

## **Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services**

### **DMH/DD/SUS Advisory Committee: Peer Support Workforce**

*June 13, 2024*

# Agenda

---

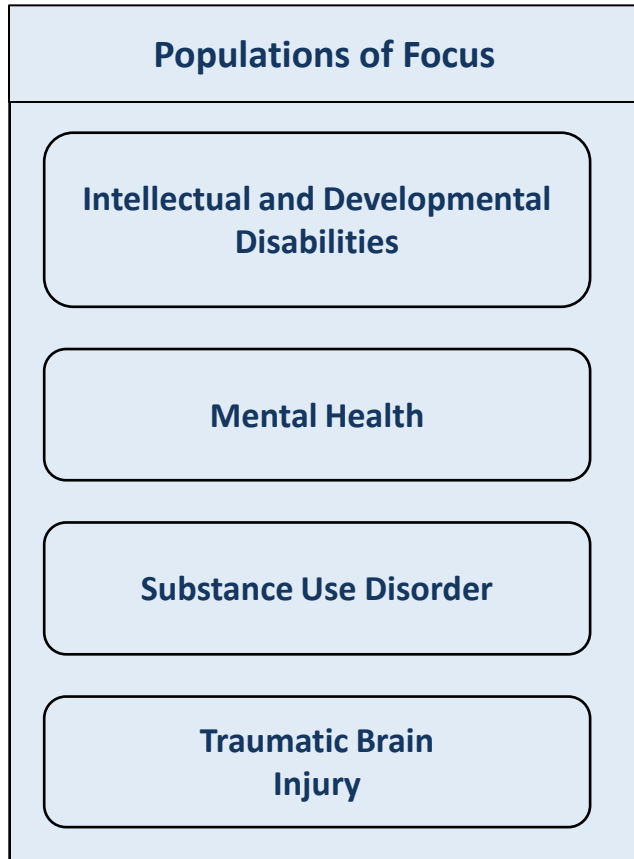
- DMH/DD/SUS Strategic Plan
- Discussion: Creating a Standardized Peer Support Certification Curriculum

# DMHDDSUS' Mission, Vision, and Principles



Our Principles	
<b>Lived Experience.</b>	We value lived experience by listening to and advocating for individuals and families, championing the expertise of peers, promoting natural and community supports, and creating opportunities for meaningful partnership.
<b>Equity.</b>	We create policy that helps everyone get what they need to live healthy lives in their communities, with particular focus on improving access to services for historically marginalized populations.
<b>Inclusivity.</b>	We commit to ensuring that everyone who uses our systems feels welcomed, and our policies support the health and well-being of all North Carolinians, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, ability, culture and experience.
<b>Quality.</b>	We promote the provision of high-quality, evidence-based services and supports that leverage the expertise and best-practices of our clinical partners.
<b>Trauma-Informed.</b>	We recognize the reality of trauma and promote a culture of kindness, understanding, and respect for every person.

# DMHDDSUS' Populations of Focus & Priority Areas



# The Strategic Plan in Action

The final release of the Strategic Plan will include initiatives that DMHDDSUS is working on and measures used to show progress. The Division will publish a dashboard showing progress towards implementation in 2024.

Priority Area	Example Goal	Example Initiative	Example Measure
Expand Access to Quality I/DD and TBI Services	<b>2.1: Increase I/DD Services.</b>	Inclusion Connects, a cross-divisional initiative to connect individuals with I/DD and their families with community-based services to support their health and wellbeing	Number of individuals connected to community services for I/DD
Strengthen the Crisis System	<b>5.3: Increase Community Crisis Facility Use.</b>	DMHDDSUS is making investments to stand up new Behavioral Health Urgent Care centers and Facility Based Crisis centers across the state	Number of North Carolina residents within 30min driving time to a 24/7 crisis facility
Expand Services for Individuals in the Justice System	<b>6.2: Increase Successful Community Re-engagement.</b>	DMHDDSUS will invest in community reentry programs in counties that don't already have reentry services, which improve reentry services for the justice-involved population by delivering psychiatric and physical health care services along with connections to community supports	Number of counties with at least one reentry program

