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Setting the scene

In the UK, six children and young people (CYP) in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health problem, most of whom will not seek help for up to 10 years. There is growing awareness that earlier preventative support that focuses on building resilience and promoting wellbeing is necessary to meet CYP’s mental health needs. Many children and young people remain reluctant to engage with preventive support, so that by the time they present to services, their difficulties may be more severe leading to poorer outcomes.

The Peer Support for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Programme aims to help solve this problem.

Preference for peer support – Many CYP find it easier to talk to their peers first, before they talk to others such as family members or professionals. As a result, there has been an increased drive to develop peer-based initiatives, particularly programmes that focus on accessing help and mental health support earlier.

A need for evidence – It is hoped that peer mentoring and the wider offer of peer support may address some of this unmet need, although evidence to date that peer support can fill this gap has been limited.

About this toolkit – This toolkit was developed to sit alongside a training programme supporting schools/colleges and children and young people’s community organisations (CYPCOs) to set up their own mental health and emotional wellbeing peer support programmes.

Not one size fits all – The toolkit is not designed to be a series of instructions to follow so that everyone develops and designs the same model. Instead, it aims to offer key points that need to be taken into account when embarking on this work and highlights some of the potential risks.

The Core principles – We have developed 5 Core Principles that will assist school/colleges and community organisations in co-designing, co-producing and co-delivering a peer support programme that works for their own settings.

Building on evidence, adapting to local need – Although we have drawn up this guidance from the evidence base and examples of national and international best practice, a peer support programme needs to be reflective of and responsive to the needs of children and young people in their own context.

Dr Nick Barnes & Dr Simon Munk Co-Authors
Abbreviations and phrases

**CYP** – Children and young people

**CAMHS** – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**CYPMH Services** – Children and young people’s mental health services

‘**Staff’** – All staff in either school/colleges or community organisations who may be involved in your programme.

‘**Settings’** – This refers to both school/college and community settings

**Peer mentors and mentees** – Throughout this toolkit, we felt it was easier to refer to mentors and mentees, rather than ‘supporters’ and ‘those that are being supported’.

**Programme facilitator** – The member of staff recruited to deliver your programme in your setting.

**CYPCO** – Children and young people’s community organisations.

Supporting documents

The following downloadable documents are referenced at the start of each relevant section:

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<th>DOCUMENT REFERENCE</th>
<th>DOCUMENT TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>5 Core Principles of Peer Support in Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>R2</td>
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We would like to thank:

Rachel Harris
Young Minds Activists
Young Minds Peer Mentors, Valentines High School, Ilford
Peter Czajkowski, Park View School, Haringey
Nicola Turhan
Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, Headteachers Quality Assurance Panel
Chapter 1
AN INTRODUCTION TO PEER SUPPORT

Peer support uses the knowledge, skills and experience of children and young people in a planned and structured way to understand, support, inform and help develop the skills, understanding, confidence and self-awareness of other children and young people with whom they have something in common.

This toolkit uses the phrase ‘peer support’ as an umbrella term to encompass an array of interventions and approaches that may be offered across different settings. These might include peer tutoring, peer coaching, peer listening, peer mentoring, peer mediation, peer counselling, befriending and buddyng.

Although approaches to peer support can be quite distinctive and varied, they offer three common features that include:

- CYP helping and supporting each other.
- Support being offered in a planned and structured way.
- Supporters that are trained to fulfil their role.

Peer support can be delivered in different ways:

**1:1** – This might include drop-in support or targeted interventions with a referral scheme.

**Group based** – This might be for a targeted group or peer-led teaching for a whole class.

**Training based programmes** – These involve skilling up CYP to provide training and sharing of expertise across their school/college or community setting.

**Community based programmes** – such as developing peer support within community organisation settings.

**Online support** – through websites and apps for more immediate and accessible peer support.

Mental health peer support for children and young people

Mental wellbeing is commonly understood as ‘feeling good and functioning well’. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being and affects how we think, feel, and act.

**Who is mental health peer support for?**

When thinking about CYP mental health and emotional wellbeing from a perspective of prevention and early help this support can be:

**Universal** – Looking to provide support across a whole population of CYP, for example a whole school or year group.

**Targeted** – Looking to build the positive wellbeing of specific groups of CYP where there is a known vulnerability to mental health difficulties and/or where they have some experience of mental health difficulties*. This may include:

- CYP with parents with mental health difficulties.
- CYP who offend or join gangs.
- CYP who are in care.
- CYP with a parent in prison.
- Young Carers.
- CYP excluded from school/college.
- Migrants and refugees.
- CYP with a long-term illness or disability.
- CYP experiencing family conflict or domestic violence.
- CYP in the lowest socio-economic group.
- Members of the LGBTQ community or CYP with questions about gender identity.

*Please note that there are some mental health difficulties that are beyond the scope of Peer Support – these are discussed in Chapter 2.
‘Mental health peer support is ...

