

New England MIRECC Peer Education Center
Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital
200 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730

**Peer Support Provider—Walking the Tightrope Between
Helping Others & Maintaining Your Own Wellness**

Training Session Activities

Role Play for Beginning of Training Session:

Instructions: Recruit a peer support provider to act in the role of Tony throughout this role play. Recruit a training participant to act in the various roles of John, Ryan, Paul, and Tony's supervisor for this role play. Have one training participant act as the narrator who reads each scenario aloud to the audience before it is enacted.

Tony is a peer support specialist who works full-time at the local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center. Tony arrives at work this morning and parks his car. As he is walking toward his office, he is thinking about a phone call he had last night with one of his family members who is going through a hard time. Tony is worried about his family member and thinking about what he could do to help.

John sees Tony and calls to him across the parking lot. Tony walks over to say hello. John looks terrible and tells Tony he just finished a detox for alcohol abuse in the VA medical center's acute psychiatry inpatient unit. John tells Tony that he is financially broke and is worried about what is going to happen to him. He states that he is not sure if he made the right decision about coming into treatment. Tony listens and provides John with support and positive feedback about taking steps towards his recovery. Tony also gives John information about some resources that could be helpful to John right now.

Tony continues on his way and encounters Ryan. Ryan states that he is wants to get into shape and wants to work out in the medical center's gym. Ryan has several physical health problems and shares a long story with Tony about his concerns about his physical health. Tony tells Ryan that he uses the gym to help himself with his own health issues and finds a workout a helpful way to relieve stress. Tony informs Ryan about the hours for the gym and what Ryan needs to do to obtain medical clearance to use the gym for his workouts.

While continuing his walk to his office, Tony runs into Paul. Paul is a distant acquaintance that Tony has not seen in a while. Paul takes Tony by surprise by calling Tony a jerk and says that he thinks that Tony may be one of the peer staff, but he is only out for himself and is not concerned about other people's feelings. Tony expresses surprise and asks Paul why he feels that way. After

listening for a few minutes, Tony explains that he has to leave because he has a meeting he needs to attend. He tells Paul he would like to iron out their differences by talking at another time and asks that Paul call his office to set up a time to meet. Tony leaves.

After his encounter with Paul, Tony receives a phone call from his supervisor who chastises Tony for missing a scheduled supervision meeting this morning during the time that Tony was talking with Ryan. The supervisor reminds him to attend their scheduled meeting next week.

Tony realizes his mental plate feels like it is getting full, and he decides to go to the gym for a short workout when it is time for his break. While at the gym, Tony gets a chance to talk with some of the people he knows there and he gets in a workout that makes him feel better when he is done. Tony leaves the gym feeling less stressed than when he arrived.

Questions for Training Participants:

1. What are some other things that Tony can do to alleviate his remaining stress?
2. What would you have done in this situation or a similar one?
3. What do you do to help yourself feel better when you have a difficult day at work?

In-Session Activity: Caregiver Self-Assessment:

Instructions: If there is time during the training session, have the participants take 10 minutes to read and fill out the “Caregiver Self-Assessment” that is included in the presentation handout. Then, ask the participants the following questions for discussion:

1. Which self-care area(s) did you discover you already have strong self-care practices in place (rated as 3 for “often”)?
2. Which self-care areas(s) did you discover you do not pay much attention to (rated as 1 for “rarely” or 0 for “never”)?
3. If you choose to improve one of the self-care areas you rated with several “1’s” or “0’s,” which self-care area do you choose to work on? What is one activity you will do within this next week to improve that self-care area?

End of Session Activity:

Instructions: Go around the room and have everyone answer the following questions:

1. What is one thing you did to take care of yourself before you came to the training today?
2. What is one thing you will do to take care of yourself some time during the rest of today after you leave here?

3. If a participant reports not doing anything for self-care thus far, ask the participant to share one thing he/she will try to do during the rest of the day for self-care.