

## **Module E: Preventative and Integrative Practice**

### **Unit E1: Children Helping Children**

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#### **Objectives of Unit E1**

- To consider strategies for engaging staff in activities which will support them in enabling children and young people to help one another in the promotion of non-violence and the reduction of violence
- To be able to motivate and support staff in developing an understanding of the central role that young people play in helping one another through peer support in the school community
- To be familiar with a range of approaches to dealing with common 'blocks and barriers' to this process
- To be familiar with the skills involved in training peer supporters in school

#### **Facilitation skills to be developed through this Unit**

*Knowledge and understanding of:*

- how pupils relate to one another
- the personal and social relationships of pupils whose behaviour causes concern
- the operation of school systems
- the importance of creating a supportive and caring school community
- how to include pupils' opinions on any decision about their education

*Personal qualities and attributes include:*

- being an effective communicator
- being an effective trainer of young people
- having empathy for pupils whose behaviour causes concern
- being a persuasive advocate for pupils – whether perpetrators, victims, assistants or witnesses of school violence
- being able to facilitate and value pupils' opinions about their own education

#### **Pre-unit reading**

Cowie, H. Boardman, C., Dawkins, J., & Jennifer, D. (2004). *Emotional health and well-being: A practical guide for schools*. London: Sage Publications. (chapter 2.4 Case study of Llantwit Major School).

Cowie, H., & Wallace, P. (2000). *Peer support in action: From bystanding to standing by*. London: Sage Publications. (Chapter 1).

Peer Support Networker <http://www.peersupport.ukobservatory.com/>

### **Summary of current thinking and knowledge about peer support**

Essentially, peer support is about training young people so that they can help themselves and one another. It is now widely acknowledged that, by implementing a peer support system, the strengths and resources of young people can be harnessed to enrich their own lives and those of others in their school, their families and their community. Peer support within a school involves enhancing feelings of safety and security as well as creating a framework within which pupils themselves can address a whole range of issues, such as bullying, friendship difficulties, learning difficulties, problems in making the transition from primary to secondary school and conflicts with peers. The presence of a peer support system can radically improve the ethos of a school since the culture of peer support encourages people to share their issues with one another and to take a problem-solving approach to the inevitable difficulties that they encounter in the course of everyday life. Over and over again, schools have discovered that peer support produces improvements to the life of a school, such as better behaviour, a more pleasant atmosphere, more respectful and friendly relationships between staff and pupils and amongst peers, and increased confidence for peer supporters and for those who engage with their service.

The strength of peer support is that it is always in a process of change as the young people involved become more creative and confident in developing the systems in which they have been trained to play a part. One significant recent development has been to empower young people to participate actively in important decisions that concern their peer group, for example through engaging in school councils, youth parliaments or other democratic systems. In this context, the philosophy of peer support is in harmony with the principles underlying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1991). This Convention spells out the basic human rights of children everywhere. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. The most important one emerging in the current research arena is listening to the voice of the child. In the same spirit, a key policy initiated by the UK government is the *Every Child Matters* (2004) white paper and subsequent Children Act (2005) that identifies five key areas for improving the lives of children. These stipulate that every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, should have the support they need to 1, be healthy; 2, stay safe; 3, enjoy and achieve; 4, make a positive contribution and 5, achieve economic well-being.

Peer support systems, in a variety of ways, help to put these principles into practice in schools. In harmony with these aspirations, many teachers who co-ordinate peer support systems encourage peer supporters to play an active part in managing the schemes, by, for example, critiquing and monitoring their effectiveness. In fact, there is evidence that young people's management of peer support systems can act as a significant catalyst for change (Cowie, Naylor, Talamelli, Chauhan, & Smith, 2002) by identifying new forms of bullying (for

example, where bullies use text messages to intimidate others), by devising new approaches to target such behaviour (for example, by disseminating information on these new forms of abuse in order to support victimised peers) and by making changes in the logistics of peer support (for example, by using evidence from systematic evaluation of the service to change from a counselling-based approach to a befriending approach). The opportunity to be a peer supporter is now viewed by many educators as an important pathway for the inclusion of children and young people in policy-making (Parsons & Blake, 2004) and is central to the vision of anti-bullying initiatives by major NGOs such as ChildLine.

