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KENTUCKY INJURY PREVENTION AND RESEARCH CENTER

VOICES of HOPE

Help the Helper: Self-Care, Boundaries, and Empowerment for Peer Support Specialists

Facilitator Guide

v 12.2024

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Introduction

Welcome to the facilitator guide for Help the Helper: Self-Care, Boundaries, and Empowerment for Peer Support Specialists. This guide and the associated training will provide you with a structured approach to conducting an effective presentation for peer support specialists on the importance of practicing self-care and self-advocacy.

Made in collaboration with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) and Voices of Hope, a recovery community organization in Lexington, Kentucky, this project is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of cooperative agreement 1 NU17CE010186 totaling $5.4 million with 0% financed with nongovernmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC, HHS, or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit CDC.gov.

Learning Objectives

- Describe self-care as harm reduction (Module 1, 2, 3)
- Create at least one self-care practice for yourself (Module 1, 2, 3)
- Describe what your role is and is not as a peer support specialist (PSS) (Module 1)
- Explain one example of setting a boundary as a peer support specialist (Module 1)
- Describe self-advocacy (Module 1, 2)

Content Warning for Facilitators

During the pilot testing of this training, strong emotions surfaced for some of the attendees. The self-care discussion lends itself to introspection and may evoke fears about the health of one's own recovery, or a sense of guilt that work duties have not been performed to the expected standard. Emotions may be more available in smaller, in-person groups, especially if the attendees are familiar with each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IN-PERSON SESSION

Beginning of the training: State you will be available at the end if anyone has questions they did not have the opportunity to ask during the training. Attendees may feel more comfortable asking questions or discussing a concern in a one-on-one or smaller setting.

Throughout the training: Lead with compassion when someone is honest about their fear, guilt, or shame. Most of us can relate to deprioritizing self-care and meeting the physical and/or emotional consequences—share your personal experience as appropriate and to your comfort level.

End of the training: Remind attendees that you will stay behind for a few minutes if anyone has any questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VIRTUAL SESSION

Prior to training: Ask the coordinator or platform host to enable the chat function so all attendees may give feedback throughout the training. Confirm the time limit of the training and if there will be an opportunity for discussion at the end.

Consider the format:

Webinar A webinar that limits audience interaction is not conducive to being available after the session for further discussion. If possible, have support staff attend the webinar to help monitor the chat and acknowledge anyone who shares something vulnerable. If time allows and the host is able, ask attendees to raise their hand to be unmuted for sharing.

Teams/Zoom meeting A virtual meeting where attendees are visible to the presenter (not a webinar) may allow for attendees to ask questions or express concerns at the end, depending on the time limit and format. If you can take questions at the end, announce to the attendees that you will be available after the training.

Throughout the training: Lead with compassion when someone is honest about their fear, guilt, or shame. Most of us can relate to deprioritizing self-care and meeting the physical and/or emotional consequences—share your personal experience as appropriate and to your comfort level.

Training Modalities

Help the Helper is an instructor-led presentation with opportunities for the attendees to voluntarily participate by sharing their responses to discussion questions. This training can be offered in person or in a virtual format. For example, reflection questions such as, "What does it feel like when I am not taking care of myself?" can be answered verbally, in person, or shared virtually using the chat function.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IN-PERSON SESSION

Prior to training:

- **Save the PowerPoint presentation to a flash drive in case you are unable to access the internet/shared drive at the training location.**
- **Print copies of the self-care worksheet, one-pagers, evaluations, and/or any relevant materials for everyone in the session. If it is not feasible to print materials, send electronic copies of the materials to be distributed by the coordinator/host.**
- **Arrive early to test the equipment and PowerPoint.**

Small group (approximately 12 people or less):

- Establish the "front" of the room. If possible, arrange the seats into a U-shape so everyone can face each other.
- Participation with smaller groups tends to occupy the extremes—discussion may be generous with a lot of depth or discussion may be non-existent. Consider the content warning offered in this manual and state that you will be available after the training to address any additional questions or concerns.

Large group (approximately 12-50 people):

- There are no guarantees for participation, but discussion tends to be consistent with this group size. Be aware of the time if there are a lot of attendees who are willing to share and encourage the group to move forward as needed.
- Consider the content warning offered in this manual and state that you will be available after the training to address any additional questions or concerns.
- Ask for volunteers to help you hand out materials to preserve time.

Large group (50+):

- Groups of this size typically do not lend themselves to audience participation. For the self-reflection questions, share from your own experience instead of relying on audience feedback.

