

Session 5: Interpersonal Barriers to Peer Mentoring

Objectives

1. To identify and re-frame interpersonal barriers to Peer Mentoring
2. To identify effective ways to approach others as a Peer Mentor

Materials

- Tape recorder, microphone and tapes with labels
- Group Rules poster (from Session 1)
- “Peer Mentors” Poster (from Session 1)
- SPEAKK Poster (from Session 1)
- Approaches Poster
- Flipchart / Newsprint
- Markers, pens
- Homework activity card

Overview

- I. Welcome Back and Homework Review (15 minutes)
- II. Reflection on Interpersonal Resistance to Peer Mentoring (20 minutes)
- III. Approaching Others When Doing Peer Mentoring (15 minutes)
- IV. Break (10 minutes)
- V. Small Group Freeze -Frame Role -Plays Using SPEAKK with Resistant Networks (30 minutes)
- VI. Summary of Dealing with Interpersonal Resistance (5 minutes)
- VII. Discuss Peer Mentoring Homework and Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

I. Welcome Back—Debrief from Peer Mentor Training Activity (15 minutes)

Procedure

Group leaders welcome participants back to the group and ask them to share about their Peer Mentor training activity. They briefly touch upon the topics that will be covered in today's session.

At the end of last session, we asked you to LISTEN to one of your network members about barriers that they have in their lives about making changes with their risk behaviors.

Questions about the Interaction

1. *What actually happened?*
 - *How did you bring up the topic?*
 - *What was their first response when you brought up the topic?*
 - *Were you able to Stay Positive?*
2. *What went well?*
 - *What techniques did you use to engage them in conversation?*
 - *Did they try to avoid answering any of your questions or information that you were presenting and what did you do to get them to talk?*
3. *What did not go so well?*
 - *Did they try to avoid answering any of your questions or information that you were presenting and what did you do to get them to talk?*
4. *Would you like some suggestions from your group about ways to improve your interaction?*

Transition

Ok, so it seems that listening to your network members about the challenges that they are facing with making changes in their behavior was [summary of experiences].

II. Reflection on Interpersonal Barriers (20 minutes)

We spent the last session talking about our own resistance to making changes. We want to spend the session today talking about resistance that you may have encountered as a Peer Mentor from your network members or others.

First, let's try to understand more about resistance. What are some reasons that people may be resistant to hearing about HIV risk reduction or changing their behavior?

Procedure

Hang a blank poster with the following columns: Why, What They Say, How it Makes You Feel, Statements to Overcome. As the participants come up with answers to the discussion questions below, write them in each column.

- Why are people resistant? (They don't care, they want to stay ignorant; they may be drug sick; they are afraid to change.)
- What do they say when they are resistant? (I don't have time to talk; I don't do those things, why are you talking to me about this?)
- How does this affect the Peer Mentor (feelings, motivation to keep trying) (Makes you feel stupid, embarrassed, angry, uncomfortable)
- What can we say as Peer Mentors to overcome this resistance? How can you tell when to back off? Why is it important to back off sometimes?

III. Approaching Others (15 Minutes)

Now that we have looked at reasons why people may be resistant, we want to spend this part of the session thinking about different ways we can approach people. Having a good approach is like making a good first impression. We want to approach people in ways that make them feel open and comfortable -- ways that make them want to talk to us.

Let's review what SPEAKK stands for, but this time, in terms of how we approach people.

Stay Positive: *When we approach people we want to have a positive outlook and be ready to support whatever positive things they are doing. We don't want to start off by criticizing them or making them feel bad about themselves. That can turn them off right from the start.*

Plan Ahead: Approaching people means making sure that they are in a place that they feel comfortable talking. Try not to interrupt them, if they look busy or are concentrating on something else.

Explain What You Want or why you are bringing up the topic of risk reduction. Telling them that you are not trying to get into their business will make them less suspicious of your motives. Explaining that you are trying to share information that could be helpful to their health (or that you have learned in this program) may reduce their resistance.

Actively Listen to the person so that if you did choose a poor time to talk, you don't turn them off by ignoring their request to talk later.

Know your Resources Peer Mentoring can be as simple as giving someone a condom or a schedule to a needle exchange. When people start to realize that you know about different places to get services in your community, they may start approaching you!

Procedure

Put up the poster with the list of Verbal Approaches and have people identify which ones they like and ask for additional suggestions of approaches that they have tried that seem effective.

Then have the group generate a list of Non-Verbal Approaches that work - being sure to touch on the ones listed in the curriculum.

Now that we reviewed our SPEAKK skills:

Here are some Verbal Approaches that we think are effective in getting people to talk to us. [Read some off of the poster].

With someone you don't know very well:

You might start out the conversation with the statement, "Can I talk to you about something really important?"