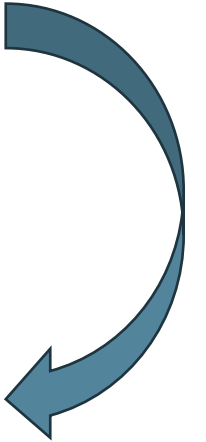
*This table includes a few illustrative examples. The final Strategic Plan will include goals, initiatives, and measures for six total priority areas.*

# Please share your feedback with us!

The Draft DMH/DD/SUS Strategic Plan for 2024-2029 was posted for public comment *today!*

Use the QR code to read the plan and submit your feedback by **July 1, 2024.**

**SCAN ME!**



# Creating a Standardized Peer Support Certification Curriculum

# Overview

DMH/DD/SUS is proposing creating a standardized certification curriculum, with online and in-person components. Over a four-year transition period (2025 – 2029), this standardized certification curriculum will replace existing certification courses.

## Today we will discuss:

- The **current process** for peer support certification and approval for certification courses
- **Key challenges** with the current process & rationale for moving to a standardized curriculum
- A **proposed, future certification curriculum** for peer support specialists, in line with SAMHSA national model standards
- A proposed **timeline to transition to the standardized certification curriculum**, including **opportunities for existing course owners to participate** in the training of peers

**DMH/DD/SUS appreciates your feedback on this proposal.**



# Reminder: Current Peer Support Certification Process

To become a Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) in North Carolina, an individual must meet specific eligibility criteria and complete training through a DMH/DD/SUS-approved course. There are currently 11 approved courses offering courses in different regions of the state at varying price points and fidelity to core competency standards.

## **To become a CPSS, an individual must:**

- Have lived experience in recovery from a serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder for at least one year
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Pay for and complete an approved course that consists of at least 40 hours of face-to-face instruction and 10 hours of pre- or homework
- Submit two reference letters and sign a code of ethics

## **To become an approved CPSS course, a course owner must:**

- Submit a packet of course materials (including an instructor manual, train the trainer manual, materials, and agenda) to UNC-BHS for review based on adherence to the NCPSS program's identified core concepts
- Respond to feedback from UNC-BHS and DMH/DD/SUS on course content and update materials accordingly
- Submit a \$1,200 application fee
- Courses are audited every 5 years to be recertified

# Current State: Peer Journey

Sam has a year of recovery and is interested in becoming a peer support specialist

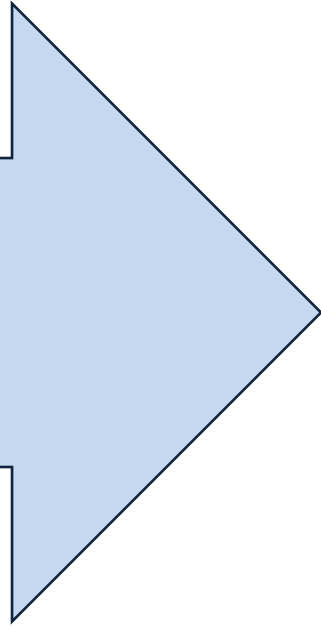
Sam takes a 40-hour in-person training through an approved course and completes 10 hours of pre-or homework

Sam applies (\$20 fee) with two letters of reference to UNC-BHS to become a CPSS



Sam uses the UNC-BHS website to find a training near them and applies for a scholarship to pay for the course (up to \$425)

Sam completes additional 20 hours of training of their choosing



# Key Challenges: Inconsistent Training & Accessibility Challenges

In interviews and conversations with community partners (including this group), DMH/DD/SUS heard continued support for establishing a single, standardized certification curriculum that offers a high-quality, affordable education.

