

# Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists

*Offering international certification for training, education & experience in  
traumatic stress services, response and treatment.*

## Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS)

### Instructions & Application Kit

This Application Packet contains information you need to apply  
for ATSS **Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS)** recognition.  
*If you have additional questions, please contact ATSS Headquarters*

#### Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists

88 Pompton Ave

Verona, NJ

Attn: Lauren De Poto

Phone: 973-559-9200 Fax: 973-857-0682

E-mail: [Admin@atss.info](mailto:Admin@atss.info)

[www.atss.info](http://www.atss.info)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fax:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_



#### For Headquarters Use Only

**Certification Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Expiration Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# ATSS Association of Traumatic Stress Specialist

## CTS Application Checklist

Please submit your application with the documents in the following order with this checklist and the cover page:

- 1. **Non-refundable certification fee in U.S. funds only: \$250.00**
- 2. **Current Resume/Vitae**
- 3. **Education Documentation:** Enclose and check one of the following:
  - Copy of High School Diploma or GED
  - Associates Degree
  - Bachelor's Degree
  - Master's Degree
  - Doctoral
- 4. **Sponsor Letter** included with the application. The sponsor letter must formally recommend the application for certification as a Certified Trauma Specialist.
- 5. **Three (3) letters of recommendation** written in support of the applicant's certification as a CTS. Letters of recommendation must formally recommend the application for certification as a Certified Trauma Specialist. Letters should be on letterhead. Please note the requirements for the letters on the following page.
- 6. **Competed Experience Form**
- 7. Copies of certificates, letters or transcripts to document attendance to conferences, seminars, workshops or class work verifying 240 education hours. Attach these behind the corresponding application section.
- 8. **I acknowledge completion of my own personal counseling.** (Check the box to acknowledge counseling.) *The counselor's own personal counseling should provide an opportunity for the trauma specialist to recognize and address those areas which may compromise or enhance the counselor's ability to provide assistance to trauma victims.* You do not need to submit documentation from your therapist.
- 9. **The original application and 1 copy.** (please keep an extra copy for your records.)

**ATSS Headquarters**  
c/o  
**MHANJ**  
**88 Pompton Ave**  
**Verona, NJ 07044**  
**Attn: Lauren De Poto**

All supporting certification documents and the certification fee must accompany your application. Incomplete applications will be held by the certification board until all documentation is received. Allow 9-120 days after the review for notice of certification status. Questions about appropriate experience and education or about your qualifications for certification should first be directed to your sponsor. If your sponsor is not available, contact ATSS. To receive additional forms contact:

Association Headquarters: 973-559-9200

The above information has been submitted and is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# ATSS Association of Traumatic Stress Specialist

## Certified Trauma Specialist Application Instructions

*Applicants are responsible for compliance with application requirements and instructions. If you submit an incomplete application, the Certification Board will not be able to complete the review of your application. **Your application fee is non-refundable.** Work with your sponsor to ensure that your documentation is complete.*

### Certification Criteria

Applications are required to obtain membership with the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists (ATSS) before applying for certification. Your membership must be processed and verified before your application for certification can be accepted at the member rate. Mail your application to the Association Headquarters at the address above.

The Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS) is appropriate for counselors and treatment specialists are facilitators of trauma recovery groups, hypnotherapists, art or drama therapists, individuals who provide Thought Field Therapy, Traumatic Incident Reduction, EMDR, meridian based therapy's, individual, group, and/or family counseling to trauma survivors. The standards for education are detailed in the application. You should review the criteria with your sponsor to ensure you meet the minimum requirements.

### 1. Application Form

You must fully complete the application form. Please type or print neatly. You must include your sponsor's name on the form. Your sponsor must be a Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS) in good standing with the ATSS.

### 2. Assignment of Sponsor

All applicants must be assigned an ATSS sponsor. Your sponsor must be a Certified Trauma Specialist (CTS) in good standing with ATSS. Contact Diane Travers at [dtravers@mhaessex.org](mailto:dtravers@mhaessex.org) for assignment of a sponsor.

