



# ***Mental Health Support Specialist Curriculum***

## **Training Policies and Procedures Manual**

**2017**



**Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services**

*Produced in collaboration with the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service,  
Center for Learning.*

# **Mental Health Support Specialist Curriculum Training Policies and Procedures Manual**

## **Introduction**

The fall of 2005 marked the completion of a revised and updated version of the former Residential Care Specialist curriculum, required for MHRT I certification in Maine's adult mental health system. This revised version is a recovery-oriented curriculum written from a trauma-informed perspective, intended to reflect best practices in the field, and to provide the best possible training to those who support adults diagnosed with mental illness. The title of the curriculum has been changed to the ***Mental Health Support Specialist Curriculum (MHSS)*** to reflect this new perspective. The new curriculum does not reflect a change in the credentialing process.

Newly hired individuals providing residential services or daily living support services in Maine's adult mental health system will be trained by certified MHSS trainers across the state, using the updated curriculum. The purpose of this document is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various partners who make that training possible.

Staff who have completed the Residential Care Specialist Curriculum before September 30, 2005, do not have to also complete the current MHSS curriculum as part of their MHRT I certification process. Their RCS course certificate is still valid. Staff who have not completed the RCS curriculum before September 30, 2005, will have to complete the MHSS curriculum as part of the MHRT I certification process.

## **Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services**

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS), has the responsibility for ensuring both the quality of the MHSS training and that the MHRT I certification program operates in a fair and equitable manner. DHHS has assigned responsibility for administering the MHSS training and the MHRT I certification process to the Muskie School's Center for Learning.

## MHSS Trainers

### 1. Trainer Certification:

A certified MHSS trainer must teach the MHSS course. A list of certified trainers is available at the Center for Learning website: <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>. MHSS trainer certification is issued for two years. Trainers are responsible for contacting DHHS' Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services or the Center for Learning to arrange for recertification before current certification expires. They are also responsible to provide their updated contact information if it changes.

### 2. Training Notification:

Trainers will notify the Center for Learning (using the MHSS Trainer Notification Form) at least 30 days prior to offering an MHSS course so that it may be posted on the CFL website. The MHSS Training Notification Form may be downloaded at <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>.

### 3. Training Format:

The order of the training modules as listed in the MHSS curriculum is the preferred order. Trainers who wish to deviate from this order are asked to submit a request in writing to the Center for Learning. The form, MHSS Curriculum Modification Form, requesting the change can be accessed at the Center for Learning's website at <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>. When filling out the form, the trainer must list the alternative order and reasons for the desired change.

It is expected that trainers will maintain the integrity of the MHSS curriculum with regard to content. No content may be eliminated, and the entire curriculum must be taught. Instructors wishing to *supplement* content are asked to submit a request in writing to the Center for Learning, using the MHSS Curriculum Modification Form. The trainer must include the supplementary materials (with source citations) and reasons for the desired change.

The hours listed at the beginning of each module are estimates of how long it will take to cover the material. These are general guidelines of time needed for each module. Trainers are expected to thoroughly cover all content in the curriculum, so that participants comprehend the material. It is understood, however, that for some trainers it may take more or less time than estimated for each module.

### 4. Student and Trainer Course Evaluations:

Trainer(s) will assign one student to distribute course evaluations. All trainers will leave the room before the assigned student disseminates the evaluations and remain out of the room while students are completing the evaluation. The designated student will collect and seal all of the evaluations in an envelope provided by Muskie prior to the start of the

course. Trainer(s) may return only after the designated student has collected and sealed all of the completed evaluations. The lead trainer will then submit the completed evaluations to the Center for Learning within 30 days. The MHSS Student Evaluation Forms may be downloaded at <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>. Hard copies of the forms are included in the appendix of this manual. (The evaluations will be tallied and a summary of them will be returned to the trainer.)

Trainers are also encouraged to provide feedback on the MHSS course as needed. The form is included in the appendix of this curriculum and can also be downloaded from the Center for Learning website at <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>. Trainer feedback is optional, but is strongly encouraged, as it will be taken into account in future revisions of the curriculum.

#### 5. Training Verification:

Upon completion of the course, trainers will submit to the Center for Learning one MHSS Training Validation Form listing all students who successfully completed the training. Trainers will also submit one Student Information Form (completed by student) for each of the students who successfully completed the course. Forms must be submitted no later than 30 days after completion of the course.

### **Muskie School's Center for Learning**

DHHS, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, in partnership with the Muskie School's Center for Learning, will provide the infrastructure necessary to sustain the delivery of Mental Health Support Specialist training across the state.

#### 1. Center for Learning website:     <http://www.cfl-muskie.org>

The Center for Learning will maintain on its website a Mental Health Support Specialist web page with a list of upcoming MHSS courses, MHSS-related forms for download, MHSS Training Policies and Procedures Manual for download, and other pertinent MHSS information as needed.

#### 2. Student Certificates

Upon receipt of proper documentation from MHSS trainers (*evaluations, training validation form, and student information forms*) the Center for Learning will issue MHSS course completion certificates, and send them directly to the students.

#### 3. MHSS Database

The Center for Learning will continue to maintain a database of students who have completed the MHSS and/or the RCS course. They will also maintain a database of certified MHSS trainers.

#### 4. Evaluation Records

The Center for Learning will tally course evaluation results and generate a summary sheet for each MHSS course offering. The summary sheet will be shared with the trainer and maintained as part of the trainer's file.

#### 5. Quality Assurance

The Center for Learning in cooperation with DHHS, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, will develop a quality assurance program to ensure that the MHSS training program reflects best practices. This program will include a periodic evaluation of trainers based on course evaluations to ensure that the performance measures detailed in the quality assurance program are being met.

#### 6. Trainer Certification and Re-Certification

The Center for Learning, in partnership with DHHS, Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, will provide certification training for new MHSS trainers as well as re-certification training for current MHSS trainers.

### **Adult Mental Health Provider Agencies**

Provider agencies must ensure that employees have sufficient training to provide quality services to consumers of adult mental health services. Provider agencies will also support MHSS trainers on staff to deliver a minimum of one training per year. Agencies are also encouraged to make these trainings available to employees of other agencies.

### **APPENDIX**

Students must complete an evaluation at the end of the course. These evaluations are included in trainer's curriculum binder along with an optional trainer feedback form. The trainer feedback form will be used to revise and improve future versions of the curriculum.

Also included in the curriculum binder are the following training/student documentation forms:

- MHSS Training Notification Form
- MHSS Training Validation Form
- MHSS Student Information Form
- MHSS Curriculum Modification Form

These forms are also available for download at <http://www.cfl.muskie.org>.