



Canadian Mental Health Association  
Mental health for all

## Campus Peer Support Program Module 1 – Facilitator’s Guide

Estimated Time to Complete: 2.5hrs total time (including breaks)		
Objectives:	Materials:	Resources:
<p>By participating in this session, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain their role and responsibilities as a peer supporter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator Guide</li> <li>• PowerPoint slides</li> <li>• Participant handouts: <i>Never have I ever scenarios; Roles &amp; responsibilities scenarios</i></li> </ul>	<p>In person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flipcharts/whiteboards, markers</li> <li>• stickers, markers</li> <li>• Fidgets, opt-out cards, quiet area</li> </ul> <p>If virtual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webcam</li> <li>• Virtual conferencing tool with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Breakout rooms</li> <li>○ Polling</li> <li>○ Whiteboard</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>LMS activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think back!</li> <li>• Explain it to a friend</li> <li>• Learning plan</li> </ul> <p>Local resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and connecting (15 mins)</li> <li>• Peer support overview (25)</li> <li>• Campus role &amp; responsibilities (50 mins)</li> <li>• Personal strengths (15 mins)</li> <li>• Your peer support statement (20 mins)</li> <li>• Conclusion and next steps (10 mins)</li> </ul> <p><b>Current timing: 145 mins (includes 10 mins break)</b> <b>(Max: 150 mins)</b></p>		



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<p><b>Total:</b> 15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Welcome / Presentation</b> (10 minutes)</p> <p><b>Slide:</b> Agenda slide</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> fidget objects, other resources required</p>	<p><i>Welcome students as they arrive and then provide a quick overview of what you will cover in this session. Include (and adjust as required) the following key points:</i></p> <p><b>Land acknowledgement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare in advance your personalized land acknowledgement</li> <li>• Invite students to add to your acknowledgement</li> </ul> <p><b>Agenda</b></p> <p>The purpose of this session is to help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain your role and responsibilities as a peer supporter</li> </ul> <p>There are also additional resources in the LMS to support and extend our discussion today.</p> <p>We will be sharing ideas as a group and also doing some individual reflection.</p> <p><i>Highlight different ways to engage/disengage – move if you need to move, use the opt out cards if you prefer not to participate in an activity/discussion, use the quiet space when you need to and the fidget objects if that helps you stay engaged.</i></p>
	<p><b>Icebreaker / Group activity</b> (5 mins)</p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Activity slide</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> N/A</p>	<p><i>Ask students to check-in for the session by sharing energy levels</i></p> <p>Let's start by sharing where we are all at today. Consider your current energy level on a scale of 0-5 (0=sleepy/low energy and 5=so ready/high energy).  On the count of three, please show me your energy level from a fist (for zero) to five.</p> <p><b>Debrief</b></p> <p>Discuss range – good to know where people are at – encourage students to honour where they are at and what they need to be present in the session today</p> <p><i>Connect to peer support principles (meet people where they are at)</i></p>



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<p><b>Total:</b> 25 mins</p>	<p><b>Peer support experiences/ Small group activity</b></p> <p>15 mins:            - 2 mins set-up            - 8 mins discussion            - 5 mins debrief</p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Activity slide</p> <p><b>Resource:</b> Scenarios handout</p>	<p><i>Divide students into small groups and have them discuss situations they may have experienced</i></p> <p>To dig into what peer support is, let's start with your own experiences!</p> <p>In your groups let's play "never have I ever"! Discuss the situations on the slide and for each one, share what helped (or would help) in each case. <i>Distribute handout</i></p> <p><b>Scenario 1:</b>            You have a lot going on at school and in your personal life and you haven't been getting much sleep. You miss your first class every morning this week.</p> <p><b>Scenario 2:</b>            You think you might have ADHD and have been trying out caffeine pills to see if it helps you study.</p> <p><b>Scenario 3:</b>            You sometimes get overwhelmed and feel like you want to quit school.</p> <p><b>Debrief:</b>            Based on your discussions, what themes emerged as things that help or are important when someone is having a difficult time? <i>(Prompt for things others can do: listen, support, validate/non-judgement and what things we can do for ourselves: personal coping strategies, seeking out resources, support)</i></p> <p>What would be important to remember if you were supporting someone in one of these situations? <i>(Prompt for things like self-determination, sharing lived experiences where appropriate etc.)</i></p>



