

10

SESSION

**Working with
professionals**



10.1 Introduction

This unit is about cooperation between peer support agents and professionals. Focus is on how to build equal and respectful partnership and on the respective roles of the peer supporter and the professionals. The unit also considers the type of support the peer workers can expect from the professionals and how to handle challenges that may arise from this cooperation.

10.2 Learning outcomes

- Learn how good cooperation is born
- Practice relationship and interaction skills between per support agents and professionals
- Understand what kind of authority and responsibilities a professional has
- Understand the benefits of cooperation when working with homeless people

10.3 Training session plan

DURATION

2,5 h

MATERIALS

- ATL Trainer Curriculum
- JCS Manual (it includes worksheets, case scenarios and self-assessment exercises)
- Worksheets and case scenario
- Stationery (paper in different sizes, cardboard, pens, pencils, markers, sticky notes, etc.)
- Pieces of paper with names of machines written
- Flipchart/whiteboard
- Power Point presentations of the contents (optional)
- Computer (optional)
- Projector/TV (optional)

CONCEPTUAL CONTENTS

- ATL Trainer Curriculum, Unit 3, Mixed profile intervention teams. Supporting a peer supporter
- JCS Manual, Unit 10, Working with professionals

ACTIVITY 1	Expectations regarding professionals
DURATION	35 min
WORKSHEET REFERENCE	N/A
PROCEDURE	<p>Participants will be given post-it notes and pens. They are asked to write on the post-it notes things that, in their opinion, are important for a peer supporter when working together with professionals (outreach workers, case managers, social workers, etc.) in an organization.</p> <p>Participants can write down their ideas freely or with the help of, for example, the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction and mutual relationship • Working hours and conditions • Working in a team and organization • Welfare and occupational safety <p>Next, all the notes are stuck onto a large paper or a board. If themes have been used, group the notes on the paper according to the themes. If participants have written their ideas freely, the trainer can still try to group the notes by topic.</p> <p>Then, the trainer (or one of the participants) reads aloud the expectations written by the participants and discusses them. The trainer will moderate the discussion and ask follow-up questions.</p>



ACTIVITY 2	Case scenario analysis
DURATION	40 min
WORKSHEET REFERENCE	Story of Lucas
PROCEDURE	<p>Participants are divided into groups of 3-4 persons. Each group reads Lucas’ story and answers the questions in it and writes down the main points.</p> <p>This is followed by a joint discussion on how a professional/ a team of professionals and a peer supporter could help Lucas together. You can use the questions in the story to help. All groups share their ideas and the trainer moderates the discussion.</p>

ACTIVITY 3	SWOT analysis – collaboration with professionals
DURATION	40 min
WORKSHEET REFERENCE	JCS Manual, Unit 10, Worksheet 1 “Collaboration with professionals – SWOT Analysis”
PROCEDURE	Introduce the SWOT analysis to the participants. Divide the participants into groups of 3-4 persons and ask each group to conduct the SWOT analysis.

ACTIVITY 4	What kind of a coworker do I want to be?
DURATION	25 min
WORKSHEET REFERENCE	JCS Manual, Unit 10, Worksheet 2 “What kind of a coworker do I want to be?”
PROCEDURE	<p>The purpose of the assignment is to consider what a good co-worker is like.</p> <p>First, play the video (5min): Final video of the NEA project (video in Finnish with subtitles in English)</p> <p>If your participants have trouble understanding English, consider searching for a short video in your language addressing the qualities of a good co-worker.</p> <p>Ask participants to select five characteristics on the Worksheet that they would like to have themselves. Then ask them to select five qualities they would like their co-workers to have. Next, ask the participants to delete two of the characteristics they chose for themselves, leaving three that are most important to them. Then, ask them to do the same for the characteristics they would like their co-workers to have.</p> <p>Then, participants share with the group the characteristics they selected and those two that were left out. Moderate a discussion on why the participants chose those particular characteristics and whether they chose the same qualities in relation to themselves and to their colleagues.</p>

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION	<p>At the end of the session, ask the participants questions that stimulate reflection, namely “How do you think today’s session has brought us closer to becoming peer supporters?”. Then, invite participants to pinpoint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what stroke their attention, • what they gained/learned, • what they want to keep as a reference point from today’s session <p>Invite the group to ask you any questions related to today’s session and/or the training.</p>
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10.4 Bibliography / Webliography

- Museum Hack, [The Only List of Icebreaker Questions You’ll Ever Need](#), 2021
- Mind Tools, [What is SWOT analysis?](#)

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SESSION

worksheets and case scenario



Accommodating a travelling **life**

Worksheet 1 - Collaboration with professionals.

SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS

What are the strengths of a collaboration between professionals and peer supporters work together?

