

PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING FOR THE YOUNG

EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES FROM
PEER EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE
AS A METHOD IN THE PREVENTIVE DRUG WORK

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
The ASK project 2003
Niina Lindström and Kirsi Autio
Supported by the European Commission



Contents

To the Reader	1
1 Background to the peer educator activity	2
1.1 What is the peer educator activity for young people about?	2
1.2 Peer educator activity in Finland.....	2
1.3 Peer educating as a method in the addiction prevention work.....	3
1.4 The peer educator trainings in the ASK project	5
2 Peer educator activity concepts	7
2.1 What does "peer" denote?	7
2.2 Which are the peer groups for the young?.....	7
2.3 Who is a peer educator?.....	8
2.4 How does a peer educator perform?	9
2.5 What is an adult's role in the peer educator activity?	10
3 Peer educator training for the young	14
3.1 Planning the peer educator training.....	14
3.1.1 <i>Estimating the situation in one's own neighbourhood</i>	14
3.1.2 <i>Contact with the young</i>	15
3.1.3 <i>Selecting the young</i>	15
3.1.4 <i>Planning the content of the training</i>	17
3.1.5 <i>The quality criteria for the peer educator training</i>	21
3.2 The content of the peer educator training	23
<i>A Presentation</i>	23
<i>B Background Information</i>	23
<i>C Getting To Know Each Other</i>	23
<i>D Definition Of Terms</i>	24
<i>E Group Forming Exercises</i>	24
<i>F Peer Group Activity</i>	26
<i>G Risks: Addiction And Prevention</i>	26
<i>H Risflecting: Reflecting Upon One's Behaviour</i>	28
<i>I Planning The Peer Activity</i>	29
<i>J Feedback</i>	30
<i>K Ending</i>	30
4 Experiences from peer educator training courses for the young	32
4.1 City of Helsinki, Youth Department: Pakila and Torpparinmäki Youth Houses	32
4.2 City of Hämeenlinna, Youth Department	35
4.3 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and Kuusankoski Youth Department.....	36
4.4 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and City of Tampere, Youth Services	37
4.5 Summary of the experiences	39
5. Summary	43

To the Reader

This material is a report on the peer educator training for the young, implemented by the ASK project 2002 at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The matter also contains instructions and example exercises to carry out an equivalent training. The material is intended to support and inspire youth workers, teachers, instructors of peer students, and other adult educators.

The ASK project peer educator training is intended for groups of ca. 12 young people aged at least 15. The training is at least 20 h i.e. 2 ½ working days long and on top of these it contains continuation visits and to lead activities for young people. The instructor may be an educator, or a leader familiar with peer educator activities, preventive drug and intoxicant work or youth work methods.

The target for the training is to make the young people reflect on their own behaviour and thus increase their ability to master the risks. Another target is to develop the youth activities; what could be done in the own peer group of the young as an alternative to, say, the intoxicant abuse on weekends.

The training comprises familiarization and group formation exercises, peer educating and peer activity determinations, exercises enhancing reflections on coping with life and risk behaviour as well as planning the activities, which are carried out by the young people themselves. After the training course, the young people function as peer educators while the instructor (the trainer) encourages their activities by regular meetings and giving opportunities to talk.

Maria Nordberg and Merja Sonninen from the Helsinki Torpparinmäki Youth House, Maisa Suikkari and Jani Hoviario from the Helsinki Pakila Youth House, Hanna Käppi and Kimmo Laiho from the Hämeenlinna Youth Department, Susanna Raivio, Janne Paananen and Rosita Juurinen from YAD and Elisabet Tarkiainen from the Kuusankoski Youth Department have supported the employees planning and implementing the peer educator training of the young people in the ASK project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. For their effort they deserve great commendations.

Thanks also to the trainer Terhi Haiminen, training the instructors of peer educators, and also to the head of the information department at the A-Clinic Foundation, Teuvo Peltoniemi, who has supplied experts' help to plan the training.

The material has been produced by the ASK project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare funded by the European Commission.

Helsinki, February 2002

Niina Lindström
Coordinator
The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare

1 Background to the peer educator activity

1.1 What is the peer educator activity for young people about?

In the peer educator activity for young people, young people instruct other young people, their equals. Young people, as has been observed, learn and adopt new thoughts and behaviour patterns more easily from each other than from adults, parents or teachers. In youth groups, school classes, gangs, among friends or in hobby circles there are often persons who are peer educators or natural peer leaders. The other members of the group respect these peer leaders, listen to them and adopt their attitudes and behaviour patterns.

