



THE PEER NEWS

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PEER HELPING: TIME FOR A NAME CHANGE

David de Rosenroll

The growth of peer programs in schools, businesses, and community agencies has led to a myriad of names being used to describe the role and activities. While the terms adopted have allowed peer programs in different settings to create their own identity, they have also created confusion, minimized cross-program learning, and under-emphasized similarities. What is needed is an umbrella term that can reflect the goals of individual peer programs while at the same time uniting such programs into a common community.

In the Workplace

Members of both business and industry who include a peer referral model in their employee and family assistance programs (EFAP) typically call the relationship and the interaction "peer assistance." In

most cases the employees are volunteers and are nominated by coworkers to participate in effective listening and problem-solving skills. In the workplace, the trained employee (or peer assistant) provides support, information, and referral to other employees. The words "peer" and "assistance" are intentionally used to describe these formal relationships.

Peer, on first glance, describes those characteristics that two people might share where they would agree that they have similarities. Gender, place of employment, race, culture, or age are easily recognized and constitute many of the criteria assessed by individuals when they are considering whether or not a relationship has peer qualities. Similar life experiences (addictions, death, illness, divorce and separation, family concerns) can create a peer relationship whose focus is on a person's life experience, as opposed to their physical, cultural or social characteristics.

Assistance describes a helpful act or action, and is based on the Latin *assistere* or "to take one's stand by." Here in the translation, then, lies the thrust of a peer assistance relationship. When a person in need asks for support of some kind, their peer or associate *stands by them*. The very act of standing by is supportive and the nature of the relationship is supportive, whether the peer assistant's reactions include focused listening, problem solving or referral to another such as a mental health, financial, or family counselling professional.

In Educational Settings

Words used to describe formalized peer help-intended interactions in educational institutions from elementary schools to university settings have included the terms peer counsellor, peer facilitator, peer mediator, peer mentor, peer ambassador, peer leader, and even peer patroller. Peer helping is clearly the most recognized and widely-used term which depicts these peer interactions.

Peer helping over the last decade has become a recognizable umbrella term for a variety of formalized peer help-intended activities in educational settings. For example, peer helping programs in schools may include peer tutors (academic and learning issues), peer mediators (student-student or student-teacher disputes), peer counsellors (one-on-one personal issues) and peer facilitators (support or issues oriented groups). Students typically receive training in communication and problem solving skills and then receive additional training for any specialized activities sponsored by the peer helping program.

Peer Assistance vs. Peer Helping

Business and industry peer programs train employees to be allies for (take their stand beside) other employees when they are asked to, thus the term peer assistance fits for the corporate culture! Schools, colleges and universities train students to "be there" for other students when they are asked to, thus the term peer helping fits their culture! Thousands of community groups have formed peer programs based on such criteria as age, culture, religion and special needs. They have not consistently named their groups either peer assistance or peer helping. Indeed many have opted for other alternatives.

Historically the peer movement began with small peer tutoring programs in colleges and universities. From those institutions, programs began developing in high schools, middle schools and finally elementary schools. Peer programs in business and industry, as well as in the community, began their evolution later, have expanded more slowly, and have approached the idea more cautiously.

A debate over what to call these programs raged for a number of years within the school-based communities. Many involved in the debate feared stigmatizing the person being helped or worried about creating false expectations of what the help giver would or could do to be helpful. The debate culminated in the generally accepted term peer helping.

The business community favors the term assistance. Peer helping, now an umbrella term, has been used to describe specialized school-based programs where the school counsellor or some other adult authority is "in charge." In business and corporate programs, as well as many community-based programs, the employees once trained might have consultants and coordinators, but have much more autonomy and control of their interactions. Further, the term helping, though generic, still suggests a vertical (have/have not) relationship, whereas assistance (taking one's stand by) suggests a more horizontal or equal relationship. The stigma associated with "needing help," particularly psychological support, may be reduced by using "assistance" rather than "helping" to describe the relationship.

I'll close with a definition of peer assistance: "Peer Assistance" is an umbrella term used to describe a sanctioned program where individuals receive appropriate training and supervision so that, formally and informally, they can directly and indirectly offer assistance in a variety of ways to individuals who, based on their situational defined similarities, would refer to themselves as peers.

The peer movement now embraces all developmental age groups from children to adults. Peer programs are available in all communities. As the movement has matured and spread, I'm convinced from my research and extensive peer program experience that the term "peer assistance" (1) describes the quality of the relationship, (2) allows for a variety of actions to take place within the relationship, (3) is respectful of both parties, and (4) is accessible to all parties. The term that best fits these criteria, whether used to describe community, business or school-based programs, is "peer assistance."