### **Types of peer support**

Systems of peer support vary quite widely across schools and according to the age groups of the peer supporters themselves. There are variations in the model of training adopted, to include: counselling based approaches, conflict resolution methods, mentoring, peer education and simple buddying. Primary school schemes generally involve looking out for pupils that appear lonely, often in the playground, the trained pupils commonly being referred to as Buddies or Befrienders. Secondary school schemes often involve peer supporters working in a lunchtime club, 'drop in' room, a younger aged tutor group, or in one-to-one contact with a pupil over a period of time, usually one term, but in some cases as long as a year. The schemes evolve over time and change in line with local needs and pupil perceptions of the effectiveness and acceptability of this type of intervention. With advances in technology, methods also take account of distance-learning types of support, including use of the internet and e-mail support (Cartwright, 2005; Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

### ***Peer counselling***

The earliest types of peer support were grounded in a counselling model. Bystanders in the role of pupil helpers were trained (usually by a qualified counsellor or psychologist) to use active listening skills to support peers in distress. The aims were: to give bystanders skills to deal with peers' interpersonal issues; to help the victims of bullying; and to challenge pupils who bully. Regular supervision (whether by a qualified counsellor or by the teacher who managed the peer support scheme) was an essential feature. Peer counsellors were likely to see users of the service in a specially designated room just as counsellors see their clients in a private consultation. Peer counselling was pioneered in the UK in 1990 by Netta Cartwright, the school counsellor at a Midlands secondary school, who trained students in basic listening and co-counselling skills as a critical part of the school's anti-bullying policy (Cartwright, 1996; Glover, Cartwright, & Gleeson, 1998). The theory behind Cartwright's training was Re-evaluation Counselling (RC), a person-centred approach. RC proposes that our ability to think and function well has been impaired by the distress experienced in the process of growing up in a society structured on inequality, injustice and pressure to compete and conform. At the same time, everyone has the natural ability to recover from the effects of the hurts that they have experienced through a process of release or discharge that includes

laughing, crying, raging, shaking, trembling and animated talk. The healing takes place when we discharge our distress through re-evaluation of self and others; increased awareness of how oppressive systems operate to the detriment of all people; the opportunity to act on this awareness. Over the years, as Cartwright trained cohorts of peer supporters, students reported that they felt safer, whether or not they actually used the service and the whole culture and climate of the school became more positive.

### ***Befriending***

Over time, peer counselling services have evolved into befriending/buddying schemes that still involve active listening skills and a person-centred approach during training, but which, in their implementation, adopt a much more informal approach. This change in practice has often been initiated by peer supporters themselves who report that both they and the users of the schemes have difficulties with a formal counselling approach and prefer the anonymity of an informal befriending scheme. Usually befrienders are same-age peers or older pupils, who are selected by teachers on the basis of their friendly personal qualities. In some systems existing befrienders are also involved in the selection and interviewing of volunteers. Usually there is some training in interpersonal skills, such as active listening, assertiveness and leadership. For example, Athy Demetriades, teacher at a London secondary school and founder of *Children of the Storm*, trained pupils to act as *peer partners* to help young refugees adjust to school (Demetriades, 1996). The peer partners were trained in listening skills so that they could help war-traumatised peers deal with difficult feelings and to affirm their attempts to grow and survive despite the unbearable memories that they all carried. The method also demonstrated bystanders' potential through befriending to play an active role in responsible decision-making alongside the adult trustees of the *Children of the Storm* project. Studies of befriending indicate a number of advantages, not least the recruitment of bystanders to tackle the problem of bullying. For vulnerable pupils, the experience of being befriended can be a critical part of the process of feeling more positive about themselves. Through the process of being helped, these pupils are given an opportunity to express their feelings about upsetting aspects of their lives. Bystanders in the role of befrienders report that they too benefit from the helping process, that they feel more confident in themselves, and that they learn to value other people more. Teachers frequently report that the school environment becomes safer and more caring following the introduction of a befriending scheme, and that peer relationships in general improve (Cowie, Boardman, Dawkins, & Jennifer, 2004; Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli, & Cowie, 2003).

