to the changing needs of the population it is designed to serve and identified the following competency domains.

The eight domains below encompass the essential knowledge competencies and skills for Maine's adult behavioral health workforce. Each domain is comprised of a set of unique competencies that are grounded in, and guided by, the fundamental components of recovery and reflect the values of consumer choice and empowerment, integrated care, respect, advocacy, responsibility, and hope. Applicants of the MHRT/C certification will have various academic, non-academic, and work-related options to satisfy the requirements.

The domains were developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and with the recognition that recovery is non-linear and unique to each individual's life stage and development. Each of these domains addresses the importance of a holistic, strengths-based and person-centered approach toward recovery across the lifespan and guides training and academic work toward the development of the following categories of knowledge:

Domain 1: Behavioral, Psychological, and Rehabilitation Intervention Models

Establish rapport, communicate effectively and respectfully, and work collaboratively with consumers regarding their care to support recovery, with awareness of changing needs across the lifespan

1. Describe common factors of effective helping strategies when working with consumers, e.g., therapeutic relationship, empowerment, consumer choice, and respect for the consumer.
2. Explain the concept of community inclusion and the use of natural supports to enhance recovery.
3. Relate human development theory, including the interaction of social, psychosocial development across the lifespan.
4. Demonstrate active listening skills, basic interviewing skills, and demonstrate respect for the consumer at all times.
5. Demonstrate a collaborative, person-centered, recovery-oriented, shared decision-making approach to working with consumers. Identify strengths and challenges and how to incorporate natural supports into individualized treatment plans.
6. Define the treatment complexities for co-occurring disorders and addictions within vulnerable populations.
7. Be aware of common strengths-based assessments, including instruments that identify or screen for co-occurring disorders and/or trauma history, and tools that evaluate the level of care needs.
8. Demonstrate general knowledge of the current diagnostic manual and be able to name basic diagnostic categories.
9. Give examples of evidence-based models and approaches that integrate treatment and rehabilitation.
10. Identify community resources to assist in the recovery process for individuals who have co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

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11. Recognize the consumer's development and life stage, and where they are in relation to the Stages of Change Model, in order to develop individualized treatment plans.
12. Illustrate an understanding of crisis planning, advance directives, crisis intervention strategies, and use of a warm line.

Domain 2: Community Integration and Inclusion

Perform a thorough psychosocial assessment to inform a collaborative, person-centered and outcome-focused plan of care and use of systemic and natural supports to facilitate an individual's progress toward their goals

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the case manager within community settings and how the community mental health system in Maine supports community inclusion.
2. Describe community inclusion as a process of assisting an individual to move towards greater community inclusion and personal well-being.
3. Identify resources and options in mental health, substance abuse, behavioral health, employment services, crisis services, natural supports, law enforcement and mental health courts available to a consumer and demonstrate understanding of how to provide linkages to these services.
4. Describe how basic interviewing and assessment techniques such as Motivational Interviewing and psychosocial assessments, can support a consumer's coping skills.
5. Illustrate the documentation process and each of its components, including the following: a) a person-centered treatment plan with specific goals/measures/target dates; b) written notes that track progress and inform the dynamic treatment process; and c) a treatment plan review to support progress in goal areas that help individuals live safe, healthy and independent lives.
6. Recall the history of peer support and consumer-directed services in Maine and nationally, including the Intentional Peer Support (IPS) Model.

Domain 3: Ethics and Professional Conduct

Demonstrate a standard of professionalism and integrity in practice, and confront and resolve ethical challenges by seeking appropriate collaboration and consultation

1. Explain ethics and how to conduct practice within the context of a professional code of ethics. Give examples of inappropriate behavior. Define appropriate contexts for dual relationships and how to set and maintain clear, professional, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
2. Describe the evolution of HIPAA and what constitutes protected health information, including communication requirements within the context of health information technology.
3. Describe what it means to be an effective contributing member of an interdisciplinary team.
4. Model appropriate professional behavior at all times, apply ethical guidelines and demonstrate the effective use of supervision.
5. Explain how to secure informed consent from a consumer.
6. Explain a provider's ethical responsibility to empower consumers.
7. Identify a number of strategies, consistent with professional practice, to empower consumers.
8. Summarize the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of personal practice.
9. Describe how individuals working in the behavioral health field practice self-care. Utilize supervision effectively to prevent compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization.
10. Practice using a supervisory relationship to resolve ethical challenges.
11. Define confidentiality requirements and how to communicate these policies to staff, consumers, families, guardians, and others.

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12. Maintain sound documentation that reflects an adherence to individualized, person-centered care.
13. Collaborate and interact effectively with community members and other professionals.
14. Relate the intersection of ethics with state and federal laws.

Domain 4: Trauma and Resiliency

Interact with consumers from a trauma-informed perspective with knowledge of the appropriate and available community resources

1. Describe the prevalence and impact of various types and contexts of trauma, e.g., domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse, sexual assault, exposure to combat, and other life-threatening events.
2. Recognize the impact of trauma on behavior, functioning, and other health-related conditions and symptoms. Please give examples.
3. Demonstrate a sensitivity to the behavioral health issues, including substance use disorders, affecting survivors of trauma and the stages of recovery they will experience.
4. Characterize the importance of working from a trauma-informed perspective and describe techniques of trauma-informed care, as well as the effects of vicarious traumatization.
5. Summarize the effects of trauma on survivors, including intergenerational trauma, inter-familial trauma, experience of trauma at various life stages, and experience of trauma specific to special populations and cultural contexts, e.g., veterans, refugees, immigrants.
6. Recall the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study and its correlation with trauma.
7. Describe evidence-based treatment approaches for trauma-related conditions, e.g., Seeking Safety, TREM, EMDR, and DBT.
8. Identify and refer survivors of trauma to specialized support resources in the community to assist in the recovery process.