References

de Rosenroll, D. (1994 September). Toward an operational definition of peer helping. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly*, 8, 1. (Retrieved January 20, 2010 from Peer Resources at <http://www.peer.ca/Docs.html>. The article has been renamed in the list of documents as "The Best Definition of Peer Helping Anywhere.")

About the Author

Dr. David de Rosenroll is a faculty member at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia. He was previously the Director of Peer Training for Peer Resources, a board member of the National Peer Helpers Association (now called the National Association of Peer Program Professionals), and the Editor of the Peer Facilitator Quarterly. He can be contacted by email at [derose @ uvic.ca](mailto:derose@uvic.ca)

***May the warm winds of Heaven blow softly on your home,
And the Great Spirit bless all who enter there.
May your moccasins make happy tracks in many snows,
And may the rainbow always touch your shoulder.
~ Cherokee Blessing ~***

~ Who said this? ~

PEER COACHING TRAINS AND CHAINS

Kerryn Griffiths

Peer coaching is a term that is loosely applied in the coaching industry to various forms of coaches coaching coaches. However, there are two versions of peer coaching, the "official" and the "unofficial", and it would be wise for coaches be aware of which is which before you end up on the wrong train!

Official peer coaching, primarily existing in formal education settings, business organizations and in some fields of coaching, has itself two forms: expert coaching and reciprocal coaching. Expert coaching occurs within an unequal relationship and involves feedback, support, alternatives and suggestions. Reciprocal coaching occurs within an equal relationship and involves observation, feedback, support and natural learning (Zeus & Skiffington, 2002; Carr, 2009). Many peer coaching relationships between coaches are reciprocal coaching relationships. In addition, cognitive coaching frequently uses peer coaching, to assist teachers in delving into the thinking behind their practices, helping them to self-monitor, self-analyze and self-evaluate their teaching practices (Costa, 1992, 2000; Garmston, 1993). Notably, cognitive coaching plays a role in evidence-based coaching literature also (Campbell, 2003).

From the literature, it seems most official peer coaching, including both expert coaching and reciprocal coaching, is used as a means of facilitating professional development and may or may not involve specific coaching process. On the other hand, there has been a proliferation of unofficial peer coaching among professional coaches within the coaching industry that focuses more on personal, rather than professional development and is underpinned by accepted coaching process. Unofficial peer coaching remains largely undocumented within coaching literature. Although it is personally focused and much more fun than official peer coaching, with professional rewards being a by-product, unofficial peer coaching can also be a bit slippery.

Shortly after I first started coaching, I started to swap coaching with one of my trainee coaching colleagues. We agreed to coach each other for 12 sessions. I gave her one session, then she gave me one, and so on until we reached about session ten. What happened at session ten? Why didn't we continue? There were two reasons.

First, I knew too much about her and she found out too much about me, the result of which meant we could no longer coach each other effectively because we started thinking we knew the answers to each other's issues! Second, we had two different relationships going at the same time. I had a relationship with my colleague as a coach and a client and that meant that her behaviour as a coach affected my interaction with her as a client and vice-versa! With this experience I got the message loud and clear that the coaching ethic warning against dual relationships in the coaching process was put in place for a reason.

After this experience, I was faced with a dilemma: pay for a coach or not have one at all. At the time, I'd given up my day job to coach, so I didn't have a lot of money, leaving just the latter option. As a coach, it was unthinkable for me not to have my own coach. So I got creative and gathered together a group of coaches who wanted coaching without having to pay money. By setting up a chain-like system, we all got coached but never coached the same person who was coaching us. This small gathering has since spread to hundreds of coaches from around the world and is known throughout as Contra Coaching. Peer coaching was sorted forevermore and I have never been without a coach since.

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"Choose to be a love-finder rather than a fault finder."

~ Who said this? ~

USE PEER LITERATURE TO GUIDE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Peer Resources continually scans the professional and popular literature for articles, books, videos and other useful reference materials. They provide a brief synopsis of the work as well as citation details and summaries in a searchable format on their site at <http://www.peer.ca/articles>. Each issue of the *Peer News* includes some of the many citations added every week.

Carr, R. (2002). *The peer helper's tobacco reduction workbook*. Victoria, BC: Peer Resources.

A workbook designed to accompany *The Peer Counselling Starter Kit* (Carr & Saunders, 1982). Filled with interactive activities to empower peer helpers to be effective in substance abuse reduction with their peers. The workbook emphasizes the perspective that successful prevention programs are less based on the facts about substance abuse and more based on interactive skills in providing support, listening, and practical assistance to peers.

