



Peer Mentor Training for People with I/DD



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This work is © 2023 by Optum, Inc. All rights reserved. This curriculum was based on the InReach peer advocates leadership training curriculum authored by Patricia K. Keul in
collaboration with a group of peer mentors with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). Peer mentors included: L. Newell, F. Davis, J. Brantley and M. Cannady.

Photo credit: Resources for Human Development

Lessons

1.	Introduction to the role: Peer mentor for those with I/DD	7.	Conflict Resolution
2.	Ethics and Etiquette	8.	The ADA and Accommodations
3.	Self-Determination	9.	The ADA and Disclosure
4.	Self-Advocacy	10.	Abuse, Bullying and Neglect
5.	Supporting People's Choices	11.	Mental Health and Substance Abuse
6.	Identifying Feelings and Emotions	12.	Detecting Scams and Fraud



How to pass this course:



Come to class



Participate in class



Read the lessons



Write in your journal



Pass the quiz each class

Earn your peer
mentor certificate!



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Lesson #1

Introduction to the Role:
Peer Mentor for People
with I/DD

welcome

and introductions

Goals for this lesson

1. Understand that peer mentors provide support and encouragement.
2. Introduce self-determination and self-advocacy.
3. Provide a course overview on how to successfully complete the course.
4. Define “What is peer support?”

Course lesson outline

1. Presentation and discussion
2. Reading the lesson
3. Journal writing
4. Art activities
5. Role playing
6. Quiz: score of 80%+

What is a peer mentor for people with I/DD?

A person who has an intellectual developmental disability who is **trained** to provide *support and encouragement* to others who have an intellectual developmental disability (I/DD).



Photo credit: skeeze. pixabay.com

Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support

Role models and what they do



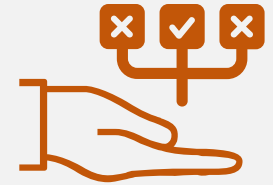
Share their own experiences when it's helpful to tell their story



Lead by example



Listen and give people time to share their feelings and concerns



Support people to make their own decisions

Role models and what they do, continued



Help people to understand the advice they get from family and friends



Reduce conflict and encourage cooperation and understanding



Refer people to professional services whenever necessary — or the issue is outside the role of a peer mentor with I/DD

Class exercise: Matching

Match the role to the person who performs that role.

Help with a lease for an apartment

Peer mentor

Getting stitches for a cut

Residential support staff

Listening to someone who needs
advice from a peer

Counselor or psychologist

Getting counseling for severe depression

Medical doctor

Teaching class at a community college

Dentist

Fixing a cavity in a tooth

Teacher

Peer mentor's primary goal

Self-determination

Help people with I/DD make choices and decisions that meet their needs and goals in life.

Self-advocacy

Help people with I/DD to speak up for themselves, voice their desires and goals, and express their needs.

Activity: Guardianship and advocacy

Activity: Guardianship and advocacy

1. The process of going to court to assign a legal guardian is called _____.
2. The law doesn't protect adults who are their own legal guardians from making _____.
3. The age when a young person becomes an adult is _____.
4. When a person has a legal guardian, the guardian can make _____ for a person with IDD (even if the person is older than 18).
5. It's important for family members and friends to respect and support a person with IDD when they are making their _____ as much as possible.
6. Peer mentors are sometimes called _____.
7. Peer mentors can't take the place of trained _____.

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8. Speaking up for yourself is called self-_____.
_____.
9. Making decisions for yourself is called self-_____.
_____.
10. A person who is in recovery from mental health problems can be a peer mentor to someone who has a mental illness.
Yes _____ No _____
11. A person who has had cancer may be a peer mentor for someone who has _____.
12. Self-termination means making _____ for oneself.
13. A peer mentor would never encourage someone with IDD to take medicine that was not prescribed by a _____.
14. Peer mentors with IDD understand what it's like to be a person with _____.
15. _____ mentors have life experiences that may be helpful to others with IDD.

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Activity: Matching

Identify images that look like peer mentors. Circle or write your answer.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



Photo credit: 1. gettyimages 2. takepart 3. autismandrace 4. gettyimages 5. istock 6. gettyimages

Activity: Listen

Listen to a song about friendship and choose words about friendship from the song. Write them down and share them with your class.

Activity: Journal writing

Activity: Journal writing

Read (or listen to) the story about peer mentoring. Write your own answers to each question. If you need help with writing, you may tell your answers to another peer mentor, your teacher or someone who supports you with writing tasks.

Peer mentoring in action

Bill is a 20-year-old person with IDD. All his life, he has been afraid of going to the dentist. When he was a child, his parents took him to the dentist and sat with him in the waiting room. Now, Bill lives in an apartment and gets help from his IDD support staff during the week.

One day, one of Bill's teeth began to ache. Bill decided to tell Frank, his IDD peer mentor, about his toothache while he was visiting that day. During lunch, Bill told Frank about his problems with his tooth.

"My tooth ached hurting yesterday. Bill told Frank, "I tried to wait to see if the pain would go away, but it's getting worse."

"I am sorry to hear that, Bill. Have you called your dentist yet?" Frank asked. "Have you told your IDD support staff about this pain in your tooth?"

"I really hate going to the dentist, Frank," Bill stated. "I get really scared in the dentist's office... don't want to go to the dentist alone, Frank. And I am afraid to tell my support staff because they may make me go alone."

Frank responded, "Bill, I understand you. Going to the dentist is scary for many people. But your tooth pain is likely to get worse without treatment. Would you be open to planning together about how to get the help you need? Remember when we rode the city bus together? We used some games and listened to music to help you relax while you were on the bus. You were scared then, but the plan we used seemed to work well."

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The plan Bill and Frank worked out follows.

1. Frank will help Bill make a call to his support staff to tell them about the toothache.
2. The support staff will help Bill call the dentist's office.
3. Frank offered to go with Bill to the appointment and wait in the waiting room with him.
4. Frank and Bill decided to take some playing cards and play card games in the waiting room to help Bill relax.
5. Frank helped Bill talk to his dentist and ask if Bill could listen to his music on his headphones to help him relax during the treatment.

The dentist treated Bill's tooth with a filling. The dentist also gave Bill some medicine (an antibiotic) to take to treat the infection he had in his tooth. After the dentist's visit, Frank and the support staff helped Bill return to his home to rest. A few days after the appointment, Frank visited with Bill to see if he was feeling better. Frank and Bill's support staff also encouraged Bill to take his medicine on the schedule that the dentist gave to him.

1. Why was Bill afraid to see the dentist?

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2. Why do you think Bill did not call his support staff agency first when his tooth hurt?

3. Why did Frank help Bill to call his support staff to tell them about the toothache?

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Lesson #2

Ethics and Etiquette

Goals for this lesson

1. Define ethics and what it means to be ethical.
2. Understand why peer mentors follow their ethical values.
3. Introduce the code of conduct for peer mentors.
4. Understand and define etiquette.
5. Introduce different types of disabilities.
6. Understand people first language.
7. Understand the use of proper etiquette with different groups of people with disabilities.

Define ethics



Ethics is a word to describe one's knowledge of good and bad conduct (behavior).

Understanding **right from wrong** behavior.

Describes the things you **value**.

Principles we value = Ethics

Right way

- Following the law
- Treating others fairly
- Being kind and respectful to others



Wrong way

- Breaking the law
- Cheating other people
- Being rude or mean to others



What being ethical means

Being ethical means following
the rules of society

Treating others as
we wish to be treated =

“The Golden Rule”



Photo credit: fSHH pixabay.com

Why is it important for peer mentors to be “ethical?”



Peer mentors should:

- Help others with I/DD
- Prevent harm from coming to the people you mentor
- Assure other people they can trust you
- Do the right thing

What is a code of conduct?

A code of conduct is a list of principles or values that describes ethical behavior for peer mentors.

Peer mentor code of conduct

1. Respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity.
2. Respect and support the choices and desires of the people you mentor.
3. Don't lecture or boss people. Offer advice and honor each person's right to make their own choices.
4. Tell the truth with kindness and compassion.

Peer mentor code of conduct, continued

5. Keep the promises you make, and don't make promises you can't keep.
6. Keep private matters private, and don't violate confidentiality.
7. Do not give medical or legal advice. Guide others to get help from doctors or attorneys when needed.
8. Do not become romantically involved with the people you mentor.

Peer mentor code of conduct, continued

9. Do not borrow from or loan money to the people you mentor.
10. Avoid power struggles with the people you mentor, be a peacekeeper.
11. Avoid having “favorites,” and treat all the people you mentor the same.
12. Be an advocate who teaches others how to advocate for themselves.
13. Keep learning and growing in your role as a peer mentor.

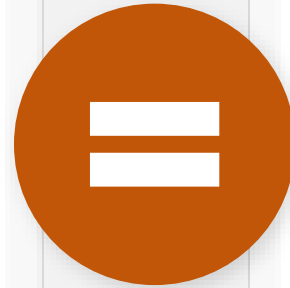
Manners and etiquette

Manners

“Manners are sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use.”

— Emily Post

Good manners refers to appropriate behavior with others.



Etiquette

“Etiquette refers to the customs and rules governing behavior regarded as correct or acceptable in social or official life.”

— Collins English Dictionary, HarperCollins Publishers

Using good manners is the same thing as following etiquette.



People-first language

Photo credit: People First Language. youtube.com

Examples of people-first language

Right way

- Person first then the disability
- Person with a disability (describing one person)
- People with disabilities (describing a group)

Wrong way

- Handicapped
- Disabled
- Crippled

People-first language shows

respect | good manners | consideration

Understanding proper etiquette for different disability groups

Etiquette for helping people with vision impairment



Photo credit: Adobe

- Introduce yourself and let the person know you're there.
- Face the person and give them your attention.
- Use clear speech.
- Let the person know if you're about to walk away from them.
- If the person uses a cane, give them space.
- If the person needs help to move, have them take your elbow, not your hand.
- Lead by the elbow and tell the person about obstacles along the path.
- If you see a dangerous situation, tell the person in a calm voice.

Etiquette for helping people with hearing impairments



Photo credit: Adobe

- Find a quiet place to talk.
- Don't block your face or lips.
- Speak clearly.
- Don't shout.
- Use hand gestures.
- Don't talk so slowly the person feels you don't understand them.
- Stand or sit face to face with the person who is hearing impaired.
- Speak directly to the person with hearing impairments, not to the interpreter.

Etiquette with people who use wheelchairs and mobility devices



Photo credit: eccoviasolutions.com

- Try to face the person at eye level or sit to talk to someone in a wheelchair.
- Greet the person and speak to them directly.
- Don't assume the person doesn't understand you.
- Don't lean on the wheelchair (part of person's personal space.)
- Don't touch or move devices (crutches, walkers, canes) and don't move around them.

Service animals

When a service animal is working in harness, **DO NOT:**

- Pet
- Feed
- Call by name
- Distract the animal in any way



Photo credit: K9 Training, LLC

How to help a person with disabilities



Ask the person first if they want help from you.
Then wait for them to tell you how to help them.

**Include the person with disabilities
in the social group.**

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. It's OK to feed a service animal if it's in a restaurant and its owner is eating. | True | False |
| 2. "Disabled people" is the correct way to describe a handicapped person. | True | False |
| 3. When I say, "person with intellectual and developmental disabilities," instead of "disabled person," I'm showing respect. | True | False |
| 4. All people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment use sign language. | True | False |
| 5. It's best to ask the person with disabilities if they want help before offering to help. | True | False |

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 6. Peer mentors are trained to tell others what to do and how to do it. | True | False |
| 7. It's unethical for peer mentors to give medical advice. | True | False |
| 8. Jeremy seems to be depressed. He has not been eating or sleeping well. It's ethical for his peer mentor to suggest Jeremy might want to see a professional counselor. | True | False |
| 9. Having a code of conduct for peer mentors gives the peers and the people they mentor guidelines for their behavior. | True | False |

Activity: Journal writing

Activity: Journal writing

As peer mentors, we can share our stories and struggles with others to help guide others through their difficult times. Below are some questions to explore in your journal that may be helpful to you as you consider the ethical standards your mentors must follow. You may write your answers in your journal or ask your teacher to help you to write while you dictate your journal entries or draw pictures or cartoons to answer your journal questions.

- Describe an example of a time when you saw someone as not being treated ethically. How did you handle the situation? How might you have handled the situation?

- Mary is a person who is blind and has just arrived at a party where she doesn't know many people. Write about how you will act to make Mary feel welcome and included at the party. You may also draw pictures about what you may do to make Mary feel welcome at the party. If you prefer drawing to writing:

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- Bill has a hearing impairment and uses a wheelchair. He is at the same grocery store where you're shopping. You notice he has trouble reaching the higher shelves to get some items he wants to buy. Write (or draw pictures) about how you will act to offer Bill the help.