Domain 5: Policy Knowledge

Awareness of relevant regulations and how to support a consumer in effective self-advocacy within the existing health and human services system

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the AMHI Consent Decree requirements and their impact on adult mental health services in Maine.
2. Explain Maine's Rights of Recipients of Mental Health Services.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of federal and state disability laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Maine statutes regarding accessibility for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of federal and state civil rights laws, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Maine Human Rights Act, and communication access policies for non-English speaking consumers.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the provider's role as a mandated reporter of abuse and neglect for both adults and children and delineate the procedure to report.
6. Assist the consumer to develop self-advocacy skills.
7. Identify advocacy organizations that address consumer rights, i.e. Disability Rights Maine.

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8. Give examples of federal and state benefit and entitlement programs, needs-based social welfare and work incentive programs, including eligibility, reporting and review requirements, and ways in which consumers can access these programs.
9. Engage with the consumer and advocate on their behalf to ensure policies are appropriately followed. Refer the consumer to an appropriate advocacy organization when there are errors in policy application.

Domain 6: Mind-Body Connection

Assist consumers in accessing whole health, integrated care, which will address chronic health conditions, mental health and substance use disorders, medication needs, stress, and other factors affecting wellness

1. Describe the interdependent relationship between mental illness and physical health and give examples.
2. Describe the value and importance of integrated care.
3. Recognize the spectrum of substance use disorders, including the psychological signs and symptoms, as well as common behavioral addictions.
4. Explain the role of medication in symptom management, including the potential for psychiatric and physical side effects of any medication.
5. Explain the case manager's role in the person-centered planning process and how to identify and refer to appropriate wellness promotion programs and community, peer, and web-based healthcare resources.
6. Describe the benefits of shared care planning and ways to incorporate an individual's needs and preferences in goal-setting.
7. Relate the significant impact of smoking on individual health, particularly those with serious mental illness, and identify evidence-based cessation resources.
8. Have an understanding of the etiology, progression, and treatment of common co-morbid conditions.
9. Define various social contexts and risk factors affecting consumers with comorbid conditions, and the impact on the consumer's overall health and well-being.
10. Discuss a variety of treatment interventions and settings for common co-occurring conditions.
11. Identify strategies to assist consumers in developing personal-care skills such as managing stress, assessing triggers, and monitoring medications.
12. Give examples of community and web-based resources that support wellness and recovery
13. Describe the Behavioral Health Homes (BHH) model and other models that promote the integration of physical and behavioral health services and the potential benefits of integrated care services and supports to consumers.

Domain 7: Cultural Competency

Provide timely relevant services that are respectful of the culture of the consumer, their family and community

1. Describe how various contexts of culture, group, and family membership impact an individual's beliefs and behavior and their behavioral health care needs and interventions.
2. Describe the importance of being culturally sensitive and responsive with populations that originate from a culture different than your own.
3. Use respectful and effective communication with consumers from a variety of cultural and social backgrounds and life stages.

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4. Develop culturally-sensitive treatment plans that are responsive to cultural contexts, family and group memberships, and the particular life stage of the consumer.
5. Demonstrate how to employ interpreter services for non-English speaking and hearing impaired consumers in a timely and appropriate manner.
6. Identify and refer consumer to pertinent support resources in the community that facilitate consumer access and recovery within the context of social, cultural, family, and other group memberships.
7. Demonstrate cultural humility and self-reflection, including acknowledgement of the limitations of one's own cultural perspective.

Domain 8: Vocational Support

Assist consumer to engage in goal-directed employment activity with the understanding of the relationship between meaningful work and overall well-being, and utilization of appropriate community resources

1. Acknowledge the importance of work as part of self-concept/identity, and describe its role in mental health treatment and recovery.
2. Understand that the paths to mental health recovery and employment are both varied and non-linear, give examples of successful employment outcomes for consumers of behavioral healthcare.
3. Recognize and describe common myths and misconceptions regarding individuals with psychiatric disabilities and their ability to be successful in the workplace.
4. Understand the role of the MHRT/C in supporting a consumer to pursue a vocational goal, the importance of ongoing support in maintaining successful employment, and how it is reflected in the individual's plan of care.
5. Engage the consumer in meaningful, ongoing conversations about finding work and/or the possibility of work in the future, including job seeking/retention strategies.
6. Be able to practice engagement and motivation techniques to encourage and empower consumers to make progress along the employment continuum.
7. Identify and know how to access resources for consumer advocacy related to employment, including the use of natural supports to help individuals obtain and maintain a job.
8. Identify and refer consumers to support and employment advocacy services that will reduce or eliminate perceived barriers to continued successful employment.
9. Give examples of career development resources, including career exploration and labor market information available in the community.
10. Discover the diverse services and roles of people involved in the employment support system for consumers with psychiatric disabilities, and explain how the MHRT/C collaborates with others in the employment support system without duplicating the roles of these providers.
11. Identify online and local resources to access federal and state regulations and policy relating to employment.
12. Give examples of current and evolving research regarding evidence-based practices in employment of consumers with psychiatric disabilities, including Individual Placement Support.
13. Demonstrate awareness of reasonable accommodation and disclosure of disability in the context of mental health and employment.
14. Identify federal and state disability benefits, the availability of work incentives, and how to consult with Community Work Incentives Coordinators.
15. Describe the role of the Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as partners, how to refer, and collaborate around work goals.