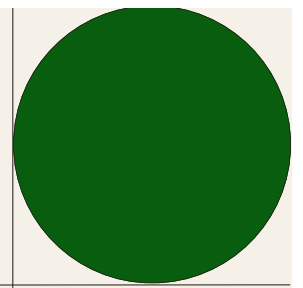


HOW TO START PEER TO PEER



PROGRAM OVERVIEW & STEPS

The mission of the Peer to Peer program is to model appropriate social behaviors, build friendships, develop leadership and communication skills, and promote independence and self-advocacy.

Step 1	Identify a motivated program leader – either general or special education. Ensure that they have the needed training to begin the program.
Step 2	Organize the meeting time for the program. Often, Peer to Peer will take place during a dedicated class time.
Step 3	Accept applications from potential peer mentors during the prior semester. You should assess student fit with the program goals, academic performance, and their behavior. Teacher recommendations may enhance identification of the strongest applicants.
Step 4	Develop a syllabus and expectations for mentors and mentees involved in the program.
Step 5	Assess mentor and mentee learning throughout the semester or year. Solicit feedback on partnerships and on the teachers involved in the class to ensure that course objectives and goals are being met.
Step 6	Out of school time is typically required for high school students and helps enhance the program experience.

WHAT TO DO DURING CLASS?

<i>Variability & Flexibility</i>	Although the program mission is the same across schools, there is flexibility in delivery depending on your students, resources, and what grade or year of program mentors are in.
<i>Disability Knowledge</i>	One key component involves learning about different disabilities. An example project for assessing this would be to have mentors assess accessibility in their community for different types of disabilities. Disability awareness events can also enhance learning in this area.
<i>Communication Skills</i>	Both mentors and mentees should develop communication skills from the program to better understand each other. These skills will vary depending on communication needs . An example is mentors learning how to use AAC devices or different conversational balance.
<i>Leadership Skills</i>	Mentors in Peer to Peer develop leadership qualities and are often visible in the school community for their role. They can demonstrate these skills by leading and facilitating connections between their mentees and their general education peers in and out of the classroom. As for the mentees, they can practice their leadership skills by taking a leadership role in collaborative class assignments.
<i>Friendship Development</i>	Although friendship cannot be compulsory, it can be created. Community should be developed during all class days, combined and separate. Further, friendships can be built during out of school activities, in pairs, and in groups. Some examples of activities could include attending school events or facilitating class field trips!
<i>Independence</i>	Gaining independence and autonomy is a key goal for mentees. With mentor support, this can be practiced in the classroom or in the community. For example, a mentee may practice ordering off of a menu for an in-class activity and then demonstrate this skill at a restaurant with a mentor during their out-of-school time.
<i>Advocacy</i>	Mentors and mentees develop the ability to advocate not only for themselves but for others. To encourage these skills, it is important to provide students the appropriate language and a safe environment to practice. An example activity would be to provide students with different scenarios to work through together to practice advocating for themselves and others.

ASSESSMENTS

Using reliable assessments of key program goals may help to better understand how the program is working for your school. We recommend seeking feedback regularly from mentors about their partnership with mentees as well as from mentees about their partnership with mentors. Feedback from the students about the teacher/s and leaders should be solicited at least four times per year. Assessments of performance of students (mentors and mentees) should be assessed by the teacher/s often. These items are a starting place to consider assessing outcomes of the program.

Skills <i>Cognitive Skills, Goal Setting, & Group Processes scales of YES (Hansen et al., 2003)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In Peer to Peer I have improved academic skills (reading, writing, math).2. In Peer to Peer I have improved Skills communication skills.3. I set goals for myself in Peer to Peer.4. I learned to find ways to achieve my goals.5. I learned to consider possible obstacles when making plans.6. Learned that working together requires some compromise.7. Learned to be patient with my peers.8. Learned how my emotions/attitude affect others in the group.
Leadership <i>Feedback and Leadership scales of YES (Hansen et al., 2003)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I learned about the challenges of being a leader.2. Others counted on me.3. I had a chance to lead a group.4. I became better at giving feedback in Peer to Peer.5. I became better at receiving feedback in Peer to Peer.
Friendship <i>Relatedness scale of Basic Psychological Needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I consider my mentee/mentor my friend.2. I feel close to my mentee/mentor.3. I am friends with other mentors/mentees in Peer to Peer.4. I really like the people I interact with5. I get along with people I come into contact with.6. I pretty much keep to myself and don't have a lot of social contacts.7. I consider the people I regularly interact with to be my friends.8. People in my life care about me.9. The people I interact with regularly do not seem to like me much.10. People are generally pretty friendly towards me.

Independence <i>Autonomy scale of Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction</i> <i>(Deci & Ryan, 2000)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life. 2. I feel pressured in my life. 3. I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions. 4. In my daily life, I frequently have to do what I am told. 5. People I interact with on a daily basis tend to take my feelings into consideration. 6. I feel like I can pretty much be myself in my daily situations. 7. There is not much opportunity for me to decide for myself how to do things in my life.
Self-Advocacy <i>(Holzberg et al., 2019)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer to Peer helped me explain my needs (and my disability). 2. I have the confidence to ask for what I need. 3. I am aware of my own needs. 4. I can advocate for myself.
Disability related items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is easy to interact with my peers who have disabilities. 2. I enjoy interacting with my peers who have disabilities. 3. People with disabilities are as capable as I am in many ways.
School Belongingness <i>(Arslan & Duru, 2017)</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I feel that I do not belong in this school. 2. I think that I am not involved in most of the activities at school. 3. I feel myself excluded in this school. 4. In this school, my friends, peers, and teachers usually ignore me. 5. I have no close connections with people in this school. 6. I can really be myself in this school. 7. I have close relationships with my teachers and friends. 8. I feel that I am accepted by other people at school. 9. I see myself as a part of this school. 10. I think that people care about me in this school.

TRAINING

<i>Peer to Peer leaders</i>	For further training and assistance with starting the Peer to Peer program at your own high school, coordination with already established schools will be helpful. Several schools in the state of North Dakota currently have this program.
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