End of the training: Ask the attendees to complete the evaluation form using a paper copy, QR code, or email a link.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VIRTUAL SESSION

Prior to training:

- **Ask the coordinator or platform host to enable the chat function so all attendees may give feedback throughout the training.**
- **Confirm the format and time limit of the training to assess the opportunity for discussion at the end.**
- **If possible, email copies of the self-care worksheet, one-pagers, and/or any relevant materials to the coordinator/host to send to the attendees.**
- **Join the virtual meeting room early to test the equipment and ensure the PowerPoint presentation is operational.**
- **Provide the coordinator/host with the evaluation link to share with attendees and/or display the QR code on the final slide of the presentation.**
- **Consider providing your contact information at the end of the session if anyone has additional questions.**
- **If attendees can unmute themselves, ask the platform host to help monitor people who accidently unmute to limit disruptions.**

Chat function:

- Ask attendees to answer discussion questions in the chat. Depending on the number of people in attendance, the chat could be flooded with responses. As you scan the chat, be sure **to read responses aloud** so the attendees can follow your thinking and to **create a better experience for someone watching a recording** (if the presentation is recorded).

Consider the format:

Webinar If the raise hand function is enabled, call on the person as if you were in a classroom. Consider the content warning discussed previously. A webinar that limits audience interaction is not conducive to being available after the session for further discussion. Instead, emphasize the areas in the training that encourage asking for help and reaching out to supportive people. Express the sentiment that no one can do self-care for us, but we do not have to do it alone.

Teams/Zoom meeting Encourage attendees to put answers in the chat but be aware that some may unmute themselves. Consider the content warning discussed previously. A virtual meeting where attendees are visible to the presenter (not a webinar) may allow for attendees to ask questions or express concerns at the end.

End of the training: Ask the attendees to complete the evaluation form using a QR code or email a link.

Modules

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Module	Topic	Time	Slides
1	Self-care, Boundaries, Empowerment	90 minutes	1-43
2	Self-care and Empowerment	60 minutes	1-21; 37-43
3	Self-care	45 minutes	1-21

Time Consideration

The time and pace of the training vary by modality and the responsiveness of the group. Settings that allow for more participation (smaller groups, in person or virtual) may generate more discussion that the facilitator will need to assertively manage in order to deliver all the material in the timeframe. Large groups, in person or webinar format, may pace faster than expected due to the limitations of the format. When open discussion is not possible, it is recommended that the facilitator be prepared to share examples to answer the prompts and fill discussion gaps.

Supplemental Materials

1. Self-care Training Worksheet
    - Provide attendees with the worksheet prior to the training
    - Purpose: to aid attendees with the development of a self-care plan
    - Available as a fillable .pdf for virtual training

2. Boundaries Factsheet

3. Self-care Resource Flyer

Self-Care Practice

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually
Physical					
Emotional					
Mental					
Spiritual					
Social					
Professional					

Self-Care Worksheet

- **What does it feel like when I am not taking care of myself?**

- **What are my warning signs and signals?**

- **How do I know when it's time to take action to care for myself?**

- **What do you do for self-care?**

- **Consider the six domains of self-care (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social, professional):**

    - **What are you already doing well?**

    - **What areas need more attention?**

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Peer Support Boundaries

Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The Big Picture

- Personal boundaries are the limits you create between yourself and other people. Workplace boundaries are the limits within a job role and your relationship to the job.
- Setting boundaries, in both your personal life and your professional life, is a form of self-care.
- Setting boundaries is not selfish! Boundaries keep us safe!

Setting boundaries, especially for peer workers and recovery coaches, can be unclear and confusing. There is often inconsistency in the definitions of peer workers and recovery coaches, and they do not always have clearly distinct roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the roles and responsibilities of peers and recovery coaches can be drastically different from place to place. However, setting boundaries in both personal and professional settings is an important form of self-care.

Personal boundaries are the limits you create between yourself and other people. Some examples of personal boundaries include:

- We can text daily, but I do not want to text 20 times per hour.
- We can meet for dinner, but I will drive separately so I can leave when I want.

Workplace boundaries are the lines and limits within a job role and your relationship to the job. Some examples of workplace boundaries include:

- I will not transport a client because I am not an authorized driver.
- I will not work outside of designated work hours.
- You may have my office phone number, but not my personal phone number.

Setting boundaries in the workplace is particularly important for peer workers and recovery coaches. Think about the point of view of the participant. They are vulnerable, and as their peer support specialist you have more power in the relationship. Maintaining boundaries is important to keep you both safe and to demonstrate consistency, reliability, and trust.

It is important to know your role at work. Peer support workers and recovery coaches are not sponsors, therapists, physicians, or lawyers. They are also not expected to be stand-in family members for participants. Remember what your expectations are at work and what is beyond your role and responsibilities.

Peer Support Role

Is/Does	Is Not/Does Not
A person in recovery	A professional
Shares lives experience	Give professional advice
A role model	An expert or authority figure
Sees the person as a whole person in the context of the person's roles, family, community	See the person as a case or diagnosis
Motivates through hope and inspiration	Motivate through fear of negative consequences
Helps to connect the participant to resources	Provide money or a place to live
Helps participant identify goals	Mandate tasks or behaviors
Encourages, supports, praises	Diagnose, assess, or treat
A role model for positive recovery behaviors	Tell the person how to live their life in recovery

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Image and text adapted from a training by Brook West, Training Coordinator at Voices of Hope, as a collaboration with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center titled "Help the Helper: Self-Care, Boundaries, and Empowerment for Peer Support Specialists." To schedule this training, contact Voices of Hope at training@voicesofhopelex.org.