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Activity: Sign your Peer Mentor Code of Conduct

The Peer Mentor Code of Conduct

I, _____, pledge to uphold the values of the Peer Mentor Code of Conduct in all my interactions with individuals I support and with the general public as I perform my duties as an IDD Peer Mentor.

1. Respect the rights of others and treat them with dignity.
2. Respect and support the choices and desires of the people you mentor.
3. Don't lecture or boss people; instead, offer advice and honor each person's right to make their own choices.
4. Tell the truth with kindness and compassion.
5. Keep the promises you make and don't make promises you cannot keep.
6. Keep private matters private and don't violate confidentiality.
7. Do not become romantically involved with the people you mentor.
8. Do not give medical, legal or professional advice, but instead, guide others to get help from the doctor, attorney, counselor, teacher and other professionals who're needed.
9. Do not borrow money from the people you mentor and don't loan money to the people you mentor.
10. Be a "peacekeeper" and avoid getting into power struggles with the people you mentor.
11. Avoid having "favorites" and, instead, treat all the people you mentor the same.
12. Be an advocate who teaches others how to advocate for themselves.
13. Keep learning and growing in your role as a peer mentor.

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Lesson #3

Self-determination

Goals for this lesson

1. Define self-determination; what it is and is not.
2. Understand how other people in our lives influence your self-determination.
3. Know how self-determination involves making choices for yourself and for others.
4. Describe high-risk versus low-risk decisions.
5. Recognize how making choices is a process.
6. Understand when to ask others for help.
7. Know how self-determination involves making choices for yourself and others.

What is self-determination?

Self-determination

- Finding out what your dreams are and what makes you happy.
- Considering all your options and choices before you make big life decisions.
- Choosing your own path and accepting the consequences of your decisions — both good and bad.



Not self-determination

- Resisting assistance or help from others when you need it.
- Making decisions that are harmful or hurt other people.



Getting help from other people



Sometimes people with I/DD need help to do certain things in life. That is normal.

People without disabilities also need help from others time to time.

People who want to help us

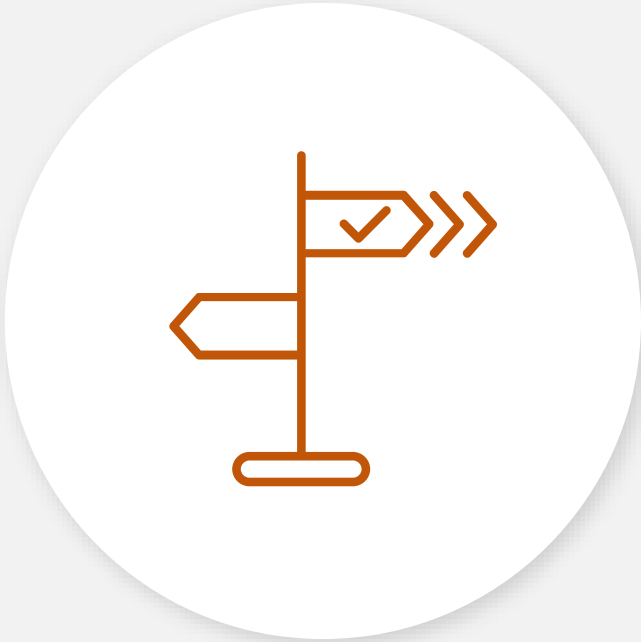


Everyone has people in their lives (family, friends, co-workers) who are concerned and may want to influence your choices.

Making decisions for yourself (both good ones and bad ones), is part of learning to manage your life.

Name the people in your life who help you.

When others choose for you



Sometimes, people with I/DD find they're getting *less choice* in how they manage and live their lives.

Family members, friends and even support staff might be making choices for the person with I/DD instead of assisting the person make their own choices.

My life. My choice.



As a person with I/DD, you may find that sometimes you're not as active in **choosing things for yourself as you would like to be.**

Most adults (with and without disabilities) want to exercise **self-determination** in their lives.

Most people also need to **learn to speak up to let others know about their dreams, hopes and goals.**



You have dreams.

But in order to make your dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort.

Making choices for yourself



Making decisions — good and bad — is **part of learning to manage your life.**

Everyone has a **right to make mistakes!**

Everyone deserves to **know the facts** so they can **make decisions** that are more helpful than harmful.

Self-determination means finding out what your dreams are and what makes you happy.



Let's discuss:

- What are your dreams for the future?
- Does everyone have the same dreams?
- What makes you happy?
- Does everyone like the same things all the time?

Self-determination

means considering all your options and choices before you make big life decisions.

What are big life decisions?

Big life decisions have **high risk**. | **Small life decisions** have **low risk**.



Let's discuss:

- High-risk means ...
- Low-risk means ...

Weighing my options

High-risk decisions

- Moving to a new home or apartment
- Taking a new job
- Spending all my money without paying my bills, buying food and other necessities

Low-risk decisions

- Choosing a movie to see
- Picking a cake flavor to bake
- Selecting a color of shirt to buy

Self-determination activity

What makes me happy?

Decisions that are harmful

Self-determination does not mean you can make decisions that are harmful or hurtful to others.

Examples of hurting or harming others:

- Inflicting physical pain
- Speaking with hurtful or harmful words
- Taking someone else's freedom to choose for themselves
- Making decisions without consideration to our loved ones
- Neglecting ourselves — self-harm hurts the ones who love us, too

How we make choices



Choice is a *process*
and an *action*

Process

What do you do before you make a choice?

Action

How you act on a choice you have made

When to ask for help decision-making

Step 1

Thinking about
my options

Step 2

Getting help
from others

Step 3

Acting on
my choices

process

action

Ask for help decision-making when:



A professional is needed
(i.e., doctor, lawyer, teacher,
counselor, mechanic)



You feel overwhelmed
and need support



A decision is high risk



You need help
gathering facts



A person has a guardian

Activity: Discussion

Discussion

When asking for help is required and whom to ask for help.

You have a cold for two weeks and it's not getting better. Should you ask for help? Who could help you with this problem?

Sharon wants to volunteer at her local library, but she does not know what hours they are open or what volunteers are expected to do. Should she ask for help? Who can help her?

Bill has been depressed for many weeks. He comes to you for peer mentor support, but after talking for some time, he still seems very depressed. Should you recommend Bill get more help? Who can help Bill?

| notes |

The consequences of our decisions

Self-determination means choosing your own path, knowing the consequences of your decisions — both good and bad.

Making a choice means thinking about the consequences.

What is a consequence?

Let's review. Quiz!

Fill in the blank.

1. Self-determination involves weighing options and making _____
2. Self-determination sometimes means accepting _____
3. It takes practice to learn to use _____

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
1. Self-determination means I can do anything I want to do without considering other people. True False
-
2. Some of my choices are high risk. True False
-
3. Some of my choices in life are low risk. True False
-
4. Self-determination means choosing your own path, knowing the consequences of your decisions — both good and bad. True False
-

Activity: High-risk and low-risk decisions

Activity: High-risk and low-risk decisions

Materials needed:

- Large white poster board or a sheet of paper
- Glue sticks, tubes of white glue or paste
- A variety of different kinds of old magazines

Directions:

1. Draw a line to divide your white poster board or paper in half to make two large columns.
2. Label the columns: High-risk Decisions and Low-risk Decisions.
3. Draw your own cartoon pictures or look through the magazines to find high-risk activities. Cut these out and paste them in the High-risk Decisions column.
4. Draw your own cartoon pictures or look through the magazines to find low-risk activities. Cut these out and paste them in the Low-risk Decisions column.
5. Discuss your collage with the class.
 - What makes some decisions high risk?
 - What makes some decisions low risk?

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Lesson #4

Self-advocacy

Goals for this lesson

1. Review the definition of self-advocacy versus self-determination.
2. Understand who influences your life choices.
3. Understand how to ask for help with decisions.
4. Understand who, what, when, where and how to ask for help when making choices and still exercise self-determination.
5. Understand when “help” causes harm.

Self-determination or self-advocacy?

Self-determination

The **choices and decisions** we make to direct our lives

Self-advocacy

How we **speak up** for our decisions and the actions we take to express ourselves

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy means telling others about your decisions and speaking up for your actions — both good and bad.

Key points about self-advocacy

Self-advocacy

- Speaking up, or telling others your wishes
- Acting on your decisions and choices



Not self-advocacy

- Resisting assistance or help from others when you need it.
- You try to hurt others or say harmful things on purpose.



What is self-advocacy?

A process we use to:

- Make our own choices and to exercise our rights
- Tell others about our choices
- Act on our decisions

When self-advocacy is hard

- Sometimes, people with I/DD find they get less choice in how they manage and live their lives.
- At times, those with I/DD have difficulty telling others about their choices.
- Others might not ask a person with I/DD to make their own choices.
- Family members, friends and even support staff may be making choices for the person I/DD.

Self-advocacy and other people in your life

Let's review



My life. My choice.

As a person with I/DD, you may find at times you're not as active in choosing things for yourself as you would like to be.

Most adults (with and without disabilities) want to exercise self-determination in their lives.

People also need to learn to speak up to let others know about their dreams, hopes and goals.

Self-advocacy activity

Who influences you?

Advocates in my life

People close
to me



People not close
to me whose
authority I respect

The steps in self-direction

Getting help and acting on a decision

Step 1

Thinking about
my options

Step 2

Getting help
from others

Step 3

Acting on
my choices

process

action

Skills needed to express yourself



Self-knowledge

Understanding your choices and what makes you happy



Communication skills

Ability to make others understand you (verbally/nonverbally)

Who are influencers?

- Friends
- Family
- Peers and classmates
- People we know and love
- People we respect
- People in authority
- Other people?
- TV
- Internet
- Books
- Radio
- Other media?

Remember:

Self-determination
DOES NOT mean
resisting assistance
or help from others
when you need it.

The key learning when asking for help:

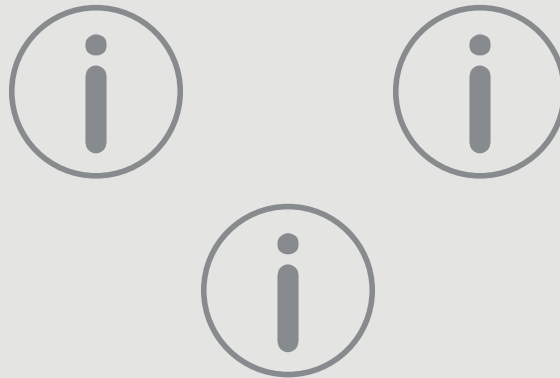
- **WHAT** type of help do you need?
- **WHO** should you ask to help?
- **WHY** do you need the help?
- **WHEN** do you need help?
- **WHERE** will you get the help?

Higher risk = more information needed to choose wisely

Low-risk

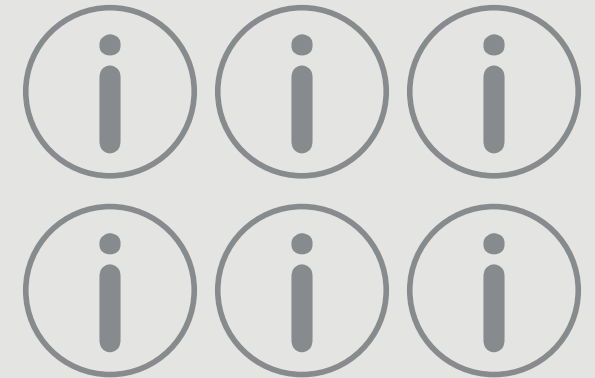


Medium-risk



High-risk

(more options to consider)



Doing your best to make choices



- Self-determination takes practice.
- Knowing who to ask for help and how to use their help takes practice.
- Practicing making low-risk choices makes it easier getting better when making high-risk choices.
- Making mistakes is okay.

How to ask for help to make a choice

Right way

- Saying please
- Showing respect
- Asking in a polite voice and manner
- Asking a person if they will give you some advice. Sometimes people don't feel qualified to give you advice.



Wrong way

- Being disrespectful
- Demanding
- Crying
- Shouting



Match the influencer to what they know

Influencers

Parents

Doctor

Teacher

Weathercaster on TV

Advertisements

Friends

What they know

Things to sell to you

School assignments

Weather forecast

Medications and treatments

Family history

Games you like to play

Sometimes, help is
not the right kind of help.

When help is **harmful**



- You feel a person is trying to control you.
- You think someone is forcing you to do something you don't agree with.
- You're afraid.
- You're not ready to make a choice.
- The other person is not qualified to offer the advice they're giving you.

