

24: Being a Peer Educator



Purpose:

To acquaint Native STAND members with the basic responsibilities and characteristics of effective peer educators.

Stages of Change Process:

Getting information, making a commitment, helping others, advocating for safer norms

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this session, Native STAND members will be able to:

1. List characteristics of effective peer educators.
2. Explain the importance of peer educators as role models and their impact on norm setting.
3. List three “dos” and “don’ts” for peer educators.
4. Identify issues that a peer educator should refer to a professional

Supplies/Materials:

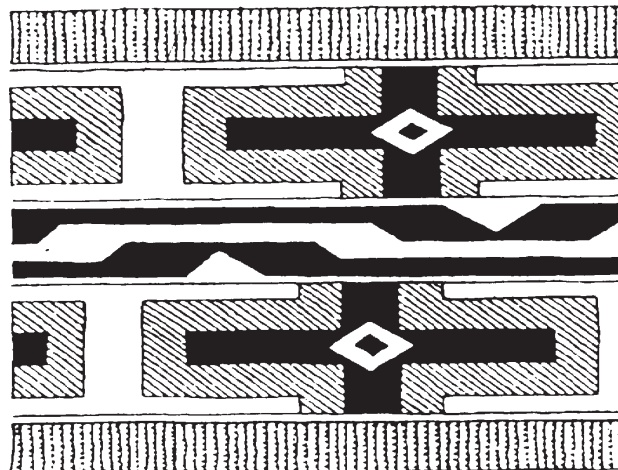
- Chart paper & markers

Resources/Handouts:

	RM	PM	HO
Words of Wisdom	●		
Dos and Don'ts of a Peer Educator	●	●	
Would you say...?	●	●	
Peer Educator Brainstorm	●	●	
When to Make a Referral	●		●

Preparation:

- Complete the When to Make a Referral worksheet with local resources prior to this session
- Display Words of Wisdom



1. Welcome/Overview

3-5 minutes, large group, adult facilitator

- Review last session: Decision Making
- Answer any questions in the Question Box
- Preview the remaining sessions—explain that the rest of the sessions will focus on preparing them to have risk reduction conversations with their peers.

The remaining topics will be:

- ◇ Stages of Change
- ◇ Effective Communication
- ◇ Putting It All Together
- Read the WOW.



Learn how to talk, then how to teach.

Nez Perce

2. Being a Peer Educator

5-8 minutes, large group discussion/brainstorming, adult or teen co-facilitator

- Ask: Peer educators can often be more effective than professional adult educators. Why do you think that is?
- Ask: What do you think the characteristics of good/effective peer educators are? Write responses on chart paper. (*Responses may include the following—if not, you can add them to the list.*)
 - ◇ Credibility
 - ◇ Respect among their peers
 - ◇ Good communication skills
 - ◇ Non-judgmental attitude
 - ◇ Dependable
 - ◇ Trustworthy
 - ◇ Self-confident
 - ◇ Respect for client confidentiality
 - ◇ Caring
 - ◇ Well-informed
 - ◇ Comfortable talking about sensitive topics without embarrassment
- This sounds like an amazing person—to have all these characteristics. Do you think it's possible for one person to be all these things all the time? (No.)
- Remember that we are human—we have good days and bad days; at times, we make mistakes or regret things we said or did. That's OK! Forgive yourself, learn from those experiences, and move on.