### ***Conflict resolution/mediation***

Conflict resolution/mediation is a structured process in which a bystander in the role of neutral third party assists voluntary participants to resolve their dispute (Hopkins, 2004). There must be a follow-up meeting at which participants review the success or otherwise of the solution and acknowledge their willingness to make adjustments if necessary. At the heart of the process of mediation we find

the quality of *active listening* and the ability to respond genuinely and authentically to the needs and feelings of the participants in the mediation. It is essential for the peer mediator not to deny or repress strong emotions usually present during and after a conflict but to have the strength to allow them to emerge and be shared in a sympathetic, supportive environment. At the same time, they need to go beyond empathy to a rational problem-solving stance so that the disputants can move through their conflict into a resolution. This is where good communication skills are also essential. The peer mediators must show through their choice of words, the tone of their voice, the rhythm of their speech and their confidence that they believe in the real possibility of a solution to the problem. There must be a follow-up meeting at which participants review the success or otherwise of the solution and acknowledge their willingness to make adjustments if necessary. Evaluation of this approach indicates that there is a substantial decrease in the incidence of aggressive behaviour. Typically, over 80% of disputes mediated by peers result in lasting agreements (Cunningham, Cunningham, Martorelli, Tran, Young, & Zacharias, 1998; Fernandez, Villaoslada, & Funes, 2002).

### ***Peer mentoring***

This method can take the form of 'buddying' whereby trained pupils are attached to a new intake from primary school to act as friends, mentors and guides to ease the new pupils into the school environment. This typically starts at the end of the intake pupils' last year at primary school and continues into the first year of their entry into secondary school. A key feature of peer mentoring is that the mentors act as positive role models for the younger pupils.

### ***Peer support and the internet***

The internet is a dynamic place for young people to expand the horizons of their every day lives, and meet other like minded young people. Many of our everyday activities such as writing, reading, searching for information, social communication and entertainment are increasingly facilitated by the internet. The internet is used to seek information on the wide range of issues that affect a young person's life. Furthermore, for youth who feel 'cut off' from healthy peer and familial relationships, online relationships may provide a substitute. Many have heralded the internet as a venue for breaking down barriers and connecting people who might otherwise be marginalised.

### **A case study of peer support by e-mail (Hutson & Cowie, 2006)**

Research has shown that in a mixed gender environment, boys tend to be less likely to volunteer for peer support schemes. They defend their gender boundaries, and perceive peer support as a female domain. In single sex schools, where there are no members of the opposite sex to compare against, gender boundaries become more diffuse. This finding was confirmed by a study carried out in an all boys' school in South West London. The school wanted to involve the pupils in decision making after an incident of physical bullying. To this end, the school ran focus groups with all Year 9 boys, asking them to identify

any gaps in the school's pastoral care system. One of the services requested was an email peer support scheme. Email was the preferred method for peer support, as it allowed any boys seeking counselling anonymity and confidentiality. There was concern that being seen by your classmates talking to peer supporters in the playground would be construed as 'grassing'. Through adopting email as a communication channel, this fear was allayed. The view was that an email helpdesk would provide the boys with an open space to meet, without preconceptions, known personalities or boundaries. Eighty-two boys volunteered to be peer supporters on day one of the recruitment drive. The volunteers were whittled down to 25 to make it a manageable number for Re-Evaluation Counselling (RC) training (as described in the section on Netta Cartwright's work), and to ensure their commitment - so that the scheme was tenable and had longevity. The 25 recruits were peer-selected, based on their responses to a standardized application form. Volunteers were wide-ranging – some had experienced bullying themselves, others had witnessed it as bystanders. Some drew from experiences at home, such as mediating in their parents' marriage. One applicant had been suspended for bullying himself, and therefore felt he would have a greater understanding of why bullying occurred and how to stop it. The majority expressed a desire to transcend and challenge the 'cliquey' atmosphere that pervaded school life. In short, initiating the peer support scheme encouraged, on an equal footing, the bully, the bystander and the victim to stand up and be accountable.

