



Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all

Campus Peer Support Program Module 4 – Facilitator’s Guide

Estimated Time to Complete: 2.5 hrs 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"> • Demonstrate effective communication strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitator Guide • PowerPoint slides • Participant handouts: <i>Sharing experiences handout, Sharing scenarios handout</i> 	<p>In person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipcharts/whiteboards, markers • Banner paper, stickers, markers • Fidgets, opt-out cards, quiet area <p>If virtual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webcam • Virtual conferencing tool with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakout rooms ○ Polling ○ Whiteboard <p>LMS activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen up • What’s your story <p>Local resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As applicable
Agenda:		



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Timing	Topic / References	Facilitation Notes
<p>Total: 15 minutes</p>	<p>Welcome / Presentation (10 minutes)</p> <p>Slide: Agenda slide</p> <p>Resources: 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>Land acknowledgement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare in advance your personalized land acknowledgement • Invite students to add to your acknowledgement <p>Agenda</p> <p>The purpose of this session is to help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate effective communication strategies <p>We will do this by exploring the following topics: Listening to understand, questioning techniques, sharing experiences and inclusive language.</p> <p><i>Share why this is important from your perspective (for connection and belonging, we all need to get better at how we communicate! One thing I'm always trying to improve is...)</i></p> <p>There are also additional activities in the LMS to support and extend our discussion today.</p> <p>We will be sharing ideas as a group and also do 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>Icebreaker / Partner activity (5 mins)</p> <p>Visual: Activity slide</p> <p>Resources: N/A</p>	<p><i>Ask students to check-in for the session with a partner</i></p> <p>Before we dive in, let's check in with each other. Find a partner and share what's got your attention right now.</p> <p>This will be a quick check-in – so just a couple of minutes each to share what's on your mind.</p> <p>Debrief:</p> <p>When you were listening to your partner, where did your attention drift? Was it something they said? Or were you thinking about what is on <i>your</i> mind?</p>



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<p>Total: 35 mins</p>	<p>Listening/ Group discussion 10 mins Visual: N/A Resource: Listening flipchart</p>	<p><i>Introduce listening as the first aspect to explore in the session</i></p> <p>Let's start with listening. As with many things – there is a range to what listening looks and feels like. At one end, we have 'ignoring' and at the other we have 'empathetic listening' or listening to understand.</p> <p>What's in between? Let's create a range.</p> <p><i>Draw a line and put "Ignoring" at one end and "Empathetic listening" at the other. Prompt students to come up with degrees of listening in between the two.</i></p> <p><i>Add in things like: pretend listening or waiting to speak at the ignoring end and moving through to confirmation listening (listening for what you already know), critical listening (listening for what you agree/disagree with) towards the middle through to active listening towards the empathetic/listening to understand end.</i></p> <p>What do each of these look like? How does it feel when someone is listening in this way?</p> <p>Debrief: Now that we have our range, let's look at specific things we can do to practice empathetic listening.</p>



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	<p>Empathetic listening skills/ Presentation</p> <p>10 mins</p> <p>Visual: Empathetic listening, tips slide</p> <p>Resource: Listening flipchart</p>	<p><i>Present some key ideas and clarify/discuss before the practice activity</i></p> <p>So, what can we do to be better at listening?</p> <p>Here are some tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on the other person – remove distractions, maintain eye contact as appropriate (recognizing cultural differences with eye contact), use encouraging posture/body language and vocal encouragement ● Avoid interrupting – always pause before speaking in case the other person isn't done! ● Notice feelings/emotions – check-in to confirm and acknowledge and then validate them! ● Summarize/paraphrase – use their words, summarize their situation, check you got it right ● Use open-ended questions – to confirm, to extend and to keep them talking <p><i>What else do you think works? Add to the tips (taking notes where appropriate can help as long as you explain why – “it helps me capture your words”, taking a “mindfulness minute” before engaging in a peer support conversation so you are ready to listen etc.)</i></p>



