

A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors

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Mental Health

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Acknowledgements

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In addition to conversations with peer support providers, supervisors, administrators, across the nation over the last 8 years, the ideas & activities found within this guidebook directly build on research projects that have aimed to:

- (1) Understand the feasibility of integrating near-age peers into community mental health treatment for transition-age youth (Ellison et al., 2015; Klodnick et al., 2015),
- (2) Examine key individual, team, and provider characteristics that boost on-the-job success of young adult peer providers (Delman & Klodnick, 2016),
- (3) Provide helpful guidelines for mental health providers to effectively integrate young adult peers into their workforce (Delman & Klodnick, 2017).

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Introduction

Hi!

My name is Vanessa. I'm a clinical social worker turned social science researcher. The most rewarding work I have engaged in thus far in my career has been developing, implementing & supervising young adults in peer provider roles in a mental health treatment setting. What I've learned first through my own experience as a supervisor (& later through conducting research of peer support) is:

“Good” supervision is critical for young adult peer success.

This guide aims to specify what “good” is (in principle & practice) so that providers & supervisors can develop the necessary skills, tools, & supports to provide effective supervision to young adult peer mentors. The fundamental principle that both providers and supervisors must deeply understand, buy-into & ardently support is that “good” supervision is really about development.

Developing Young Adult Peers requires teaching, coaching, reflecting, & problem solving in strong partnerships between Supervisors & Young Adult Peers.

This guide is most beneficial to supervisors of Young Adult Peer Mentors, but may be valuable to others (e.g., young adult peers, provider administrators, Family Partners, supervisors of adult peer & non-peer staff).

Mental health providers & Young Adult Peer Supervisors must see themselves as investors in the development of a new & exciting workforce that is going to shake up the way we think about engagement & service provision to transition-age youth (TAY; ages 14-26 years).

Here's my theory:

Good Young Adult Peer Supervision:

- Supports self-exploration
- Examines relationships
- Teaches new skills
- Processes on-the-job experiences
- Uses strategic storytelling
- Supports on-the-job wellness
- Reflects on self & progress
- Co-developing solutions

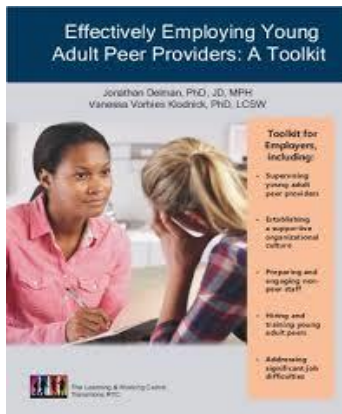
Generates

Increased Young Adult Peer Mentor on-the-job effectiveness

Improved Quality of Work Life as a Supervisor

Origin & Organization of this Supervision Guidebook

First, the activities in this guidebook directly expand on information provided in the “Toolkit for Effectively Employing Young Adult Peer Support Workers.”



This toolkit is publicly available at: http://umassmed.edu/globalassets/transitionsrtc/publications/effectivelyemployingyoungadultpeerproviders_a_toolkit.pdf

Chapter 6 of the toolkit is specifically dedicated to supervision. If you have not read this toolkit, please do! It will enhance your understanding of the many necessary elements that need to be in place within an organization to ensure Young Adult Peer Mentor success. Providing “good” supervision is just one piece of supporting YA Peer Mentors to thrive on-the-job. Areas addressed in the toolkit include how to:

- **Establish a supportive organizational culture**
- **Preparing & engaging non-peer staff**
- **Hiring & training young adult peers**
- **Addressing significant job difficulties**

Second, this Guidebook aims to reflect the Young Adult Peer Mentor Practice Profile (<http://www.cbhknowledge.center/young-adult-peer-mentoring-overview/>). The Practice Profile was developed in partnership with young adult peers & provider staff through the “Success for Transition Age Youth” (STAY) project. The Practice Profile is comprised of six core practice elements that define the YA Peer Mentor role:

- **Practicing Cultural Responsiveness**
- **Building Relationships & Collaboration**
- **Supporting Young Adult Vision & Goals**
- **Role Modeling**
- **Promoting Self-Care**
- **Demonstrating Safe, Professional & Ethical Behavior**

This Supervision Guidebook is organized around these domains in order to support and reinforce supervisor familiarity & use of the Young Adult Peer Mentor Practice Profile.

Next, the content in this guidebook has evolved from my early work in developing online trainings for Young Adult Peer Mentor Supervisors. A 2-part webinar series for providers and supervisors is available at: <http://umassmed.edu/TransitionsRTC/publication/webinars>

Finally, this Supervision Guide is ALIVE.

It will be updated as we learn first-hand from Supervisors about the kind of guidance needed to effectively supervise Young Adult Peer Mentors. I’m excited to develop new ideas, activities, & processes through providing training & facilitating online learning collaboratives with Supervisors.

How to Best Use this Guide

This guide is organized by Young Adult (YA) Peer Profile Practice Domain. It starts with an overview of the foundation for best-practice in supervision. This section is filled with “reflection” icons (see icons on the right). Then, the following sections include exercises & activities that can be used in supervision meetings in order to support YA Peer Mentors in thriving on the job!

Have fun.

Be vulnerable.

Share a little about yourself.

Don't try to “change” YA Peer Mentors too much.

Balance direction with reflection.

Keep an open mind.

Process your experiences.

Be real.

Laugh.



Personal Reflection



Activity

It is essential that you as a supervisor start to have fun in your role! You may be thinking, what on earth is she talking about? But let me tell you – supervising YA Peers is FUN – if you embrace the principles & practices proposed in this guidebook. I personally believe that **FUN** is the missing piece in the transition-age youth service engagement puzzle we are all trying to solve.

Get ready to be a mover & shaker! You are going to grow as a supervisor & as an individual as you supervise YA Peer Mentors. These young people are going to challenge much of what is deeply ingrained in us & our agencies. And, supervisors need to **actively reflect** on this & partner with YA Peer Mentors to change systems, policies, practices, & agency cultures that are incongruent with transition-age youth culture & development.

It's not your job as a supervisor to turn YA Peer Mentors into therapists. Resist this urge!

Now, get ready to reflect! It's important to examine your supervision practices regularly! Have fun!

Effective Young Adult Peer Supervision Philosophy

This guide provides supervisors with a number of supervision exercises to support the following key principles of effective YA Peer supervision.

Supervision is not simply a meeting that takes place between a Supervisor and YA Peer.

Supervision is both a practice & process that Supervisors & YA Peers continually engage in.

Effective YA Peer Supervisors must:

- **Value & understand the Young Adult Peer Role**
- **Support YA Peers in developing strong working alliances with clients & co-workers**
- **Champion the YA Peer Role within the agency & community**
- **Develop YA Peers through role modeling, on-going training, & reflecting**

YA Peer Supervision is very important because “Transition-Age Youth” (TAY; e.g., older youth & young adults) can be a challenging population to engage & work with. TAY with serious mental health challenges are:

- (1) In a developmental phase that is defined by **immense instability**
- (2) Taking on **new levels of independence** while re-defining their social support network & social role across multiple social contexts simultaneously
- (3) Engaging in **age-appropriate risky behaviors** (e.g., illegal substance use)
- (4) Figuring out **career paths** through engaging in work & school
- (5) Learning how to manage mental health & **maintain wellness** across a variety of contexts

As a Supervisor, one must recognize that Young Adult Peer Mentors are facing a challenging phase in life & to identify moments of resiliency to use in their peer support provision.

Stop & Reflect

What does it mean to be a “transition-age youth” in today’s society?

What was your transition to adulthood like?

What are some of your lessons learned?

What have you enjoyed most about working with TAY?

What makes it hard to work with TAY?

Principles of Effective Young Adult Peer Supervision

To best support Young Adult Peers, Supervisors must embrace flexibility, creativity, & a critical view of agency practice norms, policies, & culture. Transition-age youth culture can at times directly oppose provider standards of “professionalism.” Supervisors must partner with YA Peers to examine & **co-define “professional” practice standards** & reinforce these co-created standards. Supervisors must balance directives about professionalism with critical examination of how & why “professionalism” is defined.

Trauma-Informed Transparency is important. Transparency is key for peer support to be effective. Thus in supervision, there must be transparency in the practice & the supervisor-YA Peer relationship – and a real joint willingness to critically examine when & why one is transparent about their thoughts, feelings & experiences. Part of peer support is sharing one’s lived experience. Depending on the how the story is told (what details are included; where & how it is shared) can be traumatizing for a number of people: the YA Peer, the Supervisor, the client, &/or staff.

Strong Working Alliances matter for effective supervision & effective YA Peer practice. Effective supervision is ALL about TRUST! Supervisors must work to build strong working alliances with the YA Peers they supervise in order to be an effective supervisor.

Focusing on Development is key. Training & coaching on the Peer Mentor Practice Profile is a process that will continue throughout supervision. Supervisors have the coolest opportunity to help YA Peers develop foundational skills in role modeling, strategic storytelling, and developing strong working alliances - AND to help shape the professional identity of YA Peers!

Self-examination & self-care are necessary for Supervisors & YA Peers. Remain aware & conscious of well-being as with all employees, but remain attuned to the unique challenges YA Peers face on the job (e.g., stigma & exclusion) & how accommodations can be easily leveraged.



Stop & Reflect

Consider a supervisor from your past who was highly effective in supervising you...

- What was the supervision experience like overall for you?
- What made this supervision particularly beneficial to you?
- What did your relationship with your supervisor look like?
- What did supervision meetings look like?

Facilitating Effective Supervision Meetings

Effective YA Peer Supervision meetings are achieved through providing a space for:

Sharing | Development | Wellness

Supervision meetings are not optional; they are a core element in supporting the wellbeing & job success of both Supervisors & YA Peers. In the busy fee-for-service world that most non-profits function in today, supervisors are often stretched for time & regularly scheduled supervision often becomes de-prioritized. Supervisors & YA Peers must value & recognize the importance of supervision meetings – and hold one another accountable for ensuring that these meetings happen regularly.

Agency administration must support regular YA Peer Supervision meetings. And, Supervisors themselves must also participate in at least bi-monthly supervision with someone who can support them in reflecting upon their Supervision Practice with YA Peers. If Supervision is weak, it increases the chance that YA Peers will struggle in their roles.

YA Peer Supervision meetings must be:

Regularly Scheduled (Space/Place/Time). YA Peer Supervision meetings need to occur regularly. They can be individual and/or group meetings (a mix of these formats is most desirable). These meetings must take place somewhere that is private, convenient, & comfortable for both YA Peers & Supervisors.

Collaborative (Relationship). Both parties agree to participate in a respectful, mutual relationship (working alliance) where both learn & grow. Supervisors must avoid taking on the role of “expert” despite coaching around counseling & communication. Instead, supervisors introduce supervision topics (based on the domains described later) co-develop the agenda, co-engage in meeting exercises with YA Peers, & actively co-reflect on these activities & on the situations that YA Peers bring to supervision to discuss.

Reflective (Process). Supervision must focus on YA Peers own observations of & reflections upon their interactions & relationships with YA clients, co-workers – & the Supervisor-YA Peer relationship.



Stop & Reflect

In your current work as a supervisor, what do you do to ensure that supervision is:

- a. Regularly Occurring
- b. Collaborative
- c. Reflective

Goals of YA Peer Supervision

“Supervision” meetings provide a concrete opportunity for YA Peers to be better “mentors” through the “supervision” of a more experienced person. For accredited mental health professionals, supervision is often required to strengthen both the practice & professional identity of staff. However, supervision ensures that staff are consulting with others in their work with YA clients. YA clients can be a particularly challenging population to work with & having others, especially someone with clinical experience with TAY, can be very helpful to YA Peers.

Goals of YA Peer Supervision Meetings:

- Improve peer support practice with YA Clients & their families
- Actively collaborate with others to support clients in meeting their personal goals
- Reflect upon and learn from practice with YA Clients, colleagues & your supervisor
- Discuss sharing relevant experiences at key times to motivate & support clients
- Review self-care plan & any barriers to on-the-job wellness
- Co-develop plan to address any issues related to job performance
- Learn from the Practice Profile



Stop & Reflect

From your experience, what kinds of goals are typically set in supervision?

When are these goals established? Who is involved?

How do you know that these goals are achieved?

How is YA Peer Supervision Different from Therapy?

More often than not, when new to supervising YA Peers, Supervisors are concerned about supervision meetings turning into therapy sessions. And, also, although the concept of “supervision” is often embraced & understood by counselors & mental health professionals, YA Peers may be confused as to what supervision is and how it differs from therapy. Most therapy approaches employ reflection as a tool for self-discovery and as a change agent. It is highly desirable that YA Peers learn how to be good reflectors, develop through this reflection process, & teach their clients how to engage in the same kind of reflection (and ultimately change)!

Why “Supervision” can feel like “Therapy”

- Both **occur regularly** & involve 2 people (or more if group-based) who engage in a conversation.
- Both tend to include **rapport building** in order to establish a strong working relationship.
- Both tend to involve an individual who typically has more training or experience (i.e., supervisor or therapist) who interacts with an individual with less training/experience (i.e., YA Peer or client) to support **reflection**, to provide **consultation**, and to support **wellness**.
- Typically, **goals are co-formulated** in both. However, in Supervision, goals are work-related performance, while in Therapy, they are likely un-related to work performance.
- Akin to therapy clients, YA Peers **share life experiences** & practice communicating their life experiences in helpful ways.
- Akin to therapy clients, YA Peers process & reflect on their **ON-THE-JOB** performance, relationships, & wellness.
- Akin to therapy clients, YA Peers **learn new skills** & gain self-awareness through supervision.
- YA Peers will **benefit emotionally & psychologically** (hopefully) from Supervision, just like they should from therapy! That’s a good thing! It feels good to learn, feel supported, & gain increased self-awareness. One doesn’t have to focus on mental health goals to reap the benefits of effective supervision.

Stop & Reflect

In what ways have you personally benefitted from supervision?

- a. Knowledge
- b. Skills
- c. Wellness
- d. Developmentally/Career
- e. Other benefits

How to Avoid Supervision from Turning into Therapy

Be clear about the differences between therapy & supervision from the start!

YA Peer goals are set for on-the-job success, not personal life success. Supervisors are responsible for the performance of their staff, including the YA Peers they supervise. All YA Peer on-the-job goals should be developed with practice profile domains in mind & specify on-the-job activities that both YA Peers & Supervisors will do to reach goals.

Supervisors provide feedback on YA Peer performance regularly & will bring any on-the-job issues to the attention. Supervisors are attuned to their staff's wellness, but not responsible for providing support that aims to directly impact personal struggles. Supervisors help YA Peers to gain insight into their personal role in on-the-job interactions and relationships, but are not responsible for supporting YA Peers in gaining insight into their personal psychological wellbeing.

Ask, who is this sharing really benefitting?

Supervisors will ask YA Peers how their personal life experience may help a young adult client and provide space in supervision for YA Peers to practice sharing their story. Sharing one's story for the ultimate purpose of helping a client reach their goals is different than sharing one's story for the sole personal benefit of the YA Peer.

Supervisors provide consultation & direction around clients & their families. **Direction is helpful**, and at times necessary, especially with new YA Peers as they acclimate to the role & context. One of the trickiest tasks facing supervisors is how to balance direction with reflection – and to balance high support with high accountability. Supervisors must figure out a way to provide support that meets the on-the-job developmental needs of YA Peers while also providing critical feedback on their on-the-job performance.

Speak up. Bracket a conversation if it becomes primarily about something that feels very unrelated to the job – or overly focuses on processing of trauma, personal relational struggles, &/or symptom management for the mental health benefit of the YA Peer. State: *“Our time together in Supervision is to help you be successful on the job. I’m concerned we are focusing too heavily on this [add situation here]. Let’s figure out who would be helpful to process this with.”*



Stop & Reflect

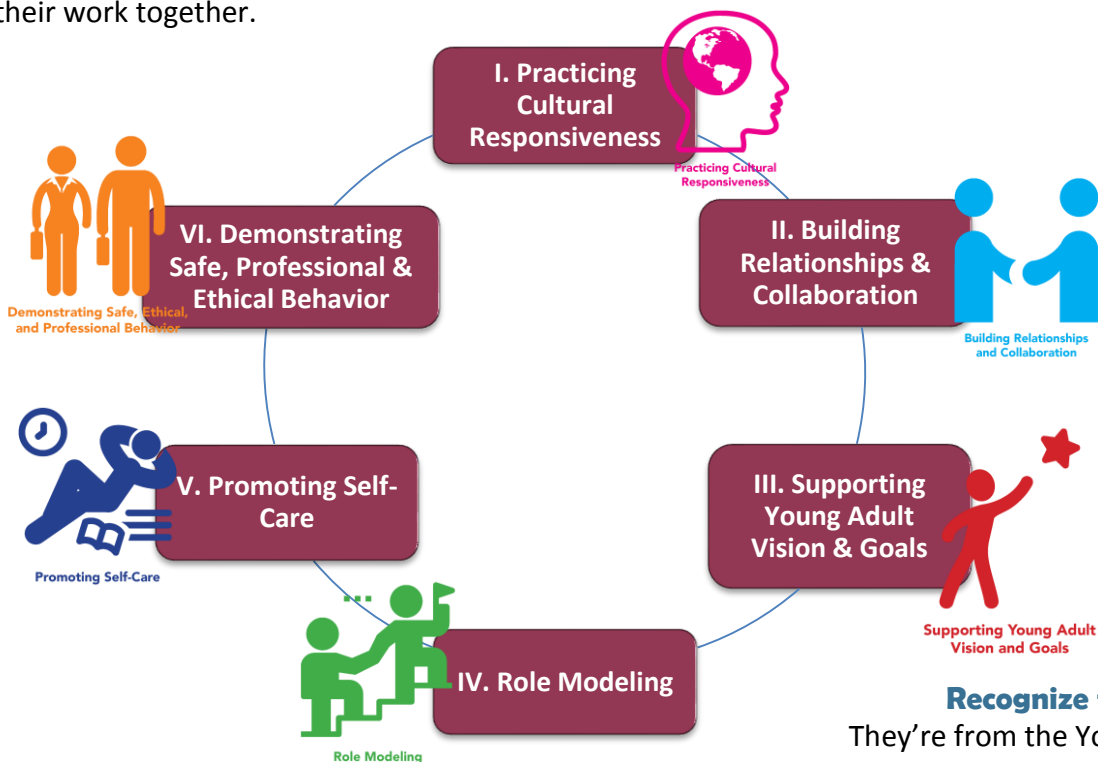
What do you do as a supervisor to maintain the integrity of supervision (& avoid it from becoming therapy?)

When a YA Peer (or other supervisee) brings to process a situation with you that you feel is better discussed with a therapist, how have you responded?

How was that response received?

