New Hampshire No Wrong Door Person-Centered Options Counseling Certification

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, New Hampshire was awarded a multi-year grant primarily focused on informing national training and certification for Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC). New Hampshire participated in the development of a national online curriculum as well as serving as a pilot site for an intensive two-day in-person course in Person-Centered Thinking.

In addition to working on the national training modules, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) contracted with UNH Center on Aging and Community Living (CACL) to develop state-specific curriculum and competencies to support PCOC. CACL, with the input of multiple stakeholders, developed online modules containing state-specific information about topics such as substance use and mental health, veteran's services, and serving children and families. In 2013, all ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Center (SLRC) staff began using the training curriculum that had been developed nationally and in-state.

DHHS and CACL convened stakeholder focus groups comprised of SLRC staff to create a formal certification process for ServiceLink Person-Centered Options Counselors. The focus groups met multiple times over a six-month period to develop the certification procedure outlined in this document.

CERTIFICATION COMPONENTS

NH PCOC Certification has four components: Online modules, a one-day in-person course, mentoring, and a written portfolio. Each of these elements are detailed below.

The certification process may take from four to twelve months. Candidates should discuss their readiness for starting the certification process with their supervisors. As part of the assessment, a candidate's relevant work and life experience should be considered. Candidates who are new to their organizations should complete a 3-6 month introductory period before beginning the certification process. This allows new employees to learn basic job requirements before taking on the added responsibilities of the PCOC Certification process.

Online Modules	One-Day In-Person Course
NH PCOC Certification	
Mentoring	Written Portfolio
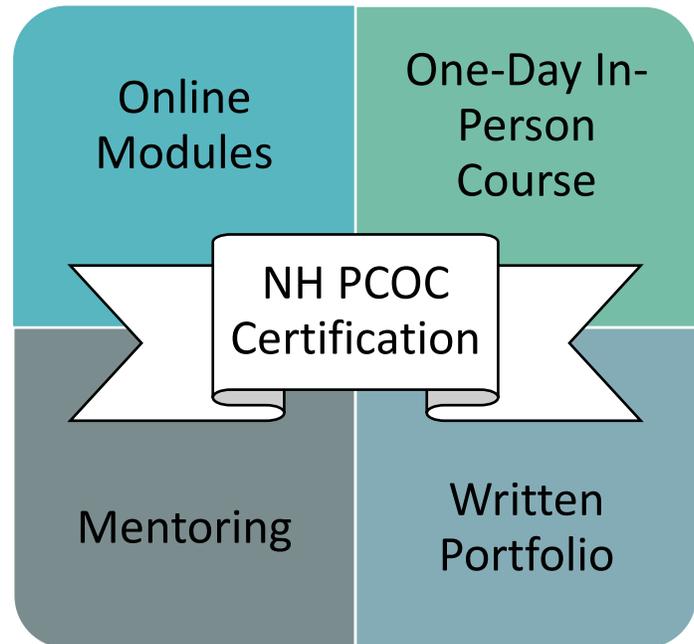
ONLINE MODULES

Staff who are seeking PCOC certification are required to complete all online modules. Your supervisor can assist staff in accessing the modules. Staff must receive an 80% passing grade or better on the quiz at the end of each lesson to qualify for certification.

> **STAFF MUST COMPLETE GLOBAL MODULE 1 OF THE FEDERAL TRAINING BEFORE ATTENDING THE IN-PERSON COURSE. GLOBAL MODULE 1 INCLUDES:**
>
> - **"INTRODUCTION TO NWD SYSTEM" LESSONS 1 – 4**
> - **"PERSON-CENTERED THINKING" LESSONS 1-12**

After the in-person training is completed, all other modules can be taken at any time during the certification process, and in any order.

ONE-DAY IN-PERSON COURSE

The one-day in-person course allows candidates to practice the skills they have learned from online modules and other experiences in preparation for the rest of the certification process. The training is offered periodically by DHHS-approved trainers.