When help is **helpful**



- You know the person helping you is qualified and trained to help you.
- You trust and respect the person giving you help or advice.
- You feel included and supported — not forced — when making a choice.
- You can ask questions and get more information to make a choice.

When and where to ask for help making choice

Right place and time

- When you still have time to consider options
- In a place where you and your advisor can focus time on your options
- When you're ready and able to listen to the advice you're asking for



Wrong place and time

- When you don't have time to and consider your options
- In a place where your advisor is not able to focus on giving you advice
- When you're not prepared to listen to the advice



How to ask for help to make a choice

Right way

- Saying please
- Showing respect
- Asking in a polite voice and manner
- Asking a person if they will give you some advice (sometimes, people don't feel qualified to give you advice)



Wrong way

- Being disrespectful
- Demanding
- Crying
- Shouting



Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Sally wants to buy a car. She should buy the first one that she can afford. | True | False |
| 2. Sally should always follow the advice of her friends. | True | False |
| 3. Sally should always make decisions when she has time to consider her options and review the consequences of her decisions. | True | False |
| 4. Sally is searching for a job. She should take the first job she finds, even if it's not one she wants to do. | True | False |
-

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

5. Jeremy should believe everything he hears and sees on TV. True False

6. Advertisements on TV, the internet and in magazines are not always true. True False

7. Jeremy should take more time to consider his choices when a choice is low risk. True False

8. Jeremy should take more time to consider his choices when a choice is high risk. True False

5

Lesson #5

Supporting People's Choices

Goals for this lesson

1. Review how self-determination helps us make choices for ourselves.
2. Recognize how to help others with I/DD to name their own choices and preferences.
3. Know what it means to make an “informed choice.”
4. Understand how to encourage individuals with I/DD to use their self-determination skills to support their choices.

Equal rights for everyone!

Self-advocacy is for everyone.

Self-determination is for everyone.

Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support

Peer mentor's role:



Help others learn to self-advocate and:

- Identify their own desires and preferences
- Speak up for their rights
- Voice their choices
- Be heard by others

Peer mentors also:



Help others to exercise self-determination to:

- Make their own choices
- Learn to weigh risks and benefits
- Gain their own information to make informed decisions

Peer mentors also:



- Help people to understand the advice they get from family and friends
- Reduce conflict and encourage cooperation and understanding
- Refer people to professional services whenever it's necessary or if the issue is outside the role of a peer mentor with I/DD.

Help others to understand



Choice is a *process*
and an *action*

Process

What do you do before you make a choice

Action

How you act on a choice you have made

Making a choice means thinking about the consequences.

What is a consequence?

Remember:

Self-determination means choosing your own path, *knowing the consequences of your decisions* — both good and bad.

When to ask for help to make a choice

Step 1

Thinking about
my options

Step 2

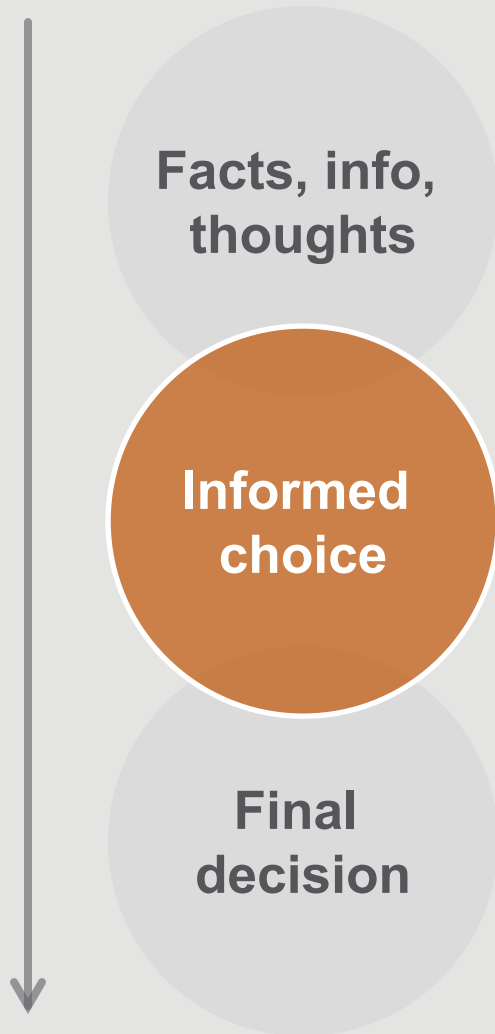
Getting help
from others

Step 3

Acting on
my choices

process

action



What is an informed choice?

People make an “informed choice” **after** they gather facts and information — and think about their needs and before they make their final decision.

Informed choices can include:



Guidance from people you trust
such as family members and friends

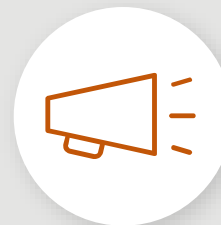
Advice from professionals
(doctors, psychologists, support
staff, etc.)



**Facts and information gathered
by reading** through the internet,
library or other sources



**Knowing when to reject unhelpful
advice** from others who are trying
to control you or force you to
make uncomfortable decisions



**Facts and information gathered
from special advocacy groups**
that specialize in the issues and
needs of people with I/DD

Decisions that are harmful

Self-determination does not mean you can make decisions that are harmful or hurtful to others.

Examples of hurting or harming others:

- Inflicting physical pain
- Speaking with hurtful or harmful words
- Taking someone else's freedom to choose for themselves
- Making decisions without consideration to our loved ones
- Neglecting ourselves — self-harm hurts the ones who love us too

Help people weigh the risks and consequences of their choices

High-risk choices and consequences

What happens if you:

- Don't pay rent for your apartment?
- Cross a busy street without checking the traffic?
- Don't get up for work and/or don't go in on a day I'm scheduled?



Low-risk choices and consequences

What happens if you:

- Eat an apple or a pear?
- Wear a blue shirt instead of a red shirt?
- Decide to play a video game instead of watching TV?



Peer mentor's role:



How to support choices we don't agree with:

- Making choices involves risk. Peer mentors have a responsibility to help people with I/DD who ask for their advice to help them determine when a choice is high or low risk.
- It's important to tell the person with I/DD you understand their feelings before pointing out your concerns about their choices.

When the choice is harmful

Brief examples of when a peer mentor should try to stop or get help to stop a situation

When a person is:

- Threatening to hurt themselves or is threatening suicide
- Threatening to hurt someone else, physically or through verbal abuse
- Able to access to guns or weapons and is threatening to use them on themselves or others
- Very depressed and is not taking care of themselves
- Under the influence of drugs or alcohol and may be about to drive a car, walk out in heavy traffic or pass out
- In a relationship with a “boyfriend or girlfriend” who is asking them to run away with them without informing their family and or support staff

When the choice may be a fraud



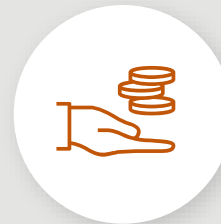
The individual reports someone is asking for money or access to their bank account. (Usually the request is made to solve a social problem or to help someone, but the story is false).



The person believes they “won a prize” but they need to send money to the prize company before their prize can be sent to them.



The person is seeing or dating someone who seems to be taking their money.



You notice the individual is not taking care of their bills and/or has less money for essentials like food, transportation, etc.

My life. My choice.



It's important to remember that everyone has a right to make their own decisions.

If the decision is not harmful or dangerous, then the peer mentor should let the person manage their own choices.

Sometimes, it's helpful to explain why you disagree or have concerns about a decision that another person is making. Explaining your concerns and supplying more information to the person can be helpful.

The final decision is always in the hands of the person, themselves.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Self-determination means other people can do anything you want to do without considering other people. | True | False |
| 2. Some of the choices other people make are high risk. | True | False |
| 3. Some of the choices other people make in life are low risk. | True | False |
| 4. Self-determination means helping other people to choose their own path, knowing the consequences of their decisions — both good and bad. | True | False |
-

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
5. Mary has been feeling bad for several weeks (losing weight, feels thirsty all the time, feels weak), and she asks you what she should do. You should advise her to drink more water. True False
-
6. Mary is still feeling bad, and she looks much worse today than the last time you saw her. You encourage her to see her doctor, but she refuses. You should insist she see a doctor and offer to go with her or help her to contact one. True False
-
7. Jim is depressed since he broke up with his girlfriend. You talk to him to try to help him deal with his loss. It has been several days, and Jim had not been sleeping, eating or getting out much since the breakup. You should you encourage him to seek a professional counselor to help him with his depression because it's affecting his health. True False
-

Activity: Making your own choices

Activity: Making your own choices

Materials needed:

- Large white poster board or a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper
- #2 pencils
- Colored pencils or markers

Directions:

1. Make a list of people in your life who support your decisions.
2. On a large poster board or sheet of paper, draw cartoons or pictures of decisions you made when you did not agree with the opinion of someone else (a friend, family member or teacher).
3. Show your pictures or cartoons to the class and discuss them.
 - How does it feel to make a choice someone else doesn't agree with?
 - What did you learn from making your own choices?

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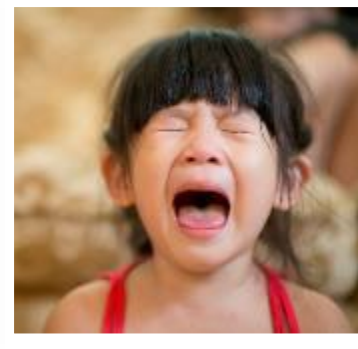
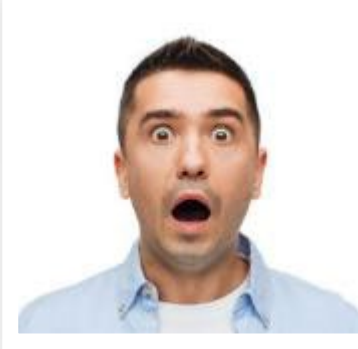
Lesson #6

Identifying Feelings and Emotions

Goals for this lesson

1. Define feelings and emotions versus moods.
2. Understand how we experience our feelings in our bodies and minds.
3. Define body language and understand common body language signals.
4. Understand how to help individuals with I/DD to name their feelings and moods.
5. Understand how to help individuals with I/DD to name body language signals and what they mean.
6. Understand how emotions and stress affect our feelings.

Feelings, emotions and the peer mentor



Let's review



Self-determination and **self-advocacy** are skills you need to identify your own feelings and emotions.

Peer mentors can guide and support other with I/DD to help identify their own feelings and use their self-determination and self-advocacy skills to express their feelings.

Feelings versus moods



A **feeling (or emotion)** is brief response to an event that is taking place out in the world or inside ourselves. A feeling is usually more intense and lasts for a few minutes or so.



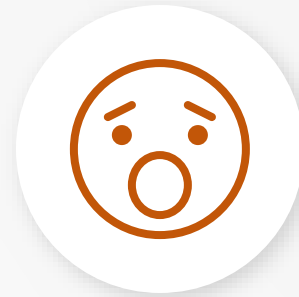
A **mood** is a more general feeling that lasts a longer time and describes a longer state of mind: sadness vs. happiness, anxiety vs. contentment, or frustration vs. peacefulness.

Common feelings and emotions

Discuss what the following emotions tell about how you feel:



Happiness



Surprise



Sadness



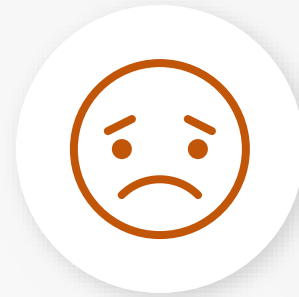
Fear

Common feelings and emotions

Discuss what the following emotions tell about how you feel:



Disgust



Shame



Anger



Pride

Common feelings and emotions

Discuss what the following emotions tell about how you feel:



Satisfaction



Regret



Embarrassment

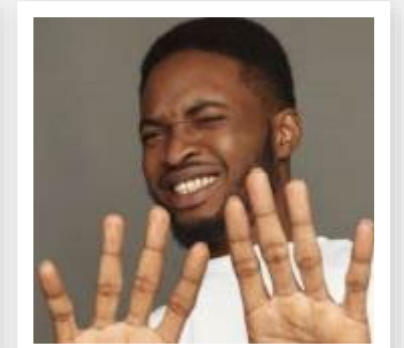
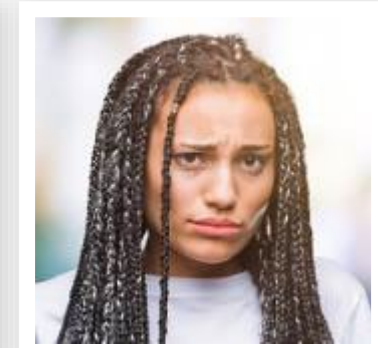
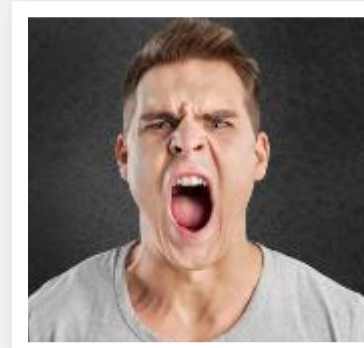


Amusement



Let's discuss

What are these faces telling you?