Leveraging the Young Adult Peer Mentor Practice Profile in Supervision

This guidebook is designed with the 6 core Practice Profile elements in mind. Supervision will be most successful with the continual review, reflection, & reinforcement of YA core peer mentoring practices. Each of the 6 core practices (see diagram directly below) were developed through a process that included young adult peers & their colleagues, including supervisors. Use of the Practice Profile is highly encouraged in supervision because the profiles clarify the work and role of a peer mentor. YA peer mentor roles are often misunderstood by colleagues & agencies that are new to peer support service provision. The practice profile importantly give supervisors and YA Peers a common language to use in their work together.



Recognize the Icons?

They're from the Young Adult Practice Profile! Look for these in this Supervision Guidebook!

◀ Stop & Reflect

How have you applied the Young Adult Peer Mentor Practice Profile in your supervision practice?

What do you think is most helpful about the Practice Profile in your work so far?

What have YA Peers taught you about the Practice Profile?

Integrating Practice Profile into Supervision

First, each of the 6 practice profile domains must be scheduled in a **supervision calendar**. When planning for success in each of these areas of development (and reflecting upon it), it is helpful to use a simple form to guide discussion in order to establish goals across these 6 domains (see following pages). Goals, steps to achieve goals, and how the Supervisor (or other staff) is going to support goal achievement is necessary to not only document, but review regularly. **Millennials like feedback often**, so it is important to reflect on these 6 core domains often.

Also, it's beneficial to have a calendar scheduled ahead of time so that both Supervisors & YA Peers come prepared to discuss a particular practice domain during supervision. In the proposed 2-month schedule to the right, Goal Setting is Week 1 (this can be for identifying goals across one or more of the domains); six weeks of individual core practice exercises/exploration/reflection; and reflection on personal practice goals in Week 8.

If **Group Supervision** is possible (I highly suggest this format of supervision with YA Peer Mentors), then a supervisor can support YA Peer Mentors in preparing for and facilitating an activity & discussion around a particular topic. This is a great exercise for YA Peers to do in order to develop their own knowledge translation & group facilitation skills.

For example, here is a quarterly schedule of supervision focus by domains:

Month 1	Week 1: Orientation & Goal Setting across all 6 Domains Week 2: Demonstrating Safe, Professional & Ethical Behavior Week 3: Practicing Cultural Responsiveness Week 4: Building Relationships & Collaboration
Month 2	Week 1: Supporting Young Adult Vision & Goals Week 2: Role Modeling Week 3: Promoting Self-Care Week 4: Reflection on Development Across Domains

Exploring & Developing Goals: A Valuable Parallel Process

It's key to embrace the idea of exploration. Exploration is a key experience during the transition to adulthood. As a supervisor of young adult peer mentors who are expected to leverage their lived experience to engage and support TAY with mental health challenges in reaching their goals, you will get the opportunity to explore their personal goals related to the 6 practice profile domains. It is through exploring – and brainstorming – personal strengths and opportunities related to the practice profile domains during supervision that YA Peer Mentors will learn to identify areas of potential skill and relational development. Supervision inherently is an exercise in exploration, reflection – & growth!

YA Peer Development Brainstorm

In conjunction with the practice profile, use this diagram to explore a YA Peer Mentor’s strengths and areas for growth. Discussion starters are included, but ideally, the Supervisor and Peer Mentor will together use the Practice Profile to identify areas for growth – and to develop associated goals!



Young Adult Peer Mentor On-the-Job Development Plan

By partnering with a YA Peer Mentor to identify particular Practice Profile Domains to develop skills within, it fosters a kind of structure for Supervision that is particularly helpful for learning, reflecting, & growing. It sets the tone that Supervision is about growth beyond what is happening in the moment (e.g., only processing on-the-job struggles as they arise). Providing time in supervision to address on-the-job struggles is important, but having dedicated time to reviewing goals, training and coaching, reporting progress & reflecting throughout this process is how Supervisors can best help YA Peer Mentors thrive on the job.

Goals can easily be formulated as aiming to reach “ideal” practice on certain practice profile domain items with a client or across clients. Prompt YA Peer Mentors to discuss why they have struggled with a domain. Make suggestions as to items to focus on – & how you as the supervisor will help support YA Peer Mentors in reaching ideal practice.



Stop & Reflect

What can I do to make YA Peer supervision more goal driven, while also providing ample room for reflection?

What has helped me to grow on the job?

Pick 1 Practice Profile domain to focus on every supervision session, but have a quarterly plan that focuses on 2-3 domains.

Ideally one of the quarterly areas of focus will be “Promoting Self-Care” as it is so important that YA Peer Mentors remain well on-the-job & role model effective self-care practice to their clients.

Then, YA Peer Mentors & Supervisors together identify 1-2 additional practice profile domains to focus on:

- **Practicing Cultural Responsiveness**
- **Building Relationships & Collaboration**
- **Supporting Young Adult Vision & Goals**
- **Role Modeling**
- **Demonstrating Safe, Professional & Ethical Behavior**

What is most important is to be clear as to how a YA Peer will know that they were successful with achieving their goal. It must be observable & measurable. Hence, a quarterly plan can be helpful to develop at the beginning of 90 days & review at the end of 90 days.



On-the-Job Development Plan

Here are some examples of On-the-Job Development Plans! These can be reviewed as often as a Supervisor & a Young Adult Peer would like, ideally at LEAST ONCE A QUARTER (i.e., 90 days). Young Adults like quick feedback!

Always remember to make goals as “SMART” as possible: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, & Timely. This exercise will help YA Peers to co-create SMART goals with their YA clients! Another parallel process!

Practice Profile Domain: Promoting Self-Care

Goal 1	Plan	Support	Progress & Barriers
e.g., Develop & enact tailored self-care plan			

Practice Profile Domain: _____

Goal 2	Plan	Support	Progress & Barriers

Practice Profile Domain: _____

Goal 3	Plan	Support	Progress & Barriers

Keeping YA Peer Mentor Supervision Meetings Sacred

Supervision meetings need to occur during a regularly scheduled time in a regularly scheduled place if possible. Supervision is typically the first thing to go, especially as YA Peers begin to become more autonomous on the job and do not need as much guidance and support as they did when they first started. No matter how busy you are as a supervisor and how busy the YA Peers are, keep the time set aside for regular supervision meetings – individual and group if possible. Both supervisors and YA Peers should not schedule other meetings during these prescheduled times.

YA Peers thrive when they have a place to process not only what they are learning about their clients – but also what they are learning about themselves! YA Peer stories will change as they grow through their work as a YA Peer – and this is a good thing!

We want YA Peers to be reflective, continue to grow, & to share their growth & resiliency experiences with their YA clients & their families.

And, most importantly, **Supervisors need a space to process their experience of supervising young adult peer mentors.** If your personal supervisor is not able to provide time and space to process your experiences, support your reflection on your role in facilitating thriving YA Peer Mentor – client relationships, and help you to set goals to improve your supervision practice – then look for someone in your life who can help you do this. This may be another YA Peer Supervisor from a neighboring agency, a Family Partner at your agency, or a friend.



Stop & Reflect

How will you ensure that YA Peer Supervision is kept sacred?

What barriers to you foresee to this?

How will you ensure that you will get the supervision you need as a YA Peer Supervisor?

What barriers to you foresee to this?

Supervision Session Guidance Form

Date:

What's gone well this week?

- YA Peer Mentor Perspective:
- Supervisor Perspective:

Anything on-the-job that YA Peer Mentor needs guidance &/or consultation?

- YA Peer Mentor Perspective:
- Supervisor Perspective:

Tasks/Discussion to follow-up from last supervision session?

- YA Peer Mentor Perspective:
- Supervisor Perspective:

Any administrative tasks that need addressing?

- YA Peer Mentor Perspective:
- Supervisor Perspective:

Selected Practice Profile Domain: _____

- Which practice item was reviewed & discussed within the selected domain?
- What did reflection upon this practice item reveal?
 - YA Peer Mentor Perspective:
 - Supervisor Perspective:

What is our to-do list? What are we responsible for until we meet next?

- What is the YA Peer Mentor responsible for:
- What is the supervisor responsible for:

Reflection through Supervision

Applying Reflective Supervision principles & practices is a very helpful approach to supervising YA Peers. Supervisors play an important role in setting the stage for YA Peers to reflect during supervision meetings. In order for reflection supervision to truly take place, the supervisor and YA Peer need to have a strong working alliance. This will allow for the YA Peer to be vulnerable with the Supervisor to examine their interactions with clients & colleagues - and their personal reactions to these interactions.

Reflective YA Peer Practice is the activity of reflecting on peer support provision, including personal reactions, attitudes & beliefs.

As part of your role as a Supervisor of Peers, you need to reflect on your own work as a supervisor. Through this reflection, you will become more aware of your own biases and assumptions that you bring to your work with YA Peers. If you don't have a supervisor or a mentor who you can reflect on your work with, find one! At least once a month you as a supervisor should be actively reflecting on your own supervision practice with YA Peers.

Being good at reflection also helps YA Peers to be successful with service documentation! This is because through reflection, YA Peers are identifying the client's problem, what happened during the YA Peer-Client Interaction, and how the client responded – which are all key elements of Medicaid reimbursable notes.



Stop & Reflect

As a supervisor, consider you own training and development as a practitioner.

How often did you engage in activities that led to you reflecting upon your work with clients in order to learn about yourself (and how to be a better practitioner) in the process?

What do you tend to reflect on in your own supervision processes? What do you share with your supervisor about what you are learning and how you are growing?

Reflection through Supervision

This concept of “reflective supervision” comes from the early intervention with children and families – and is all about directly reflecting on our practice through asking questions during supervision like:

- What we are doing in our interactions with clients and why?
- What we are not doing with our clients and why?
- Why we are reacting/responding a certain way to a situation?
- Why a client is reacting/responding a certain way to a situation?
- What role are we taking on in interactions with clients (& their families)?
- What roles are clients & families taking on with us?
- What are these roles facilitating? What are they blocking?
- How might we respond differently?
- How might we taken on a different role?
- How can we help the client and family to become aware of their role?
- How can we help the client and family to shift their role?

Reflective supervision is rooted in the concept that not only are clients constantly evolving, but practitioners are constantly evolving as they learn about one another and gain new perspectives and empathy for one another. It is thru being reflective of the process of practice - the interactions, communication, the feelings that these elicit - that we can be effective practitioners & YA Peers.

This kind of supervision practice is VERY different than focusing on problem solving & solutions. It's focused on intensively examining the bond & interactions we have with clients & learning from these as we reflect on them overtime. The entire process is focused on gaining self-awareness in order to be an effective YA Peers as well as supervisors.

In Massachusetts, Reflective Supervision is widely embraced by the Child & Adolescent Services Division. The YALE Model of Supervision provides the basis of this approach. I'm working to better align this Guidebook with the YALE Model.

Applying reflective supervision is particularly beneficial because of how peer support is so much about mutuality & sharing one's own experiences – which are 2 areas that frighten most clinically trained supervisors! By employing reflective supervision, supervisors can support YA Peers in identifying where they may need to put limits on their mutuality & sharing of their lived experiences.

See the appendix for additional resources on reflective supervision.

Learning How to Reflect

YA Peers will need support in developing general reflection skills. These include a YA Peer's capacity to: (1) reconstruct & explore the YA Peer-Client interaction, as well as (2) examine and make sense of the reconstruction in order to share it with a supervisor. For those of you supervisors who are middle-aged and older, remember the "process recordings" you did in your master's program where you transcribed verbatim an entire session with your client in order to examine the interaction? Through doing a process recording, you were recreating the session in order to examine it – and an exercise like a process recording can be helpful to do periodically with your YA Peers to help them learn how to recollect what happened – while recording their impressions.

YA Peers will also need support with applying their self-reflective skills in supervision to explore one's own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors – within the context of the YA Peer identity & developing personal peer practice approach.

There are a lot of different ways to reflect. It depends on the cognitive & emotional capacity, as well as, willingness of any staff person (supervisor & YA peers) to engage in meaningful reflection.

You might be thinking – how is this NOT therapy? Reflection is a key tool utilized by every therapist I know.

We all have slightly different styles in how engage in practice with our clients – even if we are trained similarly and applying similar interventions. As a supervisor, you are supporting a YA Peer in exploring who they are in their role as a YA Peer. This is very important because every aspect of supervision should be something that a YA Peer can utilize with their YA clients. Thus, any reflection that you help a YA Peer to engage in, they can then use those new reflective skills in their work with their YA clients.



Stop & Reflect

How do you use reflection in your supervision?

How might you use more reflection in your supervision practice?

Are there staff who it has been challenging to engage in reflective exercises during supervision? Why?

What staff have made reflection easy during supervision? Why do you think that this is?



So, what are we reflecting on?

Reflect on what happened in the YA Peer-client interaction (i.e., details of the interaction) & your own experiences, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors during this interaction.

1. Observe the experience/interaction

- Client presentation
- Your presentation
- Your role
- Client's role
- What happened during the interaction
- Describe communication (content; pattern; tone)
- How did client respond (verbally & behaviorally)?
- How did you respond (verbally & behaviorally)?

2. Clarify the experience/interaction – ASK WHY a LOT!

- What went well? Why?
- What did not go well? Why?
- Was there progress/change? Why or why not?
- What was impacting this interaction? (Environment, other people, other factors?) Why?
- What was the client feeling? (your hunch) Why?
- What were you feeling? Why?
- What was the client thinking? (your hunch) Why?
- What were you thinking? Why?
- What impact did this interaction have on the YA Peer-client bond? Why?
- How is the bond impacting the interaction?

3. Reflect on new insights for working with the client & the population

- What did this interaction teach me for how I work with this client moving forward?
- What did it teach me for how I work with other clients?

4. Implications for how YA Peer sees/understands self

- How did this interaction help me to better define myself as a YA Peer
- What am I learning about myself as a YA Peer through this reflection process?
- What am I learning about myself as a YA Peer through this reflection process?
- Supervisor reflects: What are they learning about the YA Peer in this process? What are they learning about the client? What are they learning about themselves?

NOTE: Supervisors have a unique capacity to recognize YA Peers strengths & opportunities for development through the process of supporting YA Peer reflection in supervision. This process will result in natural identification of areas of development that can easily be incorporated into performance evaluation planning.



How to Actively Reflect in Supervision

Here is a tool that helps YA Peers to reflect on their peer support practice in a way that results in the development, practice, and execution of a plan for improving their practice.

Stage	Questions to Prompt Reflection	Your Responses to these questions (record before or during Supervision)
Stage 1: Focused attention on the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the client’s presenting problem (in their own words)?• What is your take on what their problem is?• Have you had this problem? What was that like for you? How did you address it?• Has someone you know had this problem? What was that like for them? How did they address it?• Were you able to tell the YA client you had this problem (if you did)? Why or why not?	
Stage 2: Reconstruct & observe the Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did interaction begin?• What happened during the interaction?• Where, who, when?• What did the YA client say?• What did you say?• How did the interaction end?	
Stage 3: Clarifying the experience as YA Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was achieved during the session? What helped? What undermined achievement?• What did the experience feel like for you? Why?• What role were you taking on in the session?• What role was the client taking on?• What were you thinking during the interaction? Why?• What were you feeling during the interaction? Why?• How as the bond impacted?	
Stage 4: Conceptualize &	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did this interaction teach me about how to engage this client?	

synthesize new information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I change in my approach in order to better engage this client? • What skills do I need to develop in order to better engage? How can I do this? • What do I need to pay attention to in the next interaction? How can I do this? • What does this experience mean for the bond I have with this client? How might I work to improve this bond? 	
Stage 5: Develop concrete strategy & practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick 1 thing that you are going to do in order to shift one’s personal role, behaviors, thoughts, emotions, communication during the next interaction. • Practice this thing with your supervisor 	
Stage 6: Try out new strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine next appropriate interaction to employ new skill/awareness/approach 	
Beyond Stage 6: What are you learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to supervision & process what was different about the interaction where you employed the new skill/awareness/approach • Use the stages again to examine the interaction & reflect upon your practice & what you are learning about yourself. 	

*Adapted from: http://www.cbtraining.com.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf_publications/Stedmon_Dallos_ch7.pdf

Stop & Reflect

Do these stages of reflection help you in supporting YA Peers to reflect during supervision? How so? How not?

How do you use reflection, but also coach and provide direction when you feel it’s important?

What do you do if a YA Peer struggles to reflect? To understand the perspective of others?

Practice Profile Domain 1: Practicing Cultural Responsiveness



Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor:

- Cultural Self-Assessment as part of Peer Mentoring
- Overcoming practical barriers
- Young Adult Culture Discovery
- Community Culture Discovery
- Cultural Differences among family & allies
- Strengths in Context of Culture
- Beliefs about Treatment
- Addressing Cultural Misunderstandings

One of the core elements of being an effective YA Peer is the capacity to interact with YA clients & families in a way that is culturally responsive & attuned. It is crucial that YA Peers are aware of their own cultural background & how it impacts their practice with YA clients. Being mindful of one's privilege, culture, and life experiences and how they align with or differ from clients is important for YA Peers to be successful on the job. Supervisors can support YA Peers in becoming "culturally responsive" in their practice with YA clients and their families through exploration and reflection on "who" YA Peers are & their identity this shapes the stories they share to inspire YA clients. Supervisors can also support YA Peers in gaining increased competency in supporting YA clients in exploring & reflecting on who they are & what cultures influence who they are and who they want to be!

Practicing Cultural Responsiveness is the:

- 1) **Ongoing process** of acquiring an understanding of how the values, beliefs, attitudes and traditions that grow from racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic, or other affiliate groups contribute to our own and other people's culture;
- 2) **Learning about** personal circumstances, conditions, and experiences that influence our own and other people's thinking, behaviors, & roles in their communities;
- 3) **Being mindful** of the power and privilege differences and similarities between individuals & among groups of people
- 4) **Using this knowledge** to work effectively with all people.

See the YA Peer Mentor Practice Profile for specific examples culturally responsive peer mentoring practice.

In order to practice Cultural Responsiveness, YA Peer Mentors must:

1. Consider self-disclosure with purpose & intent regarding issues of age, culture, & life challenges.
2. Ask about YA's preferred language for communication & preferred mode of communication.
3. Invite YA clients to share their preferred identities (race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality)
4. Invite discussion over time with YA clients about their unique values, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, & life experiences
5. Help YA clients to recognize and "discover" strengths in their cultural background & shares potential strengths even when YAs cannot identify strengths.
6. Explore YA client beliefs & attitudes regarding physical health, mental health, substance use, medication, and other social services. Welcome discussion around how culture plays a role in shaping these beliefs.
7. Explore the impact of separations from community &/or family (related to divorce, immigration, homelessness, child welfare or juvenile justice involvement, natural disaster, etc.) on YA clients.
8. Invites & support YA Peers in addressing cultural misunderstandings with providers, family, friends, etc.