This training focuses specifically on the skills needed to deliver options counseling to an individual or family. Skills and practices covered in the one-day course include identifying options in a person-centered way based on the urgency of an individual's needs, assisting individuals and families with prioritizing options, and how to explain programs, services, and available supports.

MENTORING

When a staff member decides to pursue PCOC certification, supervisors will connect the candidate with a mentor. The mentor will work with the candidate throughout the certification process.

Mentors are responsible for communicating with candidates on at least a bi-weekly basis and are required to work with candidates and supervisors to identify shadowing opportunities for the candidate as part of the certification process.

During individual meetings with candidates, mentors are expected to participate in intensive review discussions. Mentors should initiate meaningful discussion on shadowing experiences, process recordings, and the skills candidates are working on.

Details about the role of supervisors and mentors in the certification process are outlined on

WRITTEN PORTFOLIO

The creation of a written portfolio provides PCOC certification candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained through participating in the PCOC curriculum. The portfolio is a combination of shadowing experiences and process recordings.

The purpose of the portfolio is to provide opportunities for skill assessment and to generate feedback while demonstrating that the candidate's skill set reaches the appropriate level for certification. The portfolio is

Written Portfolio

Shadowing Experiences

Process Recordings
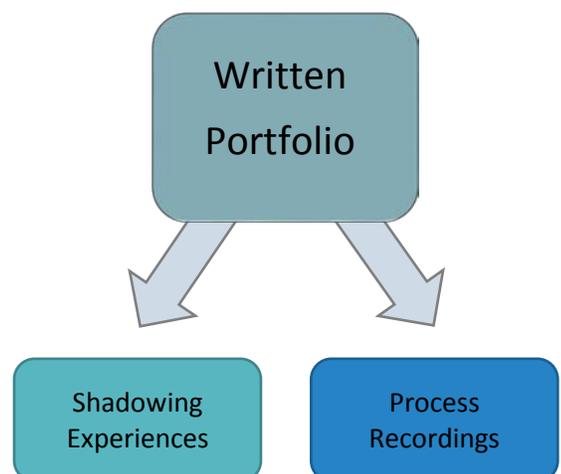
comprised of process recordings completed after participating in shadowing experiences and examples of documents showing the use of PCOC tools created during options counseling activities. More detail about each these elements is provided below.

SHADOWING EXPERIENCES

Materials included in the candidate's portfolio will be generated during one-on-one shadowing experiences with the candidate's assigned mentor. Candidates will shadow their mentors for a total of 15 hours (or the equivalent of two full working days) and will record their experiences and observations through process recordings.

The type and timing of shadowing experiences are determined through consultations among the mentor, supervisor, and candidate. The *Competency Framework* (see page 5) should be used to support shadowing experiences. Approximately halfway through the shadowing process, candidates should take the lead in working with a client, with the mentor present.

PROCESS RECORDINGS

Process recordings are detailed narrations of what happens during an interaction with an individual (and family.) Recordings are a tool to help candidates to develop self-awareness and to practice interviewing and reflection skills. A template for creating process recordings is in Appendix A of this manual.

Process recordings typically include:

- Identifying information, such as the writer's name, date of the interaction, and the first names of individuals involved (if interactions were with clients, client names and personal identifying information must be kept confidential and should not be included in a process recording, initials or descriptors ('client', 'sister', etc.) can be used.
- The goal of the encounter (for example, to discuss LTSS options, complete a form, etc.)
- A word-for-word description of the experience (as close as possible)
- A description of any verbal or non-verbal activity that occurred
- The candidate's feelings and reactions to the client and the event as it took place. This should include unspoken thoughts and reactions to the experience. The intent is to support the candidate's analytical process regarding interactions with clients
- A summary of the candidate's impressions and analysis of the interaction
- Any questions the candidate wants to ask his or her mentor or supervisor

Process recordings are meant to be shared with both mentors and supervisors. Mentors and supervisors are expected to offer meaningful feedback, preferably in writing on the process recording form. It is expected that candidates, mentors, and supervisors will work out a routine

for the sharing and return of process recordings to support the candidate's certification process. Process recordings should be saved and placed in the candidate's portfolio.