The scheme also contributed to fostering a more caring and integrated school environment. Mixed age groups of four peer supporters worked together on a rota system to respond to emails during designated timeframes, three times a week. The boys came from different year groups and were allocated to different rota groups each week to harness inter-year group relations. A teacher mediated the email scheme to ensure anonymity, and to maintain supervision of the more serious cases. Boys seeking peer support were required to email from their school email account (which they could access remotely through the web from home) to a generic email address. A teacher, who cut and pasted the text onto a blank page and then forwarded it on to the peer supporters, logged incoming emails. The peer supporters responded in their groups of four and returned their response to the teacher, who then sent it on to the correct email account. The only shortfall of the scheme was its lack of immediacy. Checking the email account three times a week could mean that a boy in crisis may have to wait for help.

So far, the scheme has been successful. The overall school environment has been positively influenced, and has encouraged a more emotionally literate environment by encouraging pupils to consider the impact of their actions on others more carefully.

Peer support systems require that the peer supporter should be skilled in communication, should be able to listen actively to another person, and should

adopt a problem-solving approach to the other's difficulty. Peer support systems, whether formal or informal, tend to incorporate the use of basic listening skills, empathy for a person with social or emotional difficulties, a problem-solving approach to interpersonal difficulties and a willingness to take a supportive role. Adults play a significant part in this process by providing training and supervision in a supportive environment. In this way, they give the young person the opportunity to offer a direct response to requests for help with regard to a specific problem. They give the peer helpers skills and strategies for enabling users of the system (or 'supportees') to find solutions to their own problem. Though the immediate work of peer support is done by the peer helpers, adults retain a supportive and supervisory role without imposing solutions. The non-punitive nature of peer support offers clear and genuine channels of communication amongst those involved (Cowie & Wallace, 2000; Ortega, 1998).

### **Responsibilities of the Unit facilitators**

Your tasks within this Unit are to:

- send to all participants information about when and where the session will be held and details of preparatory reading to be done
- familiarise yourself with the Unit text and the facilitators' notes
- plan the session to meet the needs of the participants
- ensure that all relevant resources/materials are copied and/or prepared
- lead the session and all the activities

### **Sequence of activities for Unit E1**

This Unit represents a one-day training of five hours plus breaks. Note that the training in this Unit is introductory. It will be necessary either to take further training or to involve a qualified counsellor, psychologist or other colleague experienced in the training of peer supporters in school. Note that all of the activities are suitable for young people. Participants in the training have the opportunity to experience the peer support process in action and to model appropriate behaviour with colleagues and pupils in school.

#### **Activity 1 Introduce yourself (10 minutes)**

##### **Purpose**

- To get to know everyone's names
- To begin to interact positively and purposefully with other members of the group

##### **Materials**

Name badges for each participant

##### **Procedure**

The facilitator in advance has arranged the chairs in the form of a circle.

*Round 1* The facilitator begins by introducing him/herself, e.g. 'My name is Claire'. The person beside the facilitator then introduces themselves and so on until everyone has had their turn.

**Round 2** For this round, the facilitator adds an adjective starting with the same letter as his/her name, e.g. 'My name is caring Claire' and invites each person in the circle in turn to do the same.

### **Debriefing**

The activity does not need debriefing but the facilitator can point out how important it is to break the ice at the beginning of an experiential workshop and perhaps suggest some variations that can be used when training peer supporters.

## **Activity 2 Introduce your neighbour (20 minutes)**

### **Purpose**

- To begin to feel more comfortable in the group by interacting purposefully with one member
- To discover your own level of skill in questioning someone else, in talking about yourself and in listening
- To get everyone speaking in the large group, even those who would normally avoid it

### **Materials**

None

### **Procedure**

Give the group five questions they need to ask their partner (the person sitting next to them). They should be factual questions but they can also be amusing or unusual. They should not be very personal or revealing. Each person has a short time (3-5 minutes) to do this. Then they must come back to the large group and each person must introduce their partner to the group based on the information they have gathered.

### **Debriefing**

Without pointing out individuals, it is worth noting that some people seem to have listened well and remembered the information given them whilst others did not. If you discuss it in the group, you will probably find that some people took up more than their share of time talking. This can be pointed out without judgement by saying that one of the things you hope each person will learn is which skills they need to work on.