Stop & Reflect

How have you learned cultural responsiveness? Consider where you were as a young adult and where you are now in regards to your cultural responsivity.

How do you help your supervisees to be individually culturally responsive?

How do you help your team to have a culturally responsive approach?

How does your agency instill ensure that it is culturally responsive?

Review the Practice Profile on Cultural Responsiveness

- What areas could you as a supervisor do a better job of ensuring Young Adult Peer Mentors (and other staff) are culturally responsive & attuned?
- What might you introduce to your supervision practice to increase culturally responsivity & attunement among your staff, colleagues, and agency?



Gaining Self-Awareness Supervision Discussion Questions

Exploring one's beliefs and gaining self-awareness is critical for YA Peers. One way to continue to build YA Peer self-awareness as a supervisor is to engage YA Peers (preferably in group supervision) in discussion around self-awareness; self-esteem & self-respect; self-care; respect for and acceptance of others; and conscious communication. The following are questions that can be integrated into Supervision in order to support a YA Peer in gaining self-awareness on-the-job.

How Self-Aware am I?

- What am I learning about myself in my work as a YA Peer?
- How am I self-reflective in my work? In my personal life? Do I take time for reflection? What does this look like? How am I gaining self-awareness in my role as a YA Peer?
- How do I learn from my mistakes at work? In personal life? What have I learned since starting my role as a YA Peer?
- What are my motivations for my work as a YA Peer? Have these changed since I started in my position? How so? Why?
- What are my personal values and beliefs? How firm am I on these? Am I willing to hear opposing ideas/viewpoints?
- How much am I aware of what I am feeling & thinking? At work? In personal life?
- Am I aware of my strengths and weaknesses? What would others say are my strengths and weaknesses – do I agree with these? Why/why not?

Self-Esteem & Self Respect:

- Do I feel I am competent in my role as a YA Peer? Why/why not? How has my competence increased since I began this role?
- How do I demonstrate self-respect? How am I gaining self-respect in my role?
- How has stigma impacted me on the job and in my personal life? How have I overcome stigma? How do I continue to overcome stigma?
- How do I talk about my mental health and life experiences? Has my story changed in my role as a YA Peer? How & why?
- How do I take pride in my accomplishments? How do I celebrate small wins in my work? In personal life? How do I help my clients celebrate small wins?
- How self-motivated am I? What has helped me to stay motivated on the job? What can get in the way of staying motivated?
- Am I willing to take risks? What risks have I taken at work? In my personal life?
- How do I handle criticism at work? In personal life?

Self –Care:

- How do I look after myself physically, spiritually, mentally & emotionally?
- How do I maintain balance in my life?
- How do I maintain healthy relationship boundaries with clients, colleagues, my supervisor, and others in my work as a YA Peer? How
- Am I able to say “No”? When at work? And, when not at work?
- Am I aware of the supports in my life (personal & professional)?

Respect for & Acceptance of Others:

- Do my judgements of others affect how I listen to them?
- Do I treat others with respect and honor their differences?

Conscious Communication:

- Do I listen to others with curiosity and interest even when I do not agree with them?
- Do I “ask” more or “tell” more when dealing with differences?
- Do I take the time to express myself fully?
- Do I express my feelings in a respectful way?
- Am I aware how I communicate both verbally and non-verbally?



Get Online!

There are many online quizzes that assess cultural responsiveness in a variety of ways! Young Adults (for the most part) LOVE online surveys where they learn something about themselves in the process. There are always new surveys being developed by different groups. These are not necessarily standardized measures – but it doesn’t matter. It’s gets a conversation started about things that are often challenging to discuss. Take these quizzes together in group or individual supervision. And discuss them! Solicit reactions to the questions

Search terms to use when looking for new online quizzes:

- Cultural sensitivity quiz or survey
- Cultural awareness quiz or survey
- Cultural responsiveness
- Cultural humility
- Cultural competency

Examples that are live online as of 11/21/17:

- <https://www.quibblo.com/quiz/Zqywlu/Cultural-Sensitivity-Quiz>
- <https://jlmanning.wordpress.com/2012/11/13/how-culturally-sensitive-are-you/>
- <https://www.quibblo.com/quiz/a9yja6T/Cultural-Responsiveness-Assessment>



Embracing Difference & Building Empathy

(Adapted from: www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html)

Respect Exercise

In individual or group supervision, explore what respect is with YA Peers:

- What does it mean for you to show respect? (at work?) (in personal life?)
- What does it mean for you to be shown respect? (at work?) (in personal life?)
- When do you know you are being disrespected? (at work?) (in personal life?)
- How have you responded to being disrespected?
- Did the response work? Why or why not?
- How can we ensure that we displaying respect to YA clients, their families, and our colleagues – even if we disagree/disapprove?

Name Exercise

In group supervision, pose the following questions to the group or have the group break up into dyads. This a fantastic exercise for new staff orientation. Dyads can report back to the group about what they learned about the new staff person.

- Who gave you your name? Why?
- What is the ethnic origin of your name? What does it mean? (Look this up online.)
- What are your nicknames, if any? How did you get this nickname? Who can use this nickname? Who cannot use this nickname?
- What do you prefer to be called? Why is this?

Assumptions Exercise

This is another excellent activity for group supervision. Have each YA Peer pull up a photo or video clip from their phone or computer – usually it is best to choose something that is not personally related. So, for instance, go to Instagram; pick a photo from the discovery feed & share it with the group.

- What does this image/video clip tell us about this person? (“Who” is this person?)
- What race-ethnicity are they? What sexuality? What religion?
- What are their values? What are their beliefs?
- How do we know that? What assumptions are we making about this person? Why did we make these assumptions? What does that tell us about who we are?



Stop & Reflect

How do you support staff in gaining empathy for their clients and their colleagues?

What are common assumptions made in your context about minority/disability groups? How do you address these?



Cultural ICEBERG Activity

One way to think about & process one's culture and identity is through the metaphor of an iceberg. Only 10% of who you are is observable to others (i.e., the tip of the iceberg). Skin tone; hair color and texture; clothing and accessories, language and accent; behavior, body language, mannerisms & facial expressions; and tone of voice are all examples of what can be observed by others.

However, most of "who we are" culturally lays beneath our skin tone and clothing choices. This is the 90% of the iceberg that is under water & includes: personal values, politics, past experiences, religion/faith/spirituality, sexual preference, marital or relationship status. Think about when there were WRONG assumptions made about you & your culture based on observation. (Adapted from: <http://www.cin-ric.ca/resources/cultural-competence.html#iceberg>)



Iceberg Exercise

First, imagine that someone who does not know you walks into the room right now. Around the tip of the iceberg, write down what this person would say about "who you are" from simply observing you. Second, consider what isn't observable to this person that is important about who you are. Write down what would help this person get to know you better. Include your personal values, relationship status, past experiences, politics, faith, hobbies, hopes, goals, dreams, likes/dislikes, etc.! Anything about you that would help someone to get to know the REAL you beyond what is observed.



Created by Juan Pablo Bravo
from Noun Project



Feeling Misinterpreted

Sometimes feedback can seem more negative than it really is for anyone who has a job. Here are some examples from a research project I conducted with young adults with mental health conditions that capture feeling misinterpreted in the workplace.

“I look at things a lot differently than maybe somebody without a mental illness might look at it. I come to find out...my boss might yell at me, but he didn’t mean to come off at yelling at me, but it was yelling to me. It was very offensive to me. It might not [come] off as offensive to anybody else.”

“I know plenty of times that people thought I was trying to argue and I was just talking... trying to get the point across. They like, you don’t have to loud. And I am like: What are you talking about? I’m just talking.”

“When you move a certain way, people will read you a certain way. They may not even get the right reading...”



Please answer the following questions & discuss:

- How have you been misinterpreted at work?
- How did you deal with it? (What did you do? What did you feel? What did you think?)
- Were you able to discuss this with someone? Supervisor? Mentor? Co-worker? Friend? Why or Why not?
- What did you learn through this process?



Keeping a Self-Awareness (& Wellness) Journal

Being a successful YA Peer is rooted in the assumption that a YA Peer is able to see how they have overcome struggles – and to share these with their YA clients. While YA Peers are in their roles, they will be learning to be resilient on the job (and likely in their personal lives too). One of the best things that you can do to instill the culture of valuing reflection is to set aside time at work for reflection. Supervision is a time for shared reflection, but supervisors should support YA Peers in regularly reflecting upon their practice, their growth, & their resiliency on the job. Journaling is a simple, yet effective way to reflect upon one's practice as a YA Peer. Consider having YA Peers individually reflect in a journal twice a month on their practice with YA clients and their experience with being a YA Peer. Thirty minutes or less is sufficient. As a supervisor, it is helpful to have YA Peers do some reflecting on their own before coming to a supervision meeting. You can help your YA Peer to reflect by providing prompts to their journal writing.

Prompts might include the following:

- What has gone well in the last 2 weeks?
- Why did this go so well? What was my role? What were the role of others?
- How are my working alliances with my clients? My co-workers?
- How might I improve these working alliances?
- What has been a struggle in the last 2 weeks?
- What helped me to overcome this struggle?
- What have I learned from this struggle?
- What is something I can share with my clients in the future?
- How am I culturally attuned to my clients? My coworkers?
- How is my privilege, power, race, gender, ethnicity, diagnosis, sexuality impacting my working alliances with my colleagues? With my clients?

Practice Profile Domain 2: Building Relationships & Collaboration



Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor:

- First Contacts
- Explaining the Service
- Understanding Young Person's Family Situation at the Start
- Understanding Young Person's hopes for the future
- Practical Stuff for staying in Touch
- Keeping the Relationship Healthy
- Sharing Information from others
- Team Meetings
- Talking about Ending the Young Adult Peer Mentor Service

Valuing Mutuality

Peer support when individuals with **common life experiences** help one another to maintain wellness, overcome struggles, & enjoy life. "Peer" is defined however the agency (and transition-age youth clients) want to define it. However, true peer support is rooted in the notion of **MUTUALITY**. This is where people really **help each other** based on a **shared affiliation** & a **deep understanding** of this experience. Both people who engage in the peer support relationship provide mutual support.

This relational process & experience is what produces validation, empathy, hope, newfound strength & empowerment

On the next page is a diagram that shows where Young Adult Peer Mentors fall on the continuum of helping relationships. Supervisors should review this with their YA Peers & YA clients so that it is clear as to what the relationship should look like. YA Peer Mentors bill for their time; are typically full-time employees; and have specific activities that they do with their YA clients. They share their experiences in their work, but are not the personal friends of their clients.



Stop & Reflect

As a supervisor, how do you practice mutuality?

As a colleague, how do you practice mutuality?

As a friend, how do you practice mutuality?

Valuing Mutuality



It is super important to understand that in all peer support (& arguably all relationships) are dynamic & have power imbalances. The extent to which who is helper in the relationship versus who is the receiver will vary from relationship to relationship & is subject to change overtime!

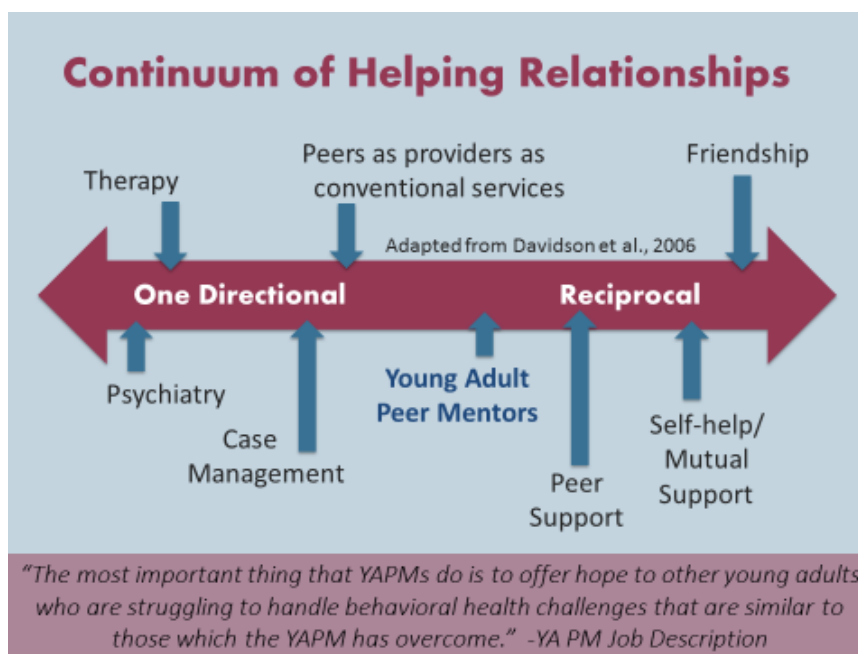
Helping to explore & manage mutuality is an exciting part of supervising YA Peers!

Providers and supervisors should not be afraid to recognize the radical notion of the “client role” as shifting closer to the “helper role” and the “helper role” sometimes shifting to the “client/receiver role.” It feels good to help & YA Clients benefit immensely from providing support to others. The healing process in many cultures & treatment philosophies is the act of giving and helping. By allowing and supporting mutuality, effective peer support at your agency will be possible.

However, there are limits to mutuality that must be clearly defined in agency policies and practice. For instance, prohibiting sexual relationships and physical fighting between YA Peers & client should be established early on. But, it should be recognized in supervision that the following are normal – & **REALLY GOOD** things to bring up in supervision:

- **Sexual or romantic feelings towards client**
- **Anger, frustration, or irritability towards client**

Normalize that you as a supervisor have experienced these things – & that it is through supervision that we make sure to not harm the working alliance we have with our clients. State that there is nothing to be ashamed of & we wouldn't be human if we did not feel emotions about/towards our clients.



Establishing Clear Policies/Guidelines around Safety & Professionalism

During Orientation & quarterly thereafter, remind YA Peers about KEY information that they need to bring to a supervisor either immediately or during supervision.

- Anytime that a YA Peer feels unsafe with a YA client (and/or their family)
- Client discloses any suicidal or homicidal ideation
- Client feels in imminent danger
- Client makes a sexual comment or behavior towards YA Peer
- Client threatens, touches aggressively, physically harms YA Peer
- Client asks YA Peer to buy something or provide money to client
- YA Peer runs into client in the community
- Client or family texts/calls/emails YA Peer outside of standard work hours
- Client or family (or colleague) discriminate or use microaggressions that affect the YA Peer



Activity: Processing the Ethics of Being a YA Peer

	Always OK	Never OK	Sometimes OK When?
A. Keep attraction to client secret from supervisor?			
B. Keep client's attraction to you secret from supervisor?			
C. Keep relationship boundary concerns from supervisor?			
D. Bend the rules for a client? A coworker?			
E. Share religious/spiritual beliefs with a client?			
F. Advocate for client despite supervisor/team's opposing point of view?			
G. Share after-hours social time with a client?			
H. Share a meal with a client?			
I. Engage in common interest with a client?			
J. Spend time alone with client in their apartment?			
K. Loan money to a client?			
L. Hug a client?			
M. Loan personal items to a client?			
N. Accept gift from a client?			
O. Attend family event with a client (per client request)?			

Adapted from: <http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/A4BoundariesInPeerClientRelationships.pdf>

The Working Alliance: The Foundation of Effective YA Peer Supervision

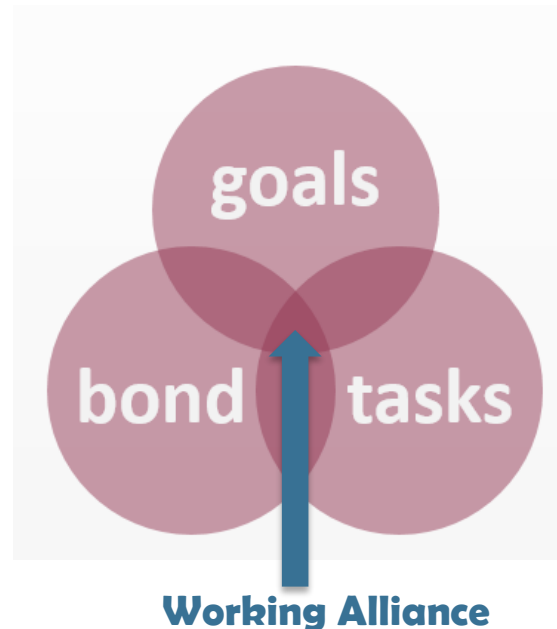


Emphasize maintaining “strong working alliances” instead of maintaining “healthy relational boundaries.”

A primary goal of YA Peers is (should be) forming strong working alliances with their clients. The first question I get from practitioners who are interested in supervising peers is: “how do I help them to maintain boundaries with their clients?” I think that this is NOT what we should be focused on; instead, we should be focused on threats to strong working alliances. Using the term “alliance” is more appropriate because it implies that the YA Peer and client are on a team working towards common goals – which is what we want YA Peers & clients to feel & achieve!

The working alliance is a collaboration based on the development of an attachment bond and a shared commitment to goals & tasks. Strong working alliances between clients and practitioners result in better treatment outcomes.

In the adult world, the notion of peer support is based on the assumption that shared lived experiences facilitate strong working alliances. But just being a “peer” doesn’t mean that you suddenly have a strong working alliance with all clients.



As clinicians, we don’t always work well with every single client that comes through the door. We need to make sure that young adult peer mentors do not become discouraged when they struggle with relationship building with particular clients.

It’s your job as a supervisor to help YA Peers to discover any patterns that go along with struggling to form strong working alliances with clients. Perhaps, it is that a YA Peer has a challenging time forming working alliances with clients with a certain set of characteristics or life experiences given their own biases and assumptions). This is what Supervision is all about: helping YA Peers to examine their practice to improve upon it – and provide better support to all clients!

Supervisors' Role in Supporting Strong Working Alliance Development



What can Supervisors do to Support YA Peers in Building Strong Working Alliances?

- Model **strong working alliances** through the Supervisor-YA Peer alliance
- **Teach** YA Peers about the working alliance & how to achieve strong working alliances
- Examine the **quality of YA Peer-Client working alliances** in weekly in supervision
- Support YA Peers to **navigate** relationships, which are rooted in communication, behavioral interactions, emotions.
- **Normalize** the challenges to managing human interactions & “relationships.”

Why should supervisors build strong working alliances with YA Peers?

- Increases likelihood that a YA Peer will **share on-the-job struggles** with their supervisor.
- Increases likelihood that YA Peer will **feel comfortable** discussing the pros & cons of supervisor suggestions & directives.
- Provides for an excellent opportunity for **modeling relationship building skills** on how to develop strong working alliances with clients, families, & co-workers.

Building strong working alliances between Supervisors & YA Peers fosters a **natural parallel process**. IF Supervisors are successful in building strong working alliances with YA Peers, this will lead to YA Peers being more likely to be successful with developing strong working alliances with their YA clients & their COLLEAGUES!