Mancini, M.A., and Lawson, H.A. (January 2009). Facilitating positive emotional labor in peer-providers of mental health services. *Administration in Social Work, 33, 1, 3-22*. Emotional labor is the work of regulating feelings in the context of employment. Providers of consumer-based mental health services help others through their use of autobiographical experiences. These providers thus routinely perform emotional labor as they negotiate their working relationships with other service users, consumer-provider colleagues, and non-

consumer coworkers. Absent organizational supports, these providers can experience emotional exhaustion leading to burnout and high turnover. Data provided from a qualitative study of consumer-providers' emotional labor indicates the salience of this construct and implicates the need for organizational cultures with relevant emotional labor supports.

Medley A, Kennedy C, O'Reilly K., et al. (2009). Effectiveness of peer education interventions for HIV prevention in developing countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *AIDS Education Prevention*, 21, 3, 181–206. The authors conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of peer education interventions in developing countries published between January 1990 and November 2006. Thirty studies were identified. In the meta-analysis, peer education interventions were significantly associated with increased HIV knowledge, reduced equipment sharing among injection drug users, and increased condom use. Peer education programs had a nonsignificant effect on sexually transmitted infections. Meta-analysis indicates that peer education programs in developing countries are moderately effective at improving behavioral outcomes but show no significant impact on biological outcomes. (The complete study is available to PRN members here.)

Rinaldi, D. (2009). *Peer-helper intervention to reduce inappropriate school bus behavior*. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 69, 7-B, 4406. Second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students who were transported by bus to and from school each day were selected to serve as part of this intervention. The current intervention was designed to decrease inappropriate school bus behavior. The second and third grade students were matched up with fourth and fifth graders who were instructed to serve as models of appropriate bus behavior and to monitor their younger grade peers. Students in the various grade sampling were selected by the principal based on previous referrals for misbehavior. Four fourth grade students were taught mediation techniques and were assigned one child each that resulted in four separate dyads. There were significant reductions in inappropriate bus behavior across all dyads. Recommendations for future research were discussed.

Schein, E.S. (2009). *Helping: How to offer, give, and receive help*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. (From the cover): Many different words are used for helping: assisting, aiding, advising, caregiving, coaching, consulting, counseling, guiding, mentoring, supporting, teaching, and more. We've all offered someone help at

some point in our lives as a client, a coworker, a colleague, a friend. But for all our good intentions, our offers of help often prove to be woefully ineffective or are even rejected outright. Distinguished MIT professor and organizational consultant Edgar Schein argues it's because we don't understand the subtle psychological and social dynamics of helping relationships. In this breakthrough book, Schein offers specific techniques and illuminating examples that help us determine what type of help to offer and how best to offer it in any situation.

Thorn, A., McLeod, M., and Goldsmith, M. (2007). *Peer coaching overview*. Unpublished paper. The authors describe what peer coaching is and what it isn't; the three basic roles that a peer coach plays; how success is measured; the concept of "feed-forward" (choosing something you'd like to improve and soliciting ideas about how to go about it from others); how to provide peer coaching support; the importance of asking "daily questions;" measuring results, and managing perception. (The complete paper is available to Peer Resources Network members.)

"Whatever we can do to facilitate learning on the one hand and loving on the other is important, because those are the most healing forces available."

~ Who said this? ~

PEER POWER BOOK REVIEWS

DeeAnne Vonde

Tindall, Judith A. (2009). *Peer Power Book One. Strategies for the Professional Leader, Becoming an Effective Peer Helper and Conflict Mediator. 4th Edition.* New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 987-0-415-96231-5. 219 pages.

The purpose of this book is to provide the foundation for the strategies that a mentor will use in the Peer Power: Book One, Workbook: Becoming an Effective Peer Helper and Conflict Mediator, 4th Edition. Dr. Tindall's knowledge, skill, and expertise are evident throughout this book.

She clearly outlines the philosophy of the peer program, the training structure, and the goals. All of the modules that are presented in the workbook are described in this book.

The intended audience is any adult who wants to deliver the program with young adults or teens. The information presented gives the reader a complete understanding of the responsibilities associated with peer assistance. Whatever the population: middle, high school, and higher education students, community agency, or church group, the information in this book will be valuable.

Dr. Tindall begins by clearly stating what is included in peer helping. Divided into three sections, she first sets the stage for the peer assistance program, then offers information on developing basic helping skills, and in the third section offers strategies on implementing a program.