A trained child or young person supporting other children and young people through offering help and support, building emotional resilience, promoting wellbeing and positive mental health, and signposting to further support.’

Thinking about potential difficulties

When setting up a peer support programme specifically focused on mental health there are often concerns raised about safety and risk that need to be addressed from the start.

Concerns might include:

- Failing to address or missing mental health needs and/or safeguarding issues that may have been disclosed in the session.
- Breaking confidentiality.
- CYP worrying that the programme does not feel safe or makes them feel stigmatised.

The following risk management template has been developed to assist staff and CYP to think about how these risks can be identified and mitigated. The table below outlines examples of some potential risks. A copy of this template is also available in the Risk Management Template (T1) so you can complete your own risk assessment relevant to your setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>RATING (Likelihood)</th>
<th>RATING (Impact)</th>
<th>Description of Impact</th>
<th>Action being taken to manage risk</th>
<th>Risk responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breach of confidentiality within PSP*</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Could impact on the reputation of PSP and have emotional impact on individual</td>
<td>Robust training and follow up training sessions Supervision Mentor-mentee training sessions</td>
<td>PF**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM*** giving unhelpful/the wrong advice</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>CYP don’t feel helped by programme leading to disengagement</td>
<td>Robust training Supervision Reflective practice</td>
<td>PF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure by CYP not picked up and raised in supervision by PM</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Serious safeguarding or mental health need unaddressed</td>
<td>Training Supervision Reflective practice Space for 1:1 support</td>
<td>PF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Peer Support Programme
**Programme Facilitators
***Peer Mentors
5 CORE PRINCIPLES OF PEER SUPPORT

Peer Support for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

1. Be creative in how you engage young people
2. Think carefully about mentor and mentee recruitment
3. Build trust to create a safe and bounded space for change
4. Collaborate, co-design, and co-produce with young people
5. Ensure mentors are adequately trained and supervised

www.annafreud.org/peersupportprogramme
email us on: peersupportprogramme@annafreud.org
Principles of Peer Support

Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

1. 

2. **Involving the right people**
   - Be creative in how you engage young people
   - Think carefully about mentor and mentee recruitment
   - Build trust to create space for change
   - Collaborate, co-design, and co-produce with young people
   - Ensure mentors are adequately trained and supervised

3. **Focus on relationships**

4. **Encourage young people’s ownership**
The 5 Core Principles of Peer Support

The 5 Core Principles provide a scaffold to co-develop and co-deliver a programme that is effective, evidence-based, safe, offers reassurance to all involved and is meaningful to the CYP in your setting to help them develop, learn and aspire.

Aligning your programme to the 5 Core Principles will help to ensure that your programme is safe, manageable, effective and sustainable. It is therefore essential that you define from the start the objectives of your peer support programme. Peer mentors should not be supporting a CYP with considerable and/or complex needs. The role of a peer support programme is not to be an alternative to specialist support, and the training of peer mentors is not to develop a team of volunteer counsellors or therapists.

These 5 Core Principles were developed in consultation with CYP, facilitated by YoungMinds. A worksheet of the 5 Core Principles in Practice (R1) for you to use to reflect on how your programme is meeting the 5 Core Principles is available in the supporting documents.

1. Work where young people ‘are at’

Be creative in how you engage young people – CYP should be involved at various stages using creative methods and resources to make sure they engage to the fullest extent possible. For example, some students may respond to art, others, sport, or dance etc. Any resources or activities also need to be at the appropriate developmental level.

2. Involve the right people

Think carefully about mentor and mentee recruitment

When setting up a peer support programme it is essential to think about who to involve, both within your staff team, as peer mentors and for those that you are seeking to support. Peers are often in a better position to relate to CYP than adults or professionals. Research conducted by young researchers however, suggests that the ability to relate to the CYP and offer support based on their own experience and/or understanding of their mentee’s situation is as important as being a ‘peer’ of the same age group.

Reducing the risks

It is important to undertake a screening process to ensure that the level of need is not too significant for the peer mentors to manage and that peer mentors are appropriate. Similarly, there be should adequate access to support and supervision should difficult emotions arise.

Reasons for being involved

CYP often look to a peer mentor as someone who might be able to relate to their current situation, and hence you may wish to recruit those that could be regarded as ‘experts by experience’ as well as other highly engaged students. There may be a role for different students in different stages, for example, co-developing the programme as opposed to being a mentor. Selecting a peer mentor is discussed in Chapter 2.

Building a staff team – avoiding working in isolation

Sharing the role, rather than being reliant on one very busy individual is vital, as the staff who take a lead on this work will effectively be modelling the expectations that they are asking of their peer mentors. The key qualities expected of an effective peer mentor of reliability, loyalty, honesty and empathy also need to be demonstrated by the staff leading the programme within their setting. Senior leadership support will enable your programme to be as successful as possible.