#### Sponsors will provide the following:

- Consultation regarding application process
- Confirmation that experience and training meets CTS criteria for certification
- Initial review of application
- Final review of application with sponsor letter recommending you be approved as CTS

### 3. Experience Criteria

2000 hours experience in counseling specific to trauma. Please complete the *Experience Form* in the application. You may also use a separate sheet of paper with "Experience" as the title and applicant's name. Only 2000 hours specific to trauma need to be documented. Example:

Employer	Dates	Trauma Populations	Hours
VA Lyons, NJ	1987-89	Vietnam Veterans	1,200
Shelter Our Sisters, DV Shelter, PA	1989-92	Domestic Violence	950

TOTAL			2,150
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**4. Documentation of Experience**

Experience Form – Fill out the experience section on the first page of the CTS application. Be sure the information matches your resume.

Resume – A current resume/vitae must be included which documents the above mentioned information and elaborates on trauma population

**5. Documentation of Education and Training.**

- a. 240\* clock hours of trauma specific education and training must be listed on the application in the *Education and Training* section. Details on the required courses are on the Minimum Standards Training and Education Form. If more room is needed, attach a separate sheet of paper that includes “Education and Training” as the title with the applicant’s name at the top of each page.
- b. The 240 hours must be supported with unofficial transcripts, certificates of attendance, CEU’s, and letters from supervisors or workshop providers. Each document must give your name, date of workshop, contact hours and verification of attendance. **Brochures and registration forms are NOT acceptable forms of documentation.**

- A college Degree is not a requirement for CTS. Final transcripts from a mental health field at the Masters or Doctoral level or a current state mental health license and a copy of malpractice insurance will satisfy 90 hours of required documentation for the following areas:
 

# 2. Intake/Initial Assessment/Psychosocial	# 5. Counseling: Individual, Family and Group
# 3. Differential Diagnosis/Dual Diagnosis	# 7. Community Resources/Referral
# 4. Treatment Planning/Case Management	# 11. Ethical/Legal Issues.

Additional hours from transcripts may satisfy other education hours. Be specific in the description of course work to satisfaction of education hours. Please put documents in the same order as they are listed. The following is an example of how to write down the documentation in the Education and Training section of the application.

If the education/training hours are satisfied while attending college, the professor’s name is not necessary, provided the college’s name is listed as the Educational Provider.

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<u>Community &amp; Social</u> 6. “Special Populations” SC 5203	Spring, 1991	University of Texas at Austin	15
<u>Electives</u> <i>Death &amp; Dying</i> Working with Families of Homicide Victims: Complicated Bereavement	October, 1997	NOVA Cheryl Tyiska	6

**6. Applicants Own Counseling**

50 hours of counselor’s own counseling must be completed. This includes individual, family, and group counseling. Check the statement on the checklist page and sign. You do not need to provide documentation of your own counseling. *The counselor’s own personal counseling should provide an opportunity for the trauma specialist to recognize and address those areas, which may compromise or enhance the counselor’s ability to provide assistance to trauma victims.*

## 7. Letters of Recommendation

Three (3) letters of recommendation must be submitted with the application. The letters of recommendation should:

- a. Specifically address the skills of the applicant as a trauma treatment provider
  - b. Specifically address the ethical conduct of the applicant
  - c. A formal recommendation for the applicant to be a Certified Trauma Specialist. Recommendations must be submitted on letterhead.
  - d. Applicants' professionalism in the provision of trauma intervention
  - e. Applicants' ethical standards in the provision of trauma intervention
  - f. How long and in what capacity the writer of the letter of recommendation knows the applicant
8. **Fees.** The fee must accompany the application
- a. Current ATSS member - \$250.00
9. **Deadlines.** The ATSS Certification Board meets throughout the year. Your packet will be reviewed when it is received.
10. All supporting certification documents and the certification fee must accompany your application. Incomplete applications will be held by the certification board until all documentation is received. Allow 90-120 days after the review for notice of certification status. Questions about appropriate experience and education or about your qualifications for certification should first be directed to your sponsor. If your sponsor is not available, contact Diane Travers at [dtravers@mhaessex.org](mailto:dtravers@mhaessex.org). To receive additional forms, please view the website [www.atss.info](http://www.atss.info)
11. Re-certification. Your certification is valid for three years. If you have not received a re-certification application when your certification is due to expire, please contact headquarters and one will be sent to you. The requirements for re-certification are as follows: verification for 30 hours of education or training in a trauma specific field, a \$175 re-certification fee, and proof of current ATSS membership (membership card, copy of dues invoice, etc.) Thirty (30) hours or re-certification must be accrued during the time you are certified and the time you expire

**Keep a copy of the application for your files and mail the original application plus 1 copy to:**

**88 Pompton Ave Verona NJ 07044**

# ATSS Association of Traumatic Stress Specialist

## Certified Trauma Specialist Application

(Please print or type)

Required: Membership # _____
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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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First	Middle	Last
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Address	City
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State/Province	Country	Zip
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Phone (Work)	Phone (Home)
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Email Address

By signing below, I attest that I have thoroughly reviewed the applicant's certification packet and confirm that they meet educational and experiential criteria and all supporting documentation has been included.