How can Supervisors build strong working alliances with YA Peers?

Be transparent about your desire to support YA Peers in their work in order to support the success of YA clients.

Express your intention to coach/mentor & build a foundation of skills that will benefit the YA PM far beyond their current role.

Be present when you meet with YA Peers.

Celebrate small successes.

Practice a little mutuality. Share your experiences from when you were new to the field; what you do to stay healthy on-the-job. Be honest. Put on your “mentor” cap.

Be accessible during the work day.



Stop & Reflect

How do you currently encourage mutuality?

How do you currently put brackets/boundaries on mutuality?

How might you expand or change your approach to mutuality when supervising Young Adult Peer Mentors?



Language matters. What if we were to “let go” of our fear about “boundary violations” and instead focus on building strong working alliances between YA Peers and their clients?

“Healthy Relational Boundaries”

How we tend to talk about staff-client interactions/connections given our training, our colleagues, & provider culture

Instead, embrace:

“Strong Working Alliances”

How we need to be talking about YA-Peer-client relationships – and maybe all on-the-job relationships in mental health settings?

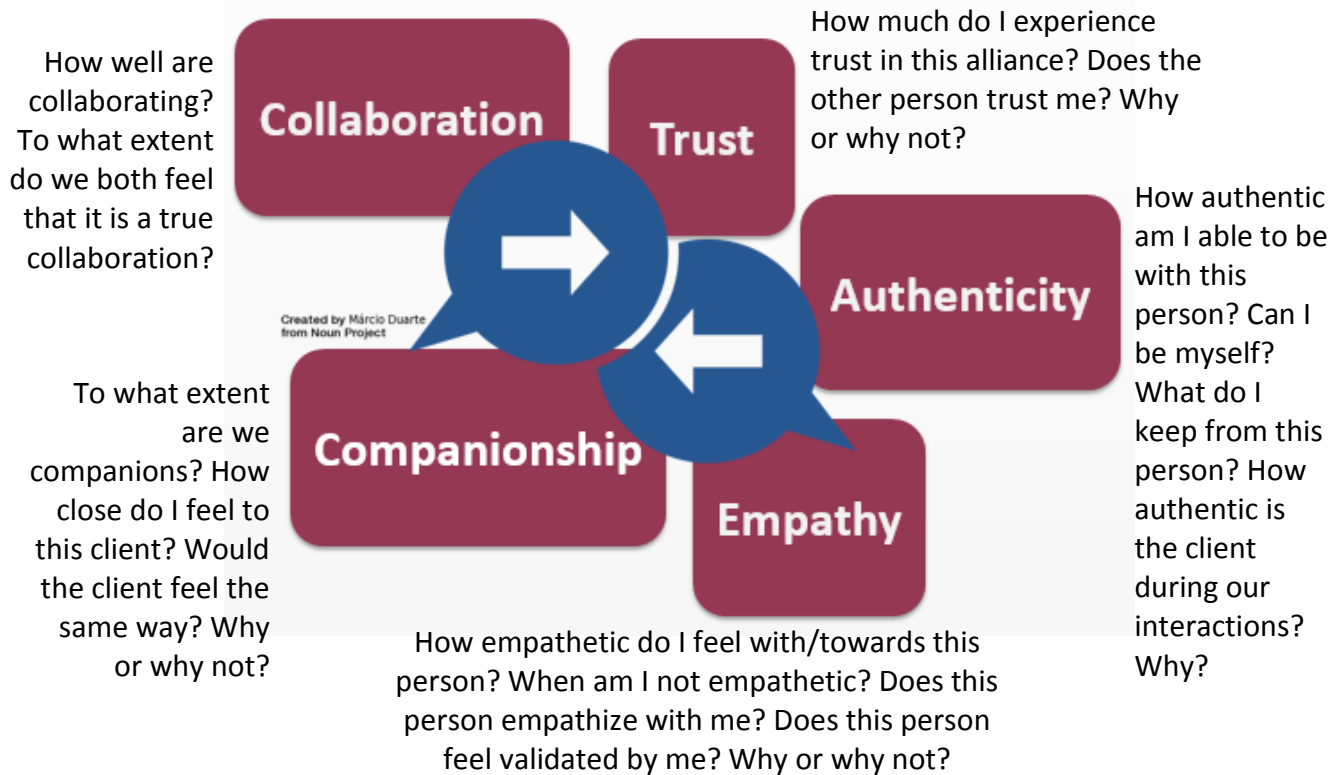
“Peer support” is based on the idea that if both the client and peer provider are authentic in revealing, discussing, and reacting to each other’s lived experiences, there will be an immense benefit for both parties involved. Based on empirical data, Spencer and colleagues (2006) theorize that **collaboration, empathy, authenticity,** and perhaps scariest for non-peer providers **“companionship,”** are key relational processes in peer support transactions. From research we’ve done with the UMASS Transitions RTC, young adult vocational peer mentors, we know that **trust** & likely **“mutual trust”** are key for particularly vulnerable young adults with SMHC and histories of child welfare and juvenile justice involvement.

Think about relational processes & how they contribute to the development of a bond that is essential for the working alliance: collaboration, companionship, trust, authenticity, & empathy. It can be helpful in supervision to process with YA Peers how they are doing with these relational elements with their clients. We can have too much or too little of each relationship element – and that can threaten the strength & longevity of the working alliance. We can’t assume that magically all YA Peers will have equal empathy for all clients – nor have the capacity to be authentic 100% of the time! It’s bringing these ideas to supervision which will help you to help YA TPMs to manage their relational boundaries with their clients.



Activity: Examining the Complexity of Working Alliances

Directions: Pick a client, colleague, your supervisor, or someone you supervise & reflect on the following 5 working alliance elements. Reflect individually & discuss with peers, supervisor – or perhaps even your client(s)!



1. Collaboration Reflection:

2. Trust Reflection:

3. Authenticity Reflection:

4. Empathy Reflection:

5. Companionship Reflection:



Activity: Examining the Strength of Your Working Alliance

A working alliance is a collaborative relationship based on a joint understanding and consensus on client goals and tasks, as well as, confidence and willingness of both parties to work together to achieve the specified goals and tasks. To examine your working alliance with a particular individual in your life, consider the questions below.

Part 1: Your Best Supervisor

Consider a supervisor, manager, or boss who you believe was THE BEST. Now respond to the extent which you agree/disagree with the statements below.

Aligned GOALS: What ARE the goal(s) of the relationship? How well understood, jointly created, & agreed upon are goals?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Goals are clearly defined (You clearly know what y'all are working towards & why.)					
2. Goals are established together. (You feel that this process values both parties' input.)					
3. Both parties' agree on the importance of established goals.					

Aligned TASKS: What are the task(s) that are related to the goals of our relationship? How well understood, jointly created, & agreed upon are these tasks?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Tasks are clearly defined. (Tasks are operationalized; each party's individual tasks are also clear.)					
2. Tasks are established together. (You feel that this process values both parties' input.)					
3. Both parties' agree that the established "tasks" are the right way to make progress towards goals. (You both believe the tasks are feasible & will result in goal achievement.)					

BOND: How strong is the "bond" between you & _____?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The relationship is founded upon trust. (Both parties trust one another to follow-through, listen, partner, provide helpful & critical insight, etc.)					
2. Both parties can be authentic. (For the most part, you can express your feelings and opinions openly & vice versa.)					
3. Both parties feel respected & appreciated.					

Part 2: Your Worst Supervisor

Consider a supervisor, manager, or boss who you believe was THE WORST. Now respond to the extent which you agree/disagree with the statements below.

Aligned GOALS: What ARE the goal(s) of the relationship? How well understood, jointly created, & agreed upon are goals?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Goals are clearly defined (You clearly know what y'all are working towards & why.)					
2. Goals are established together. (You feel that this process values both parties' input.)					
3. Both parties' agree on the importance of the established goals.					

Aligned TASKS: What are the task(s) that are related to the goals of our relationship? How well understood, jointly created, & agreed upon are these tasks?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Tasks are clearly defined. (Tasks are operationalized; each party's individual tasks are also clear.)					
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1. The relationship is founded upon trust. (Both parties trust one another to follow-through, listen, partner, provide helpful & critical insight, etc.)					
2. Both parties can be authentic in the relationship. (For the most part, you can express your feelings and opinions openly and vice versa.)					
3. Both parties feel respected & appreciated.					

Discussion Questions:

- How can you improve the working alliance between you and your supervisor?
- How can you improve the working alliances between you and your colleagues?
- How can you improve the working alliance(s) between you & the young adult peer mentors that you are/will supervise?



Creating Balance in YA Peer-Client Meetings

Examine YA Peer & Client meeting content & flow! The goal for meetings is that the YA Peer and YA Client are each talking or sharing for approximately 50% of the time each. Conversation topics should evolve overtime as well. Supervision is an excellent space for reflecting upon the extent to which sessions are “controlled” by the YA Peer in regards to topics, content, tone, & the flow of conversation.

Specify how much of the time you are talking/sharing versus the client talking/sharing:

Describe the content of the conversation in the last session (or in the last month):

Who has set the topic/tone of the meeting? To what extent is discussion guided by both the YA Peer & the YA client together?

What might you try when meeting with this client in order shift the balance of the conversation?



Empathy in the Working Alliance

You can do this exercise with anyone in your life in order to gain insight into strength of the working alliance. It's helpful to do this exercise with a variety of alliances: those that feel challenging, as well as, alliances that feel easy. Rather than just focusing on only alliances that feel "challenging" is important because it will help YA Peers to maintain healthy relationship boundaries in alliances that are stronger. And, by examining alliances that are more challenging, YA Peers can gain insight into perceived differences and engagement barriers that will allow the YA Peer to have increased empathy for clients that are having a harder time bonding and connecting with.

It's necessary to acknowledge that we all act slightly different in each relationship that we have. We take on different roles; feel closer to (and can be more vulnerable) with some; can feel more distant (and less vulnerable).

- **What is our alliance like?**
- **Who am I [YA peer] in this alliance?**
- **Who is _____ [client]?**
- **How are we similar?**
- **How are we different?**
- **How can I help _____ [client] to understand me better?**
- **What can I do to better understand where _____ is coming from?**
- **What have I taught or what can I teach _____ [client]?**
- **What can or has _____ [client] teach me?**





Strong working alliances will develop between Supervisors and YA Peers who together critically examine agency culture, systems, and practice to ensure that it is informed by youth culture & a peer/recovery perspective.

Supervisors must be willing to examine, reflect upon, & challenge agency practice norms, policies & culture. Before coaching on behavior corrections, Supervisors must reflect upon YA Peer actions & communication style. Youth culture can directly oppose agency standards of “professionalism.”

Supervisors must partner with YA Peers to co-define “professional” practice standards & then reinforce/educate others about these co-created standards.

Expert Pat Deegan has described Peer Specialists as “Disruptive Innovators” in her online blog. Disruption is inherent in Peer Support. Once a YA Peer is “integrated” into the provider context, provider norms will be challenged. And, sometimes, with these growing pains come unprofessional behavior on behalf of colleagues. Most commonly observed are “microaggressions.”

Microaggressions are: “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights to the target person or group” (Sue et al. 2007).

Supervisors must **address inherent tensions** between the YA Peer Perspective & Practices & the Non-Peer/Non-Young Adult Staff Perspective & Practices. Supervisors can partner with YA Peers to develop and engage in education efforts to help non-peer & non-young adult colleagues to understand the YA Peer Approach. Supervisors may also spend time educating YA Peers on the approach of the various individuals who work in community mental health (e.g., psychiatrists; social workers; counselors; rehabilitation specialists; etc.)

YA Peers cannot transform practice, systems, culture by themselves, they need allies – & Supervisor support.



Addressing Microaggressions & YA Peer Exclusion Activity

Directions:

Consider the following situations (all based on real life experiences)! From the perspective of a supervisor (or a more senior YA Peer), discuss how you would address these situations if they happened in your context.

- YA Peer staff member walks into the building, the traditional staff don't even say hello. They look down and pass by like this person is not even there.
- A non-peer colleague continues to ask a YA Peer to do things for them that they feel that can't bill for or that feels very administrative (e.g., make copies, transport clients).
- Everyone goes out for impromptu happy hour drinks after work. No one invites the YA Peer(s).
- A YA Peer brings a recording to you of another staff member telling a young adult client that they are a "ward of the state" and "too sick to keep a job" – and "without meds, they will never get better."
- A YA Peer reports that staff are taking bets as to when they think that one of the clients will go back to the psychiatric hospital.
- Non-Peer Staff frequently use terms in meetings like: *decompensate, crazy, non-compliant, low functioning, high functioning, schizophrenic, co-dependent, poor prognosis, manipulative, attention seeking, help-rejecting, non-compliant, poor insight, etc.*
- YA Peer Staff are silent during team meetings.
- One of your coworkers reports to you that a YA Peer is telling clients problematic information while on a trip to the library to explore community resources. The staff reports the YA Peer stated: "You will be poor for the rest of your life if you apply for SSI – and the only fun you'll have is access to the library, the "poor man's entertainment."
- A YA Peer spoke passionately during a meeting because she felt that a client was being treated unfairly. One of your non-peer coworkers is concerned that the YA Peer was very unprofessional for speaking up like that & needs to stop "personalizing the issue."
- A non-peer colleagues made a comment expressing surprise that a YA Peer can afford the type of car that he drives or tickets to the musical Hamilton.



Stop & Reflect

What other microaggressions have you witnessed on the job?

How were these addressed effectively? What might you do differently?

Practice Profile Domain 3: Supporting Young Adult Vision & Goals



Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor:

- Encouraging a Vision for the Future
- Choosing Actions (using lived experience)
- Honoring Aspirations & Developing Care Team Support for Increasing Youth Voice
- Doing Actions at YA Pace
- Treating Detours as Learning Opportunities
- Knowing when & how to exit
- Planning to sustain

Effective Communication for YA Peers!

Being a YA PM is so much more than simply telling your story to YA clients, families, colleagues, and other caseworkers. It's all about being an effective communicator & being able to get YA clients to open up with you! Supervisors & YA Peers can practice effective communication together. Although "active listening" may be something that Supervisors believe they are well-versed in, it is excellent to return to the "basics" with YA peers. YA peers will likely be new to examining how they communicate & tend to benefit immensely from practicing very basic counseling skills such as active listening.

The most important communication element for YA Peers is actually how they listen. "Active listening" is a well-embraced practice in community mental health. It requires the listener to understand and figure out what the speaker is actually communicating during an interaction. Practicing active listening regularly in group supervision can be particularly powerful for YA Peers. By balancing a focus on sharing and listening, YA Peers can be successful in their role.



Stop & Reflect

How do you model effective communication in your supervision practice?

What types of communication barriers/challenges have you observed among YA Peers and other staff you have supervised?

What have you done to address and improve communication?



Why practice “active listening” as a YA Peer?	The ability to listen actively improves & strengthens relationships. The act demonstrates respect & generates trust between two individuals. The practice communicates that care & understanding through acknowledging what a person is feeling, not just what they are doing and thinking. Active listening helps people to process and talk through their experiences and perceptions – which is a key in providing peer support.
What is “ACTIVE listening?”	All you have to do is listen, really listen, & convey that you are hearing what someone is telling you! If your client feels heard – you were actively listening!
But, what am I really listening for?	<i>The feelings</i> are contained in what the speaker is saying [not just the facts or ideas] so you can respond to these through being present, empathetic, & understanding.
How do I do I engage in Active Listening?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being present (e.g., be steady & quiet inside as you listen) • Listen in a way that the other person can <i>feel</i> • Hold off on problem solving • Do not worry about the outcome of the interaction • Demonstrate acceptance & empathy

Active Listening – What to Practice & Reinforce

Teaching & reinforcing active listening is a key element to effective supervision for YA Peers. It is essential for a supervisor to do an active listening activity at least once a quarter with YA Peers. Most Peer training programs have motivational interviewing and active listening elements, so the concept is not new for YA Peers. Supervisors can review what active listening is during supervision; Role plays are the perfect way to practice communication with YA Peers! Group supervision is great for this an

Leverage Nonverbal Communication:

- Silence & pausing (tap your foot 3-5 times before responding!)
- Nods (try nodding in agreement or disagreement rather than speaking)
- Facial expressions (using eyes, mouth, eye brows) share much about what we are thinking: happiness; anger; disgust; excitement; confusion; boredom, interest; sadness)
- Eye contact (too much can be over stimulating) – engage in an activity where dyads are not directly facing each other, but are communicating nonetheless. Try going for a walk; engaging a game or an art project – anything that gets a YA Peer & client side-by-side.
- Posture: Leaning in or sitting back; folding arms; sitting straight vs. slouching
- Breathing patterns (e.g., breathing in quickly or slowly)
- Grunting, laughing, sighing
- Eye movements (e.g., eye rolling, squinting, glaring, wide open)
- Not paying attention to your phone or other potential distractions in the environment

Add Little Slightly-Verbal Encouragements:

“mmm,” “uh-huh,” “go on,” “I see” “ooh!” “wow”

Integrate Door Openers:

“I’d like to hear more,” “Tell me more,” “Help me understand,” “oh, how so?”

Use Open-Ended Questions (but limit the use of “why”):

“How did you respond?” “What happened next?” “What was your take on that?” “What do you think about that?” “What led to that?” “How did that come to be?” “What’s the story there?”

“What’s your take on that?” “What was the reason for that?”

Reflecting Techniques:

“You feel uncomfortable when your friends talk about school.”

“You feel angry about your visit being cancelled. I’d be upset, too.”

Summarization:

“Here is what I hear you saying, you felt good at first; but now...”

Avoid Closed-Ended Questions:

“Did you think he responded well?” This produced a “yes” or “no” response.

Try instead: “How did he respond?” “How do you think that went?” These questions will keep the individual expanding on their perspective!



Active Listening Activities

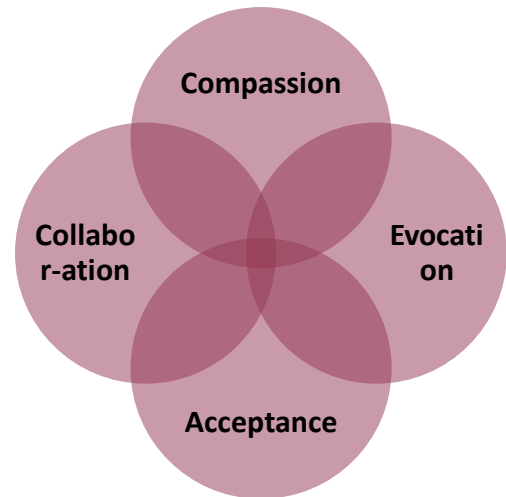
- Roleplaying in dyads with 1 or 2 individuals observing the dyad & noting communication.
- One fantastic activity is to ask YA Peers what is their favorite TV show and then to pull up a clip from YouTube to analyze a conversation between 2 people – especially the non-verbal communication. Simply ask the YA Peers to identify what helped keep the conversation going; and what hampered communication.
- Have dyads make videos using their smartphones of their attempts at active listening. Share videos & discuss where active listen was employed well – and where there were opportunities to improve active listening. It is also really fun to get administrative staff and non-peer staff to make videos for YA Peer Mentor analysis.