3. Focus on relationships

Build trust to create space for change

Safe and trusting relationships are essential to promoting positive mental health and resilience and are key to a successful peer support programme. A safe, stable and nurturing relationship with their caregiver(s) enables CYP to learn to manage their own emotions, recognise and respond to emotional states in others, develop close relationships and have confidence to explore. Exposure to trauma
(such as domestic violence, or a sudden loss) or other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affects attachment and increases the risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties. CYP who have had ACEs may find it hard to communicate with or trust others, and struggle to access or engage with the support that is on offer. These issues may also arise in supervision (see Chapter 4).

Considerable emphasis should be placed on supporting the peer mentors to initiate and build relationships with their mentees (see Session Plans). Similarly, as programme facilitators, it is important to build relationships with mentors for effective supervision. Adequate training should be provided to all staff or students involved in your programme.

4. Young people’s ownership

Collaborate, co-design, co-produce and co-deliver

Consultations with CYP about peer support frequently endorse the stance, ‘Nothing about us without us’. It is essential that CYP are involved from the start in the development of any peer support programme and at all stages. This will help to ensure that your programme is able to effectively engage the CYP it is trying to reach and provide them with a sense of agency or ownership to bring about change. They will be attentive to the needs of other CYP and how this support could be best offered within their setting. What a programme is called, how it is promoted, when it is delivered and where it is provided are all key matters to be explored and discussed.

Monitoring impact, and highlighting risks

The CYP who were consulted in the development of this toolkit highlighted issues and concerns that may arise from their perspective in any peer support programme. CYP are often well placed to identify and rectify any problems that might emerge and can provide, for example, guidance about the language used to open a dialogue about mental health, or how to name a peer support programme.

Working ‘at arm’s length’ and working alongside

Staff should work ‘at arm’s length’ and alongside mentors. Mentors should work in the same manner with mentees. This will allow CYP to have ownership of the programme, facilitate learning and foster a sense of collaboration.

5. Be safe and boundaried

Ensure mentors are adequately trained and supervised

Your peer support programme needs to be safe and have clear lines of communication for addressing any safeguarding and/or urgent mental health concerns that may arise. The main concerns that arise when setting up a peer support programme are how to address these safeguarding matters and how well CYP are able to maintain boundaries and confidentiality around the work they do with their peers. These concerns can be addressed through the training, supervision and identification of ongoing training needs throughout the running of the programme.

Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Boundaries

Peer mentors need thorough training and ongoing support through supervision to ensure that they do not feel overburdened or overwhelmed by responsibility. Discussions and role plays about this topic can be engaging and informative for staff, as peer mentors are often acutely aware of their responsibilities to those that they support.

Linking in with wider support systems

Programme facilitators need clear pathways to accessing support from the safeguarding leads within their setting. Being open and clear about what can be shared in supervision (either in a group, or 1:1) and what needs to be discussed with others outside of the peer support setting will enable the peer mentors, and subsequently mentees, to feel confident in their roles. CYP need to feel safe and need to be able to trust the support that has been put in place in order to engage.
Getting help

A peer support programme aims to offer a preventative approach and an early intervention to address mental health needs within your setting. CYP who require specialist support need to be directed to those services and not to be managed within the peer support programme.

As a programme facilitator, you are not expected to be an expert in CYP mental health. It is also important that the peer mentors are aware of the limitations of their role.

It’s OK to not know

Promoting resilience in CYP includes developing the “capacity of CYP to navigate their ways to resources that promote and sustain well-being”. Peer mentors play a key role in supporting their mentees to access wider support from services in the community and need to be comfortable with the idea that they or programme facilitators will not have all the answers. The limitations of the role of peer support should be spelt out clearly, and not be seen as failure or something that should be dismissed or disregarded. Being aware of one’s limitations is a valuable skill for both the peer mentors and programme facilitators to develop and will contribute to risk management planning and supervision.

Where to access more information

The supporting document offers websites and agencies that can provide further training and e-learning in relation to CYP mental health (R2).

Making a referral to CAMHS/specialist support

You may or may not be able to make a referral to specialist CYPMH or CAMHS in your area. The supporting document provides key questions to think about when making a referral (R3). Even if you are not in a position to make a direct referral to CAMHS, these questions could be used for supporting other professionals in making an optimal referral for specialist support, as well as thinking about how you may be able to support the CYP or their parents or carers.
Chapter 2
GETTING STARTED

Establishing a programme in your setting

Peer support can build resilience and emotional wellbeing in both the peer mentors and the CYP they are supporting. Whilst all CYP could benefit from having peer support, CYP with early emotional health difficulties may benefit the most from peer support. Those with more significant emotional difficulties often need additional access to specialist mental health support.

To establish or refine your peer support programme, we would recommend the following steps:

1. Consider which staff you need to involve in your programme
   • Who will support you?
   • Do you need sign off from senior staff?
   • How will you link into safeguarding systems in your setting?
   • Who will support the programme and the peer mentors in your absence?