In the peer educator training the joining young people are taught know-how and skills, which they can convey to other young people after the schooling. The peer educators may function as support and help for other young people, take part in arranging activities or simply “hang around” with other youths. The target is that the peer educator is able to convey to the young the insights he has acquired in the peer educator training. The intent is to activate young people to influence their own life situation.

The peer educator training is suitable for the young who are by nature group leaders. These young people function as peer educators above all as support persons for other youths. The training is, however, also meant for youth, who won't have the qualifications, even after the training, to guide others. These young people benefit themselves from the training. The training strengthens the development of their personalities and they are supported by other young people in the class.

1.2 Peer educator activity in Finland

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare introduced in Finland in 1996 the peer educator working mode from Northern Ireland. At the time, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare took part in the NuoriYouth project funded by the European Social Fund's (ESF's) Employment Youthstart cooperation programme. The target was to develop new working modes in the international cooperation to promote youth employment. Through the Northern Irish partner, the YouthAction organization, an adopted model in Northern Ireland, the Peer Education, was developed. The model was translated into Finnish as “vertaisohjaajatoiminta”.

Basis for the peer educator activity in the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare is laid by experiences from the peer support activity carried out in the schools, which is mainly based on the peer support. Besides, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare had in its Rehabilitation and Development Centre in Yläne tested peer activities as support for young people having been injured in car crashes, and it had shown promising results.

The development of the peer educator activity continued in 1998 - 2000 in the Europlus project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and the Finnish Association for Mental Health. Also that was an ESF-funded Youthstart project. The Europlus project produced training material for peer educator activities and the video "From the Young to the Young" - A guide for the Instructors of Peer Educators¹. The material can be ordered from the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

The peer educator activity of the NuoriYouth and Europlus projects was focused on supporting youth who are difficult to employ. The peer educators, for example, support and aid other youths with job applications. The peer educating has, however, beyond the practical aid an important preventive effect against mental problems and marginalizing, both among the young acting as peer educators and the young in their peer group, and the activity may be considered to prevent also a lot of other social problems than unemployment.

The peer education has become a fairly well-known and broadly used youth work method. It is applied in the municipal youth work, the schools' peer activities and in the youth work of various organizations. In addition to the peer educator activity, other activities based on the same concepts, like the peer conciliation activity of the Finnish Red-Cross, have appeared.

1.3 Peer educating as a method in the addiction prevention work

The addiction prevention work for the young tries to prevent young people from trying and using intoxicants. Addiction prevention is not just awareness, though its weight is often emphasized in the public debate. Addiction prevention is above all tangible support and aid. Intoxicant abuses are before all else prevented with actions promoting the well-being, where specially an early intervention and preventing marginalizing play central role². The peer educating is preventive drug and intoxicant work on a primary stage, whereby one tries to encourage also the meaningful, social and drugfree leisure time activities of the young through peer activity and backing.

¹ Sopenen, Leena (Editorial Work) (2000): From the Young to the Young – Guide for the Instructors of Peer Educators. The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and the Finnish Association for Mental Health. Kansioapu Oy, Helsinki.

² Soikkeli, Markku (2002): Miten puhua huumeista. National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Stakes), Jyväskylä.

The peer educator activity prevents intoxicant abuse of young people in three ways:

- 1) Through the peer educators, it is possible to influence broadly on opinions and action modes of the young.
- 2) The peer educator training promotes factors protecting from intoxicants, so to speak, to realize in the life of a young.
- 3) The peer educator activity creates sensible leisure time activity for the youth.

Few young people experiment with smoking, alcohol or drugs alone. The intoxicant abuse among the young happens mostly in groups, where the group pressure from the social relationships is strong and the example and opinions from others persuade fiercely. Awareness, added knowledge or intimidation with the ill-effects from intoxicants cannot prevent or decrease intoxicant abuse among the young³. The social environment of a child or a young person and the quality of the social relationships again influence decisively the decisions a young person makes about his intoxicant abuse. The peer group, say, the pals can influence quite strongly a young person's decision-making and at what age he tries intoxicants and how large part of the leisure time is absorbed by them. For this reason the peer educating as a method is specially well suited for the preventive drug work. By influencing natural group leaders and opinion leaders, it is possible to influence also a larger group of young people.