## **Activity 3 Getting to know you (20 minutes)**

### **Purpose**

- To get to know people's names
- To interact purposefully with several group members individually
- To practise asking questions of people you don't know
- To begin to notice similarities and differences between yourself and others in the group

### **Materials**

Resource 1 *Getting to know you*

### **Procedure**

Give out a sheet of questions (see Resource 1 *Getting to know you*) with blanks to fill in with group members' names.

Give the group 15 minutes to walk around the room and find someone who meets each criterion. Do not stop until all the blanks are filled in.

### **Debriefing**

There are two suggested ways of debriefing this activity. One is to ask people to talk about the experience of asking questions of people they do not know well. Related to this one might ask the question: 'Now that you know this information about the person, do you feel you know them?' with the intention of leading on to how knowing facts is less useful than knowing how someone feels. The other is to focus on unexpected similarities and differences discovered in the interaction, and how they might influence people's feelings about each other or about being in the group.

### **Activity 4 Think of a secret (25 minutes)**

#### **Purpose**

- To identify the qualities of the good peer supporter
- To provide the opportunity to recognise that the people on the training course already possess many of these qualities

#### **Materials**

Resource 2 *The qualities of the peer supporter*

#### **Procedure**

Ask each person in the group to think of a secret that they have never told anyone and/or something they would find it very hard to talk about.

***Emphasise that they will not be asked to reveal this secret at any time in the activity.***

Then ask them to look around the group and think about which person in the group they would tell their secret to if they had to tell one person.

***Ask them not to reveal who this person is.***

Now ask them to think about what it is about that person that made them choose him/her.

#### **Debriefing**

Take feedback from the group by asking them to call out the attributes of the people they have chosen. Write this in a list that can be seen by the group and that will be 'kept for future reference' (see Resource 2 *The qualities of the peer supporter*). When the list is complete, ask the group to provide a title. Usually they will see that it should be called something like 'The Qualities of a Peer Supporter'. Finally draw attention to the fact that they already had these qualities within the group. This sets the group up on the positive note that they have skills to learn but that they already possess some of the basic qualities needed.

### **Activity 5 Reflection (20 minutes)**

#### **Purpose**

- To identify actions that are helpful and those that are not
- To build on the qualities already identified in Activity 4

#### **Materials**

None

**Procedure**

Ask participants to think individually about a time when they turned to someone for help or support. What did that person do? How did it feel? What was useful? What was unhelpful? Ask each person to make two columns on a piece of paper. One heading is 'Peer supporters do...'. The other is 'Peer supporters do not...'

***Emphasise that they will not be asked to reveal their issue at any time in the activity.***

**Debriefing**

In the plenary, the facilitator summarises responses in the same two columns on a flipchart. The facilitator then invites the group to reflect on how they can encourage pupils to act in supportive ways towards one another and how to make them aware of unhelpful behaviour.

**Activity 6 Roadblocks to communication (25 minutes)****Purpose**

- To illustrate the importance of attending by providing the opportunity to feel what it is like not to be attended to
- To illustrate the importance of listening by providing the opportunity to feel what it is like not to be listened to

**Materials**

Resource 3 *Behaviour cards*

**Procedure**

Ask people to get into pairs – one is invited to act as a 'peer supporter', the other as a 'supportee' - and sit on their chairs facing each other. Ask the supportee to think of a problem (nothing serious) they could talk about. Give the peer supporter a card (Resource 3 *Behaviour cards*) with instructions on how to behave and ask them to do exactly what the card says. Two are included but you can make up your own.

**Debriefing**

After just three minutes, stop the action and bring the group back together. Feedback should be taken first from the supportee as to how it felt to be ignored or talked over. This activity usually provokes strong feelings of anger or not being valued, in addition to much laughter. Then take feedback from the peer supporters about how it felt to behave in this unhelpful way. We usually conclude with a question to the group about what they think we want them to take from this activity. This conclusion need not be complex or sophisticated but it is important to summarise in order to ensure that everyone has got the point you intended and remembers it when they are using their peer support skills in a real situation.

