

## **BA Peer Helper 10-12**

**District Name:** Kamloops/Thompson

**District Number:** 73

**Developed by:** Al Baker and Susan Dixon

**Date Developed:** 29 March 2004

**School Name:**

**Principal's Name:**

**Board/Authority Approval Date:** 2004/05/17

**Board/Authority Signature:**

**Course Name:** Peer Helper

**Grade Level of Course:** Grade 10, 11 and 12

**Number of Course Credits:** 4

**Number of Hours of Instruction:** 120

**Prerequisite(s):** Students will be required to follow an application process which will include a questionnaire, teacher/counsellor recommendation and an interview. Students typically accepted into this course will demonstrate maturity, responsibility, an ability to communicate clearly and have good interpersonal skills. They will be respectful and caring of the needs of others and have a willingness to work with individuals of divergent interests and experiences.

**Special Training, Facilities or Equipment Required:** Teacher or resource person will need evidence of communication skills training and/or a counselling background.

**Course Synopsis:** This course prepares and motivates students to provide leadership and assistance to others in their schools. Students will develop skills in communication, interpersonal relations, leadership, teamwork and conflict resolution and apply these skills in mentoring roles. They will work with individuals and/or small groups. Students will learn the value and complexity of social diversity while acquiring an appreciation of the importance of contributing to their communities and helping others throughout their lives.

**Rationale:** This course recognizes that students most often seek out other students for help when they are experiencing some frustration, concern, worry or problem (Carr & Saunders, 1979). The peer group is an excellent resource to utilize when developing any type of outreach, presentation or early intervention programs in the school or community. This course trains students to use communication skills to facilitate self-exploration and decision-making permitting them to provide supervised assistance to other students to help think through and reflect on concerns they might be experiencing. Training students to take on a more responsible and active role in the school community will help create a more positive school climate.

### **Organizational Structure:**

#### **A. Goals:**

- a) To improve interpersonal relationships among peers.
- b) To teach effective communication skills to peer helpers.
- c) To improve school climate by creating a more “effective” and caring school.
- d) To improve the sense of “community” among students and staff.
- e) To improve self-esteem and self-worth of students.

#### **B. Objectives:**

Peer helpers will reach the goals by:

- a) acting as positive role models for other students
- b) helping other students learn effective behaviours that are socially acceptable
- c) learning basic helping skills using a model such as the University of Victoria Peer Counselling Project
- d) learning how to deal effectively and appropriately with special issues such as suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse, bullying and racism
- e) being trained to facilitate mini-sessions in classrooms in areas of special concern and interest. These might include self-esteem, alcohol and drug abuse, problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- f) Organizing special events that promote a positive school climate (e.g. birthday boards, grade 7 transition, out-reach to elementary schools)

## **A. Training**

Peer helpers will be trained in basic communication skills including attending, roadblocks to communication, giving feedback, empathy, questioning, “I-messages”, problem solving, ethics and referrals. Training sessions will follow an experiential learning format thereby accessing the knowledge and experience of the participants. The objectives of the training will be to increase skills, knowledge, self-awareness and sensitivity to others.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

#### **a) Getting Acquainted**

*It is expected that students will:*

- begin feeling comfortable interacting with other members of the group
- learn that only selective information is shared

#### **b) Non-Verbal Attending**

*It is expected that students will:*

- learn the difference between attending and non-attending skills
- improve their power of observation of non-verbal communication

#### **c) Communication**

*It is expected that students will:*

- understand a more facilitating method of communication both verbally and non-verbally

#### **d) Listening**

*It is expected that students will:*

- learn to listen for content and then be able to summarize what was heard

#### **e) Recognizing Feelings**

*It is expected that students will:*

- be able to recognize and identify feelings
- be able to connect similar feelings
- continue to recognize that not all feelings are verbally expressed

#### **f) Trust**

*It is expected that students will:*

- be aware of the importance of developing a high level of trust as a basis for all positive relationships

**g) Listening and Responding**

*It is expected that students will:*

- develop skills in recognizing feelings
- develop skills in reflecting and responding in an empathetic manner

**h) Values Clarification**

*It is expected that students will:*

- be aware of how values affect thought, opinion-making, decision-making and action

**i) Decision-Making/Problem-Solving**

*It is expected that students will:*

- develop an understanding of the steps to be followed when searching for the solution to a problem
- be aware of efficient and effectual means of making a decision
- be aware of how various decisions affect their lives
- be aware of difficulties inherent in making poor choices

**B. Differentiation Between Grade 10, 11 and 12**

	<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Grade 11</b>	<b>Grade 12</b>
Communication Skills	Identify	Apply	Independently Apply
Leadership Activities	Participate	Participate and Collaboratively Initiate	Participate and Independently Initiate
Organizational Skills	Collaborate	Independent and Collaborative	Independent and Collaborative
Training Sessions	Participate	Assist in Mentoring	Mentor

**Instructional Component:** The student peer helper will be exposed to a variety of learning experiences which develop the skills necessary to assist others and carry out related activities. The classroom teacher may use (but is not limited to):

- direct instruction
- role playing
- modeling
- practical experience
- brainstorming
- group work

**Assessment Component:** Student evaluation, based on the student meeting the learning outcomes, will be done on an on-going basis including both peer helper self-assessment and teacher assessment of:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • communication skills                       | 25% |
| • leadership skills                          | 15% |
| • interpersonal skills                       | 15% |
| • conflict resolution/problem-solving skills | 10% |
| • relationships skills                       | 10% |
| • teaching/mentoring skills                  | 10% |
| • organizational skills                      | 15% |

TOTAL 100%

A variety of assessment methods to fit the unique learning outcomes and performance nature of this course should be selected. These might include:

- teacher observation
- logs/journals
- lesson plans
- written assignments
- presentations
- special projects

### **Learning Resources:**

1. University of Victoria Peer Counselling Project
2. Courage 2 Care: a Training Retreat for Peer Counsellors ~ Sharon Burhoe
3. Peer Helping: A Training Guide ~ Greg Brigman and Barbara Earley