What are some other approaches you might use with people you don't know very well? What approaches have been successful for you? What could you say to open up a conversation that would mentor them to decrease their risk for HIV? [Write their responses on a piece of newsprint.]

With anyone:

You can also talk about the project and say, "I'm involved in a project to help stop the spread of HIV." You can then say that you've been trained to mentor people to help stop the spread of AIDS.

With people you know who inject:

You can begin with a question, such as "Have you heard that you can get HIV from sharing cotton and rinse water?"

You can talk about yourself, such as "I'm concerned about HIV. I'm going to stop sharing my works" or "There are too many people dying from AIDS - we have to start protecting ourselves better. "

What are some other things you could say when you approach people you know who inject? What have you said in the past that has worked? [Write answers on newspaper.]

[Sex Partners]

It may be more difficult to start the conversation about preventing HIV with sex partners.

With a casual sex partner:

You might just say, "I have a rule that I live by - I always use condoms." You might want to add, "That way we protect both you and me."

With a regular sex partner:

You might say that you are concerned about AIDS and that there have been times that you used drugs and now you want to be sure that everyone is safe.

You might want to talk about something you experienced here and how it made you think about always using condoms from now on. An example might be that learning where to get condoms for free makes it easier to use them. Or learning about lubes and flavors makes you feel like it can be fun to use condoms.

These are all just ideas for how to approach the subject of HIV prevention with your sex partners. Only you can be the best judge of what's the best thing to say and do with your partner. Can you come up with some ideas for how people could approach their sex partners? What has worked for you - or for your partner? [Write responses.]

Note: If participants raise concerns about violence and personal safety, recognize their concern, and tell them that you are not advising them to put themselves in harm's way. They have to use their best judgment. If there is an immediate threat - like someone would get violent on them because they try to use a condom or not share needles - then they may not be able to protect themselves from HIV while they are still in that situation. They may want to get some personal support or help with how to handle that threatening situation in a way that best protects them.

Hang a newspaper labeled: "Non-Verbal Approaches"

Remember, when approaching people your words are important, but your body language can be just as important. Body language is part of what we call "Non-Verbal" communication - or communication without words. What are some Non-Verbal Approaches that can make it easier for others to talk with us about decreasing their HIV risk?

[Have the group generate ideas and write them down on the newsprint. The list should be brief, taking only a few minutes to complete, and it should cover the following points.]

Give people space [don't stand too close]

Use a non-threatening posture (Don't point, yell, or "get in their face").

Make eye contact (active listening)

Face and/or lean in their direction (active listening)

Use open body language (arms folded can look judgmental, hands behind back can look suspicious).

Don't fidget a lot (this can be distracting)

[Summarize the Activity]

We have talked about a lot of different approaches. The idea is to help us understand ways to be successful when we approach others. We hope that these ideas will help you with your peer mentoring - so that you have a good experience when you are out there talking to people about decreasing their risk for harm.

Now we're going to take a 10-minute break.

IV. Break

V. Small Group Freeze-Frame Role-Plays (30 minutes)

Now that we have thought about reasons why people may be resistant, how it makes us feel, and what we can say in our approach and to overcome the resistance, we want to give you all a chance to practice.

We want you all to think about one approach that you would like to try using. Sit and think about what you want to say and how you would walk up to a person. Then we want you to practice with someone else.

As a group we are going to observe and give you feedback about your body language and approach.

Think about the way that you would be walking or items that you would need to have a conversation with someone, like the risk ladders.

We have come up with a few scenarios that you may encounter. As the Peer Mentor, remember to Stay Positive and Actively Listen. Remember, you can step out of the box on the floor and freeze the role-play if you need to think about what to do or say next, or you can freeze the role play in order to ask your other group members for their advice. We may freeze the role-plays for you, if there is something we want to add.

Procedure

Divide into two groups and each facilitator take a group to opposite sides of the room. In small groups, have each participant role-play with the facilitator or another participant based upon site discretion. The network member (or facilitator) should present a challenge to the peer mentor without being absurdly difficult. These role-plays should last about 2-3 minutes each and there should be 3-5 minutes for discussion of each role-play.

After each role-play, have the small group members comment on how it went using the discussion questions below.



Note to Facilitator

Allow the Peer Mentor to FREEZE the role-play and ask for advice from the other group members and take time to think through what s/he needs to do next in the role-play. Also, allow the participants to use props such as the risk ladder.

We want to encourage the participants to be thinking through what is happening in the role-play and what SPEAKK skills will help make the interaction more effective.

At the end of the role-play, the group leader provides information to clarify any confusion that arose during the role-play or when participants were giving support/advice to the role-playing participant. This will help participants to assess what they know and don't know, and ask for assistance if they need it.