PERSON-CENTERED TOOLS AND THE WRITTEN PORTFOLIO
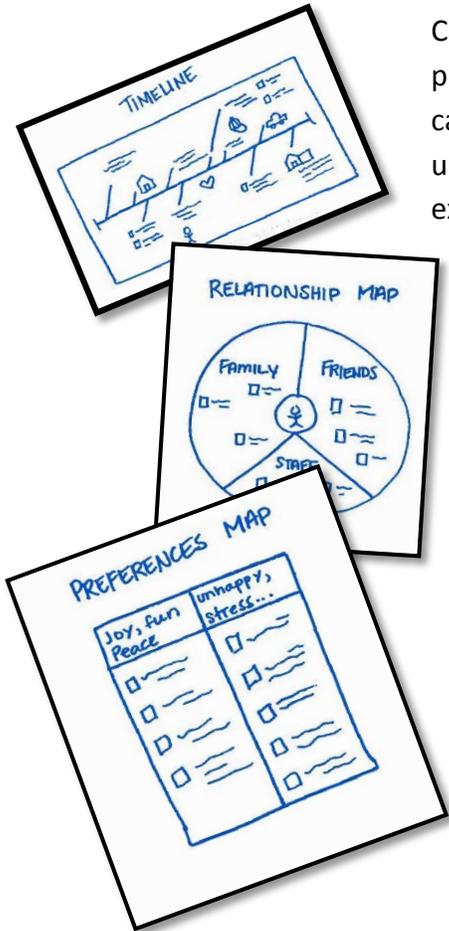
Candidates will be expected to utilize PCOC tools during their training process. Portfolios must contain a minimum of four examples of the candidate's use of tools. Tools must demonstrate the candidate's understanding of preference identification and goal setting. Tool examples may be based on the shadowing experiences as well as regular work experiences as candidates progress through their training.

Candidates should be aware that tools are not normally completed by a staff member without the client present. The process of completing a tool during the shadowing experience is intended to help the candidate practice using a tool and give the candidate the opportunity to reflect upon the experience.

Candidates should focus their initial reflections on what tools they would use during a shadowing experience, how they would facilitate the creation of headings, and what questions they would ask to facilitate the completion of the tool. Candidates should also identify the benefits of organizing information by using a tool, what other tools they would like to use in the future, and areas for future learning.

NO WRONG DOOR COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

As the New Hampshire certification process was being developed, three federal agencies, the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provided a framework to guide state governments in the development of a high performing No Wrong Door System to help states "create more consumer-driven, more efficient and more cost-effective LTSS systems." This framework, called *Key Elements of a NWD System of Access to LTSS for All Populations and Payers*, (available at https://nwd.acl.gov/pdf/NWD-National-Elements.pdf) includes competencies and measures for Person-Centered Counseling.

Based on this guidance, New Hampshire developed the *NWD Competency Framework for NH's NWD System of Access*. These competencies are intended to be used by NH CarePath Core

Partners, including ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Community Mental Health Centers, Area Agencies for Developmental Services, and NH DHHS Division of Community Services staff involved in assisting individuals (and their families) who are seeking and accessing long term services and supports. The *NWD Competency Framework for NH's NWD System of Access* is located on the UNH Center on Aging and Community Living website (https://chhs.unh.edu/center-aging-community-living).

The *NWD Competency Framework for NH's NWD System of Access* (referred to in this document as "the *Competency Framework*") reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are needed for the delivery of high-quality services and support. Appendix B shows the tool that can be used as part of the PCOC certification process. They can be used to support the Person-Centered Options Counseling Certification in several ways:

Candidates should use the *Competency Framework* to understand and assess proficiency in competency areas and to identify areas for future learning opportunities, in consultation with mentors and supervisors regarding ongoing PCOC certification.