The peer educator training also promotes factors which protect the young from early intoxicant experiments and abuse. Factors protecting from intoxicants are a strong self-esteem, a sound self-knowledge, good social skills, an ability to find constructive problem solving means, non-addicted models, meaningful activities, good relationships to the next of kin and feeling that someone cares about the young and that his life and choices have a meaning. Notable is that the young can understand, why it is sensible to abstain from intoxicants, and that he has got means to do so and to resist the suggestions and the pressure from his pals. By encouraging factors protecting from intoxicants, one can conduce to push the experiments to a yet later age, when the probability for serious intoxication problems is declining.

The substance of the peer educator training is weighted on active exercises, where the young learns social skills, communication skills, and problem solving skills. The young person's self-esteem is fortified by the positive experiences from the training and, from the other youths taking part in the training, he gains also a new peer group where the group pressure acts positively, encouraging healthy choices.

The peer educator activity prevents intoxicant abuse among the young also by offering them alternative ways of spending their leisure time. According to studies, it is just the meaningful leisure time activities which prevent the

³ Huoponen, Kaarina; Peltonen, Heidi; Mustalampi, Saini; Koskinen-Ollonqvist, Pirjo (1998): Ehkäisevää päihdetyötä tukevien ohjelmien käyttö koulussa. National Board of Education, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (Stakes), Finnish Centre for Health Promotion, Edita Oy, Helsinki.

marginalizing and the addiction problems among the young. A meaningful free time implies an activity, which the young experiences challenging and interesting. It offers the opportunity to develop oneself and learn new skills. Besides, a meaningful leisure time entails social relationships; passing with friends. The loneliness and dullness of the young is thought to lead to depression, which in turn increase the risk to start intoxicant abuse⁴.

The leisure time spending habits of the young, formed mainly by opportunities and stimuli offered by home, school and the neighbourhood, tell what kinds of resources are developing in a child or a young person. Besides, the guided leisure time activities, the peer group relations and cultures of the young are brought out when you regard their relation with their own life situation and future as well as their position in the social networks.

In the peer group activity the young has an opportunity to learn things which relations with adults cannot reach. In the peer group activity equal youth of the same age learn to be honest and working together, and defend their viewpoints and rights. The youths seek and try together their limits and compare their experiences, and on the other hand learn to check their aggressions. A controlled risk behaviour is more or less a part of the youth and the forming of a young person. The peer educator activity offers the risk behaviour safe limits and the opportunity to try one's limits with restraint.

1.4 The peer educator trainings in the ASK project

The target of the ASK project launched in 2001 by the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare was to develop the peer education model to a tool for the preventive drug and intoxicant work. The ASK project was the development project of the young for activity models in the preventive intoxicant work. Its target was to promote life mastering of the young, and thus prevent and reduce marginalizing and the risk of being excluded and becoming an intoxicant abuser.

The ASK project is based on the experiences gained through the Europlus project and "The Substance Free Living for Children" (LaSE) programme (1996 - 2000) at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The target of the LaSE programme was to develop activity preventing intoxicant abuse by children the young by means of a model based on peer education and social influence⁵. The programme is still implemented as part of the peer student activity at schools.

The ASK project has further utilized data collected from youth peer educating by the EU-funded Euronet network. Since 1998 the A-Clinic Foundation has participated in the Euronet network, where knowledge about the peer education

⁴ Report by the Committee for Preventing Drug Use among Young People. Committee report 2000:3. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Oy Edita Ab, Helsinki

⁵ The Substance Free Living for Children (LaSE) Programme; Final Report (2000). The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

and its applications in Europe have been gathered systematically. The Helsinki and Turku Youth Centres⁶ have been developing youth peer education in out-of-school youth work.

Based on existing experiences and "From the Young to the Young" model, a model suitable for the peer education in the Finnish preventive intoxicant work has been worked out in the ASK project. Within the project the instructor training of the peer educator training was planned and implemented, and training material for youth training was gathered. The youth workers / youth leaders trained to become peer educator trainers implemented the training of the young as part of their own activity.