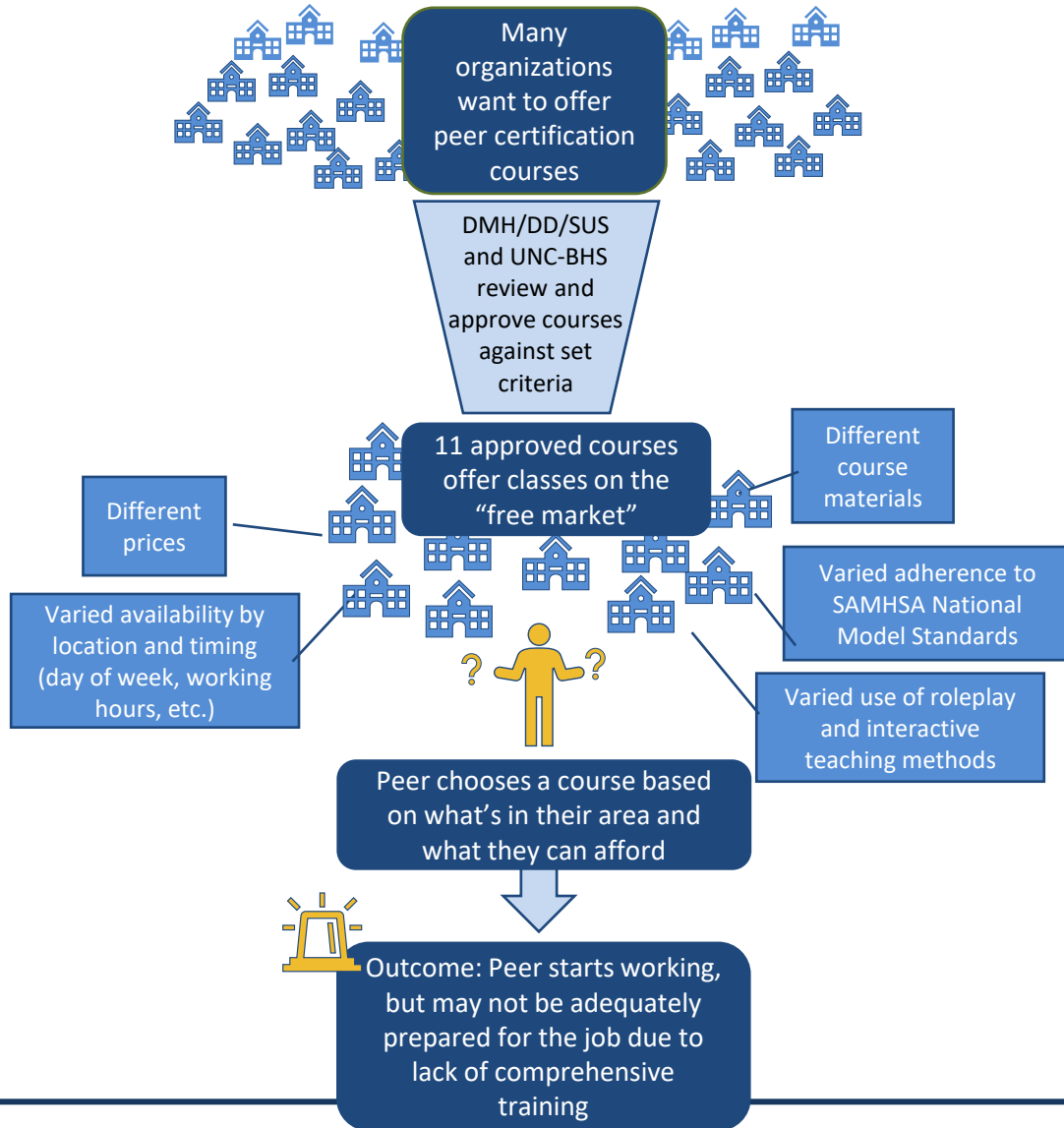
## Challenges with current certification process:

- CPSS are entering the field **inconsistently prepared because materials are different across courses**
- **Prices are determined by the “free market”**
- Curriculum **review and auditing requires significant UNC-BHS and DMH/DD/SUS bandwidth**; these **resources could be better utilized** to support other workforce initiatives

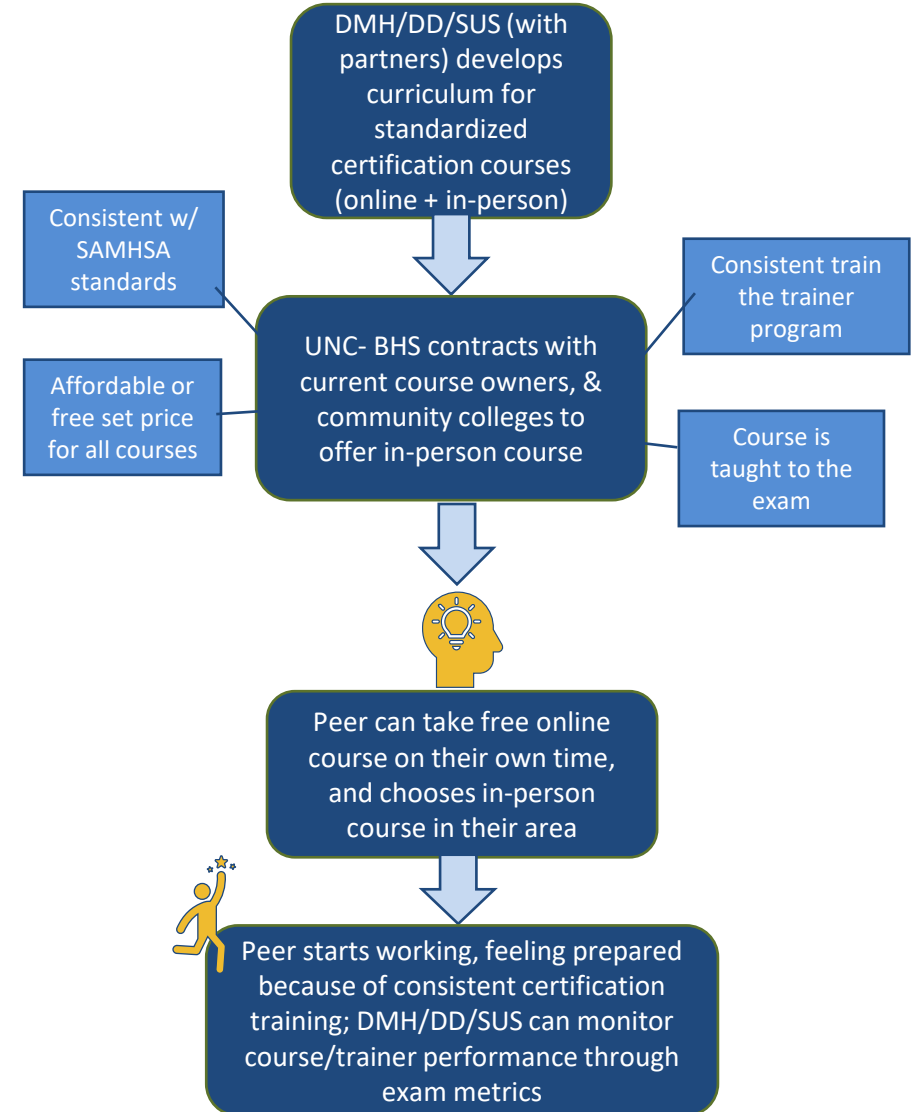
## Opportunities in developing a standardized curriculum:

- **Aligning with SAMHSA National Model Standards**
- **Utilizing the community college network** as sites for certification courses, in addition to existing course owners
- Leveraging the **expertise of peer leaders** across the state to develop a high-quality course
- Ability to **set a fair price for courses**