Our bodies and minds

We experience our feelings in our minds (thoughts) and our bodies.

How emotions and stress affect us

Stress and stressful situations cause our:

minds to feel anxious or even afraid

minds to stop thinking clearly

breathing to be shallow

hearts to beat faster

stomach to feel uneasy

bodies to feel pain

bodies to perspire (sweat) more



Nonverbal communication

Many times, it's not what we say but **how we say it** that causes more conflict. How are the people in these pictures feeling?



Tone of voice matters



10%

of conflict is because
of difference of opinion.

90%

of conflict is because
of **wrong tone of voice.**

Body language and communication



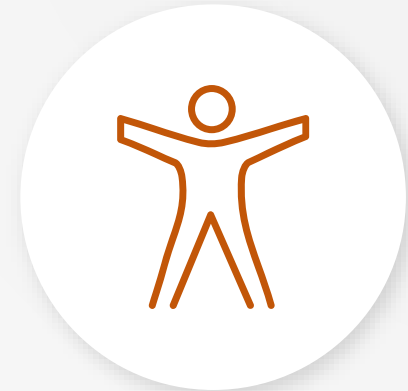
7%

of communication is based
on **our words**.



38%

of communication is based
on our **tone of voice**.



55%

of communication is based
on our **body language**.



Let's discuss

What does body language tell you?

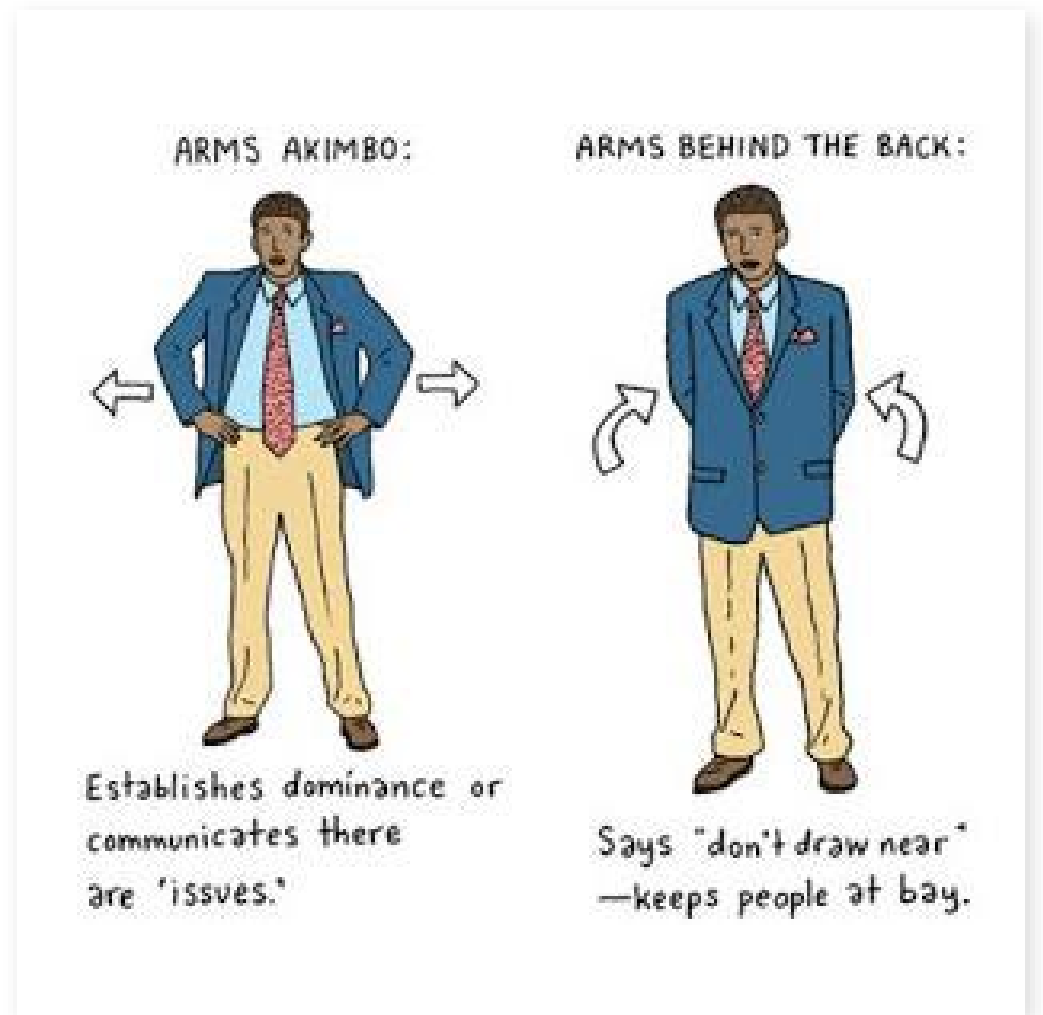


Photo credit: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/>



How does **body language tell a story** about what is happening in these photos?

Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support

Knowing how you feel

Watch your body for signs of stress.

Watch your mind for racing thoughts or slow thinking.

Ask yourself:

How am I really feeling?

Is the conflict about more than just this disagreement?

Do I need to think before responding?



Peer mentor's role



How can peer mentors help others to identify how they feel?

- Talk to them.
- Help them talk about what they're thinking.
- Help them talk about how their body is feeling.
- Help them name their feelings.
- Listen first. Talk with intention.

*Most people don't listen with the intent to understand.
They listen with the intent to reply.*

Peer mentor's role, continued



When professional help is needed

Peers should encourage people to seek professional help whenever a person:

- Experiences depression for more than a few days
- Threatens to hurt others or themselves
- Tells you they're not taking their medications or ran out of medications for mental health conditions

Peer mentor's role, continued



When professional help is needed, continued

A professional is needed when a person also:

- Is angry or very anxious for more than a few days
- Is not in touch with what is really happening and may be seeing or imagining things
- Is acting in an uncontrolled manner

Let's review

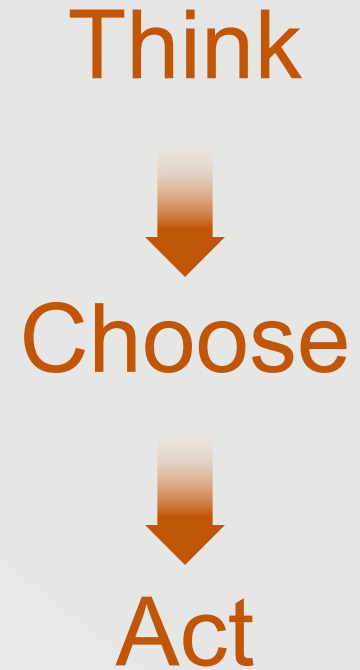


Role models and what they do

- Share their own experiences when it's helpful to tell their story
- Lead by example
- Listen and give people time to share their feelings and concerns
- Support people to make their own decisions and help them to identify their feelings and act with intention

Act from intention, not impulses

When you act from intention, you can think before you speak and choose your words and body language carefully.



Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
1. Acting from intention means doing the first thing that comes to your mind. True False
-
2. Peer mentors should always try to make people identify their feelings and emotions. True False
-
3. If a peer mentor stays calm and respectful, they're more likely to help others to act with intention. True False
-
4. We learn more about others during communication from speaking to them than we do from watching their body language. True False
-

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
5. Helping others to monitor their feelings will make it easier for them to act from intention, not on impulse. True False
-
6. Peer mentors should force people to identify their feelings and emotions. True False
-
7. If a peer mentor is out of touch with their own feelings, they will have a hard time helping others. True False
-
8. Tone of voice doesn't matter others during communication with others. True False
-

Activity: Identifying my emotions

Activity: Identifying my emotions

Materials needed:

- Large white poster board or a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Assortment of magazines to cut out pictures for vision boards
- Glue stick or tube of white glue

Directions: Draw a picture or a cartoon to illustrate each of the feelings below. Label each of the emotions you illustrate. Or if you prefer, find a picture in a magazine to illustrate each of the feelings listed below. Cut out each picture you find and paste it to your poster board or paper.

Share your poster with the class and discuss with pictures with your classmates. If you like, you may put your poster up in your home or apartment.

- Amusement
- Disappointment
- Disgust
- Excitement
- Fear
- Happiness
- Regret
- Sadness
- Shame

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Lesson #7

Conflict Resolution

Goals for this lesson

1. Define conflict and why it occurs.
2. Define conflict resolution.
3. Describe the role of the peer mentor in conflict resolution versus the role of professional staff.
4. Understand when to get help professional help.

What is conflict?

A serious disagreement and argument about something important.

What is conflict?

Conflict occurs because people have different needs.

It is common among people because people are different.

Conflict arises from differences over large and small things.

How we handle conflict can help or hurt our relationships with others.

Conflict or disagreement?



A conflict is more than just a disagreement because in a conflict **both people feel threatened**.

Conflicts will continue to come up even when ignored because we feel threatened in some way.

We respond to conflicts based on how we feel about the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts.

Conflicts will make you feel strong emotions making it difficult to think clearly.

Photo credit: pexels

Conflict and opportunity



Conflicts are an **opportunity for growth.**

When a conflict is resolved successfully, it **builds trust in the relationship.**

Photo credit: pexels

How emotions and stress affect us

Stress and stressful situations cause our:

minds to feel anxious or even afraid

minds to stop thinking clearly

breathing to be shallow

hearts to beat faster

stomach to feel uneasy

bodies to feel pain

bodies to perspire (sweat) more



Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support

Let's review



Role models and what they do

- Share your own experiences when it's helpful to your story.
- Lead by example.
- Listen and give people time to share their feelings and concerns.
- Support people to make their own decisions.
- Reduce conflict and encourage cooperation and understanding.
- Refer people to professional services whenever it's necessary or when an issue is outside the role of a peer mentor with I/DD.



Peer mentors **do not** take the place of professional support or staff.

However, a peer mentor can do some things to help people to understand and begin to resolve a conflict.

Resolving conflicts



To successfully resolve a conflict, peer mentors must practice two skills first:

1. Doing things to stay calm during the disagreement
2. Thinking about how to respond without getting emotional

How do I stay calm in a conflict?



- Take deep breaths to calm your body.
- Listen carefully to hear the words and the message.
- Think before speaking to carefully respond without reacting.
- Remember to use good manners to stay respectful of the other person and “model” respect for them.

Knowing how you feel



- ▶ Note your body for signs of stress.
- ▶ Observe your mind for racing thoughts or slow thinking.

Ask yourself:

- How am I really feeling?
- Is the conflict about more than just this disagreement?
- Do you need to think before responding?

Nonverbal communication

Many times, it's **not what** we say **but how** we say it that causes more conflict.

How are the people in these pictures feeling?



About humor and staying positive



- Using humor can help people relax during a disagreement or conflict. Humor must be respectful and not pick on anyone or make fun of anyone.
- Keeping a positive attitude can help others relax and become more positive.
- Knowing when to step back and give people time and space to calm down is also important to resolving a conflict.

How peers can support people through a conflict



- Lead by example and stay calm.
- Listen to everyone in the conflict while each person shares their concerns.
- Help people understand each other's viewpoint.
- Know when to refer people to professionals when the conflict requires expert help to resolve.

Why is it important to ...



- Help people reduce conflict and encourage cooperation and understanding of others?
- Refer people to professional services whenever it's necessary, or the issue is outside the role of a peer mentor?

Role playing a conflict



Let's pause to role play a conflict situation.

Andy and Sam are roommates. Sam is not doing his chores completely. He doesn't take the trash out when it's his turn. This is making Andy so angry he's feeling stressed out.

The peer mentor is trying to help them. While the peer can calm Sam and Andy down, there are still conflicts between them. The peer mentor decides more professional help is needed to help these roommates work on their conflicts.



Let's
discuss

How is Andy feeling?

How is Sam feeling?

What can these roommates
do to resolve their conflict?

Why should these roommates
also seek professional help?

Let's review



1. What did the peer mentor say to help resolve the conflict?
2. How did Andy respond to the peer mentor's help?
3. How did Sam respond to the peer mentor's help?
4. How did the peer mentor know when and how to refer Andy and Sam to professionals?
5. Name some professionals that can help Sam and Andy learn to manage the conflicts between them.

