

# TIPS FOR SUPERVISING A PEER SUPPORT

If you are a professional that will be overseeing a **Peer Support** during their day-to-day work, here are some tips and resources<sup>3,4</sup> for how to support and help them grow in their role:

## Tip

Ask **what their needs are** through a conversation focused on how you can best support them in their role

## Be flexible

Know when to **support** them, but also when to **back off**

Have an **open-door policy** and make yourself available and approachable

**Respect the role** of **Peer Support** and treat them as an important part of the team

Remember that this could be their **first 'professional' job** - trainings and professional development are highly encouraged

## What this sounds like...

“ What do you look for in a supervisor? ”

“ We can meet routinely and during a time and at a place convenient for you. ”

“ What is going well? Where are some struggles? What strategies will move the situation forward? ”

“ You can always come to me if you have urgent questions. ”

“ You are an integral member of our team. ”

“ Are there any topics or trainings you are interested in for growing your skills? ”

# TIPS FROM PEER SUPPORTS

## 1 Let an **emerging adult** figure out their recovery

Just because something worked for them in **their recovery does not mean** it will **work** for the **emerging adult** they are now working with.

- Do not get stuck on personal experiences.
- As a **Peer Support** you might think you always know what is best for the **emerging adult**, but it has to be driven by their thoughts. Instead, **help them see opportunities to empower them.**

## 2 This is not your treatment

**You are not there to share every detail of your life!** It is okay to talk about you, but don't keep it on you.

- **Let them guide their treatment** - tell a little bit to get a little bit - they are not there for your therapy.
- There is an art to building rapport. You can still give off an "I've been there" feeling without oversharing.
- When sharing personal experiences, ask yourself, "Why am I telling this personal story?"

## 3 Maintain boundaries!

A lot of **emerging adults** may not have had the opportunity to witness **healthy business relationships**

- Use this as an opportunity to **act as a role model** and teach them how to maintain a good relationship with resources such as behavioral health programs.
- Reach out for support when you need it!

## 4 Stay up to date on training

“Youth **Peer Support** training allowed to me have a **new perspective** on my job, and I host groups that focus on exploring client's interests because of this training. **Wellness Recovery Action Plan** (WRAP) training allowed me to recognize the importance of using **evidence-based practices**, and I am now capable of supporting my clients in using their **voice** to develop a WRAP for any of their goals.”

- **Peer Support staff**

## 5 Improve and reflect

Ask **yourself** these **questions** when ending a session with a client:

- Did we connect in any type of way?
- What did we talk about?
- Did I make time for self-reflection?
- How much time did I talk versus client?

# CHARACTERISTICS OF PEER SUPPORTS

## Relatable and Welcoming

- **Mirror** the demographic they serve.
- Able to **speak and understand the lingo** of the population they serve.
- **Not afraid** to go out in the community they work in.

## Stable in their own personal journey

- Maintain **regular participation in their own recovery** (e.g., therapy, support groups).
- Practice **self-care**.

## Patient

- Understand that things **do not change overnight**.
- This is **not** a job of **instant gratification**, but takes time and effort.

## Able to connect

- “I am with you” and “I will talk with you”
- Not just hearing the client’s stories but taking into consideration and recognizing **how those stories affect the person they are today**.