Recruit a small group of CYP to help you establish the programme.

What age do you want the peer mentors to be? You may want to consider the age gap between mentor and mentee to ensure a closeness in experience but also the ability to maintain a professional separation. You may want to consider older CYP supporting younger CYP in a different setting. For example, secondary school CYP mentoring pupils in a primary school.

Please note that we would not recommend training CYP less than 10 years old as peer mentors, although of course the mentors may be supporting CYP less than 10 years old.

There are different approaches you might take to recruiting peer mentors:
   • nomination by staff
   • open application.

You may choose to recruit your peer mentors through application forms and/or interviews to help you identify suitable candidates who may have some of the key attributes.

Key Attributes of Peer Mentors
   • Enthusiastic
   • Comfortable building relationships
   • Good listeners
   • Reflective and open to learning
   • Hold a genuine desire to ‘give back’
   • Dependable
   • Demonstrate flexibility
   • Have experienced peer support themselves
   • May have experienced mental health difficulties previously themselves.
Plan the nature of the programme with your peer mentors

This will involve discussing with your peer mentors how they could provide peer support in your setting. CYP will often be best placed to design the programme with some guidance from yourself. This will involve considering the following:

a. Which of the following peer support models would work best in your setting:
   - ongoing 1-1 mentoring
   - one-off or drop-in 1-1 mentoring
   - peer mentor facilitated group wellbeing sessions.

Detailed consideration of each model is provided in the next section.

b. When and where will the programme be delivered?

c. What do the peer mentors think the programme should be called?

d. Which of the following approaches to targeting mentees to be supported would work best in your setting:
   - open access
   - staff referral
   - CYP self-referral.

You will need to consider how the programme could be promoted in your setting and how could the peer mentors help with this promotion? Detailed consideration of each recruitment approach is considered on page 17.

Train the peer mentors using the three 1-hour session plans and accompanying resources outlined in Chapter 3.

Whichever model of peer support you choose to implement in your setting, we would recommend that your peer mentors are trained to have a core knowledge and skill-set as follows:

- Understanding of the peer mentor role and who they can support.
- Understanding that at the core of the mentor role is being able to build a relationship with the CYP they are supporting and how they might do this.
- Understanding that they have the opportunity to support the CYP they are working with to make positive changes and how they might do this.
- Understand the limitations of the peer mentor role and who they can go to for help.

Whilst you may choose to adapt these plans for your setting and the developmental stage of your CYP, we would recommend that you ensure that the learning objectives are covered. It is also important to remember the core role that you play in ensuring that adequate support and supervision is available for your peer mentors (see Chapter 4).

2. Deliver your programme

Having recruited and trained your peer mentors, developed your programme with them, and recruited CYP for them to support, now you can implement the programme. We suggest that your programme is implemented over a three-month period. You will need to ensure that regular support and supervision is in place for the peer mentors for the entirety of the programme.

3. Review of programme and subsequent refinement

Having implemented your programme, it can be useful to reflect with your peer mentors on what has worked well and opportunities for improvement in order to refine the peer support programme for the next time the programme is delivered.
Models of peer support and how they might work

Peer mentors can promote positive change in the CYP they support through building relationships and this can be facilitated in different ways. You may want to consider the following models:

1. **Ongoing 1-1 mentoring**

Peer mentors meet on an ongoing basis with their mentee. This might be during school/college, after school/college, in a CYPCO setting or independently. CYP from one setting (e.g. a secondary school/college) may mentor young CYP in a different setting (e.g. a primary school/college).

Considerations should include:

- Do you provide a structured time and location for this or do the pair meet independently? With the latter approach how do you ensure safety?
- Could you structure the mentoring around existing creative or sports activities which could provide a more informal environment for the mentoring relationship to develop?
- Could you provide food and drinks to help create an informal environment?
- How do you support the pair to continue meeting over the three months of the programme?
- How will you support the mentor to end the relationship appropriately?
- How will you support the mentor to ensure that the relationship remains boundaried? (See Session Plan 3.)
- How do you recruit the mentees? See below- ‘Identifying and Recruiting CYP to be mentored’.
- How do you match your mentors and mentees? The evidence suggests that matching on the basis of some common interest or life experience can be helpful but not essential. You may decide to match based on gender.

2. **One-off or drop-in 1-1 mentoring**

These programmes typically involve the peer mentors being available for CYP to come and talk to on a one-off or drop-in basis. This can take place in different ways including:

- Peer mentors take on roles such as playground champions, community or corridor champions. This provides opportunities for CYP to approach them for a one-off or follow up conversation.
- Peer mentors run drop-in clubs in school/colleges or the community where any CYP can come along if they wish to have a conversation.
- Peer mentors act as mediators facilitating peer disputes.