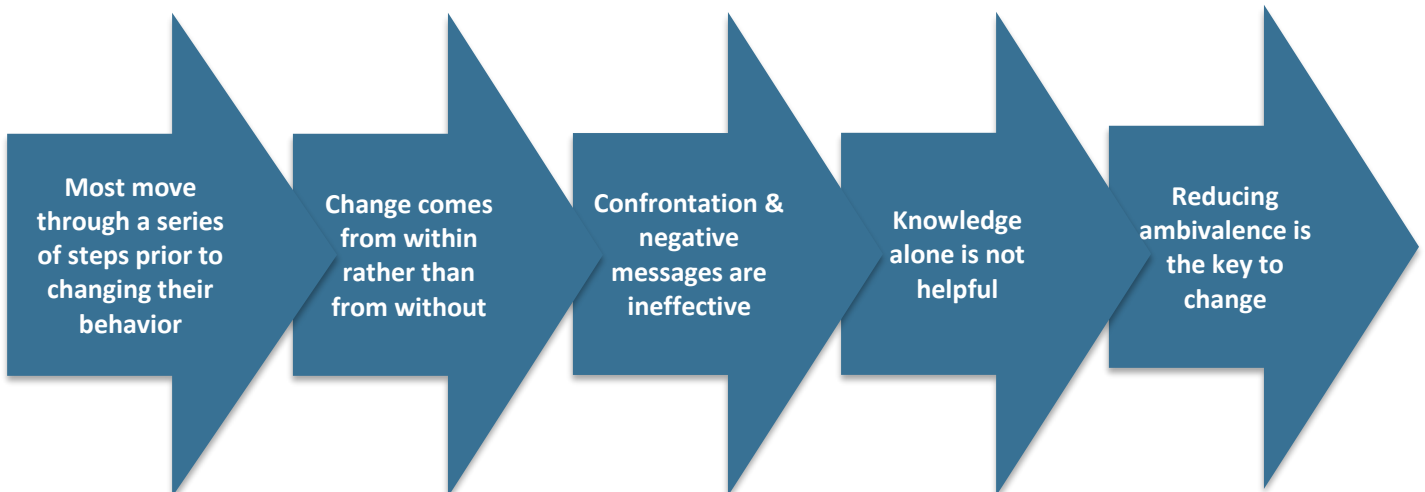
Motivational interviewing (MI) naturally is a good fit for youth & young adults. Young people are likely to respond to a more collaborative approach in exploring and generating change goals instead of complying with institutional or counselor generated goals. The central tasks of adolescence (i.e., developing autonomy and individuation) require questioning and challenging authority figures. MI seeks to minimize conflict and power struggles through acknowledging ambivalence and exploring personal choice in order to decrease resistance to change. The dual non-confrontational and non-judgmental approach of MI combined with its embracing of ambivalence to foster motivation for change makes MI a fantastic fit for engaging youth and generating change. MI is also brief in nature and is easy to use.

For Supervisors to know:

- On-going supervision reinforcing the MI approach is considered best-practice & has also been shown to be effective in learning MI (Bennett et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2004).
- One study found that MI skills were not retained without added supervision (Heaven et al., 2006).
- The spirit of MI is composed of 4 key elements: 1) collaboration (vs. confrontation), 2) evocation (drawing out, rather than imposing ideas), 3) autonomy (vs. authority), and 4) compassion. The Oregon Youth Transition Program summarized the spirit of MI in a diagram (see right).



Logic of Motivational Interviewing



Guidelines for Effective MI (Miller & Rollnick, 2002):

- 1) Talk less than your client does.
- 2) Offer 2-3 reflections for every question that you ask.
- 3) Ask twice as many open-ended as closed questions.
- 4) When you listen emphatically, more than half of your reflections should be deeper, more complex reflections (paraphrase), rather than simpler repetition or rephrasing client response.

Supervision Discussion Questions

1. Which clients do more talking than you when you meet? Why is this?
2. Which clients do less talking than you when you meet? Why is this? What might you change in order to get these clients to open up more?

How to Start the Conversation

YA Peers have the opportunity to develop a partnership in exploring goals & identifying what needs to change through a strong initial declaration that YA Peers are NOT here to direct YA clients. Instead, YA Peers are present to really listen, support, and advocate for YA clients (& their families) to ensure clinical team hears what they are saying. The best way to establish this partnership early on is for YA Peers to boldly state their intentions of partnership.

I'm not here to tell you what to do. I'm here to listen & share what I've been through because you might find some of my experiences helpful.

I also can help your voice to be heard if you feel like it isn't at times. Sometimes the treatment team and family and others in our lives all have agendas for us – and I want to help you to develop goals for an agenda that you want for your life.

I'm not here to tell you what you "should" do. I believe people know what's best for them. You are the expert in your own life.

I don't have an agenda, just a goal: to see if there is anything that you would like to change, and if so, to see if I can help you get there. How does that sound to you?

Resources for TAY Motivational Interviewing

- <http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/>
- <http://www.ytporegon.org/content/spirit-motivational-interviewing>
- http://www.nova.edu/gsc/forms/mi_rationale_techniques.pdf

OARS

Engagement in MI is facilitated through core communication skills that are easy to remember through the mnemonic acronym **OARS**. OARS stands for: (asking) **Open questions; Affirming; Reflecting; & Summarizing**. And, in order to incorporate your personal lived experience in a way that resonates with YA clients and their families: share information, advice, and life experiences with permission.

	Ask Permission	<i>"Do you mind if we talk about [insert topic]?"</i>
O	Open-ended Questions	<i>"What's happened since we last met? What was that like for you? What makes you think this needs to change?"</i>
A	Affirm	<p>Recognize effort: <i>"The important part was that you put yourself out there; you tried so hard."</i></p> <p>Recognize strengths: <i>"You are persistent." "You are strong."</i></p> <p>Express confidence: <i>"I believe that you can succeed."</i></p> <p>Express support: <i>"We are going to keep working on this together. You are making progress!"</i></p> <p>Normalize: <i>"I've struggled with this & friends of mine have too."</i></p>
R	Reflective Listening	Repeat or rephrase: <i>"It sounds like..." "What I hear your saying..."</i>
S	Summarizing	<p><i>Let me try to summarize what I hear you saying...</i></p> <p><i>Let me see if I am understanding you properly...</i></p> <p><i>Allow me to make sure I am following you correctly...</i></p>
	Evoke Change Talk	<i>"What would you like to see different about your current situation?" "What makes you think needs to change?" What will happen if the situation doesn't change?"</i>



Motivational Interviewing Exercises for Supervision

1. Find YouTube videos of motivational interview tutorials. Have YA Peers watch the video with the Supervisor & silently record OARS statements. Discussion observations. Supervisors can also stop the video at key points & ask YA Peers to identify what OARS they have observed.
2. Encourage YA Peers to role play with each other & record it using their smart phones. Then, have YA Peers review their recording together to identify where they effectively used MI and where there were opportunities to use MI.
3. As a supervisor, make brief videos of you (& your esteemed colleagues) doing a terrible job of applying MI. Cut the client off; ask closed-ended questions. Then, show these videos to YA Peers & have YA Peers identify mistakes.



Generating Reflections Activity

What is each client really trying to say with these comments? What is the underlying meaning in what they are saying? How can you reflect back to the client so that they can feel that you really heard what they have to say?

1. Everyone is so focused on whether or not I take my medication. I don't need medication.
2. I do not have a mental illness. I do not know why I am even here.
3. My parents told me that that they will stop paying for college for me if I don't stop getting high. They have no idea how hard school is.
4. I want a job but I want SSI because it will help me to afford an apartment and move out of my parent's house.
5. I have all these friends on Facebook, but sometimes I don't know if they are really even my friends.
6. I don't like meeting with the psychiatrist. He makes me feel like I am crazy. And, I might be a little crazy sometimes, but not that crazy.

Practice Profile Domain 4: Role Modeling



Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor:

- Demonstrating Reliability
- Communicating honestly & strategically
- Walking the walk

Sharing Lived Experience to Inspire

There are many ways to prompt behavior change in YA clients. For YA Peers, one way is through sharing a life experience that demonstrates resiliency while also providing validation. Storytelling is an art & comes with risks for YA Peers who are being vulnerable with sharing information to a YA clients, families, co-workers, and supervisors. It is through storytelling that YA Peers can in a sense establish themselves as “peers.” Thus, it is worth spending time in Supervision Meetings that is dedicated to story development, story sharing, and what story sharing means for identity and one’s role as YA Peer.

First, it is essential to recognize the following about sharing lived experiences in community mental health settings:

YA Peers are more than their recovery “story.”

This can be very frustrating for YA Peers who are people with real lives who have lots of life experiences [LIKE EVERYONE] beyond their experience with mental health problems. In supervision, it is key to acknowledge how challenging it can be to be identified by a few life experiences that for many feel very long ago and not that pertinent to their current life.

Focus on the Present, the Past & the Future.

Ask YA Peers: What are you learning about yourself through your work? What can you share with your clients? What are your hopes? It’s not just about sharing stories about the past.

Stories are dynamic, not static. Lived experience “stories” will change. As a supervisor, that’s a good thing! YA Peers grow in their role, learn & and gain additional insight into themselves, their situations, & other factors.

YA Peers control what is shared; when it is shared; and how it is shared. Permission must be sought from YA Peers, as well as, a discussion about what it will mean to share one’s story to a particular client, family, coworker, agency, institution, or community.

Practice, Practice, Practice. Use supervision time for a storytelling workshop at least on a quarterly basis. Reflection on storytelling is necessary. What is triggering to share today might not be tomorrow & vice versa. Unintended consequences of sharing are real – be ready for them!



Stop & Reflect

What is self-disclosure in your opinion?

What are your beliefs around self-disclosure? Have these changed overtime?

When is self-disclosure helpful? When is it unhelpful?

How do you help your staff navigate self-disclosure on-the-job? When has this come up in supervision?

Strategic Storytelling: A Helpful Foundation

Strategic Storytelling is a helpful framework from the field of child welfare. Supervisors can help YA Peers to apply Strategic Storytelling principles and processes in both the preparation for and reflection upon sharing personal life experiences with YA clients, their families, and colleagues. Below is a list of questions that Supervisors & YA Peers can use to examine and reflect upon the process of storytelling.

1. What is the story you are considering sharing? Or, what story did you share?

- What are the key elements to your story?
- What details might/did you keep private?
- How much background/set-up is necessary for the story?
- How traumatic is the story?

2. What do you hope to achieve through sharing this story? (Or, what did you hope to achieve?)

- What is Purpose of my sharing this story?
- What kind of impact do I want my story to have? (e.g., attitude change; increased awareness; validation; etc. etc. etc.)
- Who will benefit? Me? Client? Colleague? Team?
- How will they benefit specifically?
- What impact will the story have on the working alliances that you have with clients, colleagues, etc.?

3. Who is your audience? (Who have you shared with or who do you intend to share with?)

- How is the audience likely respond to hearing your personal experiences?
- How will hearing your story make them feel?
- What are you hoping will resonate with the audience?
- How will you tell this story differently depending on the audience?

4. How will you claim the meaning & significance of your story?

- How did/will you claim the personal meaning of your experience when telling you story?
- How did/will you identify the emotions that you personally have when sharing this story?
- How will you explain the rationale when you start to tell your story?
- How will you explain what you hope to achieve through sharing this story?



Strategic Storytelling Exercise

1. Identify the audience & how the story will impact the audience (e.g., their feelings/thoughts/behavior). For example, your audience could be your peers, your supervisor, your clients, community provider, etc. & your desired impact could be: understanding, trust, buy-in, excitement, partnership, etc.)

Your Audience:

Desired Impact:

2. Choose a Question to Respond to:

- Write about a time when you effectively coped with a challenging situation (on the job or in your personal life). What caused the challenging situation; what helped you to get over it?
- What have you learned about yourself in the last year? On the job? In your personal life? How did you come to know this?
- When were you most burnt-out at work? In your personal life? How did you get over this? What helped you to address this?

3. Choose your Purpose & Generate the Content.

- Describe the situation. Add the details that you think are important – that make the story come to life & understandable.

4. Reflect on the Meaning & Significance of Your Story:

- Explain the personal meaning of your experience when telling you story; don't let others interpret this for you.
- What emotions occurred when you share your story? When they occur, name them concretely when telling your story.
- Explain the rationale when you start to tell your story & stipulate what you hoped the response will be to your sharing the story



The Evolving Elevator Speech

Most people think of elevator speeches are part of getting a new job. However, YA Peers need a quick way to describe themselves to a variety of audiences in order to engage, educate, and partner with people. Simply stating, “I’m the Young Adult Peer Mentor,” does not always clarify to potential clients (& their families), colleagues, or other outside of the children’s mental health field in Massachusetts who you are; what your role really is; and your contribution to the team, provider, and field.

More likely than not, colleagues will be especially confused as to the added benefit of partnering with YA Peers. Therefore, coaching your YA Peers to professionally introduce themselves to a variety of individuals in a way that clarifies their role (a little) and garners additional interest as to how this role is particularly beneficial to the team/agency will save you time as a supervisor down the road.

And elevator speech is 30 seconds or less (3-4 sentences). During it, one must state their name, who they are, what they do, and their impact/effectiveness. It’s like a bio, but something that is informal enough

This is a fun exercise to do in training or early in supervision with YA Peers. And, to revisit periodically because, GUESS WHAT – elevator speeches evolve as YA Peers grow in their role!

Questions to Ask to Develop an Awesome Elevator Speech:

1. What am I good at? What do I really excel at? What have others told me I am good at? Why do you think that they said that?
2. What am I most passionate about? What makes me come alive? What motivates me?
3. What do I do to improve the lives of clients? What do I actually do? What is about my approach/my style/my story – that really resonates with people?
4. How have clients responded positively to me? What impact have I seen?
5. How do I positively impact my team? My agency? My community?

Responses to all of these questions will help with building the bones of your elevator speech! Avoid acronyms and any fancy language. Write how you would actually say it aloud & practice stating it aloud.

Here's an example (Vanessa):

I'm a social worker turned social scientist. I live in Chicago where I help build and study mental health services for transition-age youth. I am passionate about growing the young adult peer workforce – and work with a variety of providers and states to help develop practice tools & systems to increase young adults in peer roles. So far, I've conducted online and in-person trainings – and a cool guidebook for supervisors to help supervisors be super effective in supervising YA Peer Mentors.

Variation on Elevator Speech Supervision Exercises:

- Record elevator speech individually & then playing it during supervision
- Practice giving elevator speech to: 1) someone at work; 2) someone who knows you well; 3) someone in the community
- Propose & develop different versions of the elevator speech (shorter; longer; different angle, different language) for a variety of contexts

Resources to Help YA Peers Discover their Strengths:

- <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/>



Stop & Reflect

How do you introduce yourself to new employees? Colleagues?

When informally telling a colleague about your role as the supervisor of YA Peers, what do you say typically?

How might you change what you say now to inspire others to not only respect, but be interested in the YA Peer role?



Storytelling Exercise

“To be a person is to have a story to tell.” Isak Dineson

- Humans are natural story tellers. We learn about the world and ourselves mainly through stories. We are surrounded by stories. Think of how much time we spend watching TV, movies, reading books, or talking on the phone or reading email....so we are telling our story all the time and learning about others’ stories – even when we are not aware of it.
- Telling our story & helping others to tell theirs is a way for us to make and remake our experiences. Telling our stories allows us to claim our experience- to bring memories and meaning together – allowing for more coherence and control of our experience.
- No story is perfect. People aren’t perfect. Your story is going to change over time as you get older and gain more perspective on your experiences.
- Your experience with jobs and school are only 1 part of your entire story, but it’s important to work on finding ways to tell your story to young adults who will be in your shoes soon. Others can learn from your story. Your story can be motivating and can allow for you to connect with others.

Exercise: What story do you most want to share with your YA clients about what you have overcome?

[Allow for 15 minutes to write; then 15 minutes to share with peers or supervisor.]

- When we tell our story, it's healing. We get in touch with emotions – good & bad ones. Telling your story is getting in touch with your strengths, power, and courage. Stories are sometimes very funny because you are able to see the humor in a situation that at the time was very challenging and stressful. Laughing can be healthy and does not mean your experience was any less meaningful or challenging. You can just see where mistakes were made that you now find funny or ridiculous.

Exercise: Describe when you made a mistake (or you thought you did), but that you learned from it. What happened? Who/what was involved? What did you learn? How did you learn this?

- It's often hard to see how far you have come until you look back and tell your story. Coping strategies are interwoven in your stories of challenges you've faced. As you listen to your colleagues stories, you may discover new ways to deal with things. With telling your story, you are generating knowledge for others to use.

Exercise: Describe some positive things you have learned about yourself in the last few years through your work and education experiences.

- We have many stories we can tell – both of positive and negative experiences. Think about some of the positive things you have learned about yourself through looking for a job, working, or as a student. How did you come to know these positive characteristics?

Exercise: What you have you learned that you hope to share with your clients?

- We are always learning. As Peers, we learn so much about ourselves through our work. Our clients, colleagues, and supervisors are always teaching us something. We can understand these teachings through reflecting.

Exercise: What you have you learned about yourself in your role? What have you learned from your clients?

Practice Profile 5: Promoting Self-Care



Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor:

- Encouraging healthy habits with YAs
- Managing Stressful situations
- Knowing rights, resources, and responsibilities
- Working to increase awareness & understanding of behavioral health challenges

Support Peers in Building Psychological Capital through Self-Care

Psychological capital is a “positive psychological state of mind that is often characterized by a person’s self-efficacy, optimism, perseverance, hopefulness and resilience” (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007, p. 3). Yes, psychological capital is a thing that can be BUILT! It generates motivation to overcome barriers to accomplish goals. Those with high levels of psychological capital don’t sweat the small stuff & see **challenges as learning opportunities**. Supervisors who embrace the notion of being “resilient” on the job through learning new skills & reflecting continuously on one’s practice are successful in developing & supporting YA Peers on the job!

Supervisors play a key role in fostering YA Peer psychological capital. Focusing on building psychological capital through enacting self-care is the foundation for developing healthy staff in stressful helping professions.



Through building psychological capital on the job, supervisors support YA Peers to stay attuned to their wellness & to communicate when their mental health gets in the way of the of their job duties.

