

STARRS

Support, Training, Advocacy, Relationships,
Resources, & Skills

Oklahoma Systems of Care Initiative

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Mental Health

First things first...

Sometimes attitude is everything. To understand mental health, you need to understand wellness, illnesses, and what can help. We need to look at mental health from a different perspective other than something that shouldn't be talked about and kept quiet.

- Mental health is just as important as physical health. The two are interlinked. You cannot have good physical health without good mental health.
- Mental health illnesses are everyday problems for everyday people that deserve to be treated.
- It's nobody's fault if they have a mental health illness. If no one is at fault than no one is to blame.
- Mental health problems are not something you can "just get over." It is not a weakness that someone has a mental health illness. Mental Illness is not a choice.
- Ask for help! It's OK to ask for help!
- People can improve and recover from mental illness with the help of support and treatment. They are able to enjoy healthy and happy lives.

What
does the
Surgeon
General
Say?

The Surgeon General's report on mental health, reported that mental illness is a critical public health problem.

1 in 5 Americans suffers from a mental disorder.

Children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly all can experience a mental disorder.

1 in 10 youth suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment in everyday activities such as school, home, and friends.

Less than 1 in 5 of these youth receive treatments.

For most mental disorders there are several choices of treatments, including medications and counseling.

Treatment of these mental illnesses has not caught up with the research.

Mental Health is fundamental to physical health.



What are the warning signs and symptoms of a possible mental health illness?

- Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Intense fear of becoming obese with no relationships to actual body weight, purging food or restricting eating
- Persistent nightmares
- Threats of self-harm or harm to others
- Self-injury or self-destructive behavior
- Frequent outbursts of anger, aggression
- Threats to run away
- Aggressive or non-aggressive consistent violation of rights of others; opposition to authority, truancy, thefts, or vandalism
- Strange thoughts and feelings; and unusual behaviors
- Very angry most of the time, cries a lot or overreacts to things
- Worthless or guilty a lot
- Anxious or worried a lot more than other young people
- Grief for a long time after a loss or death
- Extremely fearful- has unexplained fears or more fears than most kids
- Overly concerned about physical problems or appearance
- Frightened that his or her mind is controlled or is out of control
- Does much worse in school than usual
- Loses interest in things usually enjoyed
- Has unexplained changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Avoids friends or family and wants to be alone all the time
- Daydreams too much and can't get things done
- Feels life is too hard to handle
- Hears voices that cannot be explained
- Poor concentration
- Inability to sit still or focus attention
- Worry about being harmed, hurting others, or about doing something "bad"
- The need to wash, clean things, or perform certain routines dozens of times a day
- Thoughts that race almost too fast to follow
- Persistent nightmares

What is a Mental Illness?

A mental illness is a disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in thinking, perception and behavior. Many mental illnesses are believed to have biological causes, just like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, but some mental disorders are caused by a person's environment and experiences.

There are five major categories of mental illness

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness. The three main types are phobias, panic disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. People who suffer from phobias experience extreme fear or dread from a particular object or situation. Panic disorders involve sudden, intense feelings of terror for no apparent reason and symptoms similar to a heart attack. People with obsessive-compulsive disorder try to cope with anxiety by repeating words or phrases or engaging in repetitive, ritualistic behavior such as constant hand washing.

Mood Disorders

Mood disorders include depression and bipolar disorder (or manic depression) symptoms may include mood swings such as extreme sadness or elation, sleep and eating disturbances, and changes in activity and energy levels. Suicide may be a risk with these disorders.

Dementias

This group of disorders includes diseases like Autism or Asbergers. These involve loss of mental functions.

Personality Disorders

These include disorders such as schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, and Narcissistic personality disorder. These serious disorders affect how a person thinks, feels, and acts. Schizophrenia is believed to be caused by chemical imbalances in the brain that produce a variety of symptoms including hallucinations, delusions, withdrawal, incoherent speech, and impaired reasoning.

Eating Disorders

Anorexia nervosa and bulimia involves serious, potentially life-threatening illnesses. People with these disorders have a preoccupation with food and an irrational fear of being fat. Anorexia is self-starvation while bulimia involves cycles of bingeing (consuming large quantities of food) and purging (self-inducing vomiting or abusing laxatives). Behavior may also include excessive exercise.

More resources and information on these types of mental illness can be found in the resources section.

Systems of Care

You deserve anything you need to feel healthy, both mentally and physically in any environment such as school for example.

*You are an individual; you are special and not like anyone else. You have needs others do not and should receive anything **you** need to help you with your special needs.*

You should receive any help that will help you lead the most normal life in the most normal way possible.

You and your family get to decide what you need and should have to maintain physical and mental health.

You should be able to understand and receive many different kinds of help from different places that all work together and know how to serve you best.

You should be able to receive different kinds of help from different places that work together to help you best. A person employed by Systems of Care, usually called a Care Coordinator, will help put the different kinds of help together.

The earlier we know about your mental health wellness issues, the earlier we can help. The sooner the better!

You deserve help in growing up and learning to use the system that is designed to help you become a physically and mentally healthy adult.

Everyone should support people who want the best for you and your family.

Everyone is different. Regardless of your differences, you deserve help in becoming physically and mentally healthy.

Systems of Care

Youth Advocate

Most importantly,

Be
A
FRIEND!

Job Description, Responsibilities, and Duties

Central Objective...

To provide youth with a voice, meet youth where they are in life, and to encourage their involvement in both their own care and in the welfare of other youth and

Youth Advocates must be....

Accepting, non-judgmental, empowering supportive, understanding, empathetic, collaborative, facilitative, and pro-active.

They must have

Respect, tolerance for disagreement and ambivalence, self-confidence, patience, genuine caring, interest in others and others needs, and a hope that change is possible.

They must ...

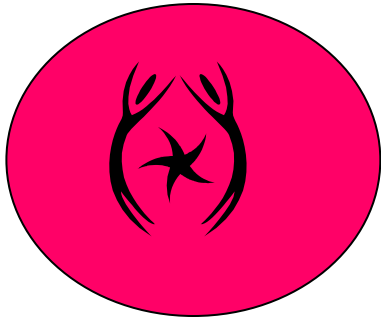
Listen without giving advice, judging, or criticizing, encourage, provide materials, give space, reassure, focus on the positive, view youth as resources, keep confidentiality, and be willing to volunteer time on a regular basis.

Minimum Qualifications:

To be a youth with experience with emotional, mental, and /or behavioral problems and a desire to help other youth

Youth Advocates will promote mental health wellness by...

Helping find access to sources of help, building confidence in those mentored and supported, teaching strategies to deal with difficult situations, promoting confidence and the acquisition of skills in the supporters, and teaching how to handle relationships.



SUPPORT

Along with helping others,

help
yourself!