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Sponsor Name	Signature	CTS #
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### **Reminder:**

**In order to apply for CTS certification, your ATSS membership must be in good standing. Your certification becomes void if membership lapses.**

**Attach the required documentation behind each divider page.**

**Include only the information that is required. All extra documents will be discarded.**

**Please submit one copy with the original to headquarters. Keep an extra copy for your record!**

# ATSS Association of Traumatic Stress Specialist

## Course Numbers and Explanations

The following is an explanation of the eleven areas of required education. Please organize your education and training hours using this format. Use the certification application pages provided to list specific courses or training under each numbered area.

CTS (Certified Trauma Specialist)	Total Hours Required
<b>Assessment &amp; Diagnosis</b>	<b>48</b>
1. <i>Post Traumatic Stress Reactions</i> – The assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of all types of reactions that occur after a trauma, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Only training that is specific to post trauma reactions and treatment can be included in the required 24 hours. Some courses or workshops on diagnosis and treatment of psychological problems do include trauma, but only the hours that are specifically about trauma can be counted toward the required 24 hours. Examples of courses that include but are not totally about diagnosis and treatment of trauma reactions are EMDR, TFT, TIR, hypnosis, crisis management, or psychiatric illness.	24
*2. <i>Intake/Initial Assessment/Psychological</i> – Training in a number of areas: Simple-Complex PTSD; Cross-Cultural, Multicultural factors (sensitivity to cultural influences); Rural/Urban/Developing regions factors (sensitivity to cultural influences); Suicidality (risk assessment and theory); Vocational Assessment; Differences in Populations (availability of services); Grief; Research Literacy (basic understanding of research process); and Addictions	12
*3. <i>Differential Diagnosis/Dual Diagnosis</i> – This covers issues of Simple-Complex PTSD; the role of the DMS-IV; Cross-Cultural or Multicultural factors; Rural/Urban/Developing regions factors; Psychopharmacology; Self Care (self-other); Research Literacy; Addiction; and Mental Illness.	12
<b>Treatment</b>	<b>48</b>
*4. <i>Treatment Planning/Case Management</i> – This covers Vocational Planning & Assessment; Grief; Psychopharmacology; Referrals; Managing Comprehensive Trauma Centers; Addictions; Development Issues; and Follow-ups & Completion	12
*5. <i>Counseling</i> – Individual (12); Family (12); Group (12) – Various topics include Systems Theory; Spirituality or Belief-Based Treatment Models (e.g. Christian, Native American, Metaphysical); Psychological Theory-based Models (e.g. Cognitive, Gestalt, Psychodynamic, Contextualistic); Grief; Self Care; and Skills	36
<b>Community &amp; Social</b>	<b>42</b>
6. <i>Special Populations</i> – Various populations often require culturally-sensitive approaches. Contexts for assessment, treatment,	18