Mentors should use the *Competency Framework* to support discussions with a candidate, to encourage the candidate to think critically about his or her future learning opportunities and as a framework for assessing readiness for certification.

Supervisors can use the *Competency Framework* as an assessment to provide a candidate with additional learning opportunities, to support a candidate's self-assessment of readiness for certification, and in encouraging the achievement of competencies through professional duties and scope of work.

SUPERVISOR AND MENTOR ROLES

This section describes the roles of mentors and supervisors in the PCOC Certification process. Mentors and supervisors will work together to support a candidate's learning experiences.

SUPERVISORS

Supervisors are responsible for overseeing the certification process, assisting with the development of an achievable timeline for certification completion, and ensuring the candidate has the support needed to fully engage in certification. Supervisors will monitor the online learning status of their staff. Supervisors will support a flexible learning environment for candidates; each candidate's process should be unique. Supervisors will work closely with mentors ensuring that all learning experiences align with the *Competency Framework.*

When a candidate is ready to submit a portfolio and documentation for review by the candidate's Certification Review Board, the supervisor will complete a pre-submission checklist, located in Appendix D of this manual, to assist the candidate in making sure the portfolio is complete. The checklist becomes a part of the candidate's portfolio.

MENTORS

Mentors are experienced professionals who are open to working with others, comfortable with consulting with candidates, and have an in-depth understanding of how to put PCOC into practice. Mentors should have extensive knowledge of person-centered thinking and planning practices. Mentors may be outside of the candidate's organization and must be trained in PCOC and tool use. As much as possible, mentors should be certified PCOC professionals.

Mentors will make recommendations to supervisors regarding the candidate's needs to further develop their PCOC skills, knowledge and abilities. Mentors should meet with a candidate's supervisor, assist with plans for improvement, and review the candidate's status. Mentors are expected to commit to regular communication with a candidate's supervisor. This communication is intended to support the candidate to maintain a balance of ongoing job duties and certification activities and to complete shadowing experiences.

Mentors are nominated by their own supervisors with agreement from the NH CarePath Administrator. To become a mentor, a mentor candidate already certified in PCOC would:

- Show that their PCOC certification is current by incorporating documentation of learning experiences into their existing written portfolio
- Work with their current supervisor to convene a Review Board
- Follow the timeline for mentor certification that is identified in Appendix C of this document.

CERTIFICATION

Ongoing review of a candidate's progress toward completion of certification should be part of regular supervision and any annual review process. Once the candidate has completed all training modules, shadowing hours, and process recordings, the portfolio should be evaluated by the mentor and supervisor. Candidates, mentors and supervisors should work together to reach a consensus on whether the portfolio is complete. Once consensus is achieved, the portfolio and required training documentation can be submitted to the Certification Review Board for approval. The Review Board process is described below.

CERTIFICATION REVIEW BOARD

Each Certification Review Board is unique to the candidate. Members will be chosen from a list of NWD Professional categories:

- Staff from Core NWD partners
- Case managers
- Mental health / substance use professionals
- Community-based agency staff.

Supervisors and candidates should work together to identify potential board members from the approved list. Each board should have a maximum of 5 members and a minimum of 3 members. Candidates and supervisors may submit requests to the NWD Administrator to add particular individuals that do not fit one of the above categories to their board. A candidate's Certification Review Board must include one staff member from the NH DHHS Division of Long Term Supports and Services. The NWD Administrator will assist with identifying this individual.

Once identified, the list of potential Certification Review Board members for an individual candidate should be submitted to the NWD Administrator for approval. Once approved, the candidate will send a request to the selected individuals to participate as reviewers.