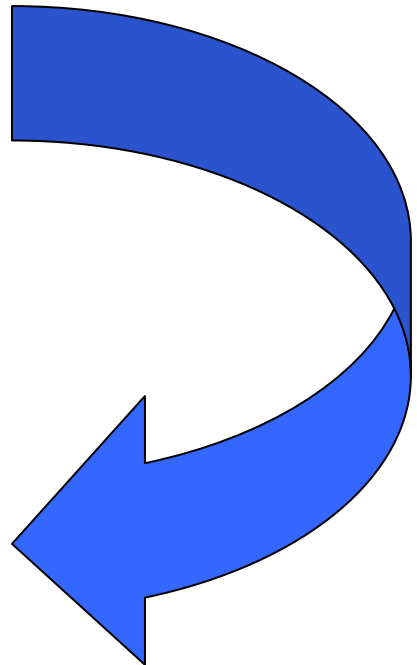
Think of all the people you can turn to for support. These are people who are concerned about you and can help comfort you, and who will listen to you and encourage you.

These people might include:

- Friends
- parents and other family members
- someone who seems "like a parent" to you

AND THEN...

Encourage your peer to do the same!



SUPPORT

Advocacy and Peer helping begins with self-help. The following words about support are things that everyone needs, including yourself and the person you help and advocate for.

Everyone needs good friends or supporters they can call on when they need:

- someone to talk to
- companionship
- help in figuring things out and decision making
- someone to take over for them and keep them safe when they can't do it for themselves
- to have a good time

Supporters are people who:

- care about you
- empathize with you
- affirm and validate you and your experience
- accept you as you are
- listen to you and share with you
- advocate for you
- enjoy sharing fun and interesting activities with you
- respect you

It may take time for supporters to arrive. Be patient and understanding with them.

Supporters need support too!

Principles of Support

We all need support and have an opportunity to give support.

- We will see the individual first, not the illness.
- We recognize mental illnesses are brain disorders.
- We aim for better coping skills.
- We find strength in sharing experiences.
- We reject stigma in ourselves and others.
- We won't judge anyone's pain as less than our own.
- We forgive ourselves and reject guilt.
- We embrace humor as healthy.
- We accept we cannot resolve all problems.
- We expect a better future in a realistic way.

Supporters can make decisions and take action in your behalf when you can't do this for yourself.

can do this when we are experiencing psychiatric symptom is to LISTEN! A good supporter knows that unsolicited advice, criticism and judgment won't help and may even make matters worse!

Because we know that supporters need support as well, understand that you should have the same things you are helping others to have.... SUPPORT!

Five Steps to Developing a Strong Support System:

1. Become an active member of a support group.

Support groups provide an opportunity to be with people who have similar problems, people who understand and can be mutually supportive.

They are a wonderful place to make new and lasting friendships. They counter social isolation.

Basic support group rules assure us that we can feel comfortable in support groups.

They are:

- no criticism or judging
- sharing is optional. It is neither encouraged nor discouraged.
- What a person talks about is not limited in any way.
- Everything discussed at the meetings and who attends the meetings is strictly confidential.
- Attendance is optional



The Systems of Care state youth advocates are a support group that you can be a part of as well as your local Systems of Care youth group.

2. Participate in community activities, special interest groups, and church groups.

The hardest part is going for the first time. **Give yourself a pat on the back for getting there.**

If you see the same person several times, suggest an activity of interest to both of you. If you enjoy being with this person, get together again.

Check your newspaper and listen to the radio for announcements of activities and events which interest you.

3. Volunteer

Find a worthy organization that needs help and lend a hand.

It's an excellent way to meet people while doing something nice for someone else and building your self-esteem.

Many communities have an organization that coordinates volunteer opportunities. By volunteering to be a peer helper, you're doing this! Congratulations!

4. Keep in touch with friends and acquaintances.

Always have a plan for your next time to get together.

Get together for fun activities- like movies, walks, and ball games.

Make regular phone calls, send notes and cards.

Help them out whenever you can.

Focusing on others is a positive way to spend time not focusing on oneself.

5. Make mutual support a high priority!

Be there for others as much as they are there for you.

If your supporter is not asking as much of you as you are asking of them, treat them to lunch or some other fun activity, or do them a needed favor.

When you have become good friends with someone and feel that they might be a good supporter, ask them if they could fill that role in your life. Tell them exactly what it is you need and expect. Let them know you have other supporters so they don't have to be available all the time. Let them know that you would also be their supporter.

If they say yes, great. If they say no, you still have a good friend. (It can be too overwhelming for some people).

YOUTH ADVOCACY

What exactly does being a youth advocate mean?

It means you are a person who has been trained in communication skills, and you have learned how to apply them in helping another person with a personal or social problem. It also means you care about others and will take time to listen to their problems. Without giving advice, you will assist the person in managing and/or solving his or her own problems.

"Leadership can bloom in quieter times when people step outside themselves to work for the greater good"

What responsibilities will you have?

1. To be available to the person needing help, whenever possible.
2. To listen.
3. To keep confidentiality.
4. To help the person solve his or her own problems.
5. To refer the person to a professional when warranted.
6. To report:
 - a. Child abuse- to the department of social services or police
 - b. Potential suicide or bodily harm- to your leader, a professional, and/or a relative.

Being involved in youth advocacy and peer support by being a peer helper should allow for the following benefits...

- increased self-confidence
- acquisition of communication skills
- enhanced responsibility and opportunities to act pro-socially
- emotional development through growing awareness
- the development of specific skills, for examples, listening skills, how to talk to people, how to put people at ease
- gained understanding, for example of people and emotional issues, of peer's problems
- counts as work experience
- the experience of positive interaction
- team work
- self- help
- increase ability to problem-solve, to integrate and apply knowledge, to work cooperatively with others, to develop versatility and values, and to take on responsibility.
- sense of competence, a sense of usefulness, a sense of power, and influence, and a sense of belonging.
- work to engage youth in learning about their work and their role in shaping it

Four ingredients necessary for youth to develop in a positive way....

A sense of
competence

A sense of
usefulness

A sense of
belonging

A sense of
power

Define these in your own words...

Competence:

Usefulness:

Belonging:

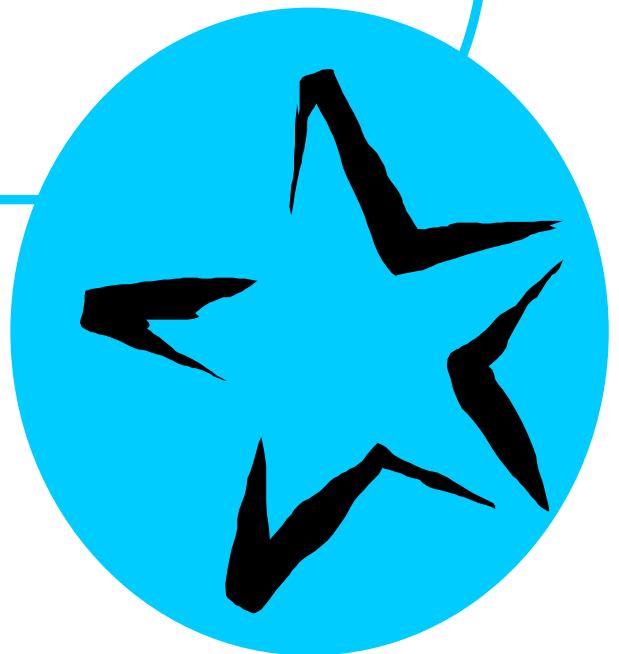
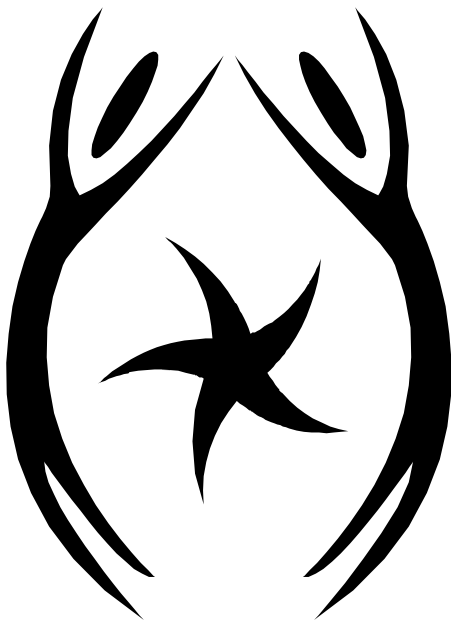
Power:

Rules for Helping Peers

There are certain basic concepts you will always want to remember when you help a peer. These are generic in nature and will apply to any age person or any helping situation. Review these tips daily until you find you use them as automatically as you do your toothbrush. As with any skill, improvement will come with practice.

A Few Rules to follow...

- be nonjudgmental
- be empathetic
- do not give advice
- do not take responsibility for the other person's problems
- stick with the here and now
- do not argue, verbally or nonverbally
- listen between the lines.
- Deal with the feelings first
- Be genuine and sincere
- Keep confidentiality
- Be a vital part of a caring network



Skills

The word "skill" may be defined as an ability which is gained by knowledge and practice. To work effectively as a peer helper, certain skills must be learned through the process. These skills are constantly improved and perfected as you put them to use.

Basic to all peer helping will be skills in communication, developing active listening, responding to peers, sending effective messages, practicing values clarification/problem solving/decision making, recognizing boundaries, and intervening in a crisis.

Meeting a Stranger

Remember some people who need your help the most will not be those who will ask for it; the person sitting alone at lunchtime or the one standing alone at a social gathering may be feeling very lonely. This person may need your care and understanding as much as any of your peers. It will be up to you to reach out to the stranger. You may do this by introducing yourself, starting a conversation, and listening to what the other person has to say. By using active listening, you will probably discover his or her needs and may be able to initiate future meetings to continue the helping relationship.

Steps for meeting a stranger

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Make eye contact, and if shake hands, shake hands firmly.
3. Initiate conversation which stems from the present surrounding and mutual interests.
4. Encourage the person to talk about himself or herself.
5. Be cautious about asking questions of a personal or intrusive nature. Show consideration for the person's privacy.
6. Listen attentively.
7. Use open-ended questions, which usually begin with "How" or "What."
8. Show sincerity and respect to strangers.
9. Initiate appropriate closure, which may include exchanging phone numbers or making plans to meet again.

Communication Barriers

The Don'ts...

Ordering, Commanding, Directing
Warning, Threatening
Moralizing, Preaching
Advising, Offering Solutions, or Suggestions, Logical Arguments
Judging, Criticizing, Disagreeing, Blaming
Praising, Agreeing, Giving Positive Evaluations
Name Calling, Stereotyping, Ridiculing
Interpreting, Analyzing, Diagnosing
Reassuring, Sympathizing, Consoling, Supporting
Questions, Probing, Interrogating, Cross-Examining
Withdrawing, Distracting, Being Sarcastic, Humoring, Diverting

Things to consider as causes of poor communication...

- interpretation/ perception
- communication shortcomings
- attention problems
- memory deficit
- language/ speech
- worries, stresses, preoccupations
- timing
- pace/ intensity

55% of All communication is Non-Verbal

non-words, sounds
appearance
facial expression
eye contact
body language
personal space
listening

38% of all communication is verbal

voice tone
pitch
resonance
breath
speed
volume

7% of all communication is words

choosing words,
definition,
vocabulary

Characteristics of Active Listening

- Restate the person's most important thoughts and feelings.
- Be attentive. Don't daydream- keep your thoughts from wandering. Focus your thoughts on the person you are listening to.
- Convey understanding and acceptance by non-verbal behavior (posture, voice tone, eye contact, facial expression, gestures).
- Put yourself in the others' place to understand what the person is saying, how he or she feels, and the values involved in the situation.
- Do not interrupt. Have patience- allow the person time to express his or her full thoughts and feelings.
- Do not offer advice or suggestions.
- Avoid bringing up similar feelings and problems from your own experience before understanding the persons experience.
- Develop the attitude that listening is fun and personally enriching.
- React appropriately. Applaud with nods, smiles, comments, and encouragements.
- Do not argue mentally with self-talk.
- Have a desire to listen. There is no such thing as uninteresting people, only disinterested listeners!
- Do not antagonize the speaker with hazy judgments.
- Listen for camouflaged feelings. Many times feelings are hiding behind words. Ask yourself what feelings you think you are hearing.
- Avoid changing the subject. Sometimes you may get off-track and need to refocus on the actual issue.

Are you an active listener?

Talking to and listening to others...

Some example below might help you.
When asking questions:

How are you feeling about that?

Or

Can you tell me more about what happened?

When reflecting what the peer shared:

You seem angry about what they said.

Or

You would like to see a change...

When conveying understanding:

This must be very difficult for you.

Or

That can really hurt.

When clarifying:

Are you saying it doesn't matter if she leaves?

Or

It sounds like you're afraid of what they might do. Is that right?

When summarizing:

It sounds like you feel torn in the situation. You want to live with your Mom, but you don't want to hurt your Dad's feelings.

It may be useful to focus on one issue and keep coming back to it, despite feelings of wanting to avoid it.

At other times, a person may need to jump around from subject to subject. At the beginning of a session a person may want to focus on one particular issue, but as they proceed, they may find other issues coming up that have priority. Many of us have never received attention to our issues, concerns and feelings. It is amazing what can be accomplished by sharing with a person committed to paying close attention to us.