Conflict resolution

Healthy conflicts

- Being respectful during a disagreement
- Using good manners (etiquette)
- Listening to the other person's concerns
- Working out a compromise
- Being ready to forgive and forget



Unhealthy conflicts

- Being explosive, shouting and resentful
- Withdrawing friendship, love and affection
- Not being willing to compromise
- Fear of conflict — not being willing to discuss differences with others
- Holding on to a grudge and not forgiving the other person



Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. A conflict is more serious and upsetting than a simple disagreement. | True | False |
| 2. Peer mentors should always try to make people resolve their differences without professional help. | True | False |
| 3. If a peer mentor stays calm and respectful, they're more likely to help others resolve a conflict. | True | False |
| 4. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth — when a conflict is resolved successfully it builds trust in the relationship. | True | False |
-

8

Lesson #8

Legal Protections and the ADA

Goals for this lesson

1. Understand that federal, state and local laws govern the United States.
2. Understand how self-advocacy and self-determination are protected by and limited by laws that protect everyone.
3. Understand how to help people with I/DD follow the law while supporting them to make choices.
4. Understand the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and what it covers.
5. Understand what an accommodation is under the ADA.
6. Understand how peer mentors help support individuals to know their rights under the ADA.

The law of the land

Laws are a set of rules that we live by.

In the United States, the Constitution is the highest law.



Federal laws
The whole country



State laws
A specific state



Local laws
A specific community
(a city or county)

Freedom of speech includes the right:



- Not to speak (if you choose not to speak)
- Of students to wear black armbands to school to protest a war
- To use certain offensive words and phrases to express a political message
- To contribute money (under certain circumstances) to political campaigns
- To advertise commercial products and professional services (with some restrictions)
- To engage in symbolic speech (e.g., burning a flag in protest)

Freedom of speech does not include the right to:



- Shout “fire” in a crowded movie theatre when there is no fire
- Make or distribute obscene materials (explicit sexual print, movies, texts or emails)
- Burn draft cards as an anti-war protest
- Permit students to print articles in a school newspaper if the school principal doesn’t approve
- Make an obscene speech at a school-sponsored event
- Advocate illegal drug use at a school-sponsored event
- Say inappropriate things at work or while you’re employed by a company that has rules about improper speech

Self-determination — a human right



The right to self-determination is a fundamental principle of human rights law.

- A person or group of people may freely determine their core beliefs and political status.
- A person or group of people may freely pursue their work, leisure or social activities, so long as they *do not break the law or hurt others!*

The peer mentor's role



A peer mentor can help people with I/DD to:

- Exercise self-determination
- Make their own choices
- Learn to weigh risks and benefits
- Gain their own information to make informed decisions
- Understand the laws and their rights under the law

Peer mentors also:



- Help people to understand the advice they get from family and friends
- Reduce conflict and encourage cooperation and understanding
- Refer people to professional services whenever it's necessary or if the issue is outside their role as a peer mentor

History of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush.

The ADA is modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

The ADA is an “equal opportunity” law for people with disabilities.

What the ADA covers



The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation.

It prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life, including enjoying:

- Employment opportunities
- To purchase goods and services
- To participate in state and local government programs and services

Subchapters of the ADA

Title I makes it unlawful to discriminate against qualified people with disabilities in employment.

Title II makes it unlawful for state and local governments and their agencies to discriminate in programs and services, including state or county medical services and substance abuse clinics.

Title III prohibits discrimination in access and enjoyment of public accommodation and commercial facilities, such as hotels, motels, restaurants, professional offices, lawyers' offices, convention centers, stores, banks, museums, parks, schools, recreation facilities and substance abuse clinics.

Title IV requires accessibility of telecommunication services to people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Title V prohibits retaliation and coercion against individuals for opposing or participating in an investigation of illegal acts or practices under the ADA.

Who is covered under the ADA?



An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person:

- Who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- A person who has a history or record of such an impairment
- A person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment

The ADA does not specifically name all the impairments the act covers.

Disability under ADA

To be considered a person with a disability under the ADA, the impairment must **substantially limit** one or more major life activities.

Examples:

- Walking
- Seeing
- Caring for oneself
- Speaking
- Hearing
- Working
- Breathing
- Learning
- Performing manual tasks

A disability under the ADA

Disability

- Being legally blind
- Using a wheelchair because of paralysis
- Having clinical depression and need to ask for time off for treatment

Not a disability

- Wearing glasses because vision is not 20/20
- Wearing a cast because of a temporary broken leg
- Being depressed but it doesn't affect work

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of:



Race



Age

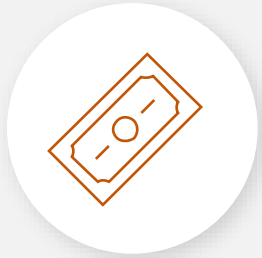


Sex



Disability

Examples of discrimination



Wages

An employer offers a lower wage to a:

- Woman doing similar work as a man
- New immigrant with similar experience/skills as a citizen



Housing

A landlord refuses to lease property:

- States “no children are allowed” (discrimination based on family status) because “they’re too noisy”
- Won’t allow people younger than 25 years (age discrimination) to rent because “they won’t look after the place”

What are essential functions?

- The **tasks listed** in the job description
- The **essential requirements** to do the job



Example: A job description at a hardware store states lifting heavy boxes is required. In this case the employer *can ask* if you can physically lift the boxes and items as required in the job description.

What is an accommodation?

A large white circle with a soft shadow, containing the letters "ADA" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

ADA

The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations so that employees with disabilities can enjoy the “benefits and privileges of employment” equal to those enjoyed by similarly situated employees without disabilities.

If an employee with a disability needs a reasonable accommodation in order to gain access to or participate in these benefits and privileges, then the employer must provide the accommodation unless it can show undue hardship.

Reasonable accommodations

A reasonable accommodation is any **modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice or the work environment** that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.



Developmental



Speech



Physical



Mental



Sensory



Visual

Some examples of accommodations



- Braille or large print menus for people with vision impairments
- Curb cuts on sidewalks for wheelchairs
- Sign language interpreter for people with hearing impairments
- Job coaches (employment support professionals) for people with I/DD

Examples of reasonable accommodations*



Example A

An employee tells her supervisor, “I’m having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medical treatments I’m undergoing.”



Example B

An employee tells his supervisor, “I need six weeks off to get treatment for a back problem.”



Example C:

A new employee, who uses a wheelchair, informs the employer that her wheelchair cannot fit under the desk in her office.

**EEOC website 2015*

The role of peer mentors

Peer mentors ...

- Encourage people to seek legal advice when needed
- Encourage people work with the other professionals in their lives
- Encourage individuals with issues to state their concerns to other professionals



Peer mentors do not ...

- Give legal advice
- Teach outside of peer support situations
- Provide professional counseling
- Encourage others to break the law or go against authorities



When you suspect discrimination or a violation of the ADA



- Encourage the person with I/DD to report the issue to a family member or trusted professional (job coach, vocational rehabilitation counselor, residential manager).
- Inform them they have the right to tell their story to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
- Help support them to take steps to end discrimination.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Mary asked her employer for time off due to surgery her doctor ordered. Mary has sick leave. This is a reasonable accommodation. | True | False |
| 2. Bill was asked to describe his disability in a job interview. This is against the ADA. | True | False |
| 3. Braille or large print menus for people with vision impairments are reasonable accommodations. | True | False |
| 4. The ADA doesn't apply to you if you don't have a disability. | True | False |
-

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

5. Self-determination means other people can do anything they want to do, so long as they don't get caught breaking the law. True False

6. Self-determination means other people are free to speak up for themselves, so long as they don't say untruthful things about others. True False

7. Self-determination means helping other people to choose their own path, knowing the consequences of their decisions — both good and bad. True False

Activity: ADA accommodations poster

Activity: ADA accommodations poster

Materials needed:

- Large white poster board or an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper
- Computer with internet access and printer loaded with paper
- Colored pencils or markers
- Glue sticks or white glue

Directions: Conduct a search of the internet or draw pictures of as many handicapped accommodations you can find for different types of disabilities.

- Computer: Print pictures or accommodations you find, then cut and paste them to your poster.
- Drawing pictures: Draw them directly on your poster.

9

Lesson #9

The ADA and Disclosure

Goals for this lesson

1. Review the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and who is covered under the ADA.
2. Review accommodations under the ADA.
3. Define disclosure and what it means to people with disabilities.
4. Review Title I: Employment and learn when and how to disclose information.
5. Understand personal choice and disclosure.
6. Understand the risks and benefits of disclosure.
7. Understand the role of the peer mentor concerning disclosure.

Let's review



History of the ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush.

Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, the ADA is an “equal opportunity” law for people with disabilities.

Let's review



What the ADA covers

The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation.

It prohibits discrimination and guarantees people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life, including:

- Employment opportunities
- Purchasing goods and services
- Participating in state and local government programs and services

Who is covered under the ADA?



An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person:

- Who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Who has a history or record of such an impairment
- Or who is perceived by others as having such an impairment

The ADA does not specifically name all the impairments the act covers.

Subchapters of the ADA

Title I makes it unlawful to discriminate against qualified people with disabilities in employment.

Title II makes it unlawful for state and local governments and their agencies to discriminate in programs and services, including state or county medical services and substance abuse clinics.

Title III prohibits discrimination in access and enjoyment of public accommodation and commercial facilities, such as hotels, motels, restaurants, professional offices, lawyers' offices, convention centers, stores, banks, museums, parks, schools, recreation facilities and substance abuse clinics.

Title IV requires accessibility of telecommunication services to people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Title V prohibits retaliation and coercion against individuals for opposing or participating in an investigation of illegal acts or practices under the ADA.

Disclosure and employment

Covered under ADA Title I:
Employment | Risks and Benefits of Disclosure

Let's review

Title I: Employment

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in:

- Job application procedures
- Hiring
- Firing
- Advancement
- Compensation
- Job training
- Other terms, conditions and privileges of employment

The ADA covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. It also applies to employment agencies and labor organizations.

Disclosure to an employer



Often, people with developmental disabilities or mental illness or substance abuse issues are encouraged to talk about their condition as part of therapy and recovery.

I/DD peer mentors encourage people with I/DD to talk about their experiences with I/DD but not disclose their disability without careful consideration.

Disclosure of a disability



While many benefits of disclosure for therapeutic purposes exist, **indiscriminate disclosure** can be risky and is often **not required in employment** situations.

The I/DD peer mentor should help people with I/DD to know **when, where, how and with whom** to disclose a mental health or substance abuse disability.

Disability under ADA

To be considered a person with a disability under the ADA, the impairment must **substantially limit** one or more major life activities.

Examples:

- Walking
- Seeing
- Caring for oneself
- Speaking
- Hearing
- Working
- Breathing
- Learning
- Performing manual tasks

Disability under ADA



To be considered a person with a disability under the ADA, the impairment must **substantially limit** one or more major life activities.

Examples of major life activities include walking, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, learning, caring for oneself and working.

The risks and benefits of disclosure



- Starts with an understanding of the ADA and what is required by law
- Choosing the time, place and manner of disclosure is important
- Preparing how to disclose and how to ask for reasonable accommodations in the near term and in the future

Disclosure: A personal choice

Disclosure benefits

- If accommodations are needed, the ADA provides for their delivery.
- Disclosure may ease the stress of hiding your health problem.
- Disclosure before serious problems arise that affect your work may build trust with your employer.
- Disclosure can explain gaps in a résumé.



Disclosure risks

- Discrimination against people with mental health problems is common.
 - Even enlightened company policies may not prevent prospective employers from a fair chance in an interview.
 - Depending on their attitudes and understanding of mental illness, telling an employer about a mental health condition could limit opportunities for advancement with the organization.



When to disclose?



Remember, a person can disclose a disability at any of these times:

- Before the hiring interview
- During the interview
- After the interview, but before a job offer
- After a job offer, but before starting a job
- Anytime after starting a job

Peer mentor's role



- Help the person with I/DD understand and follow the steps to disclose.
- Ask for professional help from a job coach or employment support professional.
- Assist with researching the company.
- Help complete applications.
- Offer help with interview preparation.

How to help research a company



- Does the organization have accommodation or disability policies in place that show it's open to helping workers with mental health problems?
- Does the organization promote employee mental health and wellness, including flex time, mentoring programs, telecommuting and flexible benefit plans?
- Does the job have requirements that would be a disadvantage if the person disclosed a diagnosis?
- Disclosure is **ONLY** required if the disability impedes the person's ability to perform the essential functions (duties) of the job.