Considerations should include:

- How do you ensure that there is space and time for the peer mentors to have meaningful conversations with the CYP whether this is 1-1 or in a group?
- How do you support and supervise the mentors? This is explored in Chapter 4.
- Could you add these drop-in sessions on to existing creative or sports activities which you are facilitating?
- How do you limit the role of the peer mentors? It is important to ensure that they are not asked to take on wider responsibilities such as managing playground discipline.
- How do you support the safety of the peer mentors in your setting?

3. **Peer mentor facilitation of wellbeing sessions**

This may involve a peer mentor helping to develop and facilitate training sessions on topics such as bullying or confidence. The peer mentors bring their ability to connect with the CYP they are working with and their ability to build relationships with them. These sessions may be facilitated for all CYP or for particular targeted groups of CYP.

This may become an ongoing regular group facilitated by one or a group of peer mentors. Examples could include a peer support wellbeing lunch time club or an after school/college group.

Considerations should include:

- How do you ensure that the peer mentors have the subject matter knowledge to facilitate these sessions in addition to their core skills as a peer mentor? Could you involve the peer mentors in developing session plans?
- How do you ensure that the peer mentors still have time in these sessions to build relationships with the CYP they are supporting?
- How do you ensure that the peer mentors still receive support and supervision regarding any safeguarding or other concerns which come up in these sessions?
Identifying and recruiting CYP to be mentored

Once you have decided on your peer support model, you will need to consider how you will identify and recruit CYP to be supported by the peer mentors. Some different options are considered below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPTION</th>
<th>POSSIBLE EXAMPLES</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open access</td>
<td>CYP receive one-off mentoring CYP attend peer mentor led group wellbeing session CYP receive ongoing 1-1 mentoring.</td>
<td>CYP don’t feel singled out for peer support which helps to reduce stigma. This may mean they are more keen to take part. CYP who could benefit from support are likely to come forward.</td>
<td>Your peer mentors, a limited resource, are not targeted at supporting those CYP who could potentially benefit the most.</td>
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<td>CYP referred by staff</td>
<td>CYP attends peer mentor led group wellbeing session CYP receive ongoing 1-1 mentoring.</td>
<td>Professionals working with CYP can be very effective at identifying those who could benefit from the support of a peer mentor. This approach can be facilitated if these staff have a referral form to help the selection process on page 18.</td>
<td>If CYP have been told that they must take part, this can be quite stigmatising sometimes resulting in them choosing not to engage with the support. Involving these CYP in decisions about whether they do choose to take part can be very helpful. Staff may also identify CYP with too high levels of need who need specialist support and who peer mentors might struggle to support. Professionals may also miss CYP with emerging difficulties who could benefit from peer support.</td>
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<td>Young people self-refer</td>
<td>CYP attend peer mentor led group wellbeing session. CYP receive ongoing 1-1 mentoring.</td>
<td>CYP who could benefit from support are likely to come forward. Use of a self-referral form with key criteria can help to target the right CYP (See T2). CYP are likely to find this less stigmatising then being referred by staff.</td>
<td>CYP who could benefit from support may be reluctant to self-refer.</td>
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</table>
It is also important to consider whether a CYP’s level of difficulties are appropriate for peer support, as certain difficulties may be beyond the remit of peer mentors. The table below highlights difficulties that CYP may be experiencing and examples of appropriate difficulties and inappropriate difficulties for peer mentoring.

## Referral to have a peer mentor

The following table highlights potential reasons CYP might be referred to your peer support programme. Certain levels of difficulties will be appropriate for peer support, whereas others are too complex. This table should help you identify appropriate candidates for peer support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>APPROPRIATE</th>
<th>NOT APPROPRIATE, NEEDS SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild emotional difficulties</td>
<td>Shy and quiet in class/activities</td>
<td>So anxious or low in mood they often get into school late or avoid social situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxious speaking in front of others</td>
<td>Panic attacks or obsessive or compulsive symptoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low confidence</td>
<td>Demonstrates anger to the extent that they become very aggressive in language or behaviour towards peers or teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can get into arguments with peers or staff (low mood in boys can often present as anger)</td>
<td>Suicidal thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can sometimes struggle with managing their emotions (for example become upset if they’ve not done well in a test)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild concentration difficulties</td>
<td>Fidgety in class</td>
<td>Fidgets to the extent that they are not able to focus on their work and are often out of their chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can get distracted from a task easily but often will re-focus when prompted</td>
<td>Requires constant supervision to focus on a class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes draws attention to themselves by acting out</td>
<td>Sent out of class frequently for disrupting the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diagnosis of severe ADHD (referral to educational psychologist to also be considered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild difficulties getting on with other people</td>
<td>Shy and withdrawn in class and at break times</td>
<td>Gets into frequent aggressive arguments with peers and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nervous about making friends and a little socially awkward</td>
<td>Socially isolated due to high anxiety or very low mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not always know how to communicate appropriately with peers (for example makes inappropriate jokes)</td>
<td>Suspected social communication disorder, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild behavioural difficulties</td>
<td>Answering back or arguing with teachers or peers</td>
<td>Very aggressive in language or behaviour towards peers or staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a bit of a temper</td>
<td>Destructive towards property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequently tells fibs</td>
<td>Severe behaviour problems associated with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (referral to behaviour support should also be considered)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3
TRAINING PEER MENTORS

It is crucial that all involved have a clear understanding of the task and role of being a peer mentor and feel confident in the skills and knowledge they have learned through training.