Responding to Peers

- Use open-ended questions. Avoid questions requiring a "yes" or "no" answer. Also remember to stay away from "why" questions- these tend to put the peer on the defensive. The peer will feel the need to justify his or her behavior. Other words to beware of are "did", "have," and "is." Good words to lead off a question with are "how" or "what."
- Avoid making premature conclusions. False assumptions invite wrong conclusions.
- Clarify the peer's feelings, thoughts, and/or problems. This will be helpful to both you and the peer. Often the peer needs to have what he or she has share clarified. And sometimes it is important to have the peer clarify something for you.
- Focus on the peer's feelings. This shows you care about the peer and offers validation of his or her feelings.
- Do not be afraid to make a mistake. It is O.K. to guess wrong about how the peer feels or what he or she means. The peer will appreciate your effort and attention.
- Do not solve the peer's problem. It is important for the peer to come to his or her own resolution. The peer, through discovering his or her feelings and options, will be able to solve the problem himself or herself. In allowing the peer this space, he or she will experience a feeling of adequacy and satisfaction.
- Do not over-analyze. This might cause the peer to feel uncomfortable and to put up barriers.
- Do not give "pat" answers. Responses such as "don't worry" suggest what the person is feeling is unimportant. When someone is worried, he or she will not feel better after being told not to worry. If anything, the person will feel worse! It is necessary to validate, and help the person understand, his or her feelings.
- Ask question to help the peer along. Certain questions will aid the peer to focus on the issue, look at it from a different perspective, and reveal information not already disclosed. In responding to your peer, you might feel stumped on how to do it. What can you say after the peer finishes talking?

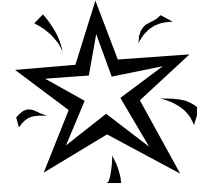
Sending Effective Messages

Sending effective messages is important in peer helping, and it is equally important in personal relationships. Certain guidelines will help you as you practice this skill.

-Use "I" statements for expressing feelings. Remember to "own" your feelings.

A correct example: I'm angry with you because

An incorrect example: You make me angry when you....



Make sure verbal and non-verbal messages agree. Your body language should match your words. An incongruent message is often confusing because the receiver must decide whether to pay attention to the verbal or the non-verbal message.

A congruent example: a person says he or she feels fine, while a smile is on his or her face

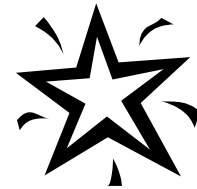
An incongruent example: A person says he or she feels fine, and a look of pain is on his or her face.

Communicate caring and acceptance of the receiver's feeling and reaction. Active listening may be used to respond to the receiver.

Examples: "I seem to be hearing you say the break-up with your boyfriend was not something you wanted. That must make it very painful."

Or

"It sounds like you are in a lot of pain because of the unwanted break-up with your boyfriend."

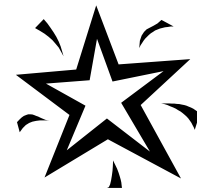


Be specific. "You always..." or "you never..." are generalizations. It is important to give someone an exact example of his or her behavior.

A correct example: "you cut classes four times last week."

An incorrect example: "you always cut classes."

Include "want" statements in expressing what you would like someone to change. If the speaker does not convey explicit expectation in his or her message as to what is wanted, the receiver may perpetuate the personal dilemma, believing he or she is powerless to resolve the situation.



Asking Questions

In sending effective messages, there are three kinds of questions used in communication. These are: closed questions, open-ended questions, and "why" questions.

Closed questions ask for specific information, such as: "did you go to the store?" This type of questioning discourages the person from talking. Closed questions usually begin with "is," "did," or "have" and are usually answered with a "yes" or "no."

Open-ended questions encourage conversation because feelings are allowed to be discussed. The most effective questions begin with "how" or "what."

"Why" questions should be used infrequently because they often put the receiver on the defensive. Sometimes "why" questions make people feel they must explain or justify what has happened.

Identify a setting in which each different type of question would be beneficial.

Closed-ended:

Open-ended:

"Why":

Values Clarification

Listed below are some guidelines to consider in values clarification:

- active listening assists peers to express their feelings.
- listen for what is important to the peer.
- restate to the peer what you heard that seems important to him or her.
- ask questions to aid the peer in clarifying what is important to him or her
- assist the peer to verbalize one or two values in respect to his or her problem.
- brainstorm some other values

Problem Solving and Decision Making Model

Ten steps are generally recognized in effective problem solving and decision making:

1. Clarify feelings- use active listening to assist the peer sort out feelings. Making a list of these feelings may be helpful
2. Gather information- find out as much as you possibly can about the situation.
3. Define the problem- what does the peer perceive as the problem? Sometime the first problem presented is not the primary one.
4. Identify the decision- what does he or she want to change?
5. Brainstorm alternatives- use open-ended, feeling-level questions to explore what the real problem may be.
6. Evaluate the alternative- list all possible solutions. **Brainstorm the pros and the cons.**
7. Predict consequences- discuss the outcome for each possible decision.
8. Clarify values- will certain decisions violate the peer's values?
Example: "I will not ride with friends who are drinking and driving because I value my own life."
9. Make an action plan- list the things which must be done first, second, and third to carry out the decision. Assist the peer to make a plan for completing each step in a given amount of time.
10. Follow-up- make an appointment for the peer to see you again and to report how the decision is working well, start over. Use the ten steps again and arrive at a different decision.

Problem Solving

First Steps:

1. Pick the most pressing problem.
2. Give the relevant specifics.

Then use POW!



P = Past Experiences

What have you tried so far?

O = Options

What new options might the group suggest?

Choose the options you want to try first.

W = What if?

Select a back-up option to try if your first choice doesn't work.

Clarifying Conflicts and Finding Resolution

A conflict may be defined as a disagreement, dispute, or quarrel. Students have a variety of conflicts in their lives. As a peer helper, you will need to assist the peer in recognizing and dealing with his or her conflict.

Conflicts may be internal, where the student is in conflict with himself or herself, or external involving one or more people. The conflict also may be between a student and a collective entity such as a school.

Conflicts may be resolved by:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Listening to complaints.
3. Gathering information
4. Seeking alternatives.
5. Making an action plan.
6. Reviewing the outcome.
7. Don't become part of the conflict.

Remember, some conflict is normal!

Conflict resolution is:

- a unique form of communication
- resolving - to melt, loosen, create movement
- placing the solution with the disputants
- moving disputants from solidified positions to solutions
- a way of getting together



Intervening in a Crisis

A crisis may be defined as a situation which arises and threatens one's psychological equilibrium. These life events or situation may be expected or unexpected, real or imagined, actual or potential. During a crisis, a person becomes very vulnerable because basic human balance is disturbed.

A crisis affects the physical body as well as the emotional being. It may be manifested in the form of:

- Sweaty hands
- Feeling faint
- racing heart
- change of body temperature
- shock
- vomiting

Prolonged physical responses may include

- chronic fatigue
- allergies
- sleeping disorders
- migraine headaches
- gastrointestinal disorders
- heart problems

The Chinese word for "crisis" involves two characters: one mean danger, the other means opportunity. A student may see the crisis as a danger because he or she may be overwhelmed by the situation. It may also be viewed as an opportunity for the student to change and develop better ways of coping.

Steps to follow when intervening in a crisis

1. Provide the most appropriate level of protection, security, and nurturing, according to the person's obvious physical and mental needs.
2. Find out what the crisis is and what caused it.
3. Explore why the person cannot handle the current situation as he or she has done with other problems in the past.
4. Now that you know the problem, make certain the peer also understands the situation and how it relates to him or her.
5. Explore alternative ways of coping with the problem and more positive ways of viewing the situation.
6. Lend appropriate support to the peer's efforts at managing or resolving the problem.
7. Assist in the full recovery process toward a restored balance and/or an improved level of functioning.

