

The Pillars of Youth Peer Support online learning series consists of nine short videos. Each video outlines foundational information to support youth as they support their peers. This Facilitation Support Document complements the videos by offering reflection questions and activities that can enhance understanding of the content. For those who may be watching these videos as a group, or as part of a training, these questions and activities also provide an opportunity for discussion and critical reflection.

1. Youth peer support 101

New to peer support, or want a refresher? Our Pillars of Youth Peer Support learning series is just for you! This video provides a brief overview of youth peer support, its key ingredients, what it is and isn't, and its role in supporting the mental health and well-being of youth.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- Have you ever accessed peer support services? What did you find helpful?
- Why do you think some youth would rather talk to a friend or peer rather than a professional?
- What characteristics and skills are needed to support someone?

Activity

Take a moment to write down three to five strengths or qualities that would help you be a good youth peer supporter.

2. Supporting your peer's journey

Everyone's life journey is different. This video discusses how to support and guide a peer's journey, and the importance of promoting a sense of belonging by connecting peers to people, services, supports, and the community.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- How would you approach your peer if you did not agree with the choices they were making?
- If your peer is experiencing social isolation or loneliness who could you connect them with? In your community, what are some resources you could direct them to?
- How far should you go to help a friend?

Activity

Having a shared identity or experience with your peer, helps to develop a connection and strong relationship. As such, we encourage you to take the time to reflect on your own experiences and wellness journey.

1. Think back to a time in your life when you faced some difficulties or challenges. On a piece of paper, briefly describe some of the key issues and how they made you feel.
2. Now, focus on what helped you overcome these struggles. Write down some of the people and supports that helped. Did you turn to a mentor, friend, spiritual leader, or family support?
3. Consider the key components of a wellness journey (i.e. hope, empowerment, responsibility and meaning) and your experiences with them.
4. Did you access any peer support services when you were struggling? If so, write about your experience and how it helped you throughout your own wellness journey.

3. Communication considerations	
<p>Communication is key to providing youth peer support. This video shares important communication considerations (such as how to create a safe space and place for meaningful conversations) and focuses on the role of language, empathy and reflective listening.</p>	
<p>Reflections, or discussion questions <i>Consider answering these questions when in company of your adult ally, as they will be able help you in identifying best results.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does a safe space or place mean to you? • If you can see something is bothering your peer, what open-ended questions could you ask to encourage them to communicate and share? • In the past, what has helped you to navigate through an intense situation? • What are some of the non-violent communication techniques that you use in conflict situations?
<p>Activity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If reviewing and discussing the videos with a group of people, establish a “comfort agreement” with them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let everyone share what they need to feel comfortable and safe within the space and among the group. • Write these down on a piece of paper. • Discuss each idea and what it means. • Have everyone sign the paper and keep in on hand for whenever the group meets. 2. It may have been a while since you’ve played, but the Telephone Game is a fun way to emphasize the importance of clear communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in a circle. • Someone starts by whispering a phrase to the person on their right. • Each person then takes their turn hearing and passing on the phrase, until it reaches the last person. • The last person says the phrase out loud, so everyone can hear how similar or different it is from the original.
<p>Homework</p>	<p>Throughout the week, take notice of the different communication styles people use, (i.e. tone, body language, active listening cues, etc.). Consider which styles or techniques resonate with you, and why? Then try practicing these during your own interactions.</p>

4. Sharing your story

Your insight and experiences are worth sharing. This video talks about how to share your lived experiences and story in a way that is hopeful and helpful for you and your peer.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- How can you make sure your peer is ready to hear your story? What questions can you ask?
- Thinking about your story, what are some helpful and hopeful parts you would want to share? What are some parts that you want to keep private?

Activity

For the *Supporting your peer's journey* video, we asked you to think back on your own journey. If you wrote down your experiences, go back to those notes.