management, etc. might be different for Multicultural or cross-cultural populations, which could include Christians; Native Americans; Indigenous people; Western Industrialized populations; Children: Adolescents; Adults; Older Adults; or Suicidal Clients	
*7. <b>Community Resources/Referral</b> – Topics include Systems Theory; Addictions; Vocational resources; Spiritual Systems; Resources; Education/Preparational; Training/Supervision; Computer Literacy; Referrals; Advocacy; Comprehensive Trauma Centers; and basic support.	12
8. <b>Legal Systems</b> - Criminal Justice, Social Justice, Juvenile and or Family Court Systems. This covers Criminal Justice System; Referrals; Public Policy and Legislation; and Advocacy	12
<b>Crisis</b>	<b>20</b>
9. <b>Crisis Intervention</b> – Contents include: Models of Crisis Response (e.g. CISM, NOVA, Process Oriented, Red Cross); Suicide Risk of Clients; Supportive Listening; Crisis Communication; and Communicating with People in Crisis	12
10. <b>Community/Large –scale Disaster</b> – Issues involved are: Education/Prevention/Training; Comprehensive Trauma Centers; Command & Control Centers; Protocols of Local/Regional/Federal/International Agencies or Organizations; Access by/to Internal/External Providers; Responding to Natural and/or Man-made disasters	8
<b>Ethics</b>	6
*11. <b>Ethics/Legal Issues</b> – Topics include: Research Competency/Literacy (understanding implications as well as knowledge of good research practices); Psychopharmacology (Philosophy & Practice); Computer Literacy; Ongoing Supervision/Consults; Referrals; Decisions regarding level of intervention (when to let go or do less); Follow-up & Accountability; Self Care; Suicide/Homicide Risks of Clients; Advocacy	6
<b>Electives</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Special Populations</b> – These topics are focused on specializations, such as Children, Families or Groups; Suicides/Homicides; Addicts; HIV Positive; Brain Injured; Chronically Ill; Crime Victims or Trauma Services	
<b>Techniques and Therapies</b> – Various techniques could include Pharmacology; Supervision/Consults; Hypnosis; Treatment Modalities; e.g. TRI, TFT, EMDR; Mobile or Comprehensive Trauma Center; Skills; Counseling; Advocacy	
<b>TOTAL</b> * Covered by Degree/License/Malpractice Insurance	<b>240</b>

## **RESUME/VITAE**

Your resume should list all your work with trauma victims and match what you list under the section titled “Experience”. DO NOT say “See resume” in the Experience section.

## **TRANSCRIPTS FOR MASTER’S OR HIGHER DEGREE IN A MENTAL HEALTH FIELD**

Or

## **COPY OF MENTAL HEALTH PSYCHOTHERAPY STATE LICENSE OR STATE CERTIFICATION**

And

## **MALPRACTICE INSURANCE POLICY**

These documents will satisfy 90 hours of the 240 hours that require documentation and verification in the following areas of required education: *2 Intake/Initial Assessment/Psychosocial; 3. Differential Diagnosis/Dual Diagnosis; 4. Treatment Planning/Case Management; 5. Counseling – Individual, Family and Group; 7. Community Resources/Referral; 11. Ethical Legal Issues.*

Write your degree (MSA, MA, PhD, EdD) in these six areas.

Documentation and verification of 90 hours training and education in those six areas will be required if you do not have proof of a graduate degree in a counseling field.

## SPONSOR LETTER

And

## THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION AS A CTS

1. Each should be on letterhead stationary or state professional occupation of the writer, as well as give a phone number and email address
2. Each must state how the writer knows the applicant.
3. **Each letter must state the writer is recommending the applicant for certification as a CTS.**
4. Each must address the ethical conduct and professional practices of the applicant.
5. **General letters of recommendation will not be accepted.**



## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Please include only the required documentation. All unnecessary documents will be discarded.

You can split hours from one workshop, seminar, or class into two or more areas.  
Be sure the total number of hours listed does not exceed the total number of hours of the workshop or class.

Example:

Course or seminar title: **“Responding to Trauma Victims”** – 16 hours

Topics with the “Responding to Trauma Victims” seminar can include

<i>Acute trauma reactions</i>	4 hours
<i>Post Traumatic Stress Reactions</i>	4 hours
<i>Crisis Intervention</i>	6 hours
Electives	2 hours

## Assessment & Diagnosis

### Post Traumatic Stress Reactions

The assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of all types of reactions that occur after a trauma, including posttraumatic stress disorder. Only training that is specific to post trauma reactions and treatment can be included in the required 24 hours. Some courses of workshops on diagnosis and treatment of psychological problems do include trauma, but only the hours that are specifically about trauma can be counted toward the required 24 hours. Examples of courses that include, but are totally about diagnosis and treatment of trauma reactions are EMDR, TFT, TIR, hypnosis, crisis management, or psychiatric illnesses.