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	<p>Practice/ Partner activity (15 mins) Visual: Activity slide Resource: N/A</p>	<p><i>Divide students into partners to practice listening skills</i></p> <p>Let's try these ideas out. We are going to pair up and practice two different skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing • Observing emotions <p>With your partner, you will each have two minutes to talk about your weekend plans. Listeners will have a specific task for each round. Please decide who will be the listener for the first round.</p> <p>Sounds like round (3 mins) In this round, the listener will focus on summarizing their partner's words periodically by using the sentence "it sounds like..." at various points in a conversation. Remind the listener that they are only allowed to respond with "it sounds like" during the three-minute conversation!</p> <p><i>Have partners switch and run again for three minutes.</i></p> <p>I'm noticing round (2 mins) This time, listeners will only be allowed to acknowledge the emotions of their partner during the conversation by saying "I'm noticing" (or "you seem...")</p> <p><i>Have partners switch and run again for two minutes.</i></p> <p>Debrief: What was it like for the listeners who had to summarize what they were hearing? What worked? What was hard? What about for the listeners who were observing emotions – how did that go? What worked? What was hard?</p> <p><i>Draw out themes and share tips – remind students to be authentic! If they would never say "I'm noticing..." that's fine! What could they say to notice and acknowledge emotions in a peer?</i></p>
<p>Total: 5-10 mins</p>	<p>Break</p>	



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<p>Total: 25 minutes</p>	<p>Questioning / Group discussion (5 minutes) Visual: N/A Resources: N/A</p>	<p><i>Move to questioning techniques now</i> The other part of listening that we have already highlighted, is the ability to ask good questions. Sometimes it might feel like focusing on asking questions is not listening, in fact, thoughtful questions demonstrate how carefully you are listening and are a way to build trust and show that you are really interested in learning more. So, let's talk about effective questioning techniques now. First of all – let's remind ourselves of the two types of questions and when to use them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open (ask for definition and then when to use – see below for notes) • Closed <p>Open-ended questions Require more than a one or two-word answer. Good for opening up the conversation, expanding the discussion, encouraging the other person to speak more (What's on your mind? What's important about that for you?).</p> <p>Closed-ended questions Typically requires a yes/no answer. Good for confirming information, asking permission or checking-in (Do you need a break? Can I share my experience?). These questions can also help assess risk (Are you thinking about harming yourself? Do you ever think about suicide?) Show slide examples and move to activity</p>



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	<p>Scenario practice/ Small group activity (15 minutes) Visual: 20 Questions slide Resources: blank paper, pens</p>	<p><i>Ask small groups to brainstorm questions for the scenarios</i></p> <p>In your groups, please discuss what questions you would use to connect with a peer/group based on the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group situation – you are facilitating a discussion with a group of peers who don't know you or each other. What questions could you use to create a sense of connection and build trust in the group? ● One-on-one – A peer shares a personal story that is on their mind. They want to move on but are having a hard time. What questions could you ask to help them? ● One-on-one – A peer you've been supporting for several weeks seems more down than normal. They mention that they're feeling hopeless, running out of options. What questions could you ask to assess risk*? <p><i>*We discuss when peers may need additional support in Module 5. In this session, you can highlight briefly to validate feelings first and then ask direct questions "what does 'running out of options' mean"? And let students know we will spend more time on this next time.</i></p>



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	<p>Scenario practice/ Group debrief (5 minutes)</p> <p>Visual: Question examples slide</p> <p>Resources: N/A</p>	<p>Debrief Discuss best questions to use to connect with peers in scenarios and connect to peer support values as you review (how would this question help to demonstrate mutuality/no judgement?) How could you build connection by asking these types of questions?).</p> <p>What questions: <i>(Use most often! Use instead of why questions)</i> What's on your mind today? What's coming up for you around that? What would you like to do? What's important about that? What else? What's that like for you?</p> <p>How questions: <i>(Use to dig in deeper)</i> How would you like to feel? How would that make you feel? How would you like me to help you?</p> <p>Why questions: <i>(Avoid! Change to a what question OR use with caution – can come across as judgemental or even aggressive!)</i> Why do you think that? (What makes you think that?) Why is that important to you?</p> <p>Other questions: Would you like me to share my experience? When else have you experienced this? Can you think of a time when you were able to manage this successfully? Tell me more about that...</p>



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Total: 30 mins	Sharing experiences / Presentation (10 mins) Visual: Sharing experiences slide Resource: Sharing experiences handout	<p><i>Present the sharing experiences model</i></p> <p>A big part of peer support is the fact that you have lived and living experiences that will help you connect and support your peers. However, knowing when and how best to share those experiences is something we need to balance with the values of peer support so that we don't end up giving advice or judging people's choices.</p> <p>Here is a model that can help you consider what and when to share experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider past experiences • Consider knowledge gained • Ask reflective questions • Use knowledge gained to inspire hope • Check for understanding <p><i>Use the tips in the handout to expand on each of these steps and add in your perspective</i></p>
	Scenarios/ Group activity (20 mins) Visual: N/A Resources: Sharing experience scenarios handout	<p>Run a quick energizer – ask students to stand up for this activity or just move a bit before discussing the scenarios</p> <p>Let's see this in practice. I'm going to read out some situations and then we'll discuss whether sharing our own experiences would help the peer we are supporting and respect the values of peer support.</p> <p><i>See end of document for scenarios and suggested themes to pull out in the debrief</i></p> <p>Debrief: What questions do you have about how and when to share experiences? What do you think will be hard for you when it comes to sharing or not sharing your experiences?</p>