**Activity 7 The conflict spiral (45 minutes)****Purpose**

- To learn that conflicts can start with something quite simple and then spiral out of control

**Materials**

None

**Procedure**

Ask participants to work in pairs to discuss a real conflict that they have had with another person. There are two roles. A tells the narrative of their experience of conflict; B listens to A's story. At the end of the story, B asks A to 'freeze frame' the worst moment as if a DVD had been paused at that particular point in time. B invites A to hold that moment and to experience the physical sensations and emotions of that moment. B then asks A to move out of the freeze frame and to describe what was experienced. A and B then change roles and repeat the activity. Give the pairs 10 minutes each.

**Debriefing**

The pairs are asked to return to the large group. In the plenary, the facilitator asks the pairs to share some of the experiences that they had while doing this activity. The group collectively discusses how easy or difficult it is to intervene to de-escalate a conflict. Allow 25 minutes for this debriefing in plenary.

**Activity 8 Conflict resolution (50 minutes)****Purpose**

- To give participants the opportunity to practise the skills of mediation between two people in dispute

**Materials**

Resource 5 *Observer's checklist*

Resource 6 *Five steps to problem-solving*

**Procedure**

The group selects a conflict from Activity 7 (or a new one if they wish). Participants work in groups of 4/5. Each group decides on the roles that they are to take for the first round: 2 disputants; 1 mediator; 1-2 observers. The facilitator goes through the five stages of conflict resolution (Resource 6 *Five steps to problem-solving*) and invites the groups to practice these steps in relation to the conflicts that they have selected. The observers make notes using Resource 5 *Observer's checklist*.

**Debriefing**

Debriefing takes place within the groups. Feedback is given by each person in order: disputants; observer(s); mediator. The groups explore what happened; how it felt; were there any difficult emotions? How did the different roles experience the solution? Were there any other ways that the mediator could have handled the dispute?

**Activity 9 To advise or not to advise (45 minutes)****Purpose**

- To provide an opportunity to practise responding to a direct request for advice
- To begin to practise helping someone without advising them

**Materials**

Resource 4 *Role cards*

Resource 5 *Observer's checklist*

**Procedure**

Divide the group into smaller groups of three and assign or ask for volunteers for three roles for a role-play – *peer supporter*, *supportee* and *observer*. Give the supportee a role card (Resource 4 *Role cards*) with a storyline including a problem on it. It should take only a few minutes for them to tell their story to the peer supporter. Instruct them to ask the peer supporter directly what he/she thinks they should do about their problem once they have told their story. If the peer supporter avoids the question, suggest that they ask it again more forcefully. The peer supporter should not be told the exact purpose of the activity. Instruct the peer supporter simply to do what they can to help the supportee. Tell the observer the purpose of the activity and ask them to record (Resource 5 *Observer's checklist*) what the peer supporter does and says in response to the question.

**Debriefing**

When the role-play is over, the observer should give feedback to the peer supporter regarding how they responded and the effect of that response on the supportee. In the large group, there can be further discussion of how best to respond to the pressure of someone wanting advice.

**Activity 10 The process of debriefing (40 minutes)****Purpose**

- To increase participants' awareness of the range of responses that exists within the group
- To make connections among the responses
- To reflect on the learning that has taken place during the session

**Materials**

Resource 2 *The qualities of the peer supporter*

**Procedure**

The facilitators invite the group to consider the range of responses that they have offered or experienced during the session. What feelings do they experience when they are offering help to another person? What feelings do they experience when they are offered support? Participants are invited to write their responses down on a piece of paper. After 10 minutes (or when everyone has finished), participants are asked to read their comments aloud one by one. Then comments are invited from the rest of the group

**Debriefing** (It may be helpful to return to the completed Resource 2)

This is an opportunity to share patterns in the ways in which the group offers and receives peer support, for example patterns of gender or ethnicity or age. Explore what are the most common themes and those that are least common. Does anyone in the group find it hard to receive peer support? Why? How frequently do individuals in the group experience support from others? Could peer support be enhanced in their own work environments? What will each person take away with them from this session?

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## Further reading and additional materials

### Books and articles

- Bertels, J., Van Vaerenbergh, J., & Schoofs, V. (2002). Jongeren begeleiden jongeren: Drie jaar later. *Caleidoscoop*, 14(4), 2-7.
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[http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit\\_aliasid=2045](http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2045)

Porro, B. (2003). *Kinderen en ... hun rol als bemiddelaar. Conflictoplossing in zes stappen*. Kwintessens Uitgevers: Hilversum.