3. Review the Native STAND Approach to Peer Education

10-15 minutes, large group lecture, adult co-facilitator

- Remind students about the first session of Native STAND, when you introduced the peer educator concept and discussed what a peer educator is and what a peer educator does.
- Ask a volunteer to describe what a peer educator is and what a peer educator does. Write responses on chart paper. *(Should include the following, if not you can add these to the list.)*
 - ◇ Shares characteristics of his or her group but gets special training to be able to share information with other youth.
 - ◇ Is a positive role model
 - ◇ Encourages positive behaviors
 - ◇ Talks with peers in 1-on-1 or small group settings
 - ◇ Starts up conversations about lowering someone's risk behaviors
 - ◇ Uses good basic communication skills
 - ◇ Is visible to other students (wears Native STAND t-shirts, etc.)
 - ◇ Refers questions/problems that are beyond their level of training
 - ◇ Participates in regular & ongoing Native STAND activities ("peer educator club", group sessions, etc.)
- Tell students to flip back in their PM to the Native STAND Contracts they signed at the beginning of Native STAND. (If they signed one.)
- Ask a volunteer(s) to read the statements listed on the contract.
- How do they feel about these statements now? Are they comfortable with the commitment they made when they signed the contract? Are they worried they won't be able to do the things listed?
- Remind students that they were selected by their peers as someone who could be trusted.

Native STAND Contract

As a participant in Native STAND, I agree to:

- ◇ Attend every session unless an emergency arises.
- ◇ Be on time for sessions and activities.
- ◇ Participate to my fullest in each session.
- ◇ Learn with an open mind and respect the ideas and feelings of others, even if they are different from my own.
- ◇ Not discuss anything personal that is said or done in the group with anyone outside the group.
- ◇ Serve as a positive role model among my peers.
- ◇ Provide my peers with factual information about STD, HIV, and teen pregnancy prevention.
- ◇ Encourage my peers to be abstinent or to reduce their sexual risk taking.
- ◇ Support fellow Native STAND participants in their personal decisions as long as they are choosing to reduce the risks they take.
- ◇ Discuss with the adult facilitator any problems, concerns, suggestions, or questions I have.

Signed _____ Date _____

4. Role Models

10-12 minutes, pairs, large group discussion, adult facilitator

- Introduce topic by saying, "One of the roles of Native STAND members is to serve as positive role models. The image that we portray—whether positive or negative—will affect how others see us and maybe even how others behave.
- Ask: What is a "role model"? What makes someone a role model?
- Ask for volunteers to share names of people they consider to be positive role models (either in their own lives, or famous) and what characteristics make them good role models.
- Discuss:
 - ◇ As Native STAND members, and role models yourselves, what characteristics do you want to put forth so that your peers will respect you, admire you, and want to model your actions?
 - ◇ What kind of responsibility comes with being a role model?
 - ◇ How does this responsibility affect your decisions and behaviors?
 - ◇ How important is it for role models to "walk the walk and talk the talk"? Is it important in everything they do? Everywhere they go?

5. Dos and Don'ts of a Peer Educator

10-15 minutes, single then large group activity, adult and/or teen co-facilitator

- Refer students to the “Do’s and Don’ts of a Peer Educator” handout in the PM.
- Ask a volunteer(s) to read the two lists.
- Ask: What do people think about these two lists? Do they agree or disagree with anything?
- Refer students to the “Would you say . . . ?” handout in the PM. Ask them to put a check mark next to the statements they think would be appropriate to say to a fellow student as a peer educator and an X next to those that would not.
- Go over the worksheet together with volunteers reading each response and explaining how they answered and why. Is there consensus among the students? Have them discuss any statements where there is not agreement.
- Explicitly state that peer educators are not counselors and are not medical experts. They have to know when an issue is beyond their scope and how to refer someone to a professional who is trained to deal with complex psychological and medical issues.

**Dos and Don'ts
of a Peer Educator**

A Peer Educator Does	A Peer Educator Does Not
Would you say . . . ?	
<small>Read the following statements. Circle the ones you think would be appropriate to say to a fellow student as a peer educator X out those that would not.</small>	
1. You have got to stop having sex without a condom.	
2. Mark has the same problem with his girlfriend.	
3. Unprotected sex is really dangerous to your health.	
4. You want to keep getting drunk on weekends? Why don't you want to stop? Don't you want to be safe?	
5. I think you should just break it off with him if he keeps pushing you to have sex and you don't want to.	
6. I know that will be hard, but I know you can do it!	
7. You are really stupid to keep doing whatever she wants you to do.	
8. The answer to your problem is to get a better group of friends.	
9. You should get on the pill.	
10. If you want, I'll call the clinic and make an appointment for you.	
11. Are you still smoking weed? Didn't you tell me last week you were going to stop?	
12. Are you really thinking about killing yourself? Let's talk about this and see how I can help you.	
13. Man, that's a weird problem! I never heard of anybody feeling like that!	
14. I'm sorry. I believe it's a sin to be gay. I can't help you.	
15. What are some ways you can come up with to solve this problem?	
16. I don't know the answer to that question.	

