

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAMS PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS CHECKLIST

I. PROGRAM START-UP:

A. Planning

- Rationale based on needs assessment
- Purpose
- Goals and Objectives
- Procedures
- Compliance

B. Commitment

- Administrative and Community Support
- Program Advisory Committee
- Resources

C. Staffing

- Positive rapport with peer helpers
- Continuing education and experience relevant to program goals
- Commitment to the fundamental principles of peer helping
- Familiarity with the program setting
- Clear understanding of the program needs and goals
- Ability to articulate goals to peer helpers, staff, sponsors and community
- Skills necessary for training and supervision
- Time to train, plan, evaluate, and supervise

D. Organizational Structure

- Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and communication
- Reflects the nature and purpose of the program

II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A. Screening and Selection

- Establish criteria for peer helpers
- Conduct a formal or informal survey to identify potential helpers
- Establish application procedures
- Employ selection guidelines such as:
 - Demonstration of appropriate helping characteristics and skills
 - Demonstration of emotional security/stability
 - Understanding of services to be provided
 - Commitment to providing services
 - Sensitivity to population being served
 - Demonstration of the ability to follow through over time
 - Manageability of group size for training and supervision

B. Training

Training Characteristics:

- Reflects nature and goals of program
- Takes into account age, needs & characteristics of population served
- Utilizes appropriate curricular resources and training strategies
- Is consistent with guidelines regarding standards and ethics
- Includes demonstration, skill development, practice and critique
- Provides specialized training for specific services
- Remains ongoing

Training Elements:

- Role of the Peer Helper
- Confidentiality/Liability Issue
- Communication Skills
- Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Strategies
- Additional Issues and Topics Relevant to Particular Program

C. Service Delivery

- Appropriate variety of meaningful, productive helping roles within the program

D. Supervision

- Regular and on-going supervision

III. Maintenance

A. Evaluation

- Process Evaluation
- Impact Evaluation
- Outcomes
- Cost Benefit

B. Public Relations

- Well-informed external& internal supporters and potential program recipients
- Program brochure or newsletter
- Media contacts

C. Long-range Planning

- Staffing
- Peer ownership
- Funding

PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAMS

The National Association of Peer Programs believes the following standards are essential for any quality peer program.

I. PROGRAM START-UP

A. PLANNING

Prior to program implementation, the following issues must be addressed through careful planning:

1. Rationale: There is a clear and compelling rationale for the development of the program; frequently, this is accomplished through conducting a formal or informal needs assessment in the setting in which the program is to be implemented.
2. Purpose: Based on the rationale, the purpose of the program must be conveyed through a formal mission statement.
3. Goals and Objectives: Programmatic goals and objectives (a) reflect the rationale and purpose of the program; and (b) are clear, measurable and achievable.
4. Procedures: Programmatic goals are accomplished through procedures and activities that are laid out in a clear and systematic fashion.
5. Compliance: The program is planned and implemented in a manner consistent with local, state, and national guidelines for programmatic standards and ethics (see *NAPP Code of Ethics for Peer Helpers and Peer Helping Professionals*).

B. COMMITMENT

The program will expect the active commitment and involvement of those who are directly involved. Commitment is reflected in the following areas:

1. Evidence of a high level of administrative, staff, and community support; in many cases, this includes the formation of a program advisory committee.
2. Advisory committee members may or may not be directly involved in program implementation. They provide a valuable link to the community and give input to program staff in order to maximize a sense of program ownership. They also sustain the program to enable it to survive changes in administration and program staff.
3. Sufficient financial and logistical support for effective program implementation is optimal; such support includes the provision of necessary curricular and training resources. (Please note that programs can be implemented without a high level of administrative/staff/community support and with a minimum of financial support. However, that support would ideally come later.)

C. STAFFING

Program staff should possess the appropriate background, training, and characteristics to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in an effective and ethical manner. The following skills are essential for professional staff who work directly with peer helpers:

1. A positive rapport with the population from which the peer helpers are selected.
2. Continuing educational and practical experience that is relevant to the goals of the program.
3. Understanding of, and commitment to, the fundamental principles of peer helping, with emphasis on maintaining peer helpers' ownership and involvement in the program.
4. Familiarity with the setting in which the program is to be implemented, such as in a school, community, or faith-based organization.
5. Clear understanding of the program's needs and goals and an ability to effectively articulate the nature and purpose of the program to peer helpers, other staff, the sponsoring agency, and the broader community.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The program should be organized and structured in a logical and consistent manner that provides clear lines of authority, responsibility, and communication. The structure also should reflect the nature and purpose of the program.