## Current State



## Proposed Future State



# Proposed Future State: Standardized 2-Step Certification Curriculum

## Step 1: Online “101” course

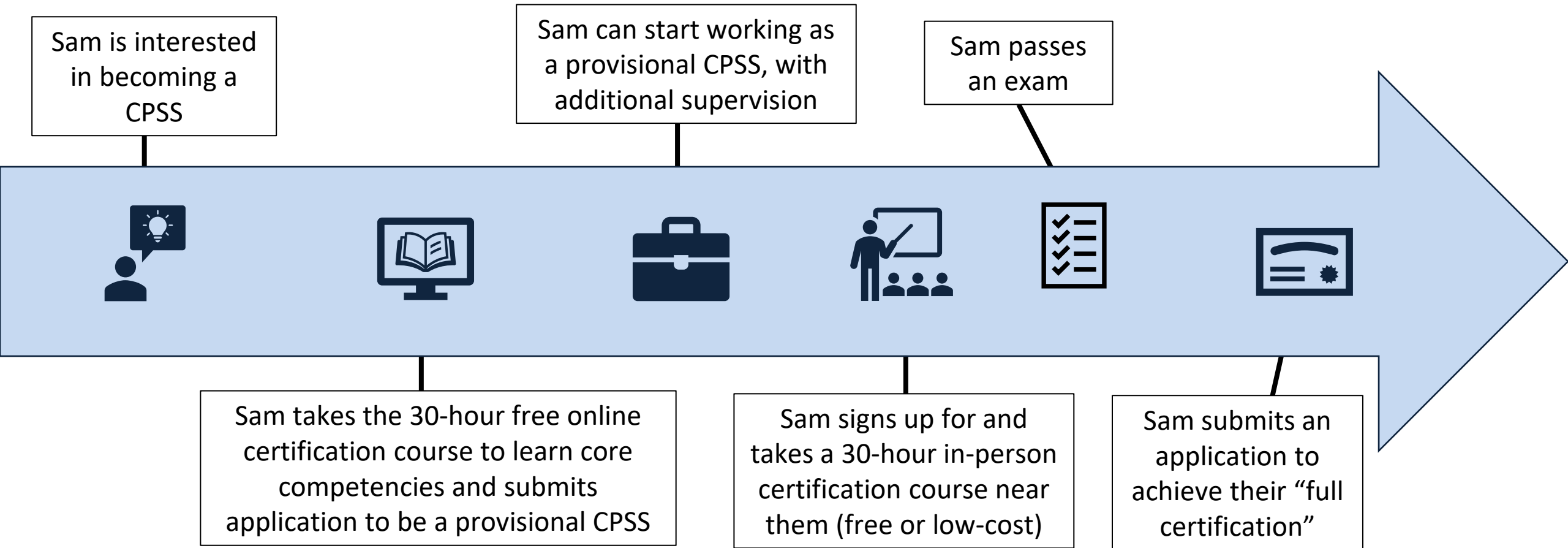
- **Self-paced** and with interactive elements (videos, mini-quizzes, etc.)
- Curriculum will focus on **basic competencies** required to start out as a CPSS
- Course will be **administered through the UNC-BHS and free**
- Once complete, participants will be prompted to apply to **become a provision CPSS**, allowing the state to track their certification

**Within 6 months**  
Peer is getting **hands-on work experience** and billing for services (with **additional supervision**)