CERTIFICATION REVIEW PROCESS

When the candidate, supervisor and mentor determine that an application is ready for review, the following steps will occur:

1) The candidate will send their Certification Review Board a copy of their portfolio and documentation. The Written Portfolio will include documentation of completed online modules, shadowing experiences, process recordings, and certificate of participation from the one-day in-person course.
2) The Certification Review Board will have a meeting (by phone or in-person) within two weeks of receiving the portfolio and documentation. During this meeting, the review board will determine the candidate's readiness for certification.
3) If the board determines that the candidate is ready for certification, they will inform the NWD Administrator, who will notify the candidate and provide documentation of the candidate's certification.
4) If the Certification Review Board determines that the candidate needs additional skill development before certification can be awarded, they will indicate the areas for improvement. Mentors and supervisors will recommend methods to achieve needed improvement and experience in the areas identified by the Review Board. The candidate's supervisor and mentor will work closely with the candidate to formulate and execute a plan to provide the candidate with added experience. The *Competency*

Framework should serve as a guide for this process. Once candidates have successfully completed the additional tasks, they may resubmit to the Review Board for certification.

5) The Certification Review Board will notify the NWD Administrator of the determination within one week of the meeting.

The NWD Administrator will assist with coordinating the Certification Review Boards and is available to help facilitate communication among review board members to assure that the review of a candidate's application is completed in a timely manner.

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

To maintain certification, Certified PCOCs should attend 2 continuing education sessions per year. Certified PCOCs and supervisors should work together to identify skills and learning opportunities to increase the candidate's proficiency in Person-Centered Options Counseling, using the *Competency Framework* as a guide. PCOCs should add documentation of their educational sessions to their portfolios. Mentors' certification is automatically renewed for the year following service as a mentor.

APPENDIX A: PROCESS RECORDING TEMPLATE

| Date: | Certification Candidate Name: | |

| Mentor Name: | Agency: |

Objective (he said / she said, include non-verbal body language and silences):

Subjective (Your thoughts, assessments, feelings, observations, skills and notations of what you wish you had said. Include your strengths areas for improvement):

Mentor / Supervisor Comments:

COMPETENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT

This tool can be used to self-assess competency in any or all of the key topic areas. Review the descriptions for a particular area and identify areas of strength, areas for improvement and areas of need. Based on this assessment, determine your level of competence.

Name_____   Date of Self-Assessment _____

Reviewed with _____   Date of Review _____

Competency	Areas of Strength	Areas for Improvement	Areas of Need	Level
No Wrong Door System Vision, Values and Structure				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Person-Centered Counseling				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Streamlined Eligibility for Public Programs				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Cultural Effectiveness				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Protection and Advocacy				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Mental Health and Mental Illness				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Developmental Disability and Acquired Brain Disorders				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Substance Use Concerns				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced
Older Adults				☐ Foundational ☐ Intermediate ☐ Advanced

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE TIMELINES

Below are sample timelines for certification and for a mentor application. The timelines are flexible. These are intended only as guidelines. A candidate's timeline may change depending on a variety of factors and should consider the unique needs of the candidate.

PCOC Certification process timeline

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7
Global Module 1	Global Module 1 continued	Global Module 2A	Global Module 2A continued	Global Module 2B	Global Module 2B continued	
	In-person one-day training					
	Meet with supervisor to assess readiness to begin certification process	Mentor assigned		Begin Shadowing	Continue shadowing	Collect elements of written portfolio

Mentor application process for certified PCOC professional

Month 1	Months 1-2	Months 2-4	Month4
Meet with Supervisor about Mentorship	Update Certification portfolio with continuing education experiences and other relevant activities	Complete additional activities if needed and add to portfolio	Convene Certification Review Board to review mentor request

APPENDIX D: CHECKLIST FOR CERTIFICATION

Item	Supervisor Initals
Online Modules	
One-day in-person training	
Process recordings	
Documentation of 15 hours / 2 full working days of shadowing	
Tool use included in portfolio	
Continuing education documentation (for maintaining existing certification)	

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