II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A. SCREENING AND SELECTION

The program should employ a clear, systematic, and careful procedure for the screening and selection of peer helpers. Typically, this procedure includes the following:

1. Establishing appropriate criteria as to the characteristics being sought among prospective peer helpers. Among those characteristics are helpfulness, trustworthiness, concern for others, ability to listen, and potential to serve as a positive role model.
2. Conducting a formal or informal survey in the program setting, in order to determine which individuals are felt to possess the desired characteristics.
3. Making application to the program, soliciting recommendations from others in the program setting, and structuring an interview with program staff. The interview should include samples of the type of skills required of the peer helper, e.g. public presentations, phone skills, and meeting new people.

Programs may differ as to whether final selection of peer helpers should occur prior to or after peer-helper training. In either case, the selection process should be guided by the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of appropriate helping characteristics and skills.
2. Evidence of emotional security/stability.
3. Understanding of the type(s) of services to be provided.
4. Commitment to and availability for the provision of those services.
5. Ability to be reflective of and sensitive to the characteristics of the population to be served.
6. Demonstration of the ability to follow through over time.
7. Manageability of the size of the group selected, in order to ensure quality training and supervision.

B. TRAINING

Once peer helpers have been selected, they should be provided with quality training in the knowledge and skills they will need to be effective as peer helpers. The training program that is implemented should do the following: (a) be reflective of the nature and goals of the program, (b) take into account the age, needs and characteristics of the population to be served, (c) utilize appropriate curricular resources and training strategies, and (d) be consistent with local, state and national guidelines on ethics and standards. All training should include demonstration, skill development, practice, and critique. Additional training is necessary to provide specific services as described in #5 below. Trainees should commit to participate in all aspects of training and to maximize opportunities for both skill development and personal growth. Finally, training should be viewed as an ongoing process, one that is never completed.

While specific features of training may vary somewhat from program to program, the following elements are characteristic of effective peer-helping training models:

1. Role of the Peer Helper
Training in the peer-helping role includes, but is not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Program orientation.
 - b. Characteristics of the helper (caring, acceptance, genuineness, understanding, trustworthiness).
 - c. Self-awareness.
 - d. Positive role-modeling; e.g., maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
 - e. Avoidance of temptation to offer advice, propose solutions, or impose values.
 - f. Positive listening skills.

- g. Recognition of limitations.
 - h. Developing of individual and group trust.
 - i. Creation of a support system of peer helpers for each other, as well as for helpees.
 - j. Development of a code of ethics and standards of behavior.
 - k. Coaching
2. Confidentiality/Liability Issues
While communication between peer helpers and helpees are typically confidential, there are 3 important exceptions to this general rule:
- a. Stated or implied threats to the personal safety or well being of the peer helper, helpee, or others.
 - b. Child abuse, sexual abuse, family dysfunction, psychotic behavior, harm to self and others, and drug and alcohol abuse.
 - c. Situations or problems beyond the personal expertise of the peer helper. An essential component of any peer-helping training program is that peer helpers know how to recognize such situations, are aware of their limitations and responsibilities, and have ready access to professional staff and appropriate referral resources.
3. Communication Skills
Effective peer helping requires the use of the following:
- a. Basic principles of verbal and nonverbal communication.
 - b. Active listening skills (attending, empathizing, etc.).
 - c. Facilitative responding (questioning, clarifying, summarizing, etc.).
 - d. Skills for communicating in a diverse situation (meeting new students, conversing with students from different countries and cultures, etc.).
4. Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Strategies
Effective peer helping often involves the use of steps in formal problem solving (identifying the problem; brainstorming alternatives; predicting consequences; carrying out action plan; evaluating results).
5. Additional Issues and topics
Depending upon the nature and goals of particular programs, additional specialized training may be provided in areas such as the following:
- a. Basic concepts of human behavior. Peer helpers should have some degree of familiarity with concepts such as the following:
 - 1. The role of motivational and reinforcement factors in behavior.

2. Sociocultural influences and differences.
 3. Individual and group dynamics.
- b. Group facilitation techniques.
 - c. Learning styles and teaching strategies.
 - d. Peer tutoring strategies.
 - e. Crisis management.
 - f. Conflict resolution, mediation, and anger management.
 - g. Special needs populations.
 - h. Telephone "hotline" management.
 - i. Specific problem areas (substance abuse, dropouts, depression, suicide, teen pregnancy, child abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, gangs and cults, family relations, etc.).
 - j. Knowledge of referral resources, services, and programs.

C. SERVICE DELIVERY

Subsequent to training, peer helpers should be provided with structured opportunities to engage in a variety of meaningful, productive helping roles within the program setting. The peer-helping services provided should:

1. Be consistent with and reflective of program goals.
2. Enable peer helpers to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during training.
3. Enhance the personal growth and positive development of peer helpers and helpees alike.
4. Recognize and accommodate the need for ongoing opportunities for continued learning and training.

D. SUPERVISION

Once peer helpers have begun to provide services, it is imperative that they receive regular, ongoing supervision from program staff. In addition to regularly scheduled sessions, staff should be available to provide supplemental supervision and support as needed. Major goals of supervision include the following:

1. Enable program staff to monitor program-related activities and services.
2. Enhance the effectiveness and personal growth of peer helpers.