Goals for helping someone with a crisis:

- Help the student cope effectively with the crisis situation and return to a normal state of functioning as soon as possible.
- Follow up after the crisis is over to see if the student is getting along satisfactorily.

If you see the warning signs of suicide...

Begin a dialogue by asking questions. Suicidal thoughts are common with depressive illnesses and your willingness to talk about it in a nonjudgmental way can be the push a person needs to get help. Questions to ask:

"Do you ever feel so badly that you think of suicide?"

"Do you have a plan?"

"Do you know when you would do it (today, next week)?"

"Do you have access to what you would use?"

Asking these questions will allow you to determine if your friend is in immediate danger, and get help if needed. A suicidal person should see a doctor or psychiatrist immediately. Calling 911 or going to a hospital emergency room are valid options. Always take thoughts of or plans for suicide seriously.

Never keep a plan for suicide a secret. Don't worry about endangering a friendship if you truly feel a life is in danger. It's better to regret something you did, than something you didn't do to help a friend.

Don't try to minimize problems or shame a person into changing her mind. Your opinion of a person's situation is irrelevant. Trying to convince a person it's not that bad, or that she has everything to live for will only increase her feelings of guilt and hopelessness. Reassure her help is available, that depression is treatable, and that suicidal feelings are temporary.

If you feel the person isn't in immediate danger, acknowledge the pain as legitimate and offer to work together to get help. Make sure you follow through. This is one instance where you must be tenacious in your follow-up. Help find a doctor or a mental health professional, participate in making the first phone call, or go along to the first appointment. If you're in a position to help, don't assume that your persistence is unwanted or intrusive. **Risking your feelings to help save a life is a risk worth taking.**

RELATIONSHIPS

The Helper-Peer Relationship

There are some essential elements involved in establishing and maintaining an honest, healthy helper-peer relationship. These include: initiating contact with the peer, defining your role in the relationship, establishing trust, and being aware of certain boundaries. Each of these should be considered. Be conscious of them- they are important!

Defining Your Role

- Ask why the peer needs help. Why did he or she reach out to a peer helper? How does this person feel about working with you? Often the peer will be nervous, and asking how he or she feels about the situation may help release some of the anxiety.
- State the kind of help you can offer, relative to the problem he or she has.
- State your desire to help and to be available for the person.

Establishing Trust

- Assure the peer of the confidentiality in the relationship. It is important, however, to let the peer know there are particular things you need to report to authorities, such as child abuse or indications of a potential suicide or homicide.
- Discuss with the peer how often you will meet. Beside the obvious necessity of arranging a time, this also reassures the peer someone is there for him or her. This provides something consistent in the peer's life, and a dependable friend.

Initiating Contact

- Introduce yourself and let the peer know you are a peer helper.
- Your first meeting with the peer often feels uncomfortable- that is OK. This awkwardness will decrease with time.
- If initially you have problems getting the peer to talk or open up, share a little about yourself. Talk about whatever seems pertinent at the time.



Being Aware of Boundaries

- As in any relationship, there are boundaries over which neither party should cross. As peer helpers, you are there to listen. You should not intrude into certain areas of the peer's life unless they have given you permission to do so.
- You have boundaries also, and it may be necessary to establish these with the peer. It is important to keep in mind that you are not responsible for the peer's actions or feelings. Never feel guilty if things do not turn out right for the peer.

The Danger of Getting Attached Getting attached can go either way.

The peer may develop a desire to become closer to you, or vice-versa. The desire may also be mutual. If you find you get along with the peer and want to become socially and/or personally involved, this is not necessarily wrong. But it is important for you to be aware that the helping relationship will be sacrificed. No longer will you be an objective person= the purpose and needs in the helping relationship will be clouded and displaced. You will have lost the emotional distance between you and the peer, which is essential to being an effective peer helper.

Things to be Aware of

Being aware of boundaries may also help to prevent two different kinds of situation which will jeopardize the helper-peer relationship. One of these situations occurs when the helper becomes the "rescuer." Another difficult situation may occur if the helper and the peer get attached to each other and become emotionally involved. However, remember that we are all members of a community.

Do Not Rescue

As a peer helper, your role is not to save the peer. You are there to help the person help him or herself. If you become a rescuer by taking care of something for the peer, or by enabling him or her not to take risks, you are doing a disservice. You would cause harm to the peer and his or her personal growth by assuming responsibilities which are not your own or by providing over protection. In this respect, you would be violating a basic rule of peer helping.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-Awareness is a vital part of peer helping. Peer helping not only has to do with what the peer is going through, but also with what is happening in your life. Being in touch with how you are feeling, or something you are experiencing, greatly affects how you can help a peer. For example, if you have just had an argument with a friend and are now in a helping session, chances are the fight will affect your nonverbal and verbal communication. The peer will be able to sense something is wrong. If you are still feeling frazzled from the argument, you will be unable to be there for your peer in a healthy way.

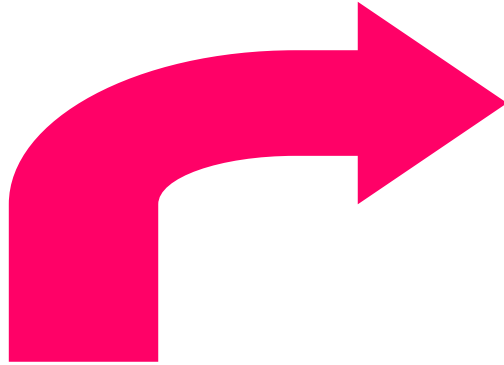
In a situation like this, there are some things you can do before and during your session with the peer:

- First, try to calm yourself and focus your feelings.
- If there is time before you meet with your peer, seek out a peer and talk about how you are feeling.
- If you are still feeling upset, let the peer know where you are coming from. You may feel more comfortable after being honest with him or her. If you do not feel focused enough to be there for your peer in a facilitative manner, ask the peer if he or she would like to meet at another time. Sometimes this is not an option; at least communicate your feelings, thus allowing you to be less distracted with your problem and better able to be a good listener.

Peer helpers, by no means, are without problems. Everyone experiences pain in his or her life. Peer helpers are human too. Through experiencing and working out problems, peer helpers can listen more empathically and be of great value to the peer. Your function is to be a caring, understanding listener. How can you do that if you are unhealthy internalizing and running from your feelings.

When people keep their feelings in from family, friends, and peers, those feelings get displaced. Be aware of what you are feeling and why. Be as honest as you can about your feeling- this will help prevent you from releasing your feelings in an inappropriate manner not only with a peer, but with others as well.

Self-awareness is an integral part of peer helping for another important reason. Peer helpers are not "perfect" -they have problems too. If you are honest with yourself, sustain your self-awareness, and deal with your feelings, you will relate better to someone who is experiencing the same thing you did.