Supervisors must validate that we all have days where we experience stress & feel overwhelmed- it’s part of working in this field. Supervisors must help YA Peers to recognize their personal signs of stress & distress – as they look slightly different for everyone.



Resiliency on the job is a pattern of adaptation that evolves over-time as YA Peers reflect on their self-care practices. Self-care is not an escape from reality and negativity – or something that we do in reaction to something negative in our lives. According to Merriam-Webster, Resilience is the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens; able to recoil or spring back into shape after bending, stretching, or being compressed. However, as a supervisor, embrace this definition of resiliency:

Resilience is a **pattern of positive adaptation** to a past or current life adversity. It is a description of a pattern, not a personality trait.

Resilient Self-Care is a Process.

Better Self-care habits of self-care don't suddenly appear after being inspired through a workshop or blog post. They don't even take full form in one particularly transformative workshop or retreat. Saying or knowing that we need to take better care of ourselves or doesn't make self-care happen. It means changing habits and schedules, shifting deeply held beliefs about self-worth and identity, and addressing the many barriers that get in the way of our resilient self-care practice.

Resiliency is something we can foster in YA Peers and in ourselves as supervisors – which I believe is achievable through the process of what I call practicing “Resilient Self-Care.”



Stop & Reflect

How do you (as a supervisor) practice self-care on-the-job?

How might you improve your self-care practice in order to role model this practice to YA Peers?

How might you find ways to celebrate self-care on-the-job among your team and colleagues?

What gets in the way of self-care on the job? What do you do to address this?



Step 1: Create an Environment that Values Self-Care

There is a HUGE problem with “self-care” as a concept as most believe that the “the individual” practitioner is the one to address these complex issues that are often really system or social problems. Organizations and supervisors need integrate a multilevel approach to self-care where the organization, supervisors, & teams value & practice self-care.

- **Supervisors must role model & practice self-care!** YES, that’s YOU Supervisors! Use your own experiences of how you overcame struggles related to self-care – and be vulnerable and admit that it’s challenging to always take care of yourself in a demanding and emotionally charged type of work. Your transparency will matter to YA Peers; it will also give them courage to be transparent with their YA clients.
- **Encourage YA Peers to share how they build resiliency on the job through supervision.** Bi-monthly, I encourage 5-10 minutes to be spent on examining a YA Peers self-care plan. Ask: What’s working? What’s not working? What are they learning about themselves?
- **Institute systematic use of work breaks & personal and vacation time.** This is something that is so very important to ensure that YA Peers (who are often new to the professional work environment and full-time employment) are aware of the benefits that their job comes with! Ensure that you let YA Peers know that they need to take time off! It’s how we stay healthy.
- **Support connection to EAP & personal therapy.** Express to YA Peers that even the most talented practioners benefit from therapy where they can process their personal life with a neutral party whose job is to help you improve your wellness. Remind YA Peers how to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at your agency & follow-up about their experience.
- **Private space for YA Peers to decompress & process with one another.** First, find a space that YA Peers can make their own where they can go to get away from the “community mental health” context. A simple office with comfy chairs and quality lighting with a door that closes is key. Second, bringing YA Peers together to process and decompress also supports wellness. Providing a space for expressing frustration without judgement with one another (without a supervisor) is very important for wellness. Peers can validate one another and help each other problem solve on-the-job through provision of a bi-monthly meeting of just YA Peers.

Step 2: Recognize self-care is a process.

There is no magic bullet for self-care. It is an individualized practice that is self-initiated, but can be supported by supervisors and organizations. Support YA Peers (and your colleagues) in recognizing that taking care of oneself is an important part of the job – and that practicing self-care is something that one is going to have to personally commit to. Support YA Peers in connecting with their peers, colleagues, and even clients about how they practice self-care. We want YA Peers to be talking about how they take care of themselves to maintain wellness. By focusing on self-care, YA Peers will naturally

become fantastic role models for clients! It's a very tall order to expect YA Peers to maintain balance in their work & personal life in order to be mentors and role models to YA clients.

Step 3: Embrace the notion of “being kind to yourself.”

This the first principle that I teach to YA Peers. In the helping professions, we need to learn how to be kinder to ourselves. This is something that Supervisors need to reinforce regularly in their staff.

Step 4. Learn about yourself! Self-care is multi-dimensional.

Self-care is only possible through self-examination and reflection. You need to know what makes you happy; what gets you down; what makes you feel stressed; and what helps to mitigate this stress. In Supervision, you can explore these discussion questions with your YA Peers to get them thinking about what is really personally meaningful in their lives.

Big Questions to Process:

- What makes me truly happy?
- What brings me joy?
- What makes me feel most accomplished?
- What has worked to help keep me healthy, well, happy in the past? What hasn't worked?
- What helps me to feel connected to myself (the real me)?
- What motivates me?

Questions that begin to get at Self-Care:

- What feels refreshing?
- What replenishes me? Feeds my soul?
- What can have an immediate relaxing impact on me?
- What gives me a sense of purpose?
- What am I thankful for?
- What do I have in my life that I don't take the time to acknowledge?

Step 5: Support YA Peers to Develop, Enact & Evaluate Self-Care Plans

Use resources for self-care plan development.

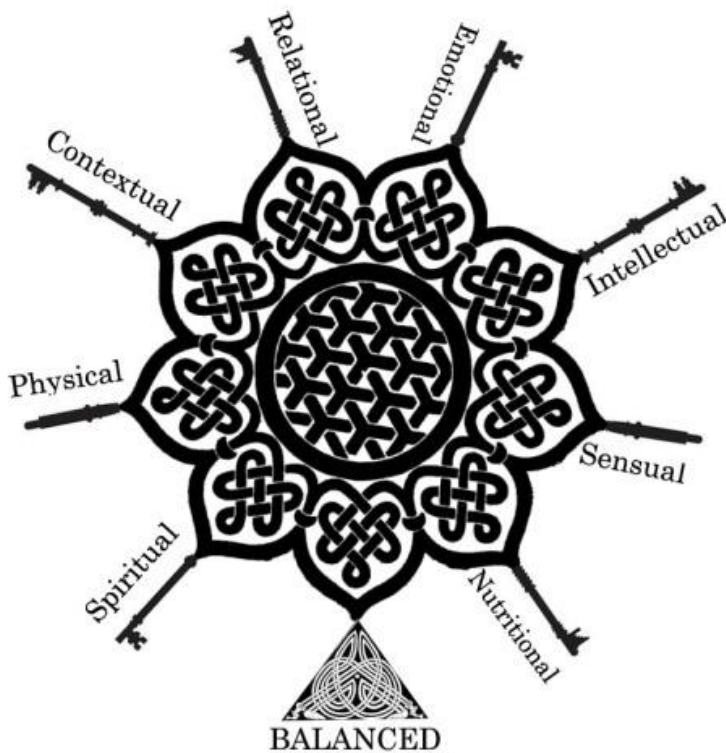
- **University of Buffalo Self-Care Starter Kit:** <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>
- **Student Self-care Plan:** http://www.bloomu.edu/documents/social_work/SelfCarePlan.pdf
- **Recovery & Wellness Lifestyle Plan (by Copeland):** <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA-3718/SMA-3718.pdf>
- **Australian Self-Care Plan:** <http://au.professionals.reachout.com/developing-a-self-care-plan#Activity>



Self-Care is Multidimensional: An Activity

Virginia Satir was a renowned therapist who developed a mandala to illustrate the many aspects of a human being - all of which need to be fulfilled in order for us to be happy. Consider Self-Care across multiple domains is the goal (see diagram below from Lavelda Nayolr LMFTA). Here are examples of the different dimensions to self-care:

Keys To Effective Self Care



Intellectual: Activity that makes us think

Contextual: Your surroundings (physical, social)

Interactional: Socializing & being with others

Physical: Engage in a physical activity

Sensual: Stimulate the 5 senses: taste, touch, sight, sound, & smell

Emotional: Stimulates emotions & makes you feel good

Nutritional: Stimulating your body in a healthy way

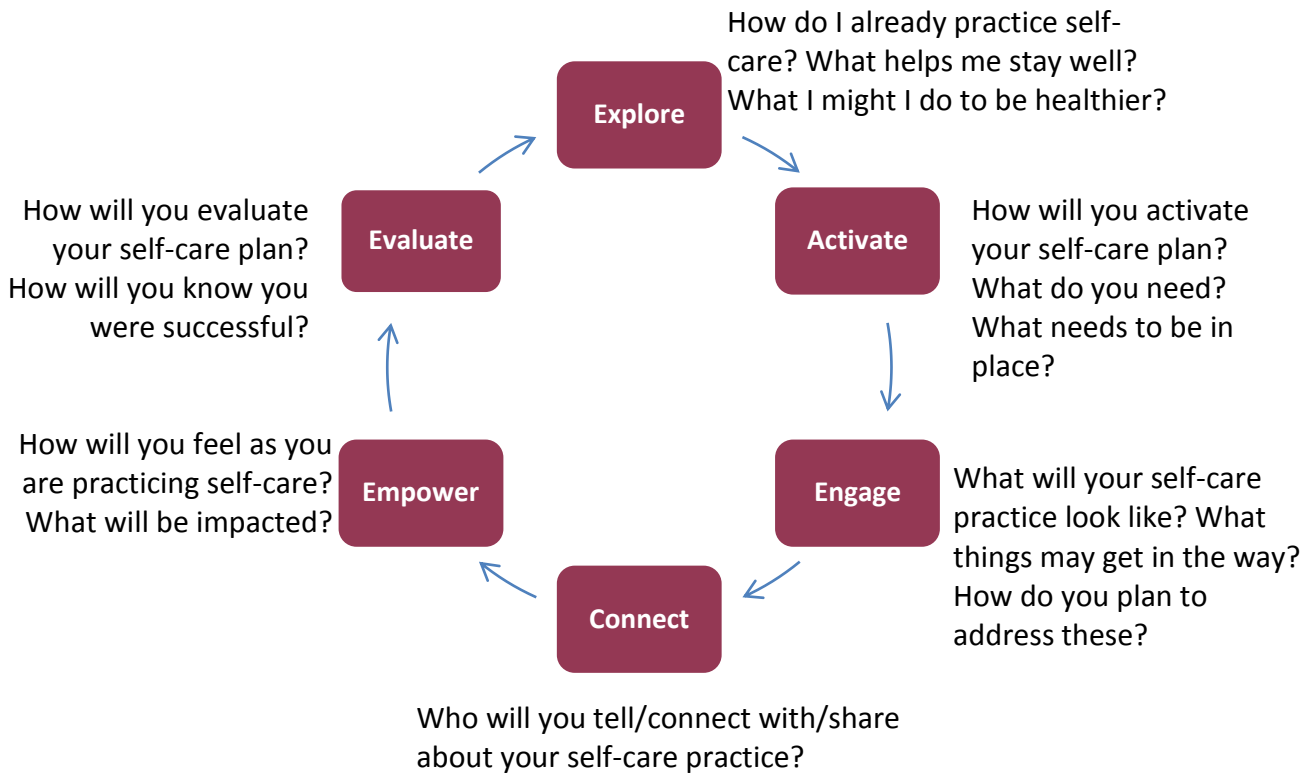
Spiritual: Activity that nourishes your soul

Pick 3 domains. How will/do you practice self-care regularly in these areas?



Self-Care as a Process: An Activity

To help YA Peers understand that self-care is a process, review the diagram below together. Discuss the questions associated with the diagram below. It’s not just, I’m going to “eat better.” It’s about defining how to eat better; engaging in the process of “eating better” as a YA Peer defines it; and evaluating the effectiveness of those self-care efforts.



Explore:

Activate:

Engage:

Connect:

Empower:

Evaluate:



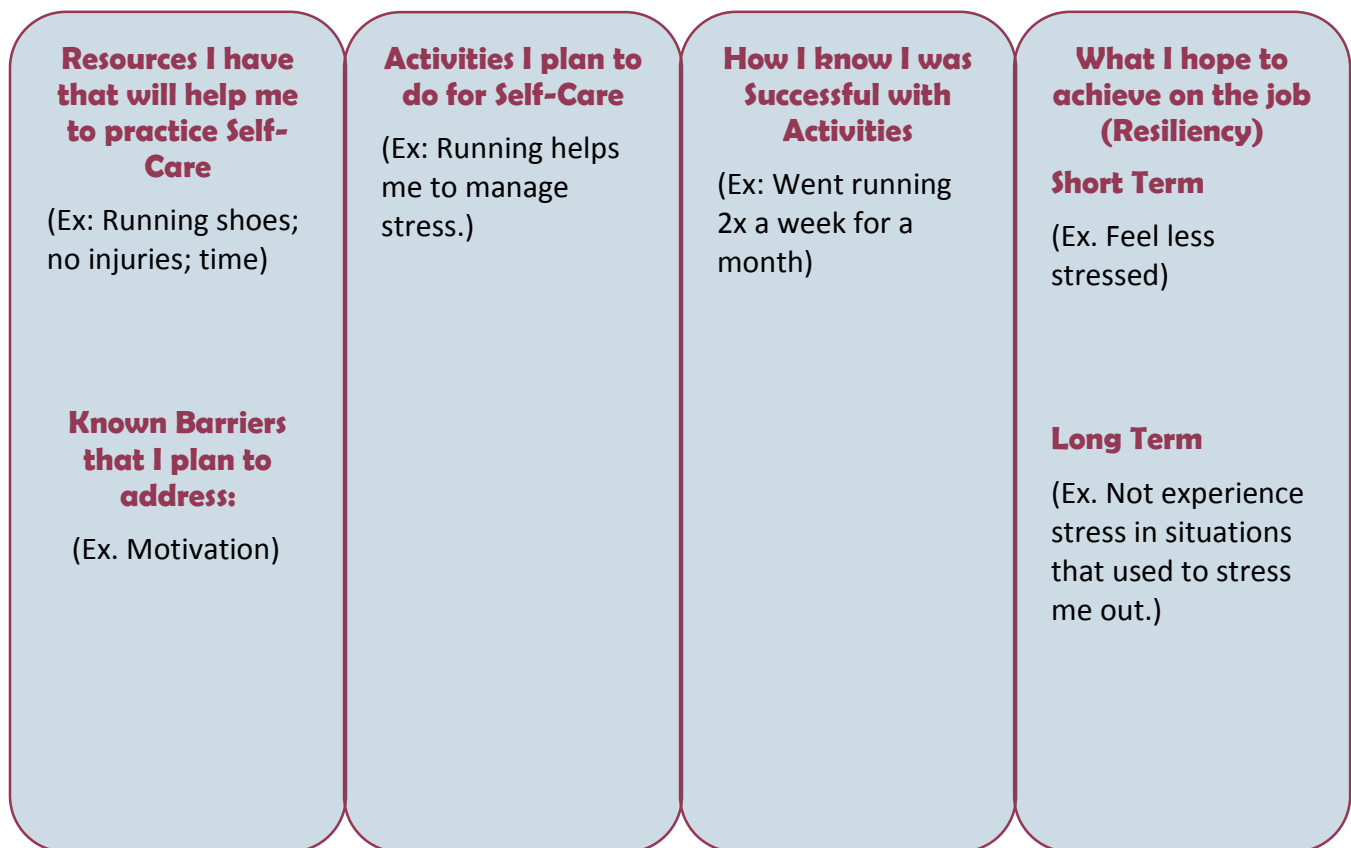
Addressing the Barriers to Self-Care

You can have the best self-care plan in the world, but if there are things in the way to actually practicing the self-care plan you have devised, it's not going to work. Most of my time as a supervisor was identifying & problem solving around the barriers to self-care. Having someone, another peer or even a YA client, who regularly discusses self-care with YA Peers is helpful so that YA Peers are held accountable to their plans. (This is akin to having a gym partner who you work with regularly. It's helpful to have someone in it with you.)

Making self-care concrete and helping to recognize one's resources is very important to practicing self-care. An exercise that can help YA Peers to achieve this is through creating a self-care logic model.

Goal: (What do I hope to achieve at work in regards to self-care & being resilient):

Example Goal: To be less stressed at work.



Identifying the Early Warning Signs of Burnout, Vicarious Trauma & Compassion Fatigue



People in the helping professions are especially susceptible to **Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, and Compassion Fatigue**. (See handout on next page.) There are many frustrating barriers facing TAY (individual, contextual, social, and system-related) that contribute to these negative on-the-job psychological experiences for peer & non-peer young adult staff. Many people (& providers) do not like working with TAY because of all of the risk factors they bring to the table, which can determinably impact staff without the right supports in place.

- **TAY engage in risky activities regularly.** (It's a normal part of the transition to adulthood; it's how TAY learn)
- **TAY are more likely to engage in substances that may negatively impact both physical and mental health.** They are also very likely to experience stress in personal lives, which can impact work & school performance too.
- **TAY are less likely to utilize traditional mental health treatment;** TAY are at higher risk for suicidality & homicidality.

- **TAY are typically embedded within family systems!** Family can add to the level of stress that a practitioner who is used to working with middle-aged and older adults is not used to – especially if the youth is new to mental health symptoms & treatment.

Thus, YA Peers will work with a population that is recognized to be challenging – and thus, it is important as a supervisor to ensure YA Peers are aware of their on-the-job wellness & that you do everything you can to support on-the-job wellness.

Burnout, vicarious trauma, & compassion fatigue must be recognizable to both supervisors and YA Peers. Often providers offer courses in learning how to combat these common experiences among staff. Encourage your YA Peers to attend these when they are offered at your agency!

If YA Peers experience burnout, normalize the experience for them. It is not shameful to be negatively impacted by the demanding work that we do. Support YA Peers in refining their self-care plan to address burnout.