I especially appreciated the emphasis on holistic learning. Using a holistic approach, not only in delivering the program, but even when it comes to "Strategy Development 2: Taking Care of You" (p.183), which encourages the trainer to keep everything going on in one's life in perspective and realize the impact of various factors.

Another major feature of this book is the attention to detail. Each exercise has a clearly stated Goal, Time Needed, Introduction to the Exercise, Training Procedures, and Application for Trainees After the Group Meeting.

I would use the Dialogue and Explanations for the Seven Steps related to Problem Solving. The sample interchange that is presented for each

would be valuable in starting discussions. Both adults and youth could relate to the examples provided. All of this makes the learning "real".

Tindall, Judith A. (2009). *Peer Power Book One. Workbook. Becoming an Effective Peer Helper and Conflict Mediator. 4th Edition.* New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 978-0-415-96232-2. 364 pages.

The purpose of this book is to clearly identify and explain the Peer Power program. The intended audience is adults who want to deliver a program either to young adults or teens.

This workbook is intended for use in conjunction with Peer Power Book One. Strategies for the Professional Leader. Becoming an Effective Peer Helper and Conflict Mediator (see above).

The workbook explains the eight core skills that peer mentors will use: Attending, Empathizing, Summarizing, Questioning, Genuineness, Assertiveness, Confrontation, Problem Solving.

One of the highlights of this workbook is the helper responses. The various responses presented will trigger discussion within the group. When reading the responses the reader will think: "I have heard people say that in that very situation." The various responses listed are all "authentic." The adults or youth being trained can begin to see how important it is to think about what you are saying, as well as what you are conveying through nonverbal communication.

The goals for the group training are clearly identified and the reader is provided more than an adequate amount of information to carry out the training. Many authors state that when leaders "are true leaders" they empower others. Tindall encourages the peer mentor to be a mentor who empowers others.

Especially useful are the examples on page 135. Both the rating scale for paraphrasing, the examples of responses can be applied in a training situation or in conversations with acquaintances. The difference between the high, medium, and low response can be examples used over and over again.

Another extremely valuable part of this book in Module VIII, Questioning, The Fourth Basic Skill in Peer Helping, is the "Diary of Questions Used While Helping Friends with a Problem" on page 190. There are details for opening a conversation, elaborating on the key point, aiding understanding, and focusing on feelings. Each has a place

for open-ended and closed responses. The author suggests writing reflections about this module, asking questions, writing key points, and then drawing or writing ideas. What a valuable tool this would be in moving peer mentors forward.

Tindall, Judith A. (2009) *Peer Power Book Two. Strategies for the Professional Leader. Applying Peer Helper Skills. 3rd. Edition.* New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 978-0-415-96233-9. 183 pages.

The purpose of Peer Power Book Two is to assist peer helpers to grow interpersonally, gain new skills, and have the tools to work with others. This would be most useful for readers who have a basic understanding of the information presented in Peer Power Book One. While any number of topics are included the author clearly states that the peer helpers need an opportunity to actually use their skills and work with others. Not only are they delivering the program there is ample opportunity for them to reflect on the strategies they have used and the skills they are using.

There are 17 major topics included in this book, and in the workbook, Peer Power Book Two, Workbook Applying Peer Helper Skills. It is important to note that all of the topics are independent, and can be delivered in almost any order. Furthermore, not all of the topics would need to be addressed. Not only is there information that the peer mentor would use to deliver the topics but there is information as well to help the mentor to identify and understand their own use.

One of the key selling points of this book is the information presented on recognizing suicidal signs in others. The author has taken this information a step further and included strategies for those coping with the loss.

This information could be shared by peers one on one or in a group setting. If a group setting is used the peer mentor will find the strategies in Module X1X a useful tool.

Tindall, Judith A. (2009). *Peer Power Book Two Workbook. Applying Peer Helper Skills. 3rd. Edition.* New York. Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-415-96234-6. 399 pages.

Dr. Tindall provides the reader in an depth understanding of such issues as drug and alcohol abuse, stress management, tutoring, eating disorders, suicide prevention, coping with loss, bullying reduction,

problem gambling and youth tobacco issues. Whether the reader is working in group settings with adults to address any of these topics or is just interested in knowing more about any of the topics this workbook is the place to find all of the answers.