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	<p><b>Peer support overview / Presentation</b>            (10 mins)</p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Peer support slide</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> N/A</p>	<p><i>Ask the group how they would define peer support based on what they know already. Share the explanations below. Remind students of the core values of peer support while comparing to other campus services.</i></p> <p>Peer support is specific and differs from friendship and peer mentoring. Peer support provides <b>non-clinical</b> emotional and social support based on empathy, the belief in self-determination and the sharing of lived experiences to inspire hope and wellness.</p> <p>What this means in practice is that we do <b>not</b> provide advice, we engage in conversations where there is mutual exchange and we actively work to eliminate power imbalances in an effort to create connection and belonging.</p> <p>It can help to think about the differences between informal and formal peer support:  <b>Informal</b> peer support is more like talking with your friends: helpful and often our first line of defense! It occurs naturally in reciprocal relationships, for example when classmates share how they are stressed about an upcoming exam and how they are each preparing/studying.  <b>Formal</b> peer support is where we connect with others who are intentionally selected because of their lived/living experiences and their demonstrated wellness and ability to be a source of support for those who are struggling. With formal peer support, individuals are trained and supervised while they support others (like all of you!).</p> <p>Finally, peer support is different from <b>mentoring</b>, because mentoring involves an intentional power dynamic between the supporter and the individual seeking support, whereas in peer support every effort is made to minimize that power imbalance. In a mentorship relationship, one individual is deemed “more expert” over the other and there is an intentional use of that expertise to help someone reach a goal (usually this goal is defined by the program/service intention, rather than being defined by the individual seeking support).</p> <p>In our <b>Orientation session</b> we talked about the core values of peer support. How do you see the core values showing up in the distinctions I just provided? <i>Connect to values and discuss how ethics and confidentiality also connect to the role of peer supporters as per your job description and institution policies.</i></p>



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<p><b>Total:</b> 50 mins</p>	<p><b>Roles &amp; responsibilities/ Group discussion</b></p> <p>40 mins:            - 10 mins x 3 scenarios            - 10 min debrief</p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Activity slide</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Scenario handout, Flipchart main differences</p> <hr/> <p><b>Campus peer support program/ Presentation</b> (10 mins)</p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Campus peer support program slide  <b>Resources:</b> Program resources/ spaces</p>	<p><i>Welcome students back and explain you will now look more specifically at what it means to be a peer supporter (building on the discussions from before the break)</i></p> <p>Let's look at some more detailed situations you may face when supporting peers. For each scenario, please discuss what a <b>friend</b> might do, what a <b>counselor</b> might do and what role a <b>peer supporter</b> could take in the situation.</p> <p><i>Discuss specific roles/responsibilities for each and emphasize the core values and ethical/confidentiality boundaries as appropriate.</i>  <i>See <b>Scenario discussion points</b> at end of document for potential responses to highlight for each scenario</i></p> <p><b>Debrief:</b>            As we've seen, there is an overlap between the range of support people can access. There are a number of services that students can access here, so let's look now at what is available and how we work within the range of services and supports available.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Review the specific service offerings and activities campus peer supporters will be involved in and connect to your discussion so far</i></p> <p>Here are the specific programs we run and the types of activities you will help with as a peer supporter:  <i>Highlight your key programs here and make distinctions between other peer programs (peer mentors etc.) and how they differ from your services (what gap does your peer support program fill?)</i></p> <p><i>Emphasize that all peer support is valuable regardless of where it falls (academic, mentoring, campus life etc.) and that service navigation will be common across all roles.</i>  <i>Highlight spaces/resources if applicable</i></p>