This situation is only one example. In practicing self-awareness, there may be a whole array of problems to recognize and to resolve in your life; from school or work problems to serious family problems. It is very important to recognize those problems and deal with the feelings in a responsible, healthy way.

How to Check Your Self-Awareness

- Be honest with yourself and others. You may want to internalize your feelings and act as if everything is O.K., when really, it is not. This can be very dangerous and lead to emotional instability in addition to creating stress.
- Recognize your feelings. Focus on those feelings.
- Don't run from whatever you may discover. Talk to someone about what you are feeling and what is happening in your life.
- Listen to others and their input.
- Do not discount or minimize your feelings- any feeling is important and deserves validation.
- Once you have recognized those feelings, deal with them in a healthy way. This may include a number of things: for example, resolving an argument or bad feelings about someone, seeking help for yourself, or writing down your feeling for even further release. The list is endless once you put your mind to it.

For example, if you have a drinking problem and are in denial about it or not seeking help for yourself, you may run into a problem when a peer approaches you and he or she has a drinking problem. If the peer specifically requests guidance in that area and you have not dealt with or accepted your own drinking problem, it is most likely you will not be clear-headed on the subject and able to give him or her the best information needed.

Although, if you have recognized you have a problem and have sought help for yourself, you could be a tremendous help for your peer. You will understand where he or she is coming from and be able to share your own experience. The peer will know that he or she is not alone and help is available.

Questions to Ask Yourself

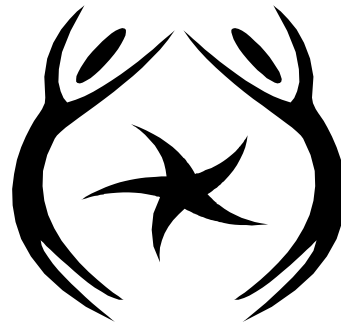
There are questions you might consider asking yourself after meeting with a peer. These questions may help you reflect on your session to discover areas of your skills which you may want to work on. It may also help shed some light on your peer's problems and reveal how you can be most helpful to him or her.

Concerning Active Listening

- Did I focus solely on the peer?
- How was my body language?
- Did I respond with appropriate nonverbal communication?
- Did I refrain from giving advice?
- Did I refrain from passing judgment?
- Did I allow the peer time to completely express his or her thoughts and feelings?
- Did I restate (reflect) the peer's feelings?
- Was I able to uncover feelings the peer was hiding behind words?
- Was I empathetic?
- Did I put myself in the peer's shoes to understand how he or she was feeling?
- Did we stick with the issue at hand?
- Did I refrain from arguing with the peer?
- Was I supportive?
- Did I express caring and love?

Checking my response

- Did I validate the peer's feelings?
- Was I able to ask questions which facilitated the peer to further express his or her feelings?
- Did I do anything which caused the peer to put up barriers?
- Did I avoid over-analyzing?
- Did I refrain from expressing my opinion?
- Did I use open-ended questions?
- Was I able to clarify and summarize the peer's



Examining the Peer's Problem

- What feelings did the peer express?
- What is the issue being dealt with?
- Is this a problem I need to report to the proper authorities? (If unsure, always check with your supervisor)
- Did the peer seem to feel better after the session?
- If we did not arrange another time to meet, do I need to try to meet with the peer again?

REFERRALS

You are trained and able to help peers, but there will be times when your peer will need professional help. Do not feel inadequate when the situation is beyond your capabilities. You have already performed an important task by assisting the peer in identifying the problem and in seeing the need for contacting another person. When you have accomplished this, you will then act as a "bridge" to professional help.

When to Refer

As a peer helper, you should refer a peer when you lack the skill/experience/knowledge, emotional stamina, or time to begin or continue helping someone.

Remember to let your peer know that you are still available for support while he or she is receiving additional help. It is also important to be available for the peer when the outside help has been completed. The professional counselor may ask for your assistance after discharging the client. This help would come in the form of alerting the professional if things start to go downhill again for the peer. This is particularly true of peers who have previously attempted suicide.

Seek outside help when your peer is:

- requiring medical attention
- showing aggressive behavior
- abusing drugs
- talking about suicide
- being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused (child abuse)
- appearing to be emotionally unstable
- asking for professional help
- having a legal problem

If there is ever a question of whether to refer or not, ask for guidance from your peer helping teacher or the person supervising you. When in doubt, do not linger about making a decision. Check with someone immediately.

Where to Refer

Peer helpers need to be familiar with agencies and persons in the community to whom they may refer their peers. The list of referrals may include suicide prevention centers, physicians, Alcoholics Anonymous or other 12-Step programs, child abuse agencies, departments of public social services, psychiatrists, psychologists, and marriage, family and child counselors.

For your convenience, lists of some referral places are given below. You will need to write the local phone numbers on the lines provided.

Use this referral phone list when your peer has a problem relating to:

AIDS

AIDS information (local)

Hospital

Other

Alcoholism

Alcoholic's Anonymous (local)

Alateen, Alanon headquarters

Alateen, Alanon (local)

Chemical dependency hospital

Other

Child Abuse

Child Abuse Hotline

Public Social Services Department (Child Welfare Office)

Police

Other

Depression, anxiety, confusion
Mental Health Clinic

Private Psychiatrist, Psychologist, or Licensed Counselor

Other

Drug Abuse
Alcoholic's Anonymous (local)

Narcotics Anonymous (local)

Cocaine Anonymous (local)

Drug Abuse Treatment center

Other

Eating Disorders
Overeater's Anonymous

Private Clinic

Psychologist or other mental health professional

Anorexia and Bulimia specialist

Other

Financial Matters
Local welfare office

United Way Office

Local Church

Other

Disability
Society for the Blind

Other

Legal Matters
Legal Aid Society

Local attorney

Other

Marriage
Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor (local)

Psychologist or other mental health professions

Domestic Violence Shelter

Local clergy

other

Missing Person
Police Department

other

Physical Illness
Doctor's office (local)

Hospital (local)

Other

Poisoning
Poison Control Center

Other

Pregnancy
Doctor's office (local)

Community clinic (local)

Home for unwed mothers

Social Service Department

Other

Rape
Rape Hotline

Hospital

Police

Mental Health Professional

Other

Spiritual or Religious Needs
Church (various ones, local)

Additional Church

Other

Suicide Threat or Attempt

Suicide Hotline

Suicide Prevention Center

Mental Health Clinic

Psychiatrist, Psychologist, or other mental health person

Hospital (local)

Family Advocate

Other

Mandatory Reporting to Authorities

By law, all cases of child abuse must be reported. This includes physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Do not feel that something happened too long ago to report it. Report the incident no matter when it occurred. Let the authorities determine if it should be pursued.

Suicide, or the intent to do bodily harm, should always be reported to your supervisor and to the person who is legally responsible for your peer.

Remember: It is important and O.K. to recognize your limitations when helping someone and to ask for help from your supervisor, another peer helper, or a professional.