For example in the information on drugs and alcohol there are two clearly stated goals: to recognize some common signs of drug use; and to review ways to test the user's understanding about drugs and alcohol. The goals are followed by Twenty-Six Questions. The questions include possible symptoms of alcoholism. The reader is then provided with basic knowledge regarding the common signs of other drug use. The effects of drug abuse on the brain are identified. A drug and alcohol review quiz provides an additional tool and if that isn't enough there is even a word puzzle. All of this leads to information on the stages of adolescent chemical usage.

Whether you are working with visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners you have all the tools you need. I could see myself using the information on drugs and alcohol to teach the information in Module XVIII, Peer Helping Through Tutoring. Participants could analyze how they learn best and develop strategies for how to use their time more effectively and improve their test scores. While participants may have addressed their learning styles at some point in time, having the wealth of information included in this book allows them to apply the information on anything from drug and alcohol issues to eating disorders, to bullying reduction.

In each section the goals are stated and an introduction follows. There are clear directions, a 'Let's Discuss' section, and a group feedback form.

The author defines peer helping as "a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy, and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person. Peer mentors are those special people in our lives who through their work help us move toward fulfilling that potential."

Working as a mentor you can use the knowledge gained in Peer Power Book One and Peer Power Book One Workbook, and hone your skills. Both intervention and prevention are addressed and the book provides many prompts to examine your own behaviour. The role playing situations provide opportunities for the reader to practice and perfect their skills.

In addressing leadership training the author offers not only strategies for leading discussion groups and classroom groups, but she also emphasizes the importance of self help. To be a peer mentor can add stress. To be an effective peer mentor it's important to learn to take care of yourself. It's hard to meet the needs of others when you aren't giving some time and attention to your own physical and mental health.

Peer helping through 'Community Impact' is included in this workbook. In Module XXVII there is a plan for delivering character education to younger youth. What more important role do we have than to be a positive role model and mentor for youth?

About the Author

Dr. DeeAnne Vonde is a Calgary, Alberta-based consultant and member of the Peer Resources Network. She received these four books from Peer Resources in exchange for writing the reviews. She can be contacted at [trvonde @ telusplanet.net](mailto:trvonde@telusplanet.net)

"Whenever you make a choice, ask yourself two questions: 'What are the consequences of this choice?' and 'Will this choice bring happiness to me and to those who are affected by this choice.'"

~ Who said this? ~

CD-ROM WITH COMPASS AND THE PEER BULLETIN

If you are involved with starting, building or re-vitalizing a peer assistance, peer coaching, or peer mentoring program, you may want to tap into expert advice, have a sounding board, brainstorm ideas, or learn about the best resources. Normally access to such consulting, coaching or support would cost hundreds, if not, thousands of dollars. But you can receive unlimited, top level assistance as part of being a member of the Peer Resources Network.

No other organization offers this type of personalized support and immediate responsiveness. You can speak with experienced practitioners who can provide a way to help solve even the toughest of peer program dilemmas or circumstances. And using our toll-free number or contacting us via email or Internet telephone software makes even the cost of your contact minimal.

In addition, as a member of the Peer Resources Network you will receive a monthly newsletter, the *Peer Bulletin*, loaded with information, practical tips, announcements, peer program descriptions, funding opportunities, job openings, and research summaries every month.

Members can also receive at no cost some of the latest books or videos on peer work in exchange for writing a review of that resource. Here are some of the current books available to members at no cost:

Reconnecting Youth: A Peer Group Approach to Building Life Skills by Leona Eggert, Leila Nicholas, and Linda Owen

Student Leadership Training: A Workbook to Reinforce Effective Communication Skills by Peer Resources Network member Diane Taub

Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships by Laura Lipton, Bruce Wellman and Carlette Humbard

PeerVention: Training Peer Facilitators for Prevention Education by Robert D. Myrick and Betsy E. Folk

Beginnings & Endings: Creative Warmups & Closure Activities by Michèle Barca and Kate Cobb

Do the quotes placed in this newsletter intrigue you? Would you like to know more about the people quoted or read more of what they have

to say? Members of the Peer Resources Network receive links and more details regarding each quote when they receive the monthly Peer Bulletin.

Peer Resources Network members have access to a variety of resources in the password protected area of www.peer.ca, and many of these documents are without cost or arrangements have been made with authors and publishers to provide them to members at reduced costs or deep discounts.

The Peer Resources Network is a non-profit organization and is sustained through memberships. The low fee for a one-year individual membership is \$99.00 and the fee for an institutional membership, which allows up to five people to share a full membership, is \$185.00 for a year. We even have a student rate of \$50.00/year. For more details on the benefits as well as a secure online form to sign-up, go to <http://www.mentors.ca/PRN.html>.

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