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<p>Total: 20 mins</p>	<p>Inclusive language/ Group activity (20 mins) Visual: N/A Resource: Tips flipchart, Traps flipchart</p>	<p><i>Introduce the final topic for the session</i> The last part of effective communications is watching our language! As we know, words have power and we need to be aware of the words we use and how we position things when in a peer support situation. And while we can probably all name the racist, ableist words that we need to all eliminate from our vocabulary, sometimes words slip in without us noticing.</p> <p>Let's see if we can come up with some tips and traps to watch out for in peer support situations <i>Ask students to divide themselves between the two flipcharts: Tips and Traps and add ideas. Switch flipcharts halfway through and ask the group to star favourite ideas and add anything missing.</i></p> <p>Tips: always ask first (pronouns, names, what words they use), google it first (rather than asking the individual to educate you) Traps: be aware of "curiosity" as an excuse for a microaggression, why are you asking this person? Will it help you build connection with them? Watch out if you find yourself speaking on behalf of a group you are not part of! (Discuss allyship and how to support others effectively)</p> <p>Debrief <i>Discuss specific stigmas and the ways our language (verbal and non-verbal) can send a message around our views of various stigmas related to mental health and substance use health.</i> <i>For more tips see: https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/09/feature-bystanders-microaggressions</i></p>



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<p>Total: 10 minutes</p>	<p>Summary / Presentation (5 mins) Visual: Slide Resources: Activity log handout</p>	<p><i>Summarize the key points from the discussion and highlight additional resources available</i></p> <p>Today we focused on building our communication skills. You will get opportunities next week to continue practicing these skills as you will be participating in our service offerings (<i>provide details</i>).</p> <p>Next week you will be working in our centre, participating, observing and practicing as a peer supporter!</p> <p><i>Provide details of the on-the-job components of the program.</i></p> <p>An important part of learning is reflecting on your experiences, so we would like you to capture your first experiences as a peer supporter on campus in this log. (<i>Handout and explain they can share highlights in the LMS community or keep it for themselves.</i>)</p> <p>After next week, we have one more session to look at additional resources and support we may need to refer students to during peer support situations.</p> <p><i>Provide details of the next session as well as self-directed activities on the LMS to complete</i></p>
	<p>Check out / Partner activity (5 mins)</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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Sharing experiences scenarios & discussion points

Scenario 1: *A peer you are just getting to know shares their struggles with alcohol, and they indicate that they're looking for ways to control their drinking better. You have a long history with substance use and have developed some ways to stay safe.*

Suggested responses:

It is important to ask permission **first** and to keep it short! Start by sharing one idea or tip and then check in with the peer. Does that help them? Would that approach work for them? This may offer hope to the peer and may provide some information or ideas they haven't thought of. Explore any other ideas that come up together.

Scenario 2: *A student shares they are worried that their partner may be cheating on them. You have been cheated on before and as you listen to their story, it definitely seems like the partner is cheating. You are painfully aware that the sooner you end it, the better, so you ask if they have considered ending the relationship and share your experience.*

Before discussing possible responses: Does this sharing feel appropriate? Why or why not?

Suggested responses:

In this case, sharing a negative lived experience may not be appropriate as it could still be a raw experience to draw upon for the peer supporter and it may not inspire hope or provide a helpful way forward for the peer. Instead, the peer supporter could help the student reflect on their feelings and what they want to do about their concerns.

Scenario 3: An Indigenous student that you're supporting describes an experience where a professor shared that they were surprised that the student was doing so well, given that they are Indigenous. You have experiences of microaggressions at the school.

Suggested responses: First, validate the difficulty of this experience. Then as the supporter, you could ask the student if they're open to hearing about your own experiences (which may or may not seem relevant to them). If the student agrees, you could share a coping strategy you've used or offer an example of how you've responded when someone uses a microaggression. After sharing, check in with the student you're supporting to ask whether these experiences are resonating.