Introduction to peer mentor training sessions

The session plans provide detailed guidance on how to train your peer mentors.

The supporting document provides three, 1-hour session plans to train your peer mentors. The plans and accompanying resources are separated into one set for 10-13 year olds and one set for CYP aged 14 and over. Please read through the session plans and decide which is most appropriate for the CYP you are working with, as the age ranges are for guidance only.

Training session plans with printable resources for ages 10-13

Training session plans with printable resources for ages 14+

Please note that we would not recommend training CYP less than 10 years old as peer mentors.

The session plans highlight key learning outcomes for each session and list the accompanying resource to be used during the session which can be found in the supporting resources. It is important to establish ground rules at the start of each session around respectful listening and confidentiality. Please keep in mind that mental health is an emotive subject which can bring up strong feelings. It is also important to highlight safe spaces in your setting that CYP can go to should the need arise.

The peer mentor/facilitator agreement (see Session Plan 3 and accompanying slide) and the peer mentor/mentee contract (R3.2) clearly lay out the roles and responsibilities of all involved. You may wish to have mentors sign the agreement at the start of training and should also introduce them to the mentor/mentee contract so they can sign it with mentees during their first session.
Chapter 4
SUPERVISION

What is supervision and who is it for?

Supervision provides an opportunity for the peer mentors to explore themes and issues that arise in the mentoring sessions, and to review how the programme is progressing. Supervision is critical for everyone involved and programme facilitators should ensure supervision takes place.

Helping us find a direction

There can be times when the peer mentor is supporting someone and it can feel very difficult to know what to do, or in what direction to take something. There can be other times when they just feel stuck and unsure what to do next. Supervision is the place where the peer mentors can raise any concerns they have, thinking with others about what might help.

Peer mentors using their personal experience

When peer mentors speak with their mentees their own feelings and thoughts can influence how they respond or react to what is being said. Sometimes this can be very helpful as they are using their own experiences to help guide the support being offered. But there are times when this might be unhelpful, and their feelings and views can get in the way. Supervision can support the peer mentors to consider this.

Reflecting on our practice

Being a peer mentor is about working alongside other CYP and enabling them to address their concerns. But being a peer mentor is also about learning. It is important that you encourage them to put aside some time to take notice of how they are feeling. The peer mentors should be encouraged to ask themselves:

- What am I learning about myself by being a peer mentor?
- What am I learning about the role of peer support in general?

This is about encouraging the peer mentors to be curious about how the programme is affecting them just as they should be curious about how the programme is affecting their mentees. It can be helpful to encourage the peer mentors to write their thoughts down.

Being and feeling safe

Supervision provides a place where the peer mentors can raise anything that they are worried or concerned about particularly regarding the safety and wellbeing of the CYP they are supporting. Supervision ensures that the peer mentors feel protected in their role and enables you as the programme facilitator to ensure that their practice is safe.

It is also important to remember that supervision is a place for recognising and appreciating what is going well. If supervision becomes a place for just focusing on the problems and difficulties, it can be seen in quite a negative light. Supervision should also be a place for recognition and appreciation for the CYP’s role in the programme.

It’s not just about the CYP

As facilitators of the peer mentoring programme you also need supervision for the reasons above as well as to help you reflect on your practice, to trouble shoot and to ensure you feel safe. Supervision should be in place from the beginning of the programme and throughout delivery.
Programme facilitators can supervise each other, but will further benefit from being supervised by a senior member of staff in your setting to help ensure that the programme is sustainable. If you have a CAMHS school/college link worker, it may be possible for you to seek supervision from them, or from a school/college counsellor. Layers of supervision can be represented in the following diagram:

**Elements to consider for successful supervision:**

Supervision should be a shared commitment. Be consistent and make sure supervision is regularly timetabled - there should be a weekly opportunity for a peer mentor to have supervision.

- Make note of what is discussed and safely store in your settings.
- Keep an attendance register. This enables you to notice if someone is avoiding attending supervision.

- Include supervision in the peer mentor and programme facilitator contract (see T3, T4 and Session Plan 3).
- Create a relaxed, enjoyable and engaging environment. You as the supervisor need to be non-judgmental and model good mentoring practice including active listening, and displaying empathy.
Developing a model and structure for supervision

Supervision may take different formats, the two main types being 1:1 supervision or group supervision.