Stop & Reflect

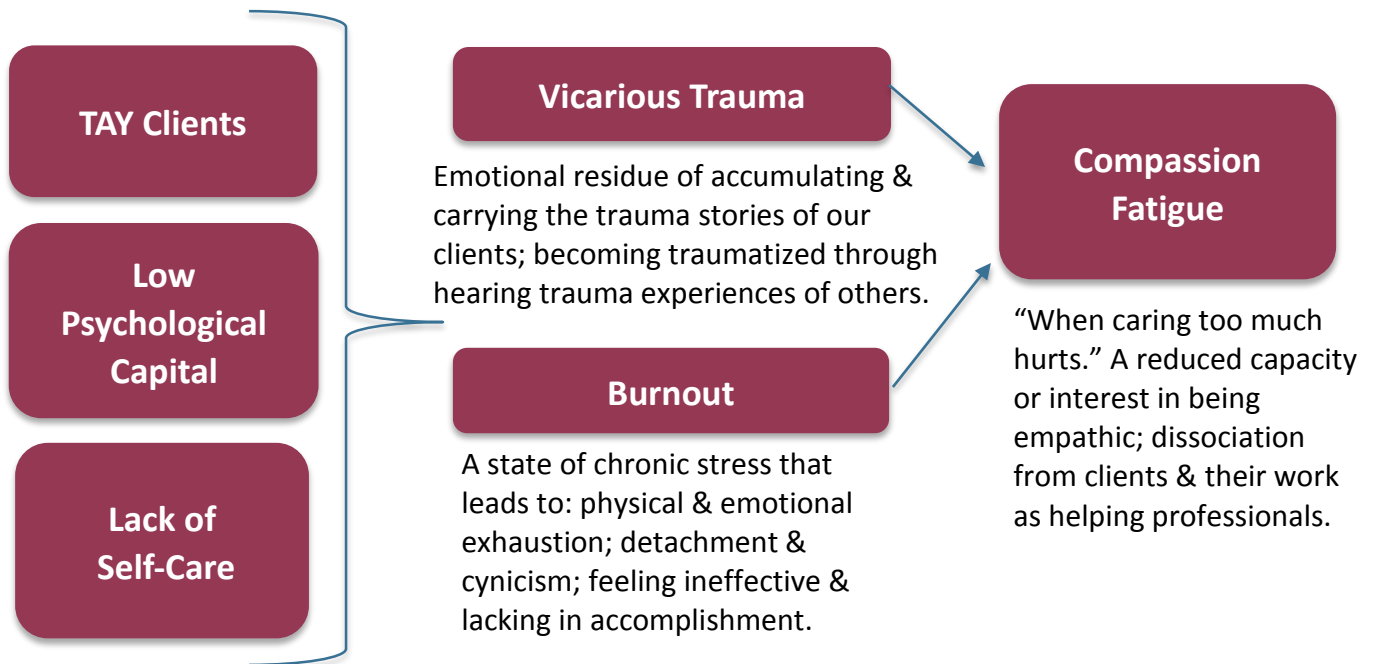
How do you (as a supervisor) prevent burnout among your staff?

When have you observed burnout? How did you address burnout?

How have you addressed your own personal experiences with burnout?



Learning about Threats to On-the-Job Wellness



Examples of Associated Experiences

- Chronic fatigue
- Too much or too little sleep
- Forgetfulness
- Inability to concentrate
- Physical symptoms (e.g. headaches)
- Increased illness (e.g., flu)
- Eating too much or too little
- Feeling worthless & hopeless
- Anger & irritability
- Loss of enjoyment
- Pessimism
- Excessive blaming – self or others
- Isolation
- Feeling numb
- Avoidance
- Hypervigilance
- Preoccupation with intrusive imagery

Ask Yourself:

When you get stressed out or super overwhelmed in your life, which ones do you typically experience? How do you know that you are experiencing them?



Leveraging Your Social Network

As a Supervisor, you can support your YA Peers in identifying who in their lives they can go to for support. This is important because this exercise can be replicated by YA Peers with their YA clients.

What is a social network? Your social network is made up of all the people you know. Imagine a web of connections with you in the middle. If you think about it, you know a lot of people. Consider: family, friends, acquaintances, neighbors, community members, coworkers, supervisor, healthcare professionals, church members, classmates, teammates – anyone who you know!

Consider who you can easily go to for support in your personal & work life.

- Who can you go to for support for your wellbeing? What about for support around your on-the-job experiences?
- Consider when and how people in your network can provide support.
- Consider these different types of support:

- **Emotional Support:** Warmth, empathy, concern, affection, love, trust, acceptance, intimacy, encouragement, caring, nurturing, etc.

- **Tangible Support:** Financial assistance, material goods, or services. Also called instrumental support, this form of social support includes the concrete & direct ways people assist others.

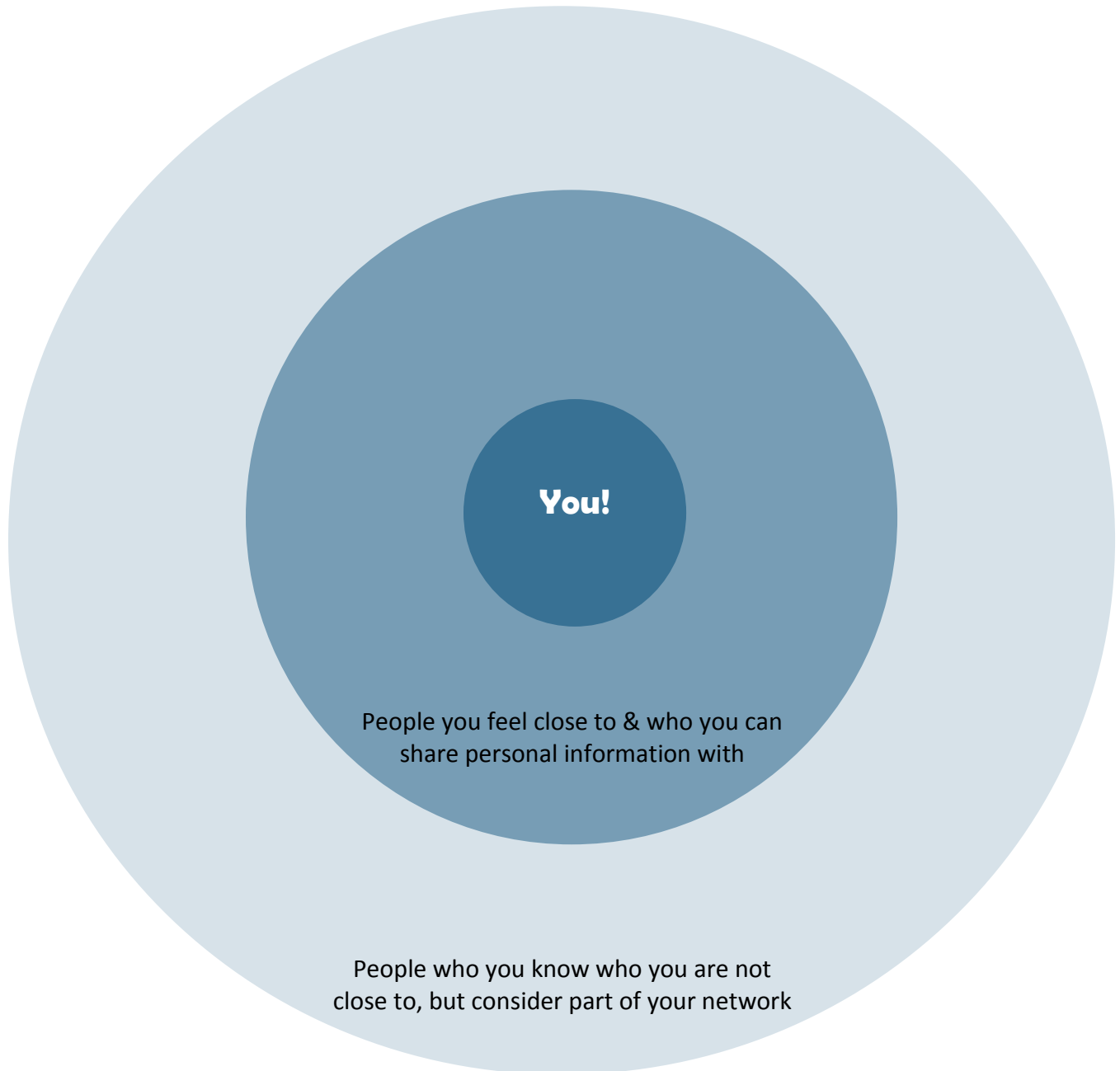
- **Informational Support:** Useful information, advice, guidance, suggestions, solutions

- **Companionship Support:** Belonging; engaging in shared social activities



Create a Social Network Diagram!

Directions: Write names of who you are close to and who you know in the space provided below!



Discussion Questions:

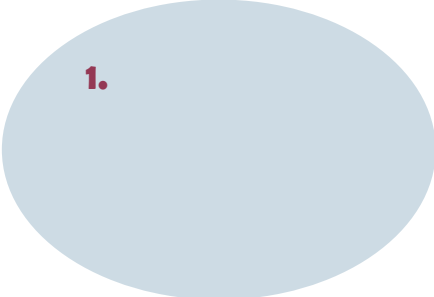
- Where do you have the most social support?
- Where might you want to develop additional sources of support to thrive on the job?
- How will you go about growing your social support network & resources?

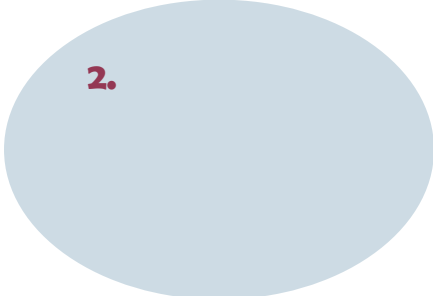


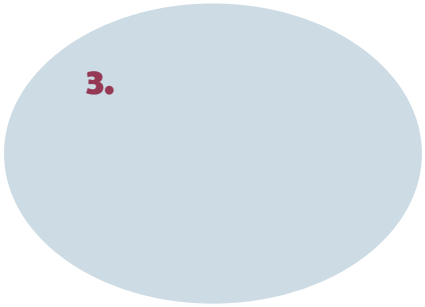
Mitigating Job-Related Stress

We all have things that stress us out at work. By being aware of these stressors, we can develop plans to prevent them from occurring. Sometimes we have more control over certain stressors than others – but a Supervisor can help YA Peers to figure out ways to mitigate or eliminate stress through gaining a new perspective, developing skills for addressing stress, and addressing any social or contextual factors that add to stress. Also, as a supervisor, sharing how you have overcome stress at work.

What makes you stressed at work?

1. 

2. 

3. 

Who or what contributes to (or exacerbates) this stress?

What can you do to cope with or prevent this stress?

What can your supervisor or the agency do to prevent this stress?



Addressing Negative On-The-Job Thinking

In the role of YA Peer, it is not uncommon for Supervisors to hear YA Peers describe that they feel overwhelmed, misunderstood, or that they are not making a difference in their clients' lives. First, welcome and celebrate the fact that YA Peers are telling you how they are feeling at work. Thank your YA Peers for being letting you know. Second, explore what thinking is linked to these negative feelings. This is an application of the principles of Cognitive Behavior Therapy and also an opportunity to demonstrate how a YA Peer can help a client explore how their thinking is related to their feelings and behaviors.

Here are some examples of negative on-the-job thinking we've observed in YA Peers with examples of how to reframe the negative thinking into positive thinking.

Negative	Positive
1. I can't keep up.	1. I can keep up by working with my supervisor to prioritize my tasks.
2. I'm not making a difference.	2. All I can do is do my best. I am going to focus on what is in front of me.
3. I feel that I am not heard at work.	3. Even though I didn't get the response I wanted, at least I expressed my idea &/or opinion.
4. My colleagues do not like or respect me.	4. I demonstrate respect for all of my colleagues. I know it takes time to get to know & trust new co-workers.
5. I am so worried about a client.	5. It is normal to be concerned for clients. I know that when my worrying gets in the way of other things in my life to talk to my supervisor about it.
6. I don't know what to say sometimes.	6. I am learning what to say in a lot of different environments with a lot of different people right now.
7. I'm not getting through to my clients.	7. My clients are going through a challenging life phase and sometimes it will feel like we are not connecting.
8. I am overwhelmed.	8. I've got a lot of questions I need answered before I am going to get this.
Your Negative Thoughts (On-the-Job)	Now, make them Positive Thoughts...



Addressing Challenging Situations at Work

Describe: A situation at work that you dislike; are frustrated with; or complain about:

Reframing & Reflect upon the Challenging Situation

Reframe: How can you reframe this situation as a positive challenge?

Reflect: What are you learning from this situation? Or, what has this challenge taught you?

Reflect: What is the positive/benefit of this situation? For you? For the client? Others?



Simple Thought Record Exercise: Positive & Negative On-the-Job Experiences

First, think about 2 positive on-the-job experiences from the last month. Describe these positive experiences in detail in the column on the left hand side (include: who, what, when, & where) of the table below. Then, describe what feelings and thoughts you have about experiences.

Positive On-the-Job Experience Who? What? When? Where?	Associated Feelings What did you feel? Describe & rate your emotion 0-100%	Thoughts What was going through your mind as you started to feel this way about your experience?
1.		
2.		

Now, think about challenging on-the-job experiences from the last month. Examine what the situation was; describe what feelings did you have when dealing with this situation; & what were you thinking?

Challenging On-the-Job Experience Who? What? When? Where?	Associated Feelings What did you feel? Describe & rate your emotion 0-100%	Thoughts What was going through your mind as you started to feel this way about your experience?
1.		
2.		

Take away: Your thoughts influence how you feel about on-the-job experiences! If you can change your automatic thinking, then you can change your emotional response!

Practice Profile Domain 6: Demonstrating Safe, Professional & Ethical Behavior

Areas of Focus in this Practice Profile to be familiar with as a Supervisor

- Safety precautions
- Professional Development
- Self-disclosure
- Confidentiality
- Relationships



During the hiring & onboarding process, it is critical that YA Peers make a commitment to their position. We take relationships seriously in our mental health treatment setting – and want to avoid abrupt job endings with YA Peers (and thus client-YA Peer relationships). Therefore, during the hiring and onboarding process, it is important to review the job expectations & obtain a level of commitment to the position from YA Peers. Below is an example of a Commitment Letter.

YA Peer Commitment Letter

I commit to being a YA Peer Provider at _____ [Agency] for 12 months. I will use my life experiences with mental health and treatment to inspire, motivate, and validate youth and young adults who are enrolled in _____ [Agency] services. I recognize that I possess & will continue to develop the following in my role as peer provider:

- 1. Positive Attitude.** Peer mentors possess a positive attitude, are responsible, trustworthy, and are positive role models for transition age youth. If I am having a hard time feeling positive about my work, then I will connect with my supervisor to troubleshoot.
- 2. Wellness.** I recognize that I am far enough along in my own recovery process and am able to recognize when mental health symptoms interfere with my job tasks. I know how to talk about these experiences with my supervisor. I plan to continue to practice self-care and am open to discussing reasonable accommodations if I need extra support on the job. I will share how I maintain wellness with my clients.
- 3. Professionalism.** I am able to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with youth and young adult clients (& their families). I also possess professional judgment over what topics are appropriate to discuss with my clients and their families. I understand that I will continue to learn about how to communicate effectively at the agency and am open to feedback around how I can be more professional in my interactions.



Supervisors must educate YA Peers about how to maintain client confidentiality & reinforce these practices to ensure that YA Peers are upholding confidentiality according to HIPAA. **Reviewing confidentiality standards at least quarterly with YA Peers as part of supervision is key.**

What is HIPAA?

It's a policy: The "Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act" of 1996 that states agencies must provide reasonable safeguard to protect privacy of client's protected health information (PHI).

Essentially, HIPAA protects client information from being used or disclosed inappropriately. Review your agency's HIPAA policy with YA Peers. Here are general guidelines:

What is Protected Health Information (PHI):

Specific individually identifiable health information that is maintained or transmitted in any form (oral; electronic) that is created or received by a health care provider, that relates to the:

- Past, present or future physical or mental condition of an individual
- Provision of health care to an individual
- Payment for that health care
- Identifies or could be used to identify the individual

How to Maintain Confidentiality through HIPAA:

- No client personal health information should be shared with anyone outside of the agency. Do not discuss any client PHI within your personal social network.
- Do not leave client records or other confidential information out & available for anyone to see. For instance, if you are writing an email or a note in the EHR & step away from your computer, lock your computer screen.
- Do not discuss clients in public areas (i.e., elevators, corridors, kitchen, cafeteria)
- Do not put PHI in regular trash bins; use confidential trash bins.
- Do not include client information or photographs on social media (including Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram) without client permission.
- Prior to speaking with the client in the presence of others, ask client if it is OK to discuss PHI in the presence of others (e.g., family). Ask others to wait outside or go to a different room during confidential discussions.
- Do NOT give information to family members of your YA clients unless there is a release of information signed by the YA client.
- In responding to a call from an individual who wants to know if a client is served by your agency, tell this individuals you are not allowed to share this information. (YES – you can neither confirm or deny an individual's enrollment (past or current) at your agency)
- Consult with your supervisor in ANY instance that you feel that confidentiality is threatened.



Sometimes the concept of confidentiality can be confusing to YA Peers & their YA clients. YA Peers must understand the following key philosophies & communicate these clearly to their YA clients. Supervisors can help YA Peers to reinforce these principles with their clients; and supervisors must create a culture of trust through establishing & reinforcing these practice principles amongst their team, YA clients, and families.

1. YA Peers work on a team & will be sharing client PHI with their team. YA Peers, YA clients, & their families must understand that information will be shared amongst team members in order to provide the best quality of care to youth and families.

2. YA Peers are not allowed to keep client secrets. If a client requests that certain information be kept from the team, this is a red flag to the YA Peer & likely information that the YA Peer will NEED to share with the team. The YA Peer should remind the YA client that they are not able to keep secrets from the team and discuss how to share the information with the team together if possible. Here is a stock response: *“I work on a team to support you in reaching your goals. We share helpful information amongst each other in order to do our best – so I can’t keep things from the team.”* This must be established at the start of the relationship, as well as revisited.

3. YA clients & their families are not held to HIPAA standards in regarded to what the YA Peer PHI the peer shares with them. What a YA Peer shares with a client can be shared with others. What YA Peers share with their YA clients is their choice. This is why it is so important for YA Peers to consider what they want to share with their clients and what they don’t want to share with their clients. As a supervisor, clarify that we all have things in our personal lives that we don’t broadcast at work – and that we would be mortified if everyone knew about us. Have clients reflect in their wellness journal or on their own during supervision the following questions. Explain that you do not want to know these personal details, but want YA Peers to be aware that there are limits on what they want people knowing about their “lived experience.”

- What do you not want your clients knowing about you?
- What do you not want your coworkers knowing about you?
- What do you not want your supervisor knowing about you?

So What Should I Report to my Team about my Clients?

It is important to establish and reinforce what types of observations, experiences, and information that YA Peers should share with their team about their clients. YA Peers are likely not going to have a training in social work, counseling or mental health – so we can’t expect them to know what is “important” to share with their team.



Things to Tell your Team: A Discussion

Immediate Report to Supervisor

- Any threat YA Peer safety that occurred during an interaction with a client
- Immediate threat to self, including any reports of feeling better off dead; having a plan to commit suicide or a reported suicide attempt
- Immediate threat to others, including any threats to seriously hurt or kill someone
- Immediate threats to personal safety in regards to domestic violence, gang activity, death threats from community member
- Substantial changes in mood & functioning that are far from baseline
- If client was high during the meeting

Report in Team Meeting

- Small successes that a young person has achieved on their way to completing a goal
- Using a new coping mechanism
- Stop use of medication or other treatment
- Work & school engagement; any changes
- Changes in Social Support
- If disengaged & explained why to Peer, share reasons for disengagement
- Engagement in risky behavior but that is not putting the youth in eminent danger (e.g., substance use; unprotected sex)
- Engagement in illegal activities: sex work, drug dealing, and substance use (if under age)

WHY?