Steps in Referring

1. Be familiar with community resources so you can refer to the most appropriate place and / or person.
2. Before referring, check with the referral source to be certain that your peer can be accepted for help.
3. Tell your peer why you feel he or she needs to be referred.
4. Indicate to the peer your reason for each particular referral recommendations you've shared with him or her.
5. Try to involve your peer in the decision to refer.
6. Let your peer make his or her own appointment, if possible. You may not have the necessary information needed for scheduling the appointment.
7. If warranted, assist the peer in planning how he or she will get to the appointment, and determine if another person is needed to go along.
8. Keep an interest in the peer even after he or she has been referred. Be ready to support the peer during and after the time he or she is seeing a professional. Let the peer know you care.

MOTIVATION

Becoming a peer helper is like any other new experience. It is exciting, challenging, interesting and rewarding. This initial thrill may not last indefinitely. There may come times when you are tired, depressed, burned-out, or unmotivated. Do not feel guilty. Your feelings are perfectly normal. You may need some time away from peers. During your rest period, take time for yourself. You may use this time to regroup and revitalize- and to see where you are with your own feelings.



During your time of reflection, concentrate on your successes, not on your apparent failures. Situations which may have seemed unsuccessful to you may have planted seeds which will blossom sometime in the future. You may hear about them later, or you may never know the important contribution you have made to someone's life. Just keep in mind that the more peers you see, the more successes you will have and by the law of statistics, more failures also. Professional counselors recognize the fact that they cannot help everyone they see. They know they will have some failures. You will also have some failures. Do not feel guilty about them. Do the very best job you can do; refer a professional when you cannot handle a situation; and feel good about what you have accomplished.

Tips to motivating self-advocacy for both you and your peer...

Learn more about your disability. Be able to define it for yourself and to others.

Practice asking for what you need in order to communicate with confidence

Set monthly goals and chart how different approaches work for you.

Develop back-up plans for everything.

Learn the steps for leading your own IEP meetings.

Know when it might be necessary to seek protection offered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

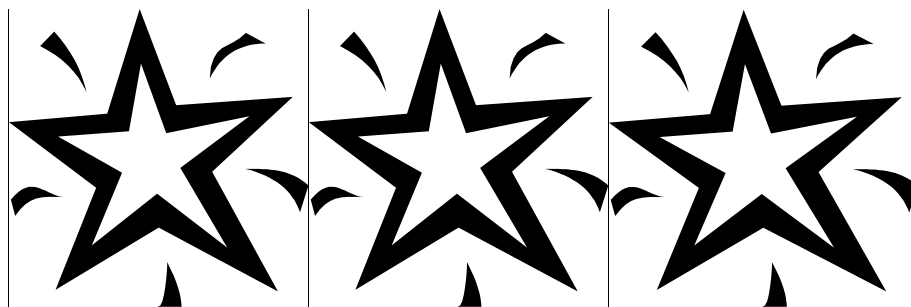
Know if your symptoms of your illness need to be accommodated in different settings and know what modifications work for you.

Know if your medications have side-effects that may require additional accommodations.

As a peer helper these are helpful tools for you to know about yourself as well as valuable tools to teach and help the peer identify.

You, the peer helper, are a very special person. You fill a spot which is unique. Other people will come to you for help because they will recognize those qualities in you which they admire and respect. They will see your concern and caring for people of all races, economic status and cultural heritage. You will be recognized as a nonjudgmental person who does not stereotype a person because of his or her physical appearance, abilities, values, or ethnic origins. Your dedication and endurance for sticking with a peer through "thick and thin" will be noticed and appreciated. You will model certain behavior which you will want to see developed in your peer- he or she will see the respect you have for yourself and the value you place on your own high self-esteem. You will radiate the love you have for all people who are experiencing many kinds of problems and life situations.

In summary, you are a peer helper because you care and are concerned; you accept and do not judge; you show dedication and endurance; you model self-awareness and high self-esteem; you radiate love. How fortunate your peer is to have you as a peer helper!



Youth Group Development!

"Not about us, without us!"

Youth

Advocacy

Change

Voice

Ending Stigma

Reform

Youth group development is a partnership between youth and an adult for support, but should be youth lead and driven.
Remember... Youth Voice Comes First!

Remembering Strengths!

Starting with strengths will get your group headed in the right direction. You each have something amazing that you bring to your group. Take time to figure out what your youth group's strengths are and how you can use them in planning and putting your plans into action. Continue to do this throughout the growth and changes in your group.

"If we do not believe in ourselves... the universe is a frightening place." -
Nathaniel Branden

- What are each of your individual strengths?
- What do each of you bring to the table?
- What are the group's strengths?
- What are the strengths of your community?

Community Mapping and Identifying Stakeholders

Who and What's out there?

Identifying stakeholders will increase the sustainability of your group. These stakeholders should be a support for the growth and sustainability of your youth group, but remember, this is still your group and should be youth led and developed.



Who is out there in your community that will be interested in the work of your youth group?



What are all of the youth-related resources that you can find in your community?



Why is the development of your youth group important for your community members?



Who in your community has an investment in the mission and outcomes of your youth group?



Who in your community will support your efforts?








Examples of stakeholders in your community could be community program staff, elected officials, community faith-based organization, educations, rotary clubs, or business owners.

MISSION STATEMENT

Why are we doing this?

The first step is writing your mission statement. This is no easy task! Your mission statement and goals and strategies have to match. Your members are going to be responsible for carrying out this mission, so make sure that this is a group effort! This effort is most effective when the core group is small so the youth can get together to fully develop the statement. It's important for the mission statement to be short, quick, and jargon-free.

This is the time the adults need to step back and let the youth lead and develop the mission statement!

-  Ask yourselves, what do you want this group to achieve?
-  Define "who" your organization is.
-  What is the purpose of your youth group? What do you hope is the result of the work you will do?
-  What are the values or beliefs of your youth group? Do you value teamwork, creativity, youth empowerment, a need for mental health systems reform, ending the stigma associated with mental health and so forth?
-  Who will be affected by the work of your youth group?
-  What makes this youth group unique?
-  What need is your youth group trying to address?

Goal Development

"Goals are not only absolutely necessary to motivate us. They are essential to really keep us alive." - Robert H. Schuller

Goals will keep your youth group alive too!

What do we want to do?

A goal is a statement of an outcome you want to achieve.
(Remember goals need to lead to outcomes, not activities.)

Make sure your goals are specific and realistic.



What are the opportunities your youth group will have based on your mission?



What are some of the barriers towards reaching your mission?



What will be the short-term and long-term goals you hope to achieve based on your organization's mission?

Youth Group Development!

Strategies & Objectives

How are we going to do it?

Your strategies and objectives are how you will put your plan into action. This is where activities come in, and you can start planning ways to meet your goals and your mission.

- ★ What will you do to reach these goals?
- ★ What actions will your group take towards reaching your goals?
- ★ Where will you direct your group's focus?
- ★ When will your action occur and how often?
- ★ Who is responsible? Who else will be involved in making this happen?

Remember the importance of collaboration to make your program more successful!

- ★ What do we need to learn to reach our goals?
- ★ Who can support us in this without the power struggle?