WEAKNESSES

What kind of challenges and weaknesses there can be between professional and peer supporter?

SWOT



OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities cooperation between professionals and peer supporter provides for the work with

THREATS

What external threats can be to a successful cooperation? (e.g. other professionals, resources)



STRENGTHS

WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES

THREATS

Worksheet 2 – What kind of a coworker do I want to be?

Choose the five most important characteristics that describe the kind of co-worker you want to be, by writing ME next to them. Then choose 5 characteristics that you would like your coworker to have, by writing CW next to them.

Active	Cooperative	Happy	Peaceful
Admirable	Creative	Hardworking	Polite
Adventurous	Curious	Helpful	Reliable
Agreeable	Dedicated	Honest	Respectful
Appreciative	Easy-going	Hopeful	Responsible
Benevolent	Educated	Humble	Self-disciplined
Brave	Enthusiastic	Intelligent	Selfless
Capable	Ethical	Inventive	Sincere
Caring	Exciting	Kind	Skillful
Charming	Extraordinary	Loving	Strong
Cheerful	Fair	Loyal	Thoughtful
Clear-headed	Focused	Neat	Trustworthy
Clever	Forgiving	Nice	Understanding
Compassionate	Friendly	Optimistic	Unselfish
Confident	Good-natured	Organized	Wise



CASE SCENARIO – Story of Lucas

PART 1

Lucas is in his late twenties. He says he has been living on the street for nearly 7 years now and has changed cities several times. An NGO street working team approached Lucas a few months ago, in his latest location. He has been pretty distrustful and has barely shared any personal information about himself which is why the NGO workers know little about him. He carries all his belongings- reduced to essentials that can be put in a hiking backpack and a supermarket trolley - with him everywhere. He refuses to leave them even with the professionals from the NGO. He always sleeps in an abandoned warehouse in a local park and refuses to go to the shelter.

The NGO workers suspect a mental health problem. They talk to several people that work in the area where he can usually be found, who confirm that he frequently acts as if he has had hallucinations. The workers have been trying to talk Lucas into undergoing a medical examination and turning to the shelter where he could get support to start his recovery process but he refuses to set foot there.

- What may be the reason(s) for Lucas not wanting to share information with the NGO workers?
- With this little information about him, do you believe the services can help Lucas recover?
- As a peer support agent, how would you approach Lucas and encourage him to open up and talk about his past experiences and present concerns?

PART 2

A few months have passed since you and your team started to work with Lucas. He has finally started to share some more personal information with you.

It turns out that both Lucas' parents had a serious drinking problem, were violent with each other and with the kids. They were deprived of parental rights when Lucas was 7 years old and the boy went to live with his grandmother. Eventually, his grandmother died. His father was nowhere to be found and his mother had formed a new family and renounced all contact with her firstborn son. He stayed with his uncle, but their relationship was conflictive and violent.

Lucas never liked to study. It was hard for him to concentrate, the letters in the books were blurry and the teachers would always get angry with him because he would never sit still. He dropped out of middle school. Sometime after, following the counsel of a social worker, he enrolled in a gardening VET training course. He was good at it and soon he found a job. However, he still felt lonely and unhappy. When he turned 18 his uncle told him to find himself a place and move out. He spent most of his money on drugs. His mental health condition got worse as the months went by. He felt frustrated and angry. It was getting more and more difficult for him to concentrate and memorize things. He started to hear voices and that frustrated and scared him even more. At work, he turned aggressive towards his boss and colleagues and got fired. At that point, Lucas stopped leaving his apartment. He was too afraid to look for a job. The voices in his head followed him everywhere. After a few months, he got evicted from the apartment and he was left out on the street with nowhere to go.

He turned to the local homeless shelter. He didn't want to talk to anyone, not fellow users, not the professionals. He would sleep there, get up in the morning, and leave without exchanging a word with anyone and wouldn't come back until late in the evening to get directly into bed. Some of the other users were pretty aggressive towards him. They would call him "dumb". He was bullied and got robbed on several occasions. One day, Lucas was accused by a fellow user of stealing from him. Said user got

physical with him. Finally, Lucas lost control and beat up the man out of rage and helplessness. That earned him a police detention and led to him being banned from the shelter. He resolved to never go back to a shelter, not to this one and not to any other.

This happened a few years ago. Since then, Lucas moved from town to town on several occasions.

Questions for reflection

- 1.** What might be Lucas' needs right now?
- 2.** Do you think Lucas is aware of his needs? If you were in his place what would you think?
- 3.** What might help Lucas engage in and progress with the recovery process? What kind of professional services could help him?
- 4.** Do you think peer support could be helpful for Lucas at this stage? If so, in what way?
- 5.** Think of an action(s) that, as a peer support agent, you could carry out to support Lucas and help him engage in the recovery process



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end of session

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