

## Problem Solving Treatment (PST) Training and Certification

### About the Training

Problem Solving Treatment (PST) is a brief, evidence-based approach for depression that is effective with a majority of patient populations, including patients of many different cultures. PST teaches and empowers patients to solve here-and-now problems contributing to their depression and increases their self-efficacy.

Psychotherapy plays an important part in a patient's treatment plan, given patient preferences and the limitations of antidepressant medications. Organizations implementing an integrated care program should have capacity to offer an evidence-based psychotherapy such as PST. PST can be billed by licensed mental health providers using psychotherapy codes and by many other clinicians using CoCM codes.

### PST Clinician Training Tiers

We offer two training tiers for clinicians:

Tier 1: *A Course in PST*, involving interactive online modules followed by a review and Q&A session, and 6 monthly group case presentation calls; or

Tier 2: *PST Certification*, involving interactive online modules followed by a review and Q&A session, individual simulated virtual visits, 6 monthly group case presentation calls, and in-depth expert feedback on application of clinical skills based on session audio recording review.

We encourage all clinicians to pursue *PST certification* (Tier 2), given the importance of skill-based practice and expert feedback to fidelity standards. Importantly, the evidence base for the effectiveness of PST has been demonstrated using clinicians meeting this level of clinical skill.

### Eligibility

Licensed (or license-track) providers such as licensed social workers, registered nurses, and psychologists are eligible to receive training and to become certified in PST.

Prospective trainees *must* have an active caseload of at least 3 patients experiencing depressive symptoms by the time they begin PST training.

Medical assistants and non-clinical staff members (such as case workers, patient navigators, etc.) are not eligible for formal certification in PST. However, these staff members can receive training in [Behavioral Activation Strategies](#).

### Intended Audience

- Licensed mental health providers (LICSW, LPC/LMHC, LMFT, PhD, PsyD)
- License-track mental health providers

- Registered Nurse
- Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Physicians

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this training, participants should be able to:

### PST Tier 1&2 Part 1:

- Describe the treatment structure and typical session agenda for PST
- Provide patient education about the link between unresolved problems and depressive symptoms
- Explain how PST can help patients solve problems and reduce depressive symptoms
- Explain rationale for activity scheduling
- Demonstrate ability to compile a comprehensive, non-detailed problem list
- Teach model patients the fundamental PST skills such as defining problems, setting goals, brainstorming solutions, making decisions, and setting action plans
- Explain how to evaluate patient outcomes and address barriers to their action planning
- \*Teach model patients the fundamental PST skills of brainstorming solutions, weighing pros and cons, and selecting a solution (**Tier 2 ONLY**)
- \*Guide patients through creating a specific, detailed action plan for a chosen solution (**Tier 2 ONLY**)
- \*Teach patient skills to identify and proactively address potential barriers to their action plan (**Tier 2 ONLY**)
- \*Describe how to incorporate relapse prevention planning into PST

### PST Tier 1 &2 LOS Part 2:

- Demonstrate agenda setting at the beginning of the PST session
- Provide psychoeducation with real patients about the link between unresolved problems and depressive symptoms
- Assist patients with clearly defining a problem and setting a behavioral goal that is achievable by the next session
- Apply brainstorming solutions and evaluation of pros and cons with real patients
- Guide patients through creating a specific, detailed action plan for a chosen solution
- Apply homework review to real patient cases
- Demonstrate ability to teach the steps of the PST process to patients

## Instructor Credentials

*Instructors vary by cohort*

- **Patrick J. Raue, PhD:** Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington, and Associate Director for Evidence-Based Psychosocial Interventions at the AIMS Center

- **Annie McGuire, MS, LMHC, MHA:** Clinical Trainer & Practice Coach at the AIMS Center
- **Monica Harrison, MSW, LCSW:** Clinical Trainer & Practice Coach at the AIMS Center
- **Becky Shermer, PhD:** Clinical Trainer at the AIMS Center

**Refund Policy**

Refunds may be granted at the AIMS Center’s discretion. All refund or cancellation requests must be submitted to [bhskills@uw.edu](mailto:bhskills@uw.edu). The AIMS Center will review requests and determine the appropriate course of action.

**Tier 1. A Course in PST**

This course consists of a series of online modules introducing PST principles, followed by a Q&A session, 6 monthly case presentation calls. Clinicians will have the opportunity to apply PST to several cases and receive feedback from AIMS Center PST expert trainers on their reported application of clinical skills. Eligible providers can claim up to 10 Continuing Education Credits awarded by the American Psychological Association.