PUBLIC RELATIONS!

Getting the word out...

Your community needs to know who you are. The more people who know about your group and your work, the better chance you have of finding people who can provide support in keeping your group going. There are many ways you can get the word out in your community. Negotiate with high schools to give credits for your participating in the group as community service or as leadership development. Partner with local schools to sponsor a speaker to talk about mental-health- related issues. Fundraise in your community. Volunteer in your community. Set up a table at local and statewide youth-related events.

MEMBER RETENTION

Youth groups should have a mission that the members believe in. Remember, this is not a program, and youth have the right to attend or to miss a few weeks if they need to without being made to feel guilty.



"Always welcome members back with open arms. Youth need to keep their eye on each other because we care about each other like family." - Brandon Fletcher, NE Youth

Youth need to feel that they are connected to the group and that they have a voice that is heard throughout the group process. Remember these groups are for youth, and youth like to have fun; everyone does! Plan activities that can be fun for youth and give the group a chance to bond and feel connected to each other. Youth groups have participated in retreats, ropes course, adventures, ice cream social, roller skating, movie nights, picnics, and pizza parties. The youth should plan what to do together to make each other happy and feel supported.



"It's all about checking in with each other and knowing when someone is unhappy and responding to that." - Maggie VanDenBerg, CO Youth Coordinator.

Resources

Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder

www.adhdlivingguide.com

www.add.org/content/kids1.htm

www.add.org

www.chadd.org/

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/adhd.cfm>

<http://www.mentalhealth.com/dis/p20-ch01.html>

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs19txt.htm>

CHADD, Children & Adults with AD/HD

1.800.233.4050

Autism

www.autism-pdd.net

www.aspergers.com

www.autismtoday.com

www.autism-resources.com

www.aspergers.org

<http://www.discovertechnology.com/PenPals/ppalsAutism.htm>

www.autismsocialvideos.com

www.specialkids1.com

www.coultervideo.com

www.exceptionalresources.com

Autism Society of America

1-800-3autism

National Alliance for Autism Research

1-888-777-NAAR

Autism Hotline

1-304-525-8014

Tourette's Syndrome

www.mental-health-matters.com/tourettes.html

www.tourettesyndrome.net

<http://www.tsa-usa.org/>

<http://tourettesyndromesupport.com/index.php>

<http://www.findinfo.com/tourettes.htm>

Tourette's Syndrome Association

1-800-237-0717

ODD/ Conduct Disorder

www.docspeak.com/articles/TOODEFY.HTM

www.conductdisorders.com

http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/about_conduct.html

Bipolar Disorder

www.bipolarchild.com

www.bpkids.com

www.bipolarhome.org

www.bipolarworld.net

www.bipolar-children.bigstep.com

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

1-800-826-3632

Depression

www.psycom.net

www.ndmda.org

www.wingofmadness.com

www.depressionfallout.com

www.depression-net.com

<http://www.tscnow.com/>

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

1-800-826-3632

Siblings

www.sibshops.com

Suicide

www.save.org

www.yellowribbon.org

www.afsp.org

www.cdc.gov/safeusa/suicide.htm

<http://www.yspep.org/>

<http://www.reachout.com.au/home.asp>

www.newday.com

1-800-SUICIDE

1-888-511-SAVE

Eating Disorders

www.something-fishy.org

www.edap.org

www.acadeatdis.org

www.anred.com

www.nedic.on.ca

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders

1-708-831-3438

Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders, Inc.

1-503-344-1144

American Anorexia/Bulimia Association, Inc.

1-212-891-8686

Center for the Study of Anorexia and Bulimia

1-212-595-3449

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

www.ocdresource.com

www.ocfoundation.org

www.ocdhelp.org

National Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Information Hotline

1-800-NEWS-4OCD

Obsessive Compulsive Foundation

9 Depot Street

Milford, CT 06460

1.203.878.5669

Anxiety

www.anxietynetwork.com/gahome.html

www.anzieties.com/home.htm

Anxiety Hotline

1-215-635-4700

Panic Disorder

www.apa.org/publicinfo/panic.html

www.panicdisorder.about.com/cs/panicdisorder/index.htm

www.ipanic.com

Anxiety Disorder Association of America

1-901-231-9350

National Institute of Mental Health Panic Campaign

1-800-64-PANIC

National Anxiety Foundation

1-616-272-7166

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

www.palace.net

www.ncptsd.org

www.aets.org

Schizophrenia

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.mentalhealth.org

Other Resources:

Teenline here in Oklahoma

1-800-522-8336

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Oklahoma

1-877-492-KIDS

NAMI

405-230-1900

Self Awareness Questions

2. There are people who believe that what you experience as life has great significance to you as a person. What is your opinion? Give the reasons for your answer.

1. Think of two adults who are a part of your life. What lessons did you learn from these adults that help you to explain the meaning of your life?

3. What makes your life meaningful?

Fears

One fear that I have that is known to others:

When did this fear begin:

How I handle this fear:

I would like to overcome this fear because:

Important Life Events that have shaped my character and personality.

Describe the event:

Describe how the event changed your life:

The change was _____ positive or _____ negative

Describe the new insight or understanding you gained from the event:

The Most Influential People in My Life

Name

Reasons why this person has influenced me:

Special Knowledge possessed by this person:

Unique qualities possessed by this person:

Ways I have been influenced by this person:

Critique of Songs and Poems that interest me

Song / Poem Title

Author

My general impression of this work:

The author's intent:

Why the work interests me:

In what ways does/does not the work strongly reflect my personal values:

Attach a copy of the song lyrics/poem!





My Personal Hero/Heroine

Characteristics:

Achievements:

Life Principles

Principle: I believe

3. This belief is very important to me because:

4. I believe this is/is not a principle that will guide my decisions throughout my life

Yes

No

Life Principles

Principle: I believe

1. This belief is very important to me because:

2. I believe this is/is not a principle that will guide my decisions throughout my life

Yes

No

Life Principles

Principle: I believe

5. This belief is very important to me because:

6. I believe this is/is not a principle that will guide my decisions throughout my life

Yes

No

Personal Crisis

In Chinese characters, the words for crisis and opportunity are represented by nearly the same characters. If it is true that in every crisis there is opportunity, we should question why one person sees a crisis as devastating and another person views it as an opportunity.

What was the crisis?

What caused the crisis?

How was the crisis managed?

Could the crisis have been managed differently?

Did the crisis represent an opportunity? Explain why or why not.

The topic of friendship is very popular. By answering the following questions, you will examine your own thoughts about friendship in general and your own friendships in particular. Explain the reasons for each of your answers

1. How important is loyalty in a friendship? Are there ever times when a friend should not be loyal?
2. How do you feel about the issue of trust in a friendship?
3. Is enjoying a person's company necessary in a friendship?
4. You will change as you mature. Do you believe that your choice of friends will also change?
5. Will the person who is your friend today still be your friend tomorrow?
6. In what ways have your friends changed or not changed through the years?
7. Who was your best friend in kindergarten? Is that person still your best friend? Why or why not?