Learning Workplace Policies, Practice & Culture

In order to be successful on the job, Supervisors need to orient YA Peers to their roles and their context. I consider this a process that begins with new staff orientation, but continues as new YA Peers step into the role, the more senior YA Peers can support orientation to workplace policy, practice, & culture. Some YA Peers will be new to employment or new to working in a non-profit setting (e.g., office building or clinical space). YA Peers are considered experts (given their lived experience with mental health services and treatment) and will be partnering with clinical staff with lots of degrees and clinical experience (who may or may not buy-into the value of peer support). Part of being successful at work is for YA Peers to be aware of the workplace social and behavior expectations, policies and cultural norms.

Make no assumptions as a supervisor. Many YA Peers have disclosed to me that they were either afraid or did not know to ask these things when they started their job. And, the longer a YA Peer stays at a particular agency, the better they are able to orient new YA Peers to the culture of the workplace.

List of Questions to Process with YA Peers

1. What is the agency mission?
2. What do you need to do when you check in or start your shift?
3. When are your breaks? How long are they for? Where do people usually go on their breaks? Is there a break room? What do you do on a break?
4. If you smoke, where can you smoke? Can I smoke with clients?
5. Where do employees usually eat lunch or dinner? Do certain employees take their work together? Can you bring a lunch? What restaurants or food stores are in the area?
6. What is the dress code? What do people typically wear daily to work? Can my tattoos be visible? Can I wear shorts or gym shoes? Can shirts have logos or sayings? Can I wear a hat?
7. Where do I store my things at work? Will my things be safe? Can I bring a purse or backpack to work?
8. Can you listen to music on the job? Can you eat or drink on the job?
9. Can you take personal phone calls at work? Can you check personal email at work?
10. What is the relationship like between the supervisor and other employees?
11. Are there rules around employees dating? If I begin a relationship with a colleague, who should I tell?
12. How does your supervisor address angry clients/families?

13. How does your supervisor address problems between employees?
14. Is there a particular supervisor who lets people get away with things?
15. If you have a problem, who and when do you go and talk to someone about it?
16. What are the attendance policies? How does your manager address tardiness?
17. When are performance evaluations? What do they look like? What are my performance goals?
18. What are some perks for employees? (e.g., free food or coffee at work; cell phone reimbursement; travel reimbursement; access to the internet)
19. What are the acceptable and unacceptable reasons for being absent and/or tardy from work?
20. What are the three most common causes for people getting fired from the agency?
21. Can I use the internet at work for personal reasons? Can I use my work email address for emailing people in my personal life?
22. How quickly am I expected to respond to an email?
23. Do staff text & email with clients?



Stop & Reflect

How do you onboard new YA Peers? Do you do anything different than what you do with other staff you supervise?

How do YA Peers learn about the agency culture?

How do you introduce standards of professionalism?

How do support YA Peers in being themselves on the job, while also adhering to agency standards?



Understanding Agency Social Norms

Agency's also have cultural norms for social interaction. YA Peers need to be aware of these norms so that they can communicate in a way that will lead to them being heard by clients, families, and co-workers. Here are discussion questions for YA Peer Supervision that have been adapted from: "30 Ways to Shine as a New Employee" by Denise Bissonnette (1999) that help to generate YA Peer awareness of agency social & cultural norms.

1. How do people at the agency address each other? How should I address administration; colleagues; clients; and families? Do I call people by their first names? When might I be more formal vs. less formal?
2. What do employees say when they answer the phone?
3. What are the customs of interruption at the agency? Can you just walk into an office or do you have to knock? (Is this different for different staff?) Do people tend to email or call each other with questions?
4. How do staff socialize during lunch or dinner breaks?
5. Are there after-hour work functions? If so, what are they like? Should I attend these? Who coordinates them?
6. What's the sense of humor in the workplace or classroom?
7. Are people at work "Facebook" friends or do they follow each other on Instagram or Twitter?
8. Do people talk about their personal lives at work? If so, what do they tend to talk about? What might I share with my colleagues? What do I want them to know about my personal life? What do I not want them knowing about me?
9. How can I "be me" at work? How can I appropriately bring elements of my identity to work (e.g., decorating cube or office space)
10. Who can you trust at work? Are there some people who are known to gossip? How is gossip addressed at work? What should you do when someone tells you something personal about a colleague that makes you uncomfortable?



Resolving Disagreement & Conflict at Work

Disagreements, frustration, & conflict between colleagues can arise – especially in agencies that are newly integrating YA Peers.

1. Your colleague is bossing you around and telling you to do their job tasks.

Resolve this situation:

2. You ask for a day off 3 weeks before and your supervisor does not give you the day off.

Resolve this situation:

3. Your colleague continues to make fun of you.

Resolve this situation:

4. You notice your coworkers are stealing or engaging in fraudulent documentation.

Resolve this situation:

5. A customer yells at you and demands a refund.

Resolve this situation:

Writing Excellent Notes in Electronic Health Records

The second most frequently asked question I get asked from providers who are employing YA Peers (the first most frequent being “how do you help YA Peers maintain healthy boundaries with their clients?”) is: **“How do we support YA peers in writing quality session notes in a timely manner for Medicaid reimbursement?”**

First, there should be an initial training period where YA Peers have the opportunity to learn the necessary components of a note and the process through which staff who are excellent at writing quality & timely notes are shadowed. When possible, the training period should include a systematic review of notes and booster sessions on note writing. As a supervisor, it is important to **co-develop individualized systems, protocols, and practices** that help YA Peers to be successful with service documentation. For effective documentation, YA Peers need:

- (1) Schedule/plan for writing & prompts to remember to write
- (2) Space with minimal distractions
- (3) Time to reflect & also write
- (4) Tools to write (e.g., voice to text options; computer; tablet; internet access)
- (5) Know what to document from a session
- (6) Know how to actually document: (a) problem/need; (b) what happened in the meeting; (c) client response; (d) client progress & (e) next steps
- (7) Be able to successfully write in clear, concise, grammatically accurate sentences with clear examples of client progress

This is a LOT – even for the most organized and efficient staff member. What we as providers need to do a better job recognizing is that individuals who are diagnosed with serious mental health conditions are also at high risk for having cognitive struggles, particularly with memory, processing, attention, and planning. By **proactively addressing documentation** by recognizing that it is challenging & that individualized systems and practices are necessary for YA Peer Success, you can avoid the negative feelings (and perceptions of failure in the role) that arise when YA Peers become consistently behind with documentation or continue to write notes that are not reimbursed. If necessary, accommodations for service documentation must be addressed **individually** with YA Peers and a plan devised to help support the YA Peer in developing the skills to effectively document support provision per agency requirements.

Second, as a supervisor, an excellent way to model service note writing is to leave 5-10 minutes at the end of a supervision meeting and co-document with a YA Peer what was accomplished during the meeting and what the next steps are for both the supervisor and the YA Peer. This not only helps YA Peers to feel like they leave Supervision with a clear plan to enact at work in order to achieve their goals, but it provides another opportunity for modeling how to partner with a client to produce a note that truly captures client experience.

TIP: Document Service Delivery with your Client!

The best way for YA Peers to write a note that is truly informed by clients (& integrates client voice and perspective) is for YA Peers to take time at the end of their session (5-10 minutes) to co-author the service note that will be entered into the electronic health record with their client. This is an exercise in reflection and analysis that can help a client and YA Peer to not only consider what they are working on; how they contributing to the process; what they have achieved, and what their plan is moving forward – but it also helps to ensure that the client and the YA Peer are truly aligned in their work together!

You are probably thinking: What if my perception of the session doesn't align with the clients? That's when you have a conversation about it! It's part of the process of getting aligned!

- **YA Peers can & should reflect on their sessions with their clients.** In doing so, they are role modeling an important practice that can be employed by clients beyond the session. Also, agreeing to disagree is a GOOD THING. It demonstrates that we acknowledge our differences and together we are co-documenting our perceptions in a way that honors both of them.
- **Supervision is an excellent place to process discrepancies** between YA Peer & client perceptions of the content, process, & outcomes of YA Peer-Client sessions. It is excellent fodder for discussion about what we really think we are doing and accomplishing in sessions when we find out our clients see things VERY differently!
- **Inherent Conflict between Deficit Note Writing & Peer Strengths-Based Approach.** You may also be thinking: the way we write notes for insurance reimbursement is very deficits-focused, how can we co-write notes that are both strength-based & reimbursable? This is where having a conversation about what to include & what not to include based on your agency's protocols- and create

TIP: Document MOST IMPORTANT Experience during Session.

Documenting the “most” important experience during a session can be super challenging to determine for staff in general. By posing the question at the end of the session with a client, “what was the most important activity that we did today?” it is possible to co-determine what this important activity actually is. It can be challenging to break down what feels like 1 activity into a series of smaller activities for billing purposes. Generally, the rule of thumb is documenting one important activity for every 15 minutes of service provision. Thus, if you have met for 30 minutes, you should have 2 activities that you engaged in during that time.

What to Include in the Note	How to Write a Good Quality Note!	Example Statements to use in your Notes
I. Problem & Need Statement		
<p>Identify presenting problem or task & associated mental health need that the Peer Provider helped the YA Client with.</p>	<p>YA Client needs assistance with:</p> <p>A. Problem/Task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpersonal skills conflict resolution budgeting <p>due to</p> <p>B. NEED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeling hopeless anxiety lack of energy disorganization impulsivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joe needs assistance with cooking due to his excessive anxiety. Joe struggles with following directions due to his getting easily overwhelmed.
II. What happened during the Meeting? Focus on the <u>MOST IMPORTANT</u> thing!		
<p>A. YA Peer Provider Action. What did the Peer Provider do in order to support the client in reaching their goals (aka: to address problem & need)</p> <p>Guideline: 1 “activity” or “intervention” per 15 minutes</p>	<p>[YA Peer Name] +</p> <p>1. VERB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrated shared validated supported <p>+ [Client Name]</p> <p>2. Add the “what”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> life skills budgeting communication <p>3. Add the “WHY”</p> <p>Specify how the action contribute to client’s goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YA Peer helped Joe identify small steps needed to work towards applying for benefits. YA Peer coached Joe on ways to approach people in order to make friends. YA Peer reminded Joe about his upcoming appointment with his therapist to manage his anxiety.
<p>B. YA Client Action. How did the client respond to the YA Peer action?</p>	<p>State what the client did or said during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [YA Client Name] did... [YA Client Name] said [YA Client Name] became 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joe completed 50% of the SSI application. Joe became anxious while in the social activity with peers.
<p>4. Show if Progress was made OR was not made.</p>	<p>Member made progress/didn’t make progress AEB (as evidenced by)...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joe made progress today AEB_____. Joe did not make progress AEB_____.
<p>5. Specify the plan.</p>	<p>What are some next steps to help support the member in working towards the identified goal?</p>	<p>Next week, staff will support Joe with completing the rest of the SSI application.</p>



Using reasonable accommodations to support YA Peer on-the-job success is a process! These can be really helpful tools that a lot of people don't know about. Supervisors need to feel comfortable with the concept of "reasonable accommodations" & maintain awareness of this process in supervision & in the development of YA Peers.

What is a "reasonable accommodation?"

Modifications or adjustments to ordinary business operations toward supporting a *qualified* employee with a disability perform *essential* job functions. The standard for reasonable accommodations:

- **Reasonableness:** Is the suggested accommodation reasonable?
- **Undue Hardship:** Will the suggested accommodation put *Undue Hardship* on the organization (productivity, quality, impact on other staff)?

Accommodation Worksheet to Guide you through this Process! There is a really fantastic description of the process of establishing and evaluating "reasonable accommodations" with YA Peers in the toolkit pages 67-71:
http://www.umassmed.edu/globalassets/tranitionsrtc/publications/effectivelyemployingyoungadultpeerproviders_a_toolkit2.pdf

Why help YA Peers to use Reasonable Accommodations?

YA Peers should understand accommodations not only for their on-the-job success, but for the employment & academic success of their clients. YA Peers experiences with requesting & negotiating accommodations provide important insights to YA clients who likely need or will need accommodations.

YA peers must recognize the need for an accommodation,

which can sometimes be tricky as they may not be open to the idea of using "an accommodation." **Explore YA Peer perspective as to what is getting in the way of their performance.** Do not assume poor performance is related to mental health! It usually isn't. Lots of system and context-related factors often come up! Having a strong working alliance with YA Peers is VERY important so that YA Peers will come to a Supervisor when struggling.

Commonly Reasonable Accommodations:

- Flexing time to go to mental or physical health appointment; take classes; pick up kids; finishing documentation
- Extra training around a particular aspect of the job (most common= documentation)
- Not working with a certain subset of clients (if they are within one's personal social network)

YA Peer Supervision Resource List

- **Building Blocks to Peer Program Success.** This toolkit provides insight into best-practices in supervising peers, which include administrative, supportive, and clinical supervision. Accessible at:
http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/6._SupervisingPeersComplete.pdf
- **Pillars of Peer Support Services Summit Six: Peer Specialist Supervision.** This guide describes the process of a meeting of peer provider stakeholders, researchers, and administrators to develop best-practice around peer support supervision. Building on 25- previously developed pillars of peer support, five principles additional principles of peer specialist supervision were developed. These include: 1) Peer Specialist Supervisors are Trained in Quality Supervisory Skills; 2) Peer Specialist Supervisors Understand and Support the Role of the Peer Specialist; 3) Peer Specialist Supervisors Understand and Promote Recovery in their Supervisory Roles; 4) Peer Specialist Supervisors Advocate for the Peer Specialist and Peer Specialist Services Across the Organization and in the Community; and 5) Peer Specialist Supervisors Promote both the Professional and Personal Growth of the Peer Specialist within Established Human Resource Standards. Accessible at: Daniels, A. S., Tunner, T. P., Powell, I., Fricks, L., Ashenden, P. (2015) Pillars of Peer Support – VI: Peer Specialist Supervision. www.pillarsofpeersupport.org; March 2015.
- **Enhancing the Medicaid Peer Provider Workforce: Recruitment, Supervision, and Retention.** This document describes a number of tips for successful employment of peer support staff. Specifically, it provides helpful appendices from Nanette Larson of Illinois Department of Mental Health for tips for effective supervision of peer support workers. Accessible at:
http://nasmhpd.org/sites/default/files/Assessment%201%20%20Enhancing%20the%20Peer%20Provider%20Workforce_9-15-14.pdf
- **Peer Services Toolkit: A Guide to Advancing and Implementing Peer-run Behavioral Health Services.** Hendry, P., Hill, T., Rosenthal, H. (2014) Peer Services Toolkit: A Guide to Advancing and Implementing Peer-run Behavioral Health Services. ACMHA. This guide provides concrete advice for supporting the success of peer run programming including how quality supervision leads to improved outcomes. Mentoring and coaching are emphasized as key for effective supervisors. Accessible at:
https://www.leaders4health.org/images/uploads/files/Peer_Services_Toolkit.pdf
- **Framework for Supportive Supervision Case Discussion.** Core Skills for HIV/AIDS Supervisors JRI Health, Education and Training Funded by the Massachusetts Department of

Public Health, HIV/AIDS Bureau. Accessible at:

http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/Framework%20for%20Supportive%20Supervision%20Case%20Discussion_0.pdf

- **Reflective Practice Guide.** Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership. This guide provides on-the-ground clinical practice and case examples of “reflective practice” in working with young children and families. The principles and approaches to practice parallel the processes of supportive supervision to young adult PRWs. Supervisors must be reflective about their supervision of YA PRWs in order to provide effective supervision. And break through the biases that clinical supervisors may have toward YA PRWs. Accessible at: <http://homevisitingva.com/conference/sheri-parcell2016supplemental.pdf>
- **Community Toolbox: Providing Supervision for Staff and Volunteers:** The Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. This free online resource provides concrete information about providing effective supervision and some of the challenges that arise in providing supervision. For example, “who should provide supervision” is an important section that all employers of YA PRWs should consider when developing their peer support service elements. Accessible at: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/effective-manager/staff-supervision/main>
- **Clinical Supervision: A Key to Treatment Success.** Dixon, G.D. (2004). Southern Coast Beacon. Southern Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center (SCATTC). This very brief article clearly outlines the differences between counseling, clinical supervision, and administrative supervision. Accessible at: <http://attcnetwork.org/explore/priorityareas/wfd/getready/docs/Beacon004.pdf>
- **Peer Self-Care Plan.** This series of documents provides helpful examples of how to teach & support self-care in PRWs. It includes activities to support PRW self-care exploration and skill development as well as a simple tool for effective supervision and ways to identify and address countertransference. Accessible at: http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/Lotus%20Supportive%20Supervision%20tools_0.pdf
- **Peers in Action (PACT) Supervision Tools.** These tools include checklists that operationalize the actions that a PRW takes with clients, allowing for self-assessment and reflection in supervision. Accessible at: <http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/PACT-SupervisionTools.pdf>
- **Administrative Supervision Scenarios.** This document provides activities for training staff to effectively supervise PRWs. Accessible at: http://peer.hdwg.org/sites/default/files/Lotus%20Administrative%20Supervision%20Tools_0.pdf

- **Supervisor Guide: Peer Support Whole Health and Wellness.** This guide specifies the multiple roles that a supervisor has of a peer support provider, including: performance, education/growth, relationships with co-workers; management issues; and personal wellness. Boundaries are highlighted as important to consider in supervision. Tucker, S. J., Tiegreen, W., Toole, J., Banathy, J., Mulloy, D., & Swarbrick, M. (2013). *Supervisor Guide: Peer Support Whole Health and Wellness Coach*. Decatur, GA: Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network. Accessible at: http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/Supervisor_Guide_to_Peer_Support_Whole_Health_and_Wellness_-c-_2013.pdf
- **Peer Specialist Toolkit: Implementing Peer Support Services in VHA.** This toolkit was designed for PRWs in the Veterans Administration. It has simple language and tips. It also highlights how supervisors can support peer identify and role to prevent “peer drift” while in the role of PRW (Ellison et al., 2012). There are a number of additional tips & resources for peer support supervisors in the appendix starting on page 89. Accessible at: http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn4/docs/Peer_Specialist_Toolkit_FINAL.pdf
- **Strategic Sharing Workbook: Youth Voice in Advocacy.** This is a fantastic tool from the Portland RTC for supervisors to support YA PRWs in developing their peer support worker identity. Supervisors can use some of the exercises to assist young people in thinking about who they are and the story that they want to use to inspire system level change. It’s youth-friendly and can be adapted for individual connections between YA PRWs and YA clients. Accessible at: <http://www.pathwaysrtc.pdx.edu/pdf/pbStrategicSharingGuide.pdf>