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ADULT PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST TRAINING

- 30 hr Core Curriculum
- To satisfy the KY state requirements from Adult Peer Support Specialist (APSS) certification

The 6 Core Competencies for APSS Certification

- 1. Problem Solving
- 2. Wellness Recovery Action Plan (aka W.R.A.P)
- 3. Stages in the Recovery Process
- 4. Effective Listening Skills
- 5. Establishing Recovery Goals
- 6. Using Support Groups to Promote and Sustain Recovery

What is a “competency”?

A competency combines skills, behaviors, knowledge, and abilities that enables an employee to effectively perform their job

USING SUPPORT GROUPS TO PROMOTE AND SUSTAIN RECOVERY

APSS Core Competency #6

What Is A Behavioral Health Support Group?

A gathering of people facing common issues to share their experiences (positive and negative). Through this sharing, they're able to offer support, encouragement, and comfort to the other group members, and receive the same in return.

4 Ways Support Groups Help To Promote Recovery

- People in a support group learn from each other.
- Being in a support group is not as intensive or demanding as one-to-situations.
- Learning we are not alone, and not the only one with these situations.
- Individual insights can build off one another.

Support groups allow its members to talk and listen freely to topics that are often embarrassing, baffling, and/or very emotionally challenging. Subjects that may be socially stigmatized can be addressed in a comfortable format/venue.

5 Processes To Avoid When Working With Clients

- **No fixing.** Your job is to help your client learn skills in order to help themselves.
- **No saving.** Consequences are a crucial part of the recovery and life learning process.
- **No advising.** Advising your clients, robs them of using their new decision process skills.
- **No setting a person straight.** You can enforce boundaries without being rude or tough.
- **No judging.** Judging makes clients feel self-conscious and often shuts down engagement.

3 Responsibilities Of A Group Facilitator

- **Opening The Meeting** - Starting on time and in an organized, structured fashion.
- **Keeping The Meeting Moving** - Ensure the meeting stays on-track and on topic.
- **Closing The Meeting** - Ending the meeting on schedule with topics completed.

Sample Meeting Guidelines For A Group Facilitator

- Meetings start and end on time.
- What is said in the group stays in the group.
- Everyone has a right to the time allotted.
- Everyone is given the right to speak as well as the right not to speak.
- Regular attendance to meetings is not required.
- Members may come and go as their needs change.
- We expect progress, not perfection.

What To Do When Confronted With These Scenarios:

- Someone in the group is bored or disinterested.
- Disruptive behavior
- Silence
- Monopolizing group time

Peer support groups can be a valuable source of emotional, social, and practical help for people facing similar challenges or experiences. However, sometimes group members may behave in disruptive ways that interfere with the group's goals, dynamics, and safety. As a peer support group facilitator, you need to have some effective strategies for managing disruptive group members and preventing or resolving conflicts. Here are some tips to help you do that:

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1. Define and communicate group norms

One of the first steps to manage disruptive group members is to establish and communicate clear and consistent group norms or rules. These norms should cover topics such as confidentiality, respect, participation, feedback, boundaries, and expectations. You can involve the group members in creating and agreeing on the norms, and review them regularly. You can also use the norms as a reference point to address any disruptive behavior and remind the group members of their commitments.

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2. Use active listening and empathy

Another important skill for managing disruptive group members is active listening and empathy. This means paying attention to what the group members are saying and feeling, and reflecting back their emotions and needs. Active listening and empathy can help you understand the underlying causes of the disruptive behavior, such as fear, anger, frustration, or trauma. It can also help you validate and acknowledge the group members' perspectives and experiences, and reduce their defensiveness or resistance.

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3. Provide Constructive Feedback And Guidance

Sometimes disruptive group members are not aware of the impact of their behavior on the group or themselves, or they may not know how to change it. In that case, you can provide constructive feedback and guidance to help them improve their behavior and align it with the group norms. You can use the sandwich method, which involves stating a positive aspect of their behavior, followed by a specific and objective description of the problem behavior, and ending with a suggestion or request for improvement. You can also offer support and resources to help them achieve their goals and cope with their challenges.

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4. Use appropriate interventions and consequences
If the disruptive behavior persists or escalates, you may need to use more assertive interventions and consequences to protect the group's well-being and safety. You can use different techniques depending on the type and severity of the behavior, such as redirecting the conversation, setting limits, giving warnings, or asking the group member to leave temporarily or permanently. You should always explain the reasons for your interventions and consequences, and follow up with the group member and the group afterwards.

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5. Seek supervision and support

Managing disruptive group members can be stressful and challenging for any peer support group facilitator. Therefore, it is essential to seek supervision and support from other professionals or peers who can offer guidance, feedback, and encouragement. You can also use self-care strategies to cope with your own emotions and reactions, such as breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, or positive affirmations. Remember that you are not alone, and that you are doing a valuable service for yourself and others.

Behavioral Health Support Groups

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	https://www.aa.org/find-aa
Kentucky Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	https://www.nkyna.org/
Kentucky Double Trouble in Recovery	https://dtrky.org/
Kentucky Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (KCYPAA)	https://www.kcypaa.org/
Kentucky Al-anon and Alateen	https://kyal-anon.org/