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<b>Total:</b> 10 mins	<b>Energizer/ Break – get everyone to stand up/move around (play some music or just get everyone to stretch)</b>	
<b>Total:</b> 15 minutes	<b>Strengths / Presentation</b> (10 minutes)  <b>Visual:</b> Strengths slide  <b>Resources:</b> Strengths flipchart, stickers	<p><i>Welcome students back and share the agenda for the remaining time.</i></p> <p>Let's shift now to what each of us bring to the role of peer support</p> <p>Based on our discussions so far, what do you think are the top characteristics of an effective peer supporter?</p> <p><i>Capture top strengths on a flipchart and then give out stickers/stars</i></p> <p>Which of these strengths do you think you have already? Make a note for yourself! Place a sticker next to the strengths/experiences you feel you have already</p> <p><i>Observe all the amazing skills/experiences that will help this group connect and support their peers!</i></p>
	<b>Strengths/ Group discussion</b> (5 minutes)  <b>Visual:</b> N/A  <b>Resources:</b> Development flipchart	<p><i>Ask students to identify areas for development.</i></p> <p>Which of the above-mentioned characteristics of effective peer supporters do you think you'd like to strengthen during this training program? (Encourage students to capture ideas in their journal or personal development plan.)</p> <p>What areas do you feel we need to develop as a group?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review skills/topics covered in the curriculum and discuss what additional topics the group would like to consider</li> <li>• Capture topics for future discussions/sessions</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Total:</b> 20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Your peer support statement/ Group activity (20 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Peer support statement slide</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Statements flipchart</p>	<p><i>Introduce the final activity for the session.</i></p> <p>In your role, you will be explaining what peer support looks like and potentially answering questions on the differences we started our session exploring. To end today, let's spend some time practicing describing peer support in your own words.</p> <p><i>Ask students to take a few minutes to come up with a short statement. Ask them to practice with a partner or in front of the group and provide feedback.</i></p> <p><b>Debrief</b> <i>Listen for scope and make sure they aren't "over promising" what they can offer as a peer supporter. Make sure that lived experience is included in their descriptions.</i></p>
<p><b>Total:</b> 10 minutes</p>	<p><b>Summary / Presentation (5 mins)</b></p> <p><b>Visual:</b> Slide</p>	<p><i>Summarize the key points from the discussion and highlight additional resources available</i> Today we focused on the role and responsibilities of a campus peer supporter. In our next session we will look at how to build connection and belonging with peers who access our services. <i>Provide details of the next session as well as self-directed activities on the LMS to complete</i></p>
	<p><b>Check out / Partner activity (5 mins)</b></p>	<p><i>End the session with a check-out activity:</i></p> <p>Find a partner and share what you are taking away from the session today</p>



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## Role and responsibilities activity scenarios

### Scenario 1:

*Lex has been working a part-time job at the print shop on campus, completing a double major degree while also supporting a younger sibling with their schoolwork and trying to keep their spot on the varsity hockey team.*

*Lex is feeling increasingly overwhelmed and they're not sure how they're going to be able to manage moving forward. They don't want to drop anything or disappoint anyone, but they have started to experience a sense of doom and occasional panic attacks, which confuses them more than anything.*

**Friends** might validate, commiserate or tell Lex it's okay to drop something

**Counselors** might treat the panic attacks and assess for depression

**Peer supporters** might ask what Lex wants support with, they may also share personal experiences to offer coping strategies where appropriate

### Scenario 2:

*Jyoti is 19 and has just started at a school away from home. So far, Jyoti is enjoying their program and classes, but they are finding it hard to make friends. It seems like everyone else has already made their own groups of friends. Jyoti is spending a lot of time in their room and on social media, seeing all their friends back home having an amazing time at the local school. Jyoti is feeling intense feelings of sadness, regret, loneliness and shame around not finding a group of new friends.*

**Friends** might empathize, remind Jyoti of their existing friendships, arrange a visit/tell them to come home for a weekend

**Counselors** might assess for depression, suggest treatment options

**Peer supporters** might ask Jyoti what support they need, share personal experiences of finding groups/friends on campus where appropriate and validate the difficulty of the experience

### Scenario 3:

*Bo was diagnosed with depression and anxiety when they were 16. They've been coping fine with medication until now. They are starting to feel some of their symptoms coming back, feeling low and unmotivated, drinking more and feeling like they can't focus on anything.*

*Bo's getting worried because they've experienced this before and it was a horrible experience that they don't want to face again.*

**Friends** might empathize, tell Bo to focus on the positive

**Counselors** might suggest other medical options, re-assess treatment plans for Bo

**Peer supporters** might ask what support Bo needs right now, share personal experiences with treatment options where appropriate, help Bo access other support services on campus