Even with group supervision, it is important to ensure that the peer mentors know that they can talk with a supervisor on their own, as it could be difficult for them to raise a particular topic in a group. The supervision, whether 1:1 or group, needs to provide the opportunity for reflection, learning and guidance. The main responsibilities of mentors and supervisors are outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer mentor responsibilities in supervision</th>
<th>Role of supervision/facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect and discuss how the sessions are going and to obtain support, ideas, advice and guidance on areas they may be finding challenging.</td>
<td>Provide support and encourage reflective practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect upon their role, considering the opportunities and limitations of their work.</td>
<td>Provide a space to remind the peer mentor of the purpose of their role as a ‘professional friend’ and not a therapist, teacher or parent, particularly when change feels difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidate and build upon some of the skills they learnt in training and to develop additional skills.</td>
<td>Offer a chance to do an additional training session, particularly in group supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach the peer support programme facilitators individually at the beginning or end of each group session for feedback or advice and guidance. This might include raising any issues of concern or risk about their mentee which have recently occurred.</td>
<td>Provide feedback, advice or guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An adaptable template for group supervision is available in the supporting documents (T3).

Promoting a culture of reflective practice

A culture of reflective practice is important to ensure that supervision is effective. Below are helpful questions to consider asking in supervision with your peer mentors to promote reflection.

Thinking about your session with the CYP you are supporting:

- What went well?
- What was it about what you did that made this go well?
- What does this say about what is important to you as a peer mentor?
- What, if anything, could have been better?
- What do you think was going on here?
- What can you take from this discussion that may help you in your next session?
- Any concerns to raise?

The supporting document (T4) provides a helpful template for peer mentors to use as a record of a discussion at supervision. It can equally be used by yourself as the programme facilitator when you are discussing a situation with your supervisor. It should be completed prior to supervision. Questions in the template include:

- What situation/scenario do you wish to reflect on?
- What is the most important thing you have learnt from this experience?
- What would you do differently next time?
- Has this experience highlighted any areas of training that you need explore further? How will this be addressed?
- Summary of my discussion with supervisor.
Boundaries, confidentiality and safeguarding

To support your peer mentors and for your mentees to feel safe, it is essential the peer support programme facilitator understands the boundaries around the work, the importance of managing confidentiality and has knowledge of the safeguarding policy at their setting.

What do we mean by boundaries?

It is important to consider the boundaries of your role as the programme facilitator in supporting your peer mentors and their mentees. If the boundaries of this are not well defined, it is easy for misunderstandings to arise. It is therefore vital to reinforce to peer mentors the boundaries of the mentor-mentee relationship.

In supervision, important issues to consider are;

- Do the peer mentors and their mentees feel sufficiently supported?
- When can CYP contact you?
- What happens if they are worried in the evening after a session?
- How well supported are you as the programme facilitator?

What is confidentiality?

For CYP to feel comfortable as mentees they need to know that what they say in a peer support session will remain confidential.

It is important to be clear about what stays in the sessions between the peer mentor and mentee and what information might be discussed elsewhere. The mentee therefore needs to be informed that the mentor may be discussing issues that arise in their session within group or 1:1 supervision. This may guide how you decide to structure supervision, particularly if working with targeted vulnerable groups. For example, if your programme is targeting CYP with parents with mental health difficulties, their parents may feel concerned that their CYP are talking with other CYP in an open group setting. In this situation, it may be worth ensuring you provide only 1:1 supervision for your peer mentors.

When can we break confidentiality?

There are times when you as programme facilitator will need to break confidentiality and discuss disclosed information with others such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your setting. As the programme facilitator you will need to inform all CYP that:

“What we talk about in these sessions [supervision or mentoring] will be treated confidentially within the peer support programme. However, there are times when I may need to break that confidence. These may be times when I am worried about you or others around you. In these situations, I will think with you about who we need to tell and discuss this issue with.”

When CYP have made a disclosure it can be helpful to consider:

a. What are the risks to the CYP from themselves?
b. What are the risks from the CYP to others?
c. What are the risks to the CYP from others?

Safeguarding and seeking help

By providing a safe environment, CYP may make a disclosure within your peer support programme.

What if CYP say something that causes concern?

- Work within the remit of the safeguarding policy in your setting.
- Make sure you don’t work in isolation.
- Contact your Designating Safeguarding Lead and they will advise you on your next steps.

Thinking about specific mental health disclosures

Some disclosures may require a more specific response. For information about how to respond to CYP who reveal a possible episode of self-harm, as an example of a more specific response, please consult the supporting document (R4).

In all situations, it is essential that you clarify with your local Designated Safeguarding Lead that you have permission to explore this matter further with the CYP.
Chapter 5
DEMONSTRATING IMPACT AND BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Consider how you can help to ensure your programme becomes sustainable within your setting.

All staff working in schools/colleges or community settings are part of a universal CYP mental health workforce, seeking to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all CYP.

