

PEER EDUCATION BASICS*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

- 🕒 **Time:** 10 minutes
- ➔ **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
 - Identify the role of peer educators.
- ★ **Training Methods:** Lecture, Brainstorm
- ✓ **In This Activity You Will...**
 - Explain the basics of peer counseling (4 minutes).
 - Use the handout or flip chart to discuss the principles of peer education (6 minutes).
- ✂ **Materials:**
 - Flip chart
 - Handout – Peer Education Basics
- 📎 **Preparation:**
 - Print handout.
 - Write Peer Education Basics on the flip chart.

Instructions

1. Distribute handouts and explain the basics of peer counseling and the importance of serving or having peers at agencies. Emphasize that the responsibility is to first listen, then to assist; help with problems, but not to tell peers what to do.

It is important to bridge the gap between persons living with HIV or AIDS and the medical and social service systems. This is where peer educators play an important role, as the bridge. You may wonder what a peer is actually supposed to do. The answer is based on the individual needs of each peer you may come in contact with.

Because peer educators are understood to be HIV+, sometimes their most important role is in sharing their HIV status with the peers with whom they meet. This lets the peers know that they are not alone.

Peer educators must be able to listen carefully to others and to help them in solving their problems. This is accomplished by drawing on their own experiences and learning from others' experiences.

2. Explain how a peer serves as a bridge between clients and services.

As peers we are the people who may be able to answer questions for others concerning health care, medications, symptoms, services and sometimes just to listen to what others have to say about these issues. Peers may also be asked to explain who is in the health care team, and who will have information about their HIV status.

Peer educators are not doctors and should never give any medical advice. Peer educators can inform peers of places and resources to go to and to get medical assistance/treatment. As you can see, peers are a very important part of health care delivery. In your handouts you have a peer education basics handout to refer to.

3. Using the flip chart “Peer Education Basics” or the handout discuss the following principles.

* This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

PEER EDUCATION BASICS

A Basic Definition for Peer Education: Peer Education is the use of simple listening and problem-solving skills-in combination with learned knowledge and lived experience-to counsel people who are your peers.

A Basic Principle for Peer Education: People are capable of solving their own problems if given a chance.

A Basic Philosophy: Most of the time, people are served best by a relationship which supports their own empowerment and decision-making.

The Goal: To help your peer find his/her own solutions to their own problems, not to solve their problems for them.

Your Tools: Tools to use in this process are active listening skills, problem solving skills and your own experience with personal and cultural issues.

As peers it is important to build a relationship of trust with each other. It is important for you, as the peer educator, to be trusted, especially when peers may need to disclose confidential information to you.

We are going to discuss ways to be a good peer educator and to learn how to communicate with each other in order to provide the best service we can. Remember that listening is the beginning of effective communication.

We talk and communicate with others everyday. What we say to them depends on our relationship with them.

4. Ask: What do you think makes a good peer educator?

Responses may include the following:

- Serves as someone to talk to;
- Listens;
- Provides encouragement and support;
- Makes no false promises;
- Works together to solve and learn about issues;
- Asks questions on behalf of peers;
- Is trusting;
- Knows how to build rapport;
- Knows how to listen and to be compassionate;
- Has a desire to help;
- Gives no advice, judges not.

Summary

Wrap up session with key point:

- People talk more about the lives and circumstances when given the opportunity to do so.

* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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SESSION HANDOUT

PEER EDUCATION BASICS

Basic Definition

Peer education is the use of simple listening and problem-solving skills- in combination with learned knowledge and lived experience- to assist people who are your peers.

Basic Principle

People are capable of solving their own problems if given a chance.

Basic Philosophy

Most of the time, people are served best by a relationship with supports their own empowerment and decision-making.

Your Goal

To help peers find their own solutions to their own problems; not to solve their problems for them.

Your Tools

Tools to use are active listening skills, problem solving skills and your own experience with personal and cultural issues.