



Policy Title: Certification and Certification Maintenance Policy
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Approved by: S.O.A.R. Board of Directors
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Approval Date: 3 Jun 2020

Preface: Peer support training is a mandatory core training for S.O.A.R. members to be peer supporters. This core training contains the basic skills and knowledge peer supporters need to deliver individual peer support services. S.O.A.R. strongly encourages all Peer Supporters to participate in as many education and training events as they can and to continually work toward greater levels of healing and personal growth. S.O.A.R. believes the more personal growth a peer supporter achieves the healthier and happier their life will become, the more self esteem they will possess and the more capacity they will have to provide hope and support to a fellow survivor. Similarly, the more skills and knowledge a peer supporter gains the more confidence they will have and the more they will be able to help others heal.

1. How does an individual become certified to Peer Support with S.O.A.R.?

To attain certification as a S.O.A.R. Peer Supporter, individuals are required to:

1. be a survivor of childhood sexual abuse
2. pass the Peer Supporter screening process,
3. submit to a criminal background check,
4. successfully complete the S.O.A.R. Peer Supporter Training Program,
5. be a S.O.A.R. member or become a S.O.A.R. member
6. be recommended as ready to peer support by the Peer Counseling trainer(s)
7. be approved to peer supporter by the Certification Committee
8. receive a S.O.A.R. membership card stating they are qualified to Peer Support with S.O.A.R.

2. How does a Peer Supporter maintain their certification?

For an individual to maintain their status as a Peer Supporter with S.O.A.R. they are required to:

1. *Maintain their membership in good standing,
2. **have regular contact with the Peer Supporters at their monthly meetings - *See attendance by-laws (three meetings per year)*
3. ***obtain a leave of absence if unable to peer support and attend peer support meetings, for any period in excess of 6 months.

Definitions:

***Maintain membership in good standing:**

Refer to By-law #9. To remain a member in good standing, a member must:

1. adhere to the Society's code of ethics,
2. uphold the objects and by-laws of the Society,
3. continue to be a resident of Nova Scotia,
4. Pay annual dues determined annually at the general meeting.

****Regular contact:**

We believe Peer Supporters should attend 3 meetings per year (*see Bi-law*). SOAR cannot mandate a peer supporter to attend a specific number of meetings, education sessions or other SOAR related activities. However, SOAR believes that peer supporters who have regular contact with other peer supporters at the peer support meetings benefit because of the opportunity for peer supporters to know each other, ask questions, discuss client issues, learn from the experiences of others, gain confidence, develop skill, obtain feedback, encouragement, support and advice. As well and perhaps most



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importantly if peer supporters are confident and supportive to each other, it helps the organization stay strong, maintain an excellence in our standards and continue to be respected.

SOAR recognizes that all members are volunteers who have busy lives and yet willingly offer a valuable service to the community. However, once a volunteer makes a commitment to join SOAR, there is an expectation that the SOAR member actively participates in at least one activity in addition to peer supporting. If a peer supporter is unable to meet that recommendation, the individual is requested to inform the chair of the peer services committee because members connection to SOAR is important for the organization and because there may be times/ways that SOAR can be of assistance to-the individual member so that she/he is more likely to be able to attend peer support meetings/functions.

*****Leave of Absence:**

Peer Counselors who are unable to meet any of the above certification maintenance requirements in a given year may request a leave of absence from peer counseling. Leave can only be granted by the Chair of the Peer Support Committee or chair of the board in the absence of a peer support committee and only for one year at a time. If an individual requires a longer period of leave they should apply for an extension to their leave before the current leave expires. The chair will issue their approval or denial in writing, stating the reason the leave was or was not granted and the period the leave covers. The Chair will give a copy of this letter to the Certification Committee.