

Frequently Asked Questions ~ Answered

for the

Personal Support Specialist (PSS) Trainer Certification

Spring 2003

PSS Trainer-specific Information:

- Previous curricula for PCA, CNA and RCS trainings were reviewed side-by-side and those topics that were common were combined to create a Core Curriculum consisting of modules 1-6, which are the same in both the PSS and CNA Training curricula. In effect, a person that becomes a PSS will be able to enter a CNA Training at module 7.
- By September 1, 2003, all Residential Care, Assisted Living or Home Care staff must take the PSS Train the Trainer or Re-certification in order to train their staff in what was formerly known as the Residential Care Specialist (RCS).
- PCA & RCS trainings will no longer be honored by The Department of Human Services (DHS) after September 1, 2003. One group of exceptions exists...the following list of 10 facilities may continue to offer the RCS Training to their staff and must work closely with BDS if doing so:
 1. Lincoln Street Group Home
 2. Ingraham House
 3. Foster Street House
 4. Knox Road House
 5. Quarry Road Residential Care
 6. 67 Highland Avenue
 7. Summer Street Residence
 8. Horizons Unlimited
 9. Ensign Boarding Home
 10. House of Shawmut
- The cost of delivering the PSS Training is up to the Trainer/Employer or Agency.
- Student/Teacher ratio is up to the Trainer, however the recommended size of a class is 10-12 Max.
- DHS may allow people to teach this curriculum before September. – Contact Peter Mauro ASAP if you wish to begin providing the PSS before September 1.

- Instructors must submit the following forms:
 1. Course Notification;
 2. Trainer Form
 3. Student Information Forms;
 4. Course Verification Form;
 5. Course Evaluations; and
 6. any other PSS training information to:
 Peter Mauro, Jr.
 Department of Human Services
 Bureau of Elder and Adult Services
 442 Civic Center Drive
 State House Station #11
 Augusta, ME 04333
 Email: peter.mauro@maine.gov
 Phone: 207-287-9254
 Fax: 287-9229

Contact Peter if you need new forms that reflect DHS as the recipient of your training forms (they should no longer be submitted to BHSI).

- Dates of upcoming trainings and “sharing exercises” for trainers will be posted on the DHS/BEAS website.
- All Trainer information (future Train-the-Trainer and Trainer Re-certification) will continue to be provided by BHSI.
- **If our agency already requires CPR, can we skip the First Aide/CPR section?**
 No, we do need the curriculum completed in its entirety as 50 hours. In order to certify people as a PSS, they need to have received this information in the format provided. It will enable the PSS to know the “boundaries” of the PSS. CPR will be an add-on at the end of the curriculum.
- **Can we supplement curriculum information with handouts & materials of our own?** Yes. The curriculum must be followed, but you may add any materials that will effectively add to the training.
- **Following is the PSS Grading Grid that will assist you in calculating grades:**

PSS GRADING GRID

	Grade	%	Final
Class Participation		30%	
Skills Check List		30%	
Quizzes		30%	
Final Exam		10%	
Final Score			
→			

EXAM:

- If a student successfully completes Modules 1-6 and completes the testing associated with it, they may go on to CNA Training, entering their training at Module 7. The Instructor is responsible for documenting proof that the student successfully completed Modules 1-6. There is no certificate for completing Modules 1-6.
- If a student fails an exam, the Instructor must administer a new exam (no re-taking the same questions). A student may retake the exam 2 times (a total of 3 tries) and if they are unable to pass they must retake the entire course. If a student fails 3 times, they cannot work in capacity as PSS.
- Instructors must keep exams on file for three years.

TRAINEE INFORMATION:

- The minimum age to be enrolled in a PSS is 17.
- One does not need to be a high school graduate to be a PSS.
- **What is the literacy requirement to be a PSS?** 8th grade level literacy is required. If a student does not have a High School Diploma a Trainer may elect to have the potential student take a TABE test through one of the Vocational Schools or Job Centers free of charge.

- All staff who are RCS or PCA will be able to continue to work in their capacity as a PCA or RCS but if they want to become a PSS, they must take the entire PSS course.
- There will be NO PSS bridge course for people who are currently RCS' or PCA's.
- **Does an employee who is a C.N.A. who has been trained with the new Core Modules 1-6 (and the remaining C.N.A. Curriculum) need to take the PSS course in order to work as a PSS?** No, not technically. A CNA working as a PSS (without a PSS certificate) must not call themselves a PSS or a CNA.

This question needs clarification under the Regulations Governing the Licensing and Functioning of Assisted Housing Programs, 13.6 for those who wish to work in Assisted Living Programs or Residential Care Facilities.

Section 63.10 – C of the BEAS Policy Manual In-House and Community Support Services for those persons wishing to work in the home care arena.

- **Do all staff have to take PSS, even housekeepers?** This answer depends upon whether or not the staff person is doing direct care. This does not only apply to housekeepers. Refer to the Regulations Governing the Licensing and Functioning of Assisted Housing Programs.
- BDS is not accepting PSS in place of the RCS for their MHRT.
- **Before September 1 is there a waiver for those that need to be trained within 120 days as a PSS?** No, employees need to be compliant with current regulations.
- **Is there going to a registry for the PSS similar to CNA's?** It's not called a registry, but DHS will have a database of all PSS trainings and trainees.

DEMO/REDEMO:

- Of the 50 hours of training, 10 must be spent on demo/re-demo.
- For the "Demonstration of Skills" section, the trainer can bring in an RN or be trained by an RN to perform the demonstration skills. This is up to the agency or the individual Trainer. The Department of Human Services (Peter Mauro, Jr.) must be notified that a non-RN Trainer was trained to perform the demonstration skills by submitting a completed skills checklist. Peter will keep the paperwork on file, allowing the Trainer to complete the skills section with their students.

CNA-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

- Modules 1-6 of the Personal Support Specialist Training (also called the Core) constitutes the first 20 hours of both the PSS and the CNA curricula. This “Core” was created to set up a career path for people working in the human services field. Both the PSS and CNA curricula will provide all students with the same first 6 modules. As a Trainer, you will be required to present this Core of modules as they are designed and presented in the Instructors Manual.
- Any student who only completes the first 20 hours of either the PSS or CNA training will not be considered a PSS or a CNA. In order to transfer the first 20 hours of the training a person must complete one of the courses in its entirety, or must enter into another course immediately. It is up to the individual Trainer to provide any verification that a student completed the first 6 modules.
- The Department of Human Services will provide all certificates for students completing a PSS Training. If a new hire comes to you with an official PSS certificate signed by Peter Mauro, Jr., they have completed the PSS Training, which includes the first 20 hours (modules 1-6) of the Core Curriculum and the new hire can enter the CNA training program at Module 7 within 2 years of completing the PSS.
- This Core Curriculum is not an add-on to the CNA curriculum, it is an integration. These same 6 modules of the Core will be the first 6 modules of the CNA training curriculum. You will not receive these 6 modules when you receive a new version of the CNA curriculum. The CNA curriculum will begin with Module 7.
- The CNA final exam will include integrated questions from the Core.
- If you have an interest in becoming a trainer for the entire PSS Curriculum, contact Erin Gurney, BHSI at 871-1238. Trainings are not being offered at this time, however we will schedule a training when we do have enough interest. For those individuals that are a current CNA trainer, the remaining time involved to become a PSS trainer is approximately 4 hours and training is available from the Department.
- Fees you charge for your training courses are a local issue.