Patfoort, P. (2004). *Se défendre sans attaquer. La puissance de la nonviolence*. Mechelen: Jeugd & Vrede et Baeckens Books BVBA.

We lossen het zelf wel op! Peer mediation. Uitgave bij 'De Vlaamse Vredesweek'. Pax Christi Vlaanderen, Antwerpen. [We will solve it ourselves! Peer mediation.]

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## Resource 1 Getting to Know You!

**This activity will help you gain more information about people in this peer support training. Walk around and find someone who matches each description. Write their name in the appropriate row.**

1. Wears the same size shoes as me
2. Was born in another country
3. Has a birthday in the same month as me
4. Has a brother
5. Is someone who does a sport regularly
6. Is good at maths
7. Speaks at least 3 languages
8. Knows how to cook
9. Has a pet dog or cat
10. Lives in a flat

**Resource 2 The Qualities of the Peer Supporter**

Good listener Trustworthy Understanding	Friendly Calm and objective Does not put me down
Caring Makes me feel better	Respects a confidence Solid/reliable

### Resource 3 Behaviour cards

When your partner starts to talk, look at the floor or off into the distance, shift in your seat, clean your nails, generally look bored. Do not offer any response that encourages the person to carry on talking, just say, 'Yeah, Yeah' in a bored way.

As soon as your partner has described their dilemma, interrupt, talking over them if necessary to give advice. Tell them how you would handle the situation. Don't leave much space for your partner to talk about their experience. Say something like, 'You think that's bad? You should hear what happened to me!'

**Resource 4: Suggestions for the role cards**

My friends are avoiding me and are going round the school saying I'm a slut. It's because a boy one of them fancied for a long time asked me out and I went out with him. I didn't say anything, but he told his friends and now they've told mine and it's all over the school. I like this boy but I don't want to lose my friends. What do you think I should do?

I'm really worried about my brother. I know he's hanging around with a gang who carry knives and I guess he's doing that too. Everyone knows the gang carries knives and I think he's going to get into serious trouble. He always comes in late and sleeps through school. My parents shout at him but I don't think they know what he's doing. I don't know what to do. What do you think I should do?

## Resource 5 Observer's checklist

Your task is to observe the quality of the interaction between peer supporter and supportee. Look particularly at the following: Eye contact; Gestures; Body position; Facial expression; Tone of voice.

Write general comments about the way the peer supporter responded to the supportee.

- What messages were conveyed by the peer supporter's eyes, gestures, body position, facial expression?

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- How appropriate was the voice of the peer supporter?

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- How interested did the peer supporter appear in the supportee's problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Provide evidence for each of your comments**

## **Resource 6 Five Steps to problem-solving**

### **Stage 1 Identify the problem**

Make the two disputants feel comfortable. Explain what the process of mediation entails. Invite each participant to describe their view of the problem situation without interruption, stating feelings as well as facts

The mediator clarifies the needs and interest of each party, using statements like, 'My understanding of what you said is this...'

Each party is asked to summarise what the other said

The conciliator summarises what each has said

### **Stage 2 Explore options**

Each party states what ideally they would like to happen and is invited to suggest possible solutions. The mediator notes possible risks and benefits.

### **Stage 3 Take account of risks and benefits**

The mediator invites each party to think about the outcomes of the suggested solutions. Each is invited to explore possible risks and possible benefits of the proposed solutions.

### **Stage 4 Make a plan of action**

Each party considers which solutions are likely to meet the needs of both. They are asked to select one or two possible solutions. The mediator clarifies what each party agrees to do and by when. The mediator then draws up a written agreement of future actions which is signed by all present. Both parties shake hands.

### **Stage 5 Review and evaluate**

The parties agree to meet to review outcomes and to evaluate what happened. They agree to re-negotiate as appropriate. The mediator praises each party for successes and summarise in context the values of co-operation and trust. Close the meeting by acknowledging that progress has been made (even if complete resolution has not been reached). Invite each person to reflect on how they might each behave differently in the future.