The Department for Education offers guidance on mental health and counselling in schools/colleges whilst Ofsted has developed a key judgement area of "Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare" to help steer best practice.

It is important to evaluate the impact of your own peer support programme to help to build your business case for the continued sustainable delivery of such a programme in your setting.

When making use of the provided self-evaluation tools, we would recommend you consider the following:

- Choose outcomes that matter to you and the CYP involved and use reliable and validated measures so that you can measure the impact of your programme on the CYP involved.
- Involve CYP in the evaluation of your programme.
- Repeat the measures, avoiding making judgements based only on one collection of data.
- Ensure data is presented in a digestible format for commissioners or funders to understand.
- Ensure evaluation data is gathered from a wide range of participants, including those who were not involved in the programme and those who may have begun receiving support but stopped part way through.
- Seek an independent review of your evidence.
- Explore how your evaluation can be used to embed the learning from your peer support programme in policy and practice across your setting.

Further information about measuring and monitoring the impact of mental health and emotional wellbeing interventions

Further information about measuring and monitoring the impact of mental health and emotional wellbeing interventions is available online.

1. Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing:
   A toolkit for schools and colleges. Anna Freud Centre (EBPU), Public Health England, CORC and Common Room.
   www.annafreud.org/media/4560/mwb-toolkit.pdf

2. A database of programmes available in the UK, including details on their effectiveness and cost.
   The Institute for Effective Education.
   www.evidence4impact.org.uk

3. E-learning modules for professionals on measuring impact.
   MindEd.
   www.minded.org.uk
Enabling sustainability and embedding best practice

Forward planning is key to ensuring your peer support programme is sustainable and that learning is shared effectively across your setting.

Dissemination of best practice

Having established an effective and well-evaluated model of peer support it can be enormously helpful to share what has worked well, as well as some of the challenges involved, with peers and other organisations. Within larger settings, a peer support programme may have been set up and been highly effective, and yet many of the staff within that setting may not be aware of the programme. Developing mechanisms for sharing of practice within your setting or with the wider community is invaluable, as others can then feel encouraged to learn from your experience.

How to keep the programme running in your setting

Recognition, accreditation and a champion role

Recognition of people’s contributions and work is incredibly important, both for those that are facilitating the programme as well as the CYP who are volunteering their time. The CYP could be rewarded for what they have done and given to their community through vouchers, reward trips, or certificates.

This type of programme lends itself to many recognised accreditation schemes which could be explored at your setting.

Developing an ambassadorial or ‘champion’ role for the peer mentors can generate recognition and identity within your setting for the peer mentors, as well as being a useful way of thinking about recruitment and how other CYP could engage with the programme. This also allows for CYP to see that this is a programme promoted and supported by the CYP, and not just by staff.

Awards, assigning responsibility and wellbeing policies

School/colleges and community organisations can achieve recognition for best practice through programmes such as the Healthy School Awards initiative. With sufficient support from the SLT in your setting it can be possible to embed the programme facilitator role into a person’s job plan/description, ensuring future sustainability within your workforce. A clear statement of intent of support for this work is the co-writing and co-implementation of a mental health or wellbeing policy within your setting.
References

Building resilience and promoting wellbeing, an example being the work developed by Boing Boing: www.boingboing.org.uk

The iTHRIVE programme is an example of service development to enable this approach: www.implementingthrive.org

Exploring barriers to accessing support, “Meeting us where we’re at”, a joint document by Centre for Mental Health and MAC-UK (2017): www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=f549e7a6-3ed0-4559-8a87-ebb7439323b7


Time 2 Talk project, A whole school approach to raising mental health awareness and challenging mental health stigma: https://time2talk.blog/


A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy based programme in schools, Friends: www.friendsresilience.org

The Young Health Champion Awards developed by the Royal Society for Public Health: www.rspfh.org.uk/qualification/level-2-award-for-young-health-champions.html

Think Resilient badge - Girl Guides: www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/programme-and-activities/peer-education/what-is-peer-education/think-resilient/

Examples of online and/or app based support include:

https://kooth.com/
https://getcypherapp.com/


Five steps to mental wellbeing: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx

Five a Day – Live Well: www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx


www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/the-decade-of-delay


Information about Attachment Theory: www.acamh.org/topic/attachment/

Information about Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences: www.cph.org.uk CASE-study/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces/
Resilience Framework:
www.boingboing.org.uk/resilience/resilient-therapy-resilience-framework/


Department for Education, Feb 2017:

Department for Education – Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future, Feb 2016:

Personal development, behaviour and welfare: www.uk.ecorys.com/#home

The More than Mentors programme offers a level 2 N-OCN qualification to their peer mentors:

Healthy School Awards – Park View School in Haringey were able to achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold by undertaking the Time2Talk project: www.healthyschools.london.gov.uk/about/school-awards

Mental Health Policy and Guidance: www.cwmt.org.uk/mental-health-policy