

Peer Counseling Sample Introduction

Hi, my name is _____. And you are? (You may make small talk or ask light questions to put student at ease.) Are you familiar with the Peer Counseling Program? Well, let me tell you a little bit about the program. We are a group of students trained to be good listeners and keep everything confidential, but I do meet briefly with my teacher/advisor _____ after each student I see. Do you know _____? She/he will keep our discussion confidential too. The only kind of information we would have to report is if something you tell me involves any of these 3 duties to inform, which include: Harm to self, Harm to others, future harm, if you do discuss anything within those duties, I will inform my advisor. Knowing all this information would you like to continue with this session?

You look kind of (identify feeling) so what's going on? ... or, you wanted to talk to a peer counselor? ... or, so what brings you here?

Guidelines for Starting Conversations

- Introduce self first, if first time meeting.
- Open conversation with a topic that may be of interest to you both.
- Ask informal questions that will provide “free information” on which the conversation may be built and which may introduce the subject of interests to both.
 - a) EXAMPLES: have you lived in other places? Have you traveled outside of the country? Where have you gone on vacation?
- Make eye contact and look at the person
- Show you are listening by following with a comment related to what they just said.
- Avoid asking questions with a yes or no answer.
- Smile occasionally but don't laugh or giggle
- use a tone of voice that conveys sincerity, do not sound
- Do not probe/push students into areas the person has not opened up about because the subject may be too personal.
- Allow silence to occur when another may be considering what to answer, or both are thinking of new directions to the with the conversation.

Communication Stoppers

These are NOT RECOMMENDED!

- Shouldering:
 - “you should do this instead; it’s better than...”
- Know-It-All:
 - “I said I was right from the start”
 - “I told you...”
 - “I knew it all along”
- Criticizing:
 - “That was just okay, but you did this and that *all wrong*”
- Belittling:
 - “If you werent so stupid, then maybe _____ wouldnt be happening.
- Advising:
 - “What you did was a mistake. Next time, you better do what I say”
- Demanding:
 - “talk NOW!”
 - “You’re here for a reason. What is it?”
- Joking:
 - “Hey, if you flunk out of school, you’ll have lots of time to play video games.”
- Denying:
 - “I don’t believe it happened that way, you’re just too upset to think straight “
- Blaming:
 - “You got yourself into this mess, you get yourself out.”
- Ignore:
 - “Don’t worry about finals; you can always go to summer school”
- ME ME ME:
 - “You think you have problems... let me tell you!”