Clinicians can expect to develop beginning skills in PST, but will not develop full competency in PST based on session audiotape review to fidelity standards (see Tier 2).

Training Component	Time (per clinician)	Includes:
<b>Online Training and Q&amp;A</b>	5 hours	4-hour self-paced online introduction to the evidence base, foundations, and skills of PST 1-hour review and Q&A session with an expert trainer via Zoom
<b>Monthly Case Presentation</b>	6 hours (1 hour per month)	Group calls with 5-8 participants Participants present real cases and discuss challenging and complex case presentations with the trainer

Total Cost of A Course in PST	
Cost of training:	<b>\$825</b> per clinician pursuing 6 case calls*

*\*We offer “A Course in PST” as a contract or invoice with the University of Washington.*

**Tier 2. PST Certification**

PST training and certification typically requires between 19 to 22 hours of participant time over the course of seven months. Upon completion of all training requirements, participants receive certification as a PST practitioner. Eligible providers can claim up to 13 Continuing Education Credits awarded by the American Psychological Association.



Training Component	Time (per clinician)	Includes:
<b>Kickoff Webinar</b>	½ hour	Group introduction to PST and the training program
<b>Online Training and Q&amp;A</b>	5 hours	4-hour self-paced online introduction to the evidence base, foundations, and skills of PST 1-hour review and Q&A session via Zoom
<b>Simulated Virtual Visits</b>	3-4 hours (1 hour per session)	One-on-one practice sessions with a certified PST trainer In-depth education on PST fundamentals and skills
<b>Monthly Case Presentation</b>	6 hours (1 hour per month)	Group calls with 5-8 participants Participants present real cases and discuss challenging and complex case presentations with trainer
<b>Audio Recording Review for Certification</b>	4 hours (1 hour per review)	Audio submission of participant practicing PST with a patient Audio recording review by expert PST trainer

Total Cost of PST Training and Certification	
Cost of training and certification:	<b>\$1,425</b> per clinician
Trainees requiring additional time from the trainer for either 1) Phone-Based Practice Sessions, or 2) Audio Recording Review for Certification to meet certification will be charged per hour in addition to the standard fee	<b>\$200</b> per hour

*\*We offer “PST Certification” as a contract or invoice with the University of Washington.*

### Continuing Education (CE)

PST training and certification offered by the AIMS Center provides *licensed* clinicians CE through the American Psychological Association (APA). Clinicians gain a skill that they can use with a wide spectrum of patient populations in a variety of settings. Tier 1 training offers up to 10 CE credits, while Tier 2 training offers up to 13 CE credits. Credits are earned at two different points in the training.

#### Part 1:

**3-5 CE credits available for Tier 1**

**6-8 CE credits available for Tier 2**

- Online modules - Basic Skills/Common Elements: 2 credits (*only available to participants who have not completed the BHCM online modules in the last 12 months*)
- Online modules - PST: 2 credits
- Live Q&A session: 1 credit
- Individual simulated virtual visits: 3 credits (Tier 2 ONLY)

#### Part 2:

**5 CE credits available (Tier 1 & Tier 2)**

- 5 of 6 one-hour monthly case presentation calls: 5 credits



The AIMS Center is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor CE for psychologists. The AIMS Center maintains responsibility for this program and its content. All training activities are eligible for CE at no additional charge. Check with your licensing board to determine whether APA accredited CE is accepted for your state license. Clinical Social Workers: The University of Washington is recognized by Washington state licensing authority for social workers practicing in the state.

### **CE Eligible Providers**

Psychologists, Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Mental Health Counselors, and license-track mental health providers

### **How to Claim**

To receive CE credits, participants must complete the training in its entirety. After completing part 1 of the training, participants take a CE quiz and must receive a minimum score of 75% in no more than 3 attempts. The CE certificate will be emailed to the email on record after passing the quiz. After completing part 2 of the training, CE certificates will be emailed to participants who attended a minimum of 5 case presentation calls.

### **Conflict of Interest Disclosure Information**

There are no relevant financial relationships for anyone who was involved in the planning or who had control of the content of this training.

### **More Information**

More information about PST training and certification is available on the [AIMS Center website](#). If you have questions, contact the AIMS Center at [bhskills@uw.edu](mailto:bhskills@uw.edu).