- If you are in a larger group, split up into pairs, and if comfortable, practice how you would share parts of your story, (e.g. signs and symptoms, what made you seek help, what help you received). If you are not in a group setting, consider practicing with an adult ally.
- Take time to listen to the stories of others, and consider how while there may be similarities, no two people, nor their stories, are exactly alike.
- Discuss what you hope someone can learn from your story and/or what you learned from others.

5. Working across differences

We are all unique. While shared lived experiences is a key ingredient of youth peer support, in this video we also highlight the importance of understanding and valuing the ways in which we are different and incorporating this understanding into your peer support practice.

Reflections, or discussion questions

After watching the "Working across differences video", discuss the different topics.

- Were any of these concepts new to you, (i.e. stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, oppression, power and privilege)?
- Do you have any personal experiences with the issues that you want to share?
- What are some privilege(s) you may have experienced?
- How can understanding these issues strengthen your peer support practice?

<p>Activity</p>	<p>Keep in mind there is more to diversity than meets the eye. It's important for you to take time to look beneath the surface so you can learn more about yourself, and your peer, and how to best support them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a piece of paper draw an iceberg, (typically you can see the tip of the iceberg above the surface, which means most of the iceberg is beneath the water). • On the surface of the iceberg write down some simple things that visibly make you different from others. • Now, below the surface of the iceberg, write down some characteristics or layers of your identity that are invisible to others such as values, spiritual beliefs, goals, skills and sexual orientation, etc. • If willing, share your iceberg with others to see how they are similar and different.
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6. Supporting your peer through a crisis

We all go through tough times. This video focuses on how to support your peer through a crisis.

TRIGGER WARNING -in this video, we'll provide an overview of how to support someone who is considering suicide and will talk about the importance of breaking codes of silence around suicide.

<p>Reflections, or discussion questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the limits of confidentiality and why you must tell someone if your peer or someone else is in danger. • Why is it important to consider your own triggers before supporting someone in crisis? • Who are the trusted adults you can turn to for support?
<p>Activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On a sheet of paper, write down a couple of activities or techniques that help you refocus when you feel triggered or upset (e.g. counting backwards from 99, having a physical object to hold, knitting, etc.)
<p>Additional training</p>	<p>We strongly encourage you to access resources and trainings available in your area such as SuicideTALK, safeTALK, or Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).</p>

7. Taking care of yourself

You and your well-being matter! Taking care of yourself is essential to providing youth peer support. In this video, we'll highlight the different components of self-care and suggest ways to keep yourself balanced. The importance of setting boundaries will also be discussed.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- What are some signs that you may need to step back to take care of yourself?
- What activities help to keep you balanced?
- If you are providing peer support within an organization, review the social media policy and discuss when and how debriefs will take place.
- If you are outside of an organization, what are your social media boundaries?

Activity

- Develop a self-care plan to ensure you are being intentional about taking care of yourself.
- For an example of a self-care plan, check out Social Work Tech: <http://socialworktech.com/2011/05/25/making-a-self-care-plan/>

8. Making connections

As a youth peer supporter, you are not alone! In this video we'll talk about connecting with people, community resources and services that can support your lifelong peer support journey.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- What makes for a good adult ally?
- Who are the trusted adult allies in your life that could help you debrief?

Activity

By yourself or with a group, create a list of known resources and services in your area. These resources and services can become part of your "community connections" and can be helpful for your peer.

9. Ending a peer support relationship

All good things must come to an end. In this video we'll talk about how to respectfully and meaningfully wrap up a peer support relationship. We'll also provide a quick summary of the takeaway messages from the Pillars of Youth Peer Support Learning series.

Reflections, or discussion questions

- If you have accessed peer support yourself, how did the relationship come to an end? What was helpful and what would you have done differently?
- After watching all the videos, do you feel more capable providing youth peer support?

Activity

Learning is a life long journey and these videos are just the beginning when it comes to knowledge and resources on peer support.

- With an adult ally, or with a group, develop a learning plan with some clear goals.
- Research different resources and trainings opportunities that can help you achieve these goals.