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Post Traumatic Stress Reactions (24 Required)</b>			



## DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS/DUAL DIAGNOSIS

Issues of Simple-Complex PTSD; the role of the DSM-IV; Cross-cultural or Multicultural factors; Rural/Urban/Developing regions factors; Psychopharmacology; Self Care, Research, Literacy; Addiction..  
*Documentation of this category can be satisfied by a copy of your transcript for a Master's or higher degree in a counseling field **OR** a copy of a current state license in a mental health field **and** proof of malpractice insurance.*

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Differential Diagnosis/Dual Diagnosis Hours (12 Required)</b>			

## TREATMENT PLANNING/CASE MANAGEMENT

This covers Vocational Planning & Assessment; Grief; Psychopharmacology; Referrals; Managing Comprehensive Trauma Centers; Addiction; Developmental Issues; and Follow-ups and Completion. Documentation of this category can be satisfied by a copy of your transcript for a Master's or higher degree in a counseling field **OR** a copy of a current state license in a mental health field **and** proof of malpractice insurance.

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Treatment Planning/Case Management Hours (12 Required)</b>			



## COMMUNITY & SOCIAL

### Special Populations

Various populations often require culturally-sensitive approaches. Contexts for assessment, treatment, management, etc. might be different for Multicultural or cross-cultural populations, which could include Christians, Native Americans; Indigenous peoples; Western Industrialized populations; Children, Adolescents; Adults; Older Adults or Suicidal Clients

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Special Populations Hours (18 Required)</b>			

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES/REFERRAL

Topics include System Theory; Addiction; Vocational resources; Spiritual System/Resources; Education/Preparational; Training/Supervision; Computer Literacy; Referrals; Advocacy; Comprehensive Trauma Centers; and basic support. *Documentation of this category can be satisfied by a copy of your transcript for a Master's or higher degree in a counseling field **OR** a copy of a current state license in a mental health field **and** proof of malpractice insurance.*

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Community Resources/Referral Hours (12 Required)</b>			





## COMMUNITY/LARGE-SCALE DISASTERS

Issues involved are: Comprehensive Trauma Centers; Command & Control Centers; Protocols of Local/Regional/Federal/International Agencies or Organizations; Access by to Internal/External Providers; Responding to Natural and/or Man-made Disasters

Title of Class/Workshop	Date(s) of Training	Educational Provider/Trainer	Number of Hours
<b>Total Community/Large –Scale Disaster Hours (12 Required)</b>			



## **ELECTIVES**

A combined total of 76 hours are required in the next two areas. Some elective hours may be taken in the required areas of training listed from the previous sections or from the following:

**Crime Victimization**  
**Terrorism/Social & Political Oppression**  
**Sexual Assault/Family Violence**  
**Counter-Transference**  
**Domestic Violence/Family Violence**  
**Hostages**  
**Childhood Abuse**  
    **Sexual, Physical, Emotional**  
**Holocaust Survivors & Family Members**  
**Suicide/Homicide & Co-Victims**  
**Death, Dying and Grief, Traumatic Grief**  
**Treatment Modalities:**  
    **TFT, EMDR, TIR, Hypnosis**  
**Workplace Violence and Trauma**  
**Substance Abuse**  
**AIDS/HIV**  
**Chronic Mental Illness**  
**Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Trauma**  
**School Violence and Response**  
**Trauma & Spiritual Issues**  
**Advocacy/Policy Making/Legislation**  
**Combat/Military Veterans**  
**Emergency Rescue/Fire/Law Enforcement**  
**Refugees/War Victims**  
**Secondary PTSD/Caregiver Debriefing**  
**PTSD & Pharmacology**  
**Catastrophic Injury/Illness/Physical**





# ATSS Association of Traumatic Stress Specialist

## Minimum Standards Education and Training Form Certified Trauma Specialists (CTS)

240 total clock hours of training are required. It must be in the order of the required training list below.

<u>REQUIRED CORE COURSES</u>	<u>CLOCK HOURS</u>
1. Post Traumatic Stress Reactions	24
2.* Intake/Initial Assessment/Psychosocial	12
3.* Differential Diagnosis/Dual Diagnosis	12
4.* Treatment Planning/Case Management	12
5.* Counseling: Individual, Family, Group	12
6. Special Populations	18
7.* Community Resources/Referral	12
8. Legal Systems	12
9. Crisis Intervention	12
10. Community/Large-scale Disasters	8
11.* Ethics/Legal Issues	6
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12. TOTAL Core Courses	164
13. Approved Electives	76
TOTAL ALL Required Core and Elective	240

\* These courses can be satisfied by a Master's or higher degree in a counseling field or copies of a current state license in a mental health field and proof of malpractice insurance