Role-play scenarios

You are trying to talk to someone about not sharing cookers and cotton, but they say or they are acting like they are too busy to talk right now. Actually, they are just uncomfortable (meaning the network member is persuadable to talk if the peer mentor uses good SPEAKK skills).

You are talking to someone about not sharing needles. The person has time to talk, but he says he never shares needles. Actually, the person occasionally does share needles, but makes an effort not to.

You are talking to some one about using condoms, but they are too embarrassed to talk openly. (Again, this can be overcome using the SPEAKK skills.)

You are talking to someone about not splitting drugs with a dirty needle. They are dope sick and don't want to talk. (This may or may not be overcome.)

You are talking to someone about not splitting drugs with a dirty needle. They want to be safe, but have a hard time getting clean needles.

You are talking to someone about using condoms. They don't want to tell you that their partner refuses to use condoms because it would show they are not in control in the relationship.

You are talking to someone about using condoms. They are afraid to bring up condom use with their partner because they are afraid the partner will think they have been cheating.

You are talking to someone about using condoms. They have tried using condoms, but have difficulty maintaining an erection. They are embarrassed to admit this.

You are talking to someone about using condoms. They have never told their casual partner that they use drugs. (Or maybe they have never told their steady that they have other partners)

You are talking to someone about not sharing. They are afraid that if they bring this up with their other drug using friends, the friends will think the network member is HIV positive.

Discussion/Debrief Questions

After each role-play, ask the following questions:

For the peer mentor: How did that feel? Did you feel good about the encounter? What worked well? What might have worked better? What felt uncomfortable or unnatural?

For the network member: How did that feel? Did you feel good about the encounter? What worked well? What might have worked better? Would the approach the peer mentor used have made you consider trying to make this positive change in behavior?

For the observers/facilitator: What worked well? What might have worked better? What SPEAKK skills did the peer mentor use? What seemed uncomfortable or unnatural? What could have made it more natural feeling?

VI. Summary of Dealing with Interpersonal Resistance (5 minutes)

As we have seen from the role-plays, there are effective ways to deal with resistance that you may encounter as a Peer Mentor. None of these techniques will work in every situation and there may be some situations where the person may simply not want to talk with you. It is important not to let difficult or unpleasant interactions get you down.

It is also important to remember that you may not know that your Peer Mentoring has been successful in helping someone make a change or learn something new. It may not always be apparent to you at the time if and when someone plans to use the information that you share with them. You may find out much later that your conversation made a difference in their life. Sometimes you may never know. But Staying Positive means feeling good about the effort that you are making and not beating yourself up because of an unpleasant experience.

Is there anything else that someone wants to share before we move on?

VII. Discuss Peer Mentoring Training Homework and Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

Procedure

Each participant names or gives the first initial of the network member they will talk to. The group leader records each person's goal to use at the next session's debriefing. The participant writes his or her goal on an activity card to take with them to remind them of the activity.

For today's Peer Mentor training activity, we want you to think about one of the last four homework assignments where the conversation did not go as well as you had hoped. We want you to go back to that network member and try the conversation again using one of the new approaches that we talked about today. If you can't see that network member, try your new approach with your other network member. Remember, what we talked about with your non-verbal communication and body posture. Sometimes this can make the difference between a good Peer Mentoring experience and one that does not go so well.

When you come back next session, be ready to share what it was like for you to try your new approach with your network.

VERBAL APPROACHES

With someone you don't know very well:

- ***Can I talk to you about something important?***
- ***Do you have a minute?***

With anyone:

- ***I participate in a project to help stop HIV.***
- ***I've been trained to help people learn about HIV.***

With people you know who inject:

- ***Have you heard that you can get HIV from sharing cotton and rinse water?***
- ***I'm concerned about HIV. I'm going to stop sharing my works.***
- ***There are too many people dying from AIDS - we have to start protecting ourselves better.***

With a casual sex partner:

- ***I have a rule that I live by - I always use condoms.***

With a regular sex partner:

- ***I am concerned about AIDS, and there have been times that I have used drugs. I want us to be safe.***

Homework:

Session 5 - Trying Again with a New Approach

I'm going to talk with _____ about something I learned today.

If I don't see _____ I'll talk with _____.

I plan to talk about _____

The next session is _____ / _____ / _____ at _____ AM/PM

If you need to speak with someone before the next session you can call _____ at _____.

Homework:

Session 5 - Trying Again with a New Approach

I'm going to talk with _____ about something I learned today.

If I don't see _____ I'll talk with _____.

I plan to talk about _____

The next session is _____ / _____ / _____ at _____ AM/PM

If you need to speak with someone before the next session you can call _____ at _____