How to help prepare for an interview



- Prepare in advance for difficult questions.
- Make a list of the questions and formulate an answer, then practice how to respond.

For example: “I see a two-year gap in your work history. What have you been doing during this time?” This is an opportunity to talk about what the person has been doing, not what they haven’t been doing. Tell them to think about a valuable life experiences they have gained during this time. Have they been taking care of children or a parent, going to school, taking art classes or volunteering?

This question might prompt the disclosure of a disability. If so, be sure the response shows how a difficult situation was handled in a positive manner.

- Remember to talk about abilities, not disabilities.

How to help prepare for an interview, continued



What to say during the interview?

- Describe the skills, qualifications and experience that are strong indicators of the ability to do the job.
- Specify the main duties of the job and specific training or experience to do the work.

If disclosing: Describe any functional limitations or functional concerns caused by disability that interfere with work performance and identify the accommodations that will allow you to overcome these. *(Example: “I have low vision, but with a large monitor I’m proficient on the computer.”)*

How to help prepare for an interview, continued

Before and during interviews or after hiring, employers cannot ask a person with I/DD questions about:



Physical or mental impairments or how they occurred
(for example, questions about why someone uses a wheelchair)



Use of medication



History regarding prior workers' compensation
(per the U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, 2004)

How to help prepare for an interview, continued

Employers might ask:



Questions about what job-related accommodations will be needed by a job applicant if it seems likely an applicant has a disability and will require a reasonable accommodation.

Example: An employer may ask a blind applicant interviewing for a position that requires working with a computer whether they will need a reasonable accommodation, such as special software to read information on the computer screen.



Conduct voluntary medical exams, including voluntary medical histories as part of an employee health program available to employees at the work site.

Example: Hospitals require employees to produce proof of immunization records.

How to help prepare for an interview, continued

Employers may also ask:



Inquire into the ability of an employee to perform job-related functions. Can you perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodations?

Example: An employer may ask if a job applicant is physically able to lift 50 pounds for a shipping job that requires lifting boxes.

(U.S Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, 2004)



Post-employment questions about disability and/or voluntary medical exams as long as it's done for everybody in the same job category and such questions are job related and consistent with business necessity.

Example: Hospitals and schools may ask employees to take TB tests every year to protect their patients or students.

How to help prepare for an interview, continued

After the job offer:



- Disclosure is a **personal choice** and each individual needs to make their own decisions about the information they reveal.
- There are **no absolute answers** as to if, when or how to disclose mental health issues to a prospective employer.
- Advise the person with I/DD to **talk to your employment support professional** to assist them with disclosure.

Risks of disclosure summary

- Disclosing a disability has risks and should not be done without careful consideration.
- Individuals with disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse, are not bound by law (ADA) to disclose a disability — at hire or after!
- In many cases, waiting until after getting the job is advised before disclosure. In fact, no disclosure is needed if no accommodations are needed.
- The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations for a person with known disabilities.
- Once a person knows accommodations are needed, the employer may require only enough information about disability-related work limitations to support the need for accommodation.

Let's review

What is an accommodation?

The ADA requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations so that employees with disabilities can enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by similarly situated employees without disabilities.

If an employee with a disability needs a reasonable accommodation in order to gain access to or participate in these benefits and privileges, then the employer must provide the accommodation unless it can show undue hardship.

When to ask for a reasonable accommodation

Yes

- When you need help from a job coach to learn your job duties
- When you need to take time off for a medical condition to be treated
- When you have a change in abilities (lose your hearing, hurt your back)



No

- To take a vacation
- To visit your doctor for a physical
- When your health problem is temporary and doesn't affect your work



When you suspect discrimination or an ADA violation



- Encourage the person with I/DD to report the issue to a trusted professional or family member (job coach, residential manager, vocational rehabilitation counselor).
- Inform them they have the right to tell their story to the EEOC.
- Help support them to take steps to end the discrimination.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Individuals with disabilities — including intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse — are not bound by law (ADA) to disclose a disability — at hire or after. | True | False |
| 2. If an employee asks for a reasonable accommodation, the employer must always make the accommodations even if it's too costly for them. | True | False |
| 3. Disclosure of a disability is ONLY required if the disability impedes the person's ability to perform the essential functions (duties) of the job. | True | False |
| 4. A peer mentor should help people with I/DD who come to them for assistance to understand the risks and benefits of disclosure before they tell their employer about their disability. | True | False |

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Lesson #10

Abuse, Bullying
and Neglect

Goals for this lesson

1. Define abuse, bullying and neglect.
2. Understand the signs of abuse and neglect.
3. Understand when and how to report abuse and neglect.
4. Understand how to provide support peer support to individuals who have been victims of abuse and/or neglect.

What is abuse?



Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person.

- Abuse can be physical, emotional/psychological, or financial, including elder abuse and sexual abuse.
- In the United States, all types of abuse are illegal and may carry a serious criminal penalty.

Source: Wikipedia

Common signs of physical abuse

- Broken bones
- Burns
- Cuts or scars, abrasions or scrapes
- Missing teeth
- Spotty balding (from pulled hair)
- Eye injuries (black eyes or detached retinas)
- Bleeding coming from the ears, nose or mouth
- Frequent sore throats
- Sudden unexplained difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent urinary tract infections or yeast infections
- Painful urination
- Incontinence in someone who was previously toilet-trained
- Sudden onset of illnesses or other complaints
 - Males most frequently complain of stomach aches
 - Females most frequently report headaches

Bruises



Bruises are a common sign of abuse among people with I/DD. While occasional bruising happens with everyone, and some people with I/DD are more likely to bruise for other reasons, certain bruises might indicate abuse:

- Facial bruises
- Frequent bruises that are unexplained or inadequately explained
- Bruises in unlikely places or in different stages of healing
- On several different surface areas
- Patterned bruises that look like specific shapes
- Evident bruises after an absence, home visit or vacation

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can cause both physical and mental behaviors, or changes in the person with I/DD. Possible indicators:

- A preoccupation with anything sexual
- Abrasions, bleeding or bruising in the genital area
- Bruises
- Loss of sleep
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Soreness or bleeding around the genitals or rectum
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Unexpected or unexplained changes in behavior

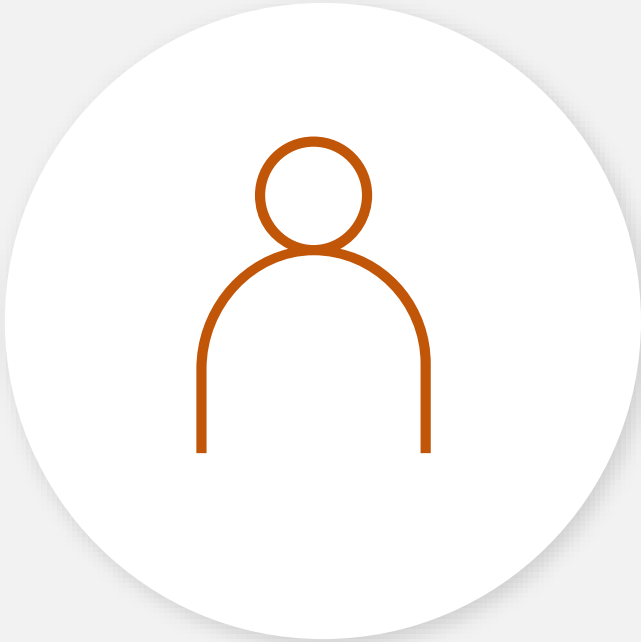
Mental, emotional and psychological abuse

Unlike physical abuse, mental, emotional or psychological abuse may not be as easy to see. With mental or psychological abuse, the signs will be more evident in the person's behavior. Common signs of psychological abuse:



- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Depression
- Fear
- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behavior

Discrimination abuse



Abuse can also be experienced as harassment, insults or similar actions due to race, religion, gender, gender identity, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Sometimes, people with I/DD have been victims of abuse and harassment because of their disability.

Signs of financial abuse

- Unexplained or unusual withdrawals from the person's bank or credit union account
- Unusual use of the individual's bank or credit card accounts
- Reports of family members, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends asking for money, taking money or using a person's credit, debit cards or accessing their accounts, etc.
- Unpaid bills or unusual expenses
- Unexplained shortage of money; the individual is unable to pay for basic budgeted items: food, rent, clothes, transportation, etc.
- Signs showing the individual is involved in a scam or fraud, or the person tells you they were scammed

Common signs of neglect



- Not eating well/malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Untreated medical problems
- Person seems drugged or over-sedated
- Bed sores
- Confusion
- Inappropriate dress or clothing that doesn't fit the social situation
- Improper or poor hygiene or poor grooming
- Poor dental care
- Lack of funds to cover basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, transportation)
- Lack of adequate or appropriate supervision by family members, legal guardians or professional staff

Self-neglect



Sometimes, when people are being abused, they stop caring about themselves. Signs of self-neglect include:

- Not bathing or showering
- Not brushing one's teeth
- Wearing dirty clothes
- Not eating properly
- Not sleeping
- Refusing to take medicines or treatments prescribed by a doctor
- Signs of depression

Signs of caregiver abuse

- Ignoring directions or refusing to complete necessary personal tasks for a person with I/DD
- Using threats or menacing looks/body language to intimidate a person with I/DD
- Displaying controlling attitudes and behaviors
- Showing up late or not at all
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Abusing or harming pets or service animals
- Using a person's money or other resources without consent
- Socially isolating a person with a disability (including limiting educational and/or employment opportunities)
- Using put downs to diminish the person with developmental disabilities
- Speaking for the person with developmental disabilities

What is bullying?

Bullying is mistreating someone on purpose by another person to make them feel humiliated or embarrassed.



Photo sources: illuminateed.com, istockphoto.com, gettyimages.com

Bullying can be:

Verbal: Saying or writing mean things about someone such as calling them names or threatening to hurt them.

Social: Excluding someone from social activities, spreading gossip or embarrassing them in front of other people.

Physical: Includes hitting, pushing, kicking or tripping someone, spitting on them, physically restraining them or taking their things.

Bullying and people with disabilities

People with I/DD can be vulnerable to bullying because:

- people don't understand them
- they might not have the self-advocacy skills to speak up for themselves to stop the bullying

As a peer mentor, you can provide the support and leadership to:

- help others with I/DD to recognize bullying
- help them to know to act to stop it when it's happening to them or others

Bullying is serious and can harm people mentally, emotionally and physically.

Signs of bullying

Peer mentors can look for the **signs that bullying** might be taking place:

- Missing belongings
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach aches
- Trying to avoid a person or a place
- Changes in appetite, mood and anxiety
- Being distracted and fearful

However, it can be hard to know if someone is being bullied. Some of these signs may be caused by other reasons.

As a peer mentor, it's important to **watch for changes in behavior or health** of the people you're mentoring.

How to stop a bully

STOP BULLYING

- Avoid the situation (if possible)
 - Look to friends and family members for support
 - Stay calm and try not to fight
 - Walk away as soon as possible
- Tell someone in charge — a supervisor or other authority
 - If the bullying becomes more dangerous, call the police

Anyone can be the abused or neglected.

An abuse can happen in any area of your life —
where you work, live or in your personal life.

Peer mentors can help



- Some people are especially vulnerable to bullying, abuse or neglect because they're open and suggestable.
- Senior citizens and people with I/DD may be more likely to be abused or be victims of neglect.
- The peer mentor can be a source of support and guidance to others with I/DD to help them recognize when they're victims of abuse or neglect. The peer mentor can also help individuals report abuse or neglect.

Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support



Peer mentors **do not** take the place of professional support or staff.

However, a peer mentor can do some things to help people to understand when abuse or neglect is taking place. Peer mentors can also help individuals report the incident to a professional who can help them.

Reporting abuse and neglect



There are many different types of abuse and neglect.

Reporting abuse and neglect is very important.

If you suspect abuse or neglect you should contact your local office of social services and report what you suspect is happening. Social services will investigate the matter and, if needed, will take other actions to stop the abuse or neglect.