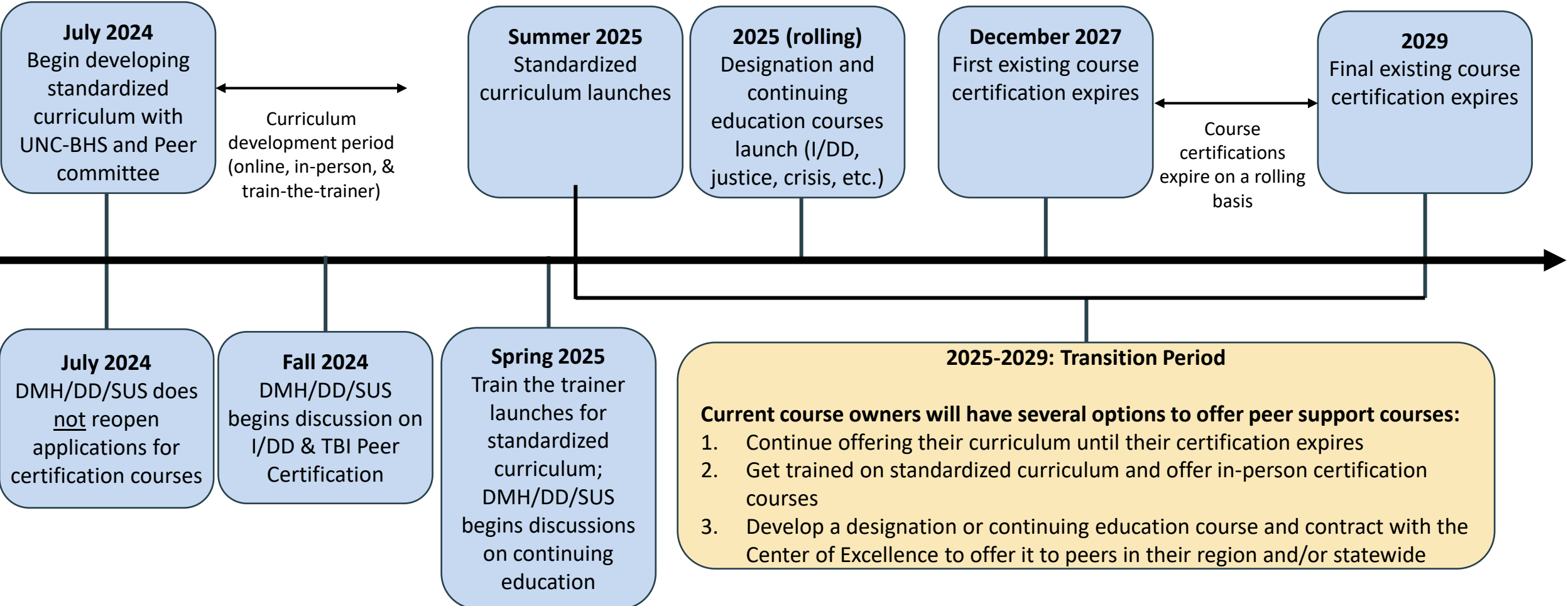
## Step 2: In-person interactive course

- Fully interactive, focusing on **role-playing scenarios** and allowing provisional CPSS to learn from experienced CPSS
- Trainers will be required to complete the Train of Trainer Course
- Courses may be **offered by existing course owners, or by trainers connected with community colleges, or other community partners**
- Participants will be able to take the course for **low or no cost**

# Proposed Future State: Peer Journey



# Proposed Transition Plan for Existing Certification Courses & Development of New Courses



# Curriculum Development Steering Committee



**If you are interested in helping DMH/DD/SUS develop the standardized peer support certification curriculum, we will be establishing a steering committee to guide and inform curriculum development.**

- We are looking for members who are knowledgeable about the role of Peer Support Specialists, represent the diversity of the state, and are willing and able to devote their time and energy to this project.
- We are specifically recruiting CPSS to join the committee and will select participants through a blinded application processes.
- Participants will be paid for their time

**DMH/DD/SUS will be sending out an application in the coming days, we encourage you to apply and share widely with your networks.**



## Discussion Questions

---

1. What should we consider as we start to develop a standardized certification curriculum?
2. How can we ensure a standardized curriculum is adequately preparing peers to start working?
3. Do you agree with the 2-step (online + in-person approach)? Are there alternative paths to certification we should consider?