A clear job description, employee handbook, or list of workplace policies and standard operating procedures may be helpful in maintaining workplace boundaries. Know the chain of command in the workplace so you can identify who you report to and what the expectations are for communication and documentation. Finally, familiarize yourself with procedures around confidentiality (such as HIPAA) and required documents in the workplace.

Continued on reverse.

Continued from reverse.

If work boundaries are crossed, begin by having a conversation with your supervisor or human resources representative to help gain clarity about your role and work goals, communicate concerns, and come up with solutions. Follow up with an email that summarizes the conversation to create written documentation. It is okay if your boundaries change over time. For example, if your workload increases, you may choose to limit your availability on your work calendar to block off time to focus each day. Boundaries are based on each individual's level of comfort. Speak with your supervisor or human resources representative to find a solution that meets your level of comfort with the organization's expectations.

Please help us improve our services by completing a brief survey.
Scan the QR code below to access the survey.

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SELF CARE

RESOURCE GUIDE

PHYSICAL

- Check out your local parks, recreational facilities, or walking trails for some exercise
- Visit the farmers market
- Take a relaxing shower or bath
- Schedule your annual checkups, dental cleanings, cancer screenings, etc.

MENTAL

- Take mini breaks throughout the day
- Take intentional screen breaks
- Work on a puzzle or game
- Read a book for fun
- Start a gratitude journal
- Create! Artwork, poetry, woodworking, crocheting, etc.

EMOTIONAL

- Talk to a safe person such as a friend, family member, or therapist
- Practice journaling
- Join a support group
- Make time for yourself
- Develop healthy coping skills like exercise, meditation, and deep breathing

SPIRITUAL

- Spend time in nature
- Meditate
- Volunteer at a food bank or other organization
- Create rituals for yourself
- Reflect on meaning or purpose
- Attend a service at a local place of worship
- Join a prayer group

PROFESSIONAL

- Make to-do lists
- Block off focus time on your calendar
- Take your designated lunch and break times
- Use your vacation time
- Advocate for yourself at work
- Take advantage of your work benefits
- Set workplace boundaries

SOCIAL

- Schedule dinner with a trusted friend
- Join a recreational league
- Attend self-help or recovery groups
- Check with your local Parks and Recreation Department or public library for free community events
- Join a book club

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KNOW YOURSELF

Do more of what brings you joy

Celebrating 30 Years
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References Highlights

Bassuk, E. L., Hanson, J., Greene, R. N., Richard, M. R., & Laudet, A. (2016). Peer-delivered recovery support services for addictions in the United States: A systematic review. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 63, 1–9. Retrieved April 30, 2024, from https://www.jsatjournal.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0740-5472%2816%2900016-7

Bassuk et al. (2016) performed a systematic review of peer-delivery recovery support services for addiction across the United States. They learned there was significant inconsistency in the definitions of peer workers and recovery coaches. Most lacked a clear description of their roles and responsibilities in the interventions. Without a clear definition of the nature and role of peer involvement, comparison across studies is difficult and generalizability of findings nearly impossible. Arguably, the inconsistency of the definitions of roles and responsibilities of peer workers is a by-product of the lack of a national credentialing body and the proliferation of a wide range of training and certification programs across the United States.

Lisa D. Butler, Kelly A. Mercer, Katie McClain-Meeder, Dana M. Horne & Melissa Dudley (2019) Six domains of self-care: Attending to the whole person, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 29:1, 107-124, DOI: 10.1080/10911359.2018.1482483

Butler et al. (2019) emphasizes the significance of a self-care plan that incorporates six domains: physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, relational, and professional. An overall self-care plan needs to include both maintenance and emergency practices, guards against stress and negative states, and enhances overall well-being and functioning. Self-care is a personal commitment and one size does not fit all—practices need to be tailored to the individual.

Tate, Marie C., Amanda Roy, Meinca Pinchinat, Emma Lund, Judith B. Fox, Sara Cottrill, Annemarie Vaccaro, and L. A. Stein. (2021). Impact of Being a Peer Recovery Specialist on Work and Personal Life: Implications for Training and Supervision. *Community Mental Health Journal* doi: 10.1007/ s10597-021-00811-y.

At the University of Rhode Island, Tate et al. (2021) conducted a statewide evaluation of peer recovery support training. They recruited participants from organizations from across the state and they completed a questionnaire that evaluated both their personal and work environment. The results will not surprise peer support specialists. Peers who participated in the study reported workplace challenges such as feeling overworked, lack of sufficient supervision, challenges navigating addiction stigma, difficulty maintaining boundaries, lack of resources for clients (e.g. transportation). Peers also reported personal challenges: feeling emotionally drained, feeling like there are no solutions (i.e. resources), taking problems home, difficulty hearing clients' stories/vulnerable to emotional triggers, feelings of failure to do the job successfully.

Evaluation

https://qualtricsxm6yh3ssdyd.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6yxxbbx7vzVEzvU

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