Reporting abuse and neglect helps to stop these crimes



- If you **report abuse promptly**, you may have a better chance of getting the authorities to bring charges against the person doing the abuse.
- It also helps law enforcement prevent abusers from victimizing other people.
- As a peer mentor, your task is to be aware of the different types of abuse so you can be alert to any situation that may arise when you're mentoring others with I/DD.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
1. Anyone can be the victim of abuse or neglect. True False
-
2. Peer mentors should not help people with I/DD to recognize and report abuse and neglect. True False
-
3. It's always easy to recognize abuse or neglect, and you don't need to ask professionals to help you to identify these incidents. True False
-
4. Senior citizens and people with I/DD may be more likely to be victims of abuse, neglect, financial abuse or sexual abuse than other people. True False
-

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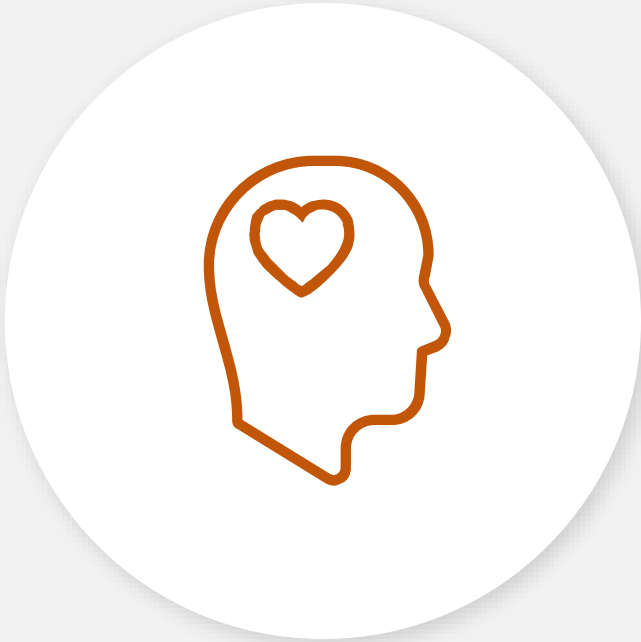
Lesson #11

Mental Illness and Substance Use

Goals for this lesson

1. Understand what it means to be mentally healthy.
2. Define the signs of mental illness.
3. Understand that people with I/DD can have mental illness.
4. Define substance use disorder.
5. Understand how people with I/DD can develop substance use disorders.
6. Understand the role of the peer mentor to support to people with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

What does it mean to be mentally healthy?



When you're mentally healthy, your mind is in a "good space," and your thoughts don't keep you from enjoying life.

Being mentally healthy doesn't mean you're constantly happy and don't have any challenges or stress.

Mentally healthy people can handle the normal stresses of life, can perform well at work and have solid relationships (friends and social connections) with other people.

What is mental illness?



Mental illness happens when someone becomes unbalanced in their thinking and behavior, and they're no longer to manage normal daily stress and daily activities in an appropriate manner.

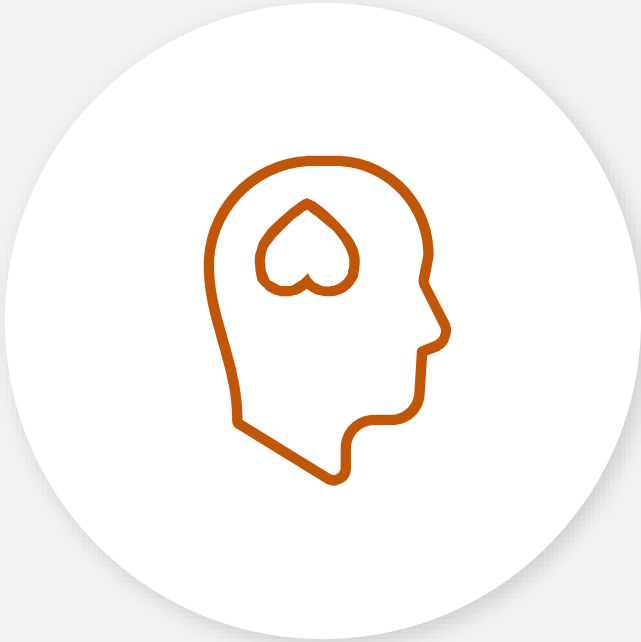
According to Wikipedia: A mental illness is an illness of the mind. People with a mental illness may behave in strange ways or have strange thoughts in their view or the view of others.

What is mental illness, continued



- Mental illnesses develop during the life of a person.
- People with a mental illness sometimes have problems dealing with other people or leading “a typical life.”
- Treatment and certain medications can help people with certain mental illnesses lead a better life.
- In some cases, mental illnesses changes the way a brain works.
- Many conditions affecting the brain are not mental illnesses because they don’t change the way people think. Neither epilepsy nor Parkinson’s disease is a mental illness, yet both affect the brain.

People with I/DD and mental illness



- People with I/DD are just as likely to have a mental illness as people who don't have I/DD.
- Having I/DD doesn't cause a person to also have mental illness.
- Sometimes, people with I/DD can have another condition such as mental illness.
- It's important to remember that just because someone has I/DD, it doesn't mean they automatically have mental illness.
- Both I/DD and mental illness can be misunderstood by the general public.

Common signs of mental illness

- Loss of interest in things that the person once enjoyed
- Staying alone and not interacting with others
- Frequent crying for no reason or at inappropriate times
- Laughing for no reason or at inappropriate time
- Excessive, explosive anger or rage
- Inability to show feelings or emotions
- Feeling hopeless and expressing hopelessness
- Excessive bragging or feelings of superiority over others
- Impulsive and/or erratic behavior
- Seeing or imagining things (hallucinations)
- Extreme nervousness and anxiety

Let's review

Sometimes, mental, emotional and psychological abuse can contribute to mental illness. With mental or psychological abuse, the signs will show more in the person's behavior. Below are some common signs of psychological abuse.

- Depression
- Fear
- Confusion
- Anxiety
- Loss of sleep
- Unexpected or unexplained change in behavior

Let's review



Discrimination abuse can contribute to mental illness.

Discrimination abuse. Abuse can also be experienced as harassment, insults or similar actions due to race, religion, gender, gender identity, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Sometimes, people with I/DD have been victims of abuse and harassment because of their disability.

Self-neglect



Sometimes when people are being abused, they stop caring about themselves. Signs of self-neglect include:

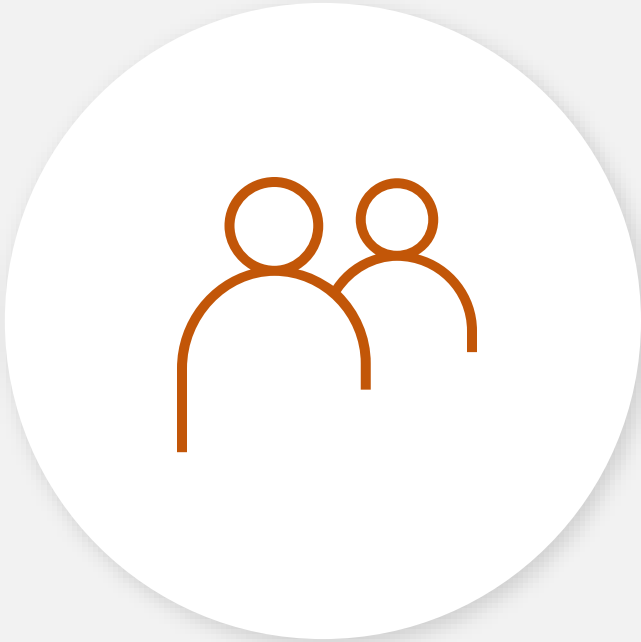
- Not bathing or showering
- Not brushing one's teeth
- Not eating properly
- Not sleeping
- Refusing to take medicines or treatments prescribed by a doctor
- Signs of depression
- Wearing dirty clothes

What is substance use disorder?



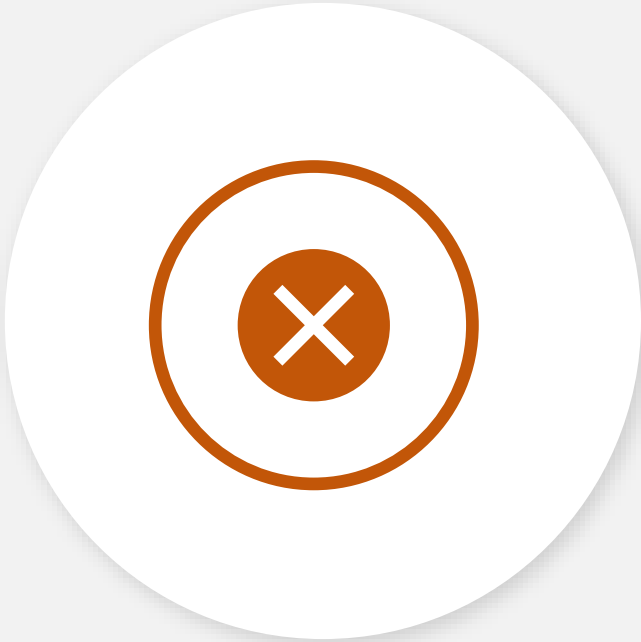
“Substance use” refers to the use of prescription and illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco. A substance use problem occurs when using the substance causes harm to you or to others. Substance use problems can lead to addiction or substance use disorder.

Peer mentors can help



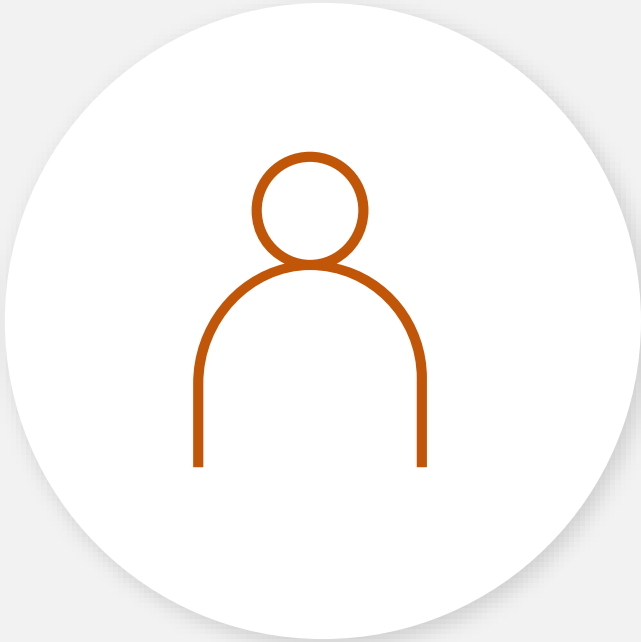
The peer mentor can be a source of support and guidance to others with I/DD who are experiencing mental illness and/or substance use problems.

Myths about I/DD and substance use



- Sometimes, people don't view adults with I/DD as being “grown up” enough to become interested in or addicted to medications, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Some people believe individuals with I/DD operate at a level of young children or teenagers. In fact, many people with I/DD are very capable of using their medications as proscribed and even using alcohol in a responsible manner.
- However, some adults with I/DD are just as capable of becoming addicted to alcohol, prescription drugs or illegal drugs and other substances as any other adult.

Substance use and people with I/DD



- People with I/DD use drugs and/or alcohol for the same reasons others without I/DD use these substances.
- Drinking is a something people do in groups or with friends as a social activity to feel included.
- Using substances is also something people do when feeling stressed or lonely.
- It's important for people with I/DD to know they can fill adult roles by working at paid jobs, volunteering with organizations they support, and engaging in leisure activities without resorting to using drugs or alcohol.

Signs of substance use problems



Behavior

- A change in the person's personality; such as withdrawing or being easily angered
- Keeping secrets about phone calls, text messages



Family/Friends

- Changing friends and being secretive about them
- Not visiting family members or withdrawing from friends who don't use substances



Home and health

- Breaking rules or laws
- Need for privacy; unreachable (doesn't answer phones or texts)
- Staying out late in the evening
- Unexplained, frequent "illnesses" such as headaches, nausea and colds



Money/Work issues

- Running out of money without a reasonable explanation
- Unable to tell you where they spent their money
- Being fired from a job for cause
- Taking more leave from work (or volunteer activities) or calling in sick

Signs of substance use, continued



- It's important to understand there may be other reasons, besides substance use, that can be causing the signs described previously.
- However, when a peer mentor notices these changes in a person with I/DD, it's important to help the individual to seek professional help from staff (including substance use recovery specialists, doctors, psychologists, counselors) for guidance to support the person with I/DD.
- It's important for peer mentors to support the individual with I/DD to understand having an addiction doesn't mean they're a "bad" person who should feel ashamed.
- Substance use disorder is an illness that can occur in many people without disabilities and those who have I/DD and other disabilities.

How peer mentors can help



Peer mentors can help people with I/DD to use their self-determination and self-advocacy skills to seek professional help for their substance use problem, and to focus on recovery from the disease of addiction.



Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

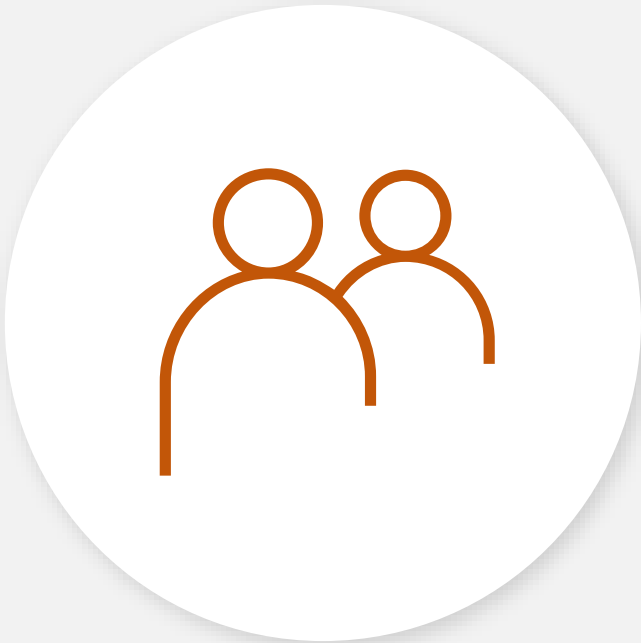
- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support



Peer mentors **do not** take the place of professional support or staff.

However, a peer mentor can do some things to help people to understand their mental illness or substance use disorder and help them to seek help from professionals.

How peer mentors can help



Peer mentors can use their lived experience to help the person with I/DD to stay focused on recovery, even if they may relapse from time to time.

The peer mentor with I/DD can also **seek assistance to find peer mentors with lived experience** with substance use disorder such as Alcoholics Anonymous or mental health support groups (if the I/DD peer mentor doesn't have substance abuse or mental health conditions in his/her background).

People can and do recover from mental illness and substance use disorders with treatment, commitment and support.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Anyone can develop mental illness during their lifetime. | True | False |
| 2. Peer mentors should not help people with I/DD to recognize and seek professional help for a substance abuse disorder. | True | False |
| 3. It's always easy to recognize mental illness or substance abuse, and you don't need to ask professionals to help you to identify these incidents. | True | False |
| 4. People can recover from mental illness and substance abuse with treatment and support. | True | False |
-

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Lesson #12

Detecting Scams and Fraud

Goals for this lesson

1. Define the terms scam and fraud.
2. Understand different types of scams.
3. Understand how to identify scams, fraud and identity theft.
4. Understand the role of the peer mentor to help people with I/DD to not become victims of scams, fraud or identity theft.

What is a scam?



Scam

- A scam is a dishonest way to make money by deceiving people.
- Often, a scam is a plan to get someone to give away money or other valuables, or personal information, by telling a story or a lie that convinces people to give up their money or possessions.
- Someone who tries to deceive another person or lies to them in order to get their property or personal information is called a scammer.

What is fraud?



Fraud

Fraud is an intentional act to deceive someone, often for criminal purposes. Someone who cheats others out of their money, valuables or personal information and deceives people can be called a fraud.

Scammers are out to commit fraud. But you can protect yourself and as a peer mentor, you can help others with I/DD to avoid becoming victims of scams and fraud.

Who could be targets for scams or fraud?

It's important to understand that anyone can be the target of a scam or fraud.

- Some people who take pleasure in deceiving others by cheating them out of their money, valuables or information. Also, scammers are very clever.
- People who commit scams work hard to create a lie or scam that others will believe.
- A scam can happen in any area of your life — where you work, live or even in your personal life.
- Some people are especially vulnerable to believing in scams and to being cheated because they're open and suggestable.
- Senior citizens and people with I/DD may be more likely to believe a scam than others.
- The peer mentor can be a source of support and guidance to others with I/DD to help them detect scams and report the scammers to the police before they become the victims.

Remember your role



Peer mentors are *role models* who:

- Encourage
- Listen
- Suggest
- Guide
- Motivate
- Support

Let's review



Role models and what they do

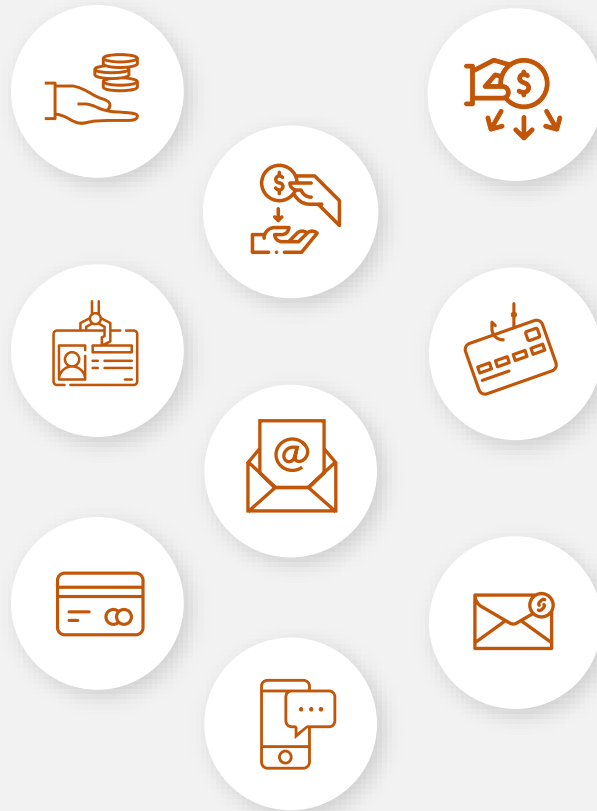
- Share your own experiences when it's helpful to your story.
- Lead by example.
- Listen and give people time to share their feelings and concerns.
- Support people to make their own decisions.



Peer mentors **do not** take the place of professional support or staff.

However, a peer mentor can do some things to help people to understand and begin to resolve a conflict.

Types of scams



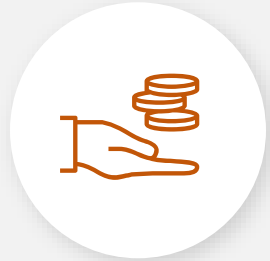
Scams come in many forms.

Most scams sound like a good idea, and a lot of scammers work hard to gain your trust.

They often use exaggerated and fake prizes, products or services as bait to make you share your financial or personal information.

Anyone can be the victim of a scam.

Types of scams, continued



Advance fee scams

Advance fee scams send notices in the mail, via email or by phone stating you have just won a prize or lottery. You will only receive the prize after you pay a small up-front fee.



International financial scams

Like the advance fee scam, these scams offer entries into foreign lotteries or international investment opportunities. Many of these scammers ask you to send money first to collect your prize.

Types of scams, continued



Dating scams

Dating scams can be especially hurtful and can even be very dangerous. Sometimes, scammers create fake profiles on online dating sites and express interest in you, just so they can convince you to send them money.



Charity scams

In a charity scam, the scammer will collect your donation and keep it for themselves rather than using it to help those in need. It's important to research any group or charity where you want to send money before you make your contribution.

Types of scams, continued



Chain letter scams

These letters are called “chain” letters because you’re asked to send the letter to a group of your friends or family members to create a long chain of communication. Chain letters are against the law. It’s important to know that nothing good or bad will happen to you for not passing on a chain letter. Never send money to anyone in a chain letter!



Mass mailing fraud

You receive a letter promising wealth or good fortune. These letters are scams.

Types of scams, continued



Coupons scams

Coupons can be a helpful way to save money on your purchases from stores or internet sites. But beware of illegitimate (deceptive) offers. Take care to only buy things from companies that you recognize and read each coupon before using them, so you're aware of any "hidden charges" or conditions on the coupon.



Credit card fraud

Credit card fraud is when someone uses your credit or debit card, or card number, to fraudulently obtain money or property. **NEVER** give out your Social Security number, credit card number or checking account or bank savings account information to someone you don't know, based on a phone call, email or letter.

Types of scams, continued



Phantom debt scams

Beware of letters and calls, supposedly from “debt collectors” or “court officials.” These scammers make threatening claims requiring you to pay money that don’t owe.



Debt relief scams

Some scammers hope you’re as eager to get rid of your debt as they’re to scam you out of your money. Know the warning signs so you won’t be their next victim. Never use payday lenders. If you’re in debt and cannot pay your bills, other non-profit agencies can help you learn to manage your money and deal with your debt. Legitimate agencies won’t charge you money to help with your debt.

Types of scams, continued



Health care and insurance fraud

Health insurance scams involve scammers attempting to sell people fake insurance or health insurance policies. Before you decide to buy an insurance or a health insurance policy, be sure to research the company. Ask for advice from people you trust (family, staff service provider and/or your doctor's office).



IRS-related scams

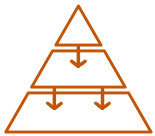
Be careful of trusting emails supposedly from the IRS. Scammers try to gain access to your financial information to steal your identity and assets.

Types of scams, continued



Job scams

Be wary if you must pay money or supply your credit card number to a company to apply for a job. Some scammers make big promises with work at home opportunities, but these may require you to engage in illegal activities. If you have job coach services or a vocational rehabilitation counselor, they can help you to determine if a job lead is a scam or not.



Pyramid schemes

These investments offer big profits, but really aren't based on revenue (money) from selling products. Instead, they depend on the recruitment of more investors (sometimes called members or associates).

Types of scams, continued



Text message spam

Not only can text message spam be annoying and cost you money on your mobile phone bill, but the messages are often for scams.



Free computer security scams

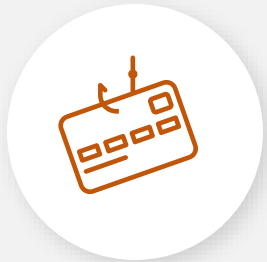
Don't be tricked by messages on your computer screen claiming your machine is already infected with a virus. The realistic, but phony, security alerts exploit your fear of online viruses and security threats.

Types of scams, continued



Identity theft

Identity theft occurs when someone assumes your identity to perform fraud or other criminal act.



Smishing, vishing and phishing

All three of these scams rely on you replying to an email, phone call or text message with personal information, such as your bank account or credit card numbers. Never give out your Social Security number, bank account number or other personal information over the internet, on the phone or in a text. Unless you're sure you are on your own bank's site.

Types of scams, continued



Subpoena scams

Scammers send bogus emails, supposedly from a U.S. District Court, stating you're required to show up for a court appearance. These emails are fake and might contain links harmful to your computer.



Jury duty scams

Someone calls pretending to be a court official who threatens to serve a warrant for your arrest because you failed to show up for jury duty.

Types of scams, continued



Non-delivery of merchandise

This scam involves you purchasing something in an online auction or ordering something over the phone or via the internet, but the items is never delivered to you. Non-delivery of merchandise is a scheme most often linked to internet auction fraud, but it can also be considered a form of business fraud in certain cases.



Telemarketing fraud

Telemarketing fraud takes place when you send money to people you don't know personally or give personal or financial information to unknown callers. If you answer these calls, you increase your chances of becoming a victim of telemarketing fraud.

How peers can help



As a peer mentor, your task is to be aware of the different types of scams so you can be alert to any situations that could arise when you're mentoring others with I/DD.

Reporting frauds and scams

Because each type of fraud might be reported differently, you need to know each type to alert the proper law enforcement authorities.

Steps to follow to report scams and fraud:

- First, report the fraud to your local police department.
- Second, you can report it by contacting your state regulators (for example, consumer protection office).

Reporting to federal agencies:

- Violations of federal laws should be reported to the federal agency responsible for enforcement.
- While federal agencies are rarely able to act on behalf of individuals, they use complaints to record patterns of abuse, which allows an agency to act against a company or industry.

Reporting scams helps to stop them



- If you report a fraud promptly, you may have a better chance of improving your chances of recovering what you have lost.
- It also helps law enforcement authorities stop scams before other people become victims.
- Remember, your task as a peer mentor is to be alert to all types of scams to assist those you're mentoring.

Handling unexpected sales calls



Robocalls

Pre-recorded calls or robocalls are recorded messages trying to sell you something. These calls are generally illegal unless you have given the company written permission to call you.

Stopping unsolicited calls

If you don't want a business to call you again, say so and register your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry. If they call back, they're breaking the law.

Let's review. Quiz!

Choose the best answer. Circle true or false.

-
1. Anyone can be the victim of a scam or fraud. True False
-
2. Peer mentors should always try to make people recognize and report scams and fraud. True False
-
3. If you report a fraud promptly, you may not improve your chances of recovering what you have lost. True False
-
4. Senior citizens and people with I/DD may be more likely to believe a scam than others. True False
-



Questions

Peer Mentor Training for People with I/DD

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This work is © 2023 by Optum, Inc. All rights reserved. This curriculum was based on the InReach peer advocates leadership training curriculum authored by Patricia K. Keul in collaboration with a group of peer mentors with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD). Peer mentors included: L. Newell, F. Davis, C. Brantley and M. Cannady.