

CO-FACILITATION WITH YOUTH PEER EDUCATORS

Guidance for CAPP and PREP

Using peer educators as co-facilitators brings diversity to the training and expands the range of skills and experiences that can be utilized in a workshop. As co-facilitators, youth can bridge the gulf that can exist between young people and adult trainers or facilitators.

When one facilitator is leading the group, the other can assume the role of group observer and may note group dynamic issues which need to be monitored and/or resolved. In addition, the other individual can be noting participant statements/concerns that can be referred to later, or missing information and key points that should be woven in at a later point.

The relationship among co-facilitators should demonstrate mutual responsibility and respect. Team members serve as allies, resources, and supports for and to each other. This is in particular important in youth-adult teams. For adult facilitators it can be challenging to find a balance and share facilitation tasks more equitably. On the one hand, it is easy for adults to take over and dominate the session, and delegate minor responsibilities to young people such as handing out activity cards or handouts. On the other hand, it may be tempting to hand over facilitation of the session completely to youth peer educators and observe how they fare. Co-facilitation implies that both facilitators are actively and collaboratively involved in facilitation.

Co-facilitators need to spend time together, practice together, and communicate well in order to work together effectively. Youth and adult facilitators each bring their own unique life experiences, beliefs, knowledge, reactions, and feelings about themselves, the content to be covered, and their role as facilitators, so it is important to get to know each other. Joint trainings and team building activities are helpful as well as EBP implementation practice sessions. Adult educators can get involved early and be part of the peer education training program.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM: BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

- Do some personal homework: Conduct a personal examination of your own attitudes, feelings, and confidence/competence about the issues and content to be covered in the workshop and about the makeup of the expected audience. Identify your personal and professional strengths, weaknesses, confidences, and vulnerabilities about the issues/content and audience. Identify your hopes and fears about working with a youth facilitator.
- Set up a time to prepare for the program. Use this as the opportunity to learn about each other as facilitators, to establish your operating ground rules and to share expectations.
- Plan program sessions together, developing and/or reviewing the goals, objectives, agenda, activities; who will do what; the overall process the two of you will follow; what the room should look like; etc. Establish a timeline and clearly identify who is responsible for things that need to be done before the session begins.

Given the prescriptive nature and timing of EBPs we suggest that you divide facilitation tasks as follows (*using Be Proud Be Responsible as an example*):

Peer educator:

- *takes the lead in establishing group agreements (Module 1, Activity B),*
- *introduces and gives directions for the activity (Module 1, Activity E),*
- *asks brainstorming questions (Module 3, Activity B)*
- *models role plays (Module 6, Activity D, Role Play A)*

Adult co-facilitator:

- *takes responsibility for debriefing activities (Module 3, Activity B)*
- *gives short lectures (Module 1, Activity D)*
- *answers questions (Module 2, Activity C)*

DURING THE PROGRAM SESSION: CHECKING IN

- Continually check in with each other to monitor how the session is evolving overall and how the co-training seems to be going for each of you.
- Be supportive of and helpful to each other in all ways possible.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP: DEBRIEFING

- Debrief the session as a whole.
- Debrief your experience with each other as co-facilitators. If you are going to train together again in the future be sure to identify what things need to be done differently. Be clear and specific about who needs to do what differently and how.
- Give concrete positive and corrective feedback. Ask the youth facilitator to do the same.
- Share with each other what you learned from this experience.
- Create a space for youth that allows them to reflect on their own areas of strengths and growth. This practice can support their own investment in doing this work and could subsequently increase their buy-in and desire to continue co-facilitating.

Adult facilitators will administer the pre-/post surveys and document EBP cycles in the Online Reporting System (ORS).

REFERENCE

Adapted from Minneapolis School Based Clinics Co-facilitation Guide:

http://mplssbcreources.weebly.com/uploads/2/0/3/0/20301493/co-facilitation_guide.pdf