3. Encourage peer helpers to share with, learn from, and support each other in the performance of their helping roles.
4. Establish safeguards to protect peer helpers from too many program responsibilities, role confusion, or inappropriate assignments.

III. PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

Once the program has been established, program staff should take steps to ensure its continued sustainment, improvement, success, and expansion or infusion into a system. These steps include the following:

A. EVALUATION

Evaluation is conducted to document program-related activities and services. It is done to assess the process, impact, outcome, and cost benefits of the program with reference to its mission, goals, and objectives. The program should develop and implement a formal evaluation plan. Evaluation data should be utilized to examine program effectiveness and to determine whether and how the program needs to be revised. The evaluation plan may include four components:

1. Process Evaluation

Process evaluation provides a picture of what happened in connection with the program and its consistency with *NAPP Programmatic Standards*. Process evaluation determines the degree to which the program has been successful in achieving its goals and objectives aligned with the mission. Process data includes information in such areas as number of peer helpers and helpees involved; program staffing and organization; selection procedures; nature and extent of training; amount and types of services provided; and other program-related activities.

2. Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation typically assesses the effect of program upon both peer helpers and those who have received program services within a set period of time. Such assessment can be qualitative (open-ended questionnaires, opinion surveys, etc.) and/or can employ quantitative indices of program impact. In a school-based program, for example, impact evaluation might assess effectiveness in such areas as student knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills or behaviors (e.g., grade point average, absenteeism and dropout rates, or incidence of disciplinary referrals).

3. Outcomes

Outcome evaluation assesses long-term changes to the peer helper, those they serve, and the community. Examples of societal benefits are fewer alcohol-related crashes and deaths, employment, improved leadership skills, and lower health risk parameters.

4. Cost Benefit

Costs benefits are the monetary savings related to the effectiveness of the program (e.g., the cost of the program in providing services to at-risk students, thus reducing dropout rates which will increase A.D.A. funds to the school.)

B. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Program staff should make a concerted, ongoing effort to keep external and internal supporters and potential program recipients well informed about the benefits and accomplishments of the program. Informative techniques might include brochures, presentations, newsletters, media communication involvement of community leaders in training or program services, as well as community outreach projects.

C. LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Program staff should engage in long-range planning to ensure that the program is sustained and infused. Key factors to consider in long-range planning include the following:

- 1. Staffing:** The success of the program is dependent on a broad-based ownership. This can be accomplished by having a planning team, advisory committee, and multiple staff participation. At least one individual within the program setting should be prepared in coordination responsibilities in the event of staffing changes.
- 2. Peer Ownership:** The program should maximize the level of ownership and involvement of peer helpers. When peer helpers feel directly responsible for the success and sustainment of the program, the program is more likely to be infused.
- 3. Funding:** The program should have a secure and consistent funding base. There need to be contingency plans to provide for continued operation in the event of reduced or nonexistent funding.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAMS

CODE OF ETHICS

FOR PEER HELPING PROFESSIONALS

Professionals who are responsible for implementing peer-helping programs shall be people of personal and professional integrity. To be ethical, peer professionals must operate programs in alignment with *NAPP Programmatic Standards*. NAPP believes the *Code of Ethics for Peer Helping Professionals* should contain the following guidelines:

1. A belief that peer helping is an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.
2. A commitment to an individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
3. Program development and implementation which demonstrates:
 - A strong positive rapport with peer helpers.
 - Personal commitment to the peer-helping program.
 - Integrity of acquiring necessary training for specific work with students (e.g., tutoring, mediation, etc.).
 - Utilization of a training curriculum that is aligned with *NAPP Programmatic Standards*.
4. Selection of trainers and program managers who:
 - Model positive behavior.
 - Reject the pursuit of personal power or gain at the expense of others.
 - Respect copyright and acknowledgment obligations.
 - Adhere to the ethics and legalities of confidential issues (abuse and harm to self and others).

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAMS CODE OF ETHICS FOR PEER HELPERS

A CODE OF ETHICS IS AN AGREEMENT AMONG THOSE WHO COMMIT TO THE PROGRAM AS TO THE NORMS THAT SHALL GUIDE THEIR BEHAVIOR DURING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM.

Peer Helpers shall be people of personal integrity. NAPP believes peer helpers will:

1. Embrace the philosophy that peer helping is an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.
2. Respect the individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
3. Model positive behaviors and life choices (e.g., no substance use/abuse).
4. Embrace the concept of service to others for the good of the community.
5. Maintain confidentiality of information imparted during the course of program related activities with the exceptions of child abuse, sexual abuse, family dysfunction, psychotic behavior, harm to self and others, and drug and alcohol abuse.
6. Refrain from tackling situations for which they have no training and preparation (e.g., peer mediation, tutoring, etc.).
7. Recognize, report, and know techniques to deal with stated or implied threats to their emotional or physical well being.