6. Knowing Your Limits as a Peer Educator

8-10 minutes, large group activity, adult and/or teen co-facilitator

- Before this session, you must complete the When to Make a Referral worksheet so that it has local referral information for your specific community.
- Distribute a completed worksheet to each student and ask them to review the information.
- Stress that these issues require more training to deal with than Native STAND peer educators receive. The best thing you can do when these issues come up is to get the person the help they need. You can continue to be supportive as they deal with the problem with a professional, but you should not attempt to be the only helper they talk to.
- When possible, it's best to go with the person to the resource, to support and encourage them. If they have thoughts about hurting themselves or others, make every effort to go with them to seek help IMMEDIATELY.
- If a student who is having thoughts about hurting themselves or others refuses to go with you to get help, you must report this situation right away to the adult facilitator or to a school or safety official (such as a principal or security guard).
- Let students know that they can and should refer ANY problem (on the When to Make a Referral list or not) if they are uncomfortable with that situation. Peer educators can also seek help from their adult and/or peer co-facilitators at any time, as long as confidentiality is maintained.

When to Make a Referral

Some issues require more training to deal with than Native STAND peer educators receive. The best thing you can do when these issues come up is to get the person to the help they need. You can continue to be supportive as they deal with the problem with a professional, but you should not attempt to be the only helper they talk to.

Issue	Refer to . . .
Alcoholism	
Drug addiction	
Depression	
Suicidal thoughts*	
Quitting smoking	
Coming out/sexual orientation	
Plans to hurt others*	
Sexual abuse	
Physical abuse	
Rape	
Medical problems	

* Make every effort to go WITH the person to get help IMMEDIATELY.

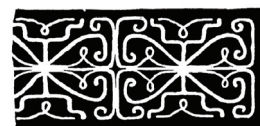
7. Peer Educator Brainstorm

15-20 minutes, pairs, large group activity, adult and/or teen co-facilitator

- Refer students to Peer Education Brainstorm in the PM.
- Have students get into pairs and brainstorm ideas about how they would respond if another student came to them with the problems described in each scenario.
- Let students know that it's OK if they don't know what to do right now—we're going to be working on this in the next few sessions. This activity is just to get them thinking.
- After they have worked through the scenarios, reconvene the large group and ask for volunteers to share their responses.

Peer Educator Brainstorm

1. I've been dating Joe for a couple of months. He says he loves me and he wants to have sex with me. Last night he said, "You love me enough to have sex with me, don't you?" I really like him and I really like "fooling around" but I am just not sure I want to have sex yet.
2. I've been dating my girlfriend for a long time. We've had sex a couple of times, but now I am not sure that it was such a good idea. I am afraid to bring it up with her because I am afraid of how she might react.
3. I'm going camping this weekend with a bunch of friends. This guy I've gone out with a few times, Alex, is going to be there. I think we're sharing the same tent. I am not sure what is going to happen or if he expects anything.
4. Jamie and I were invited to Sam's for a party this weekend. I heard he's going to have keg and some weed there. I've heard lots of rumors about Sam's parties, that people always go off and hook up at his house. I think it will be really fun, and Jamie really wants to go, but I'm not sure.
5. So, I met this guy online last night. He asked if I want to meet up and go clubbing one night. I really want to meet him in person, but I am little nervous.



8. Closing

3-5 minutes, large group discussion, adult or peer co-facilitator

- Preview next session: The Stages of Change
- Direct the students' attention to the Words of Wisdom on the wall. Ask a volunteer to read the words and to share with the group what those words mean to him or her and how they relate to today's session and activities.
- Adjourn.

NOTES