This material presents one example of what the peer educator training contains. The content should, however, be tailored for the target group i.e. the peer educators who are to be trained. If the participating young people are active and sound, there will not necessarily even be talk about intoxicants in the class. The training material uses the term "coping with life" or "life skills", which also includes healthy ways of living. If, again, youths with acute intoxication problems are trained, these could be taken up in the class. The ASK project gave very good experiences from various participatory talks, where the young got to deliberate about e.g. advantages and drawbacks with the weekend drinking.

The training material is found in chapter 3 of this material. Reports on the youth trainings are found in chapter 4 of this material.

⁶ Käytännön vertaisohjaus ehkäisevässä päihdetyössä (2000). A-Clinic Foundation report no. 35, Helsinki. (Koller, Gerald: Meet the need – Guidelines for peer group education, preventing addiction in out-of-school youth work. Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe. Kern-Scheffeldt, Waltere & Wirth, Steffi: Parents as peers – New approaches to parent education. Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe.)

2 Peer educator activity concepts

2.1 What does "peer" denote?

Peer can be defined in many different ways, starting from the people, the activity or the activity environment. The peer group consists of people sharing the same values and working in the same social system. Peer means a shared empiric world and that the same language is spoken; concepts have an identical meaning to the peers. A young peer is a person who knows and is able to place himself in another young's situation and the community surrounding the young⁷. In relation to the other, a peer positions himself by the side of the other person, not above or beneath, and he is thus equal in regard to the other. Among the young, the importance of the peer group is generally quite great, as largely one's own development is mirrored in belonging to the friends and the youth cultures and standing out from them.

2.2 Which are the peer groups for the young?

The peer group consists of people sharing the same values and functioning in the same social system⁸. The age as such is not linked to the peer concept. All 15 years of age do not necessarily belong to the same peer group, more important is the kind of background and set of values the young has and who belong to his intimate circles.

A young may belong to several different peer groups, depending on which factors determine the belonging to the group. E.g. the young can be a peer to his siblings, friends or some manner-of-living group. Other factors defining peer groups could e.g. be factors connected to the area, the social background and individual special features.

Youth peer groups rising from various youth cultures or hobbies were considered in the instructor training of the ASK project. A.o. these kinds of groups came out:

- skateboarders

⁷ Sopanen, Leena (Editorial Work) (2000): From the Young to the Young – Guide for the Instructors of Peer Educators. The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare and the Finnish Association for Mental Health. Kansioapu Oy, Helsinki.

⁸ Käytännön vertaisohjaus ehkäisevässä päihdetyössä (2000). A-Clinic Foundation report no. 35, Helsinki. (Koller, Gerald: Meet the need – Guidelines for peer group education, preventing addiction in out-of-school youth work. Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe. Kern-Scheffeldt, Waltere & Wirth, Steffi: Parents as peers – New approaches to parent education. Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe.)

- breakers
- musicians
- interested in nature
- general activists
- keeping company
- conscientious
- athletes
- horsey girls
- animal activists
- mannequins
- peer students
- candidates for confirmation
- youth house visitors

2.3 Who is a peer educator?

A peer educator is an approved and popular member of some youth group or subculture. The peer educator is an active player, acting as an opinion leader or a facilitator on some level inside the group. He is also capable of answering for himself or the group. The peer educator often has some social status, which consolidates his position in the group: He could be a socially gifted leader figure, a funny joker, a scary or experienced tough guy or gifted in those things and activities which are appreciated in the group, like e.g. being an outstanding skateboarder.

The peer educator does not need to be a perfect model, he could, say, have experiences from intoxicant abuse or problems at school. The peer educator training could have a target to help youth coming to the training, while functioning as a peer educator could be but a secondary target. If, however, a young person has not got his own life situation mainly in balance, he cannot succeed working as a peer educator. An acute crisis is not a good basis of educating others. A fit peer educator is a common young person with sensitiveness for a reciprocal and sincere social intercourse with other young people.

There are many ways to become a peer educator. Firstly a youth worker or some other adult, who is closely in contact with young people, could choose suitable young people to the peer educator training, as he sees fit. The selection criteria are influenced by the reasons why a young person is included in the training i.e. what in his case is the aim with the peer educating; i.e. consolidating the self-esteem of the young person himself or to influence a larger group of youth through him. Secondly a young person, fit to become a peer educator, might appear in the very group of youth. In this case the peer educator is a youth, who enjoys his peer group's confidence and who has some kind of responsibility or influence in the group. A young person himself might seek his way to become a peer educator.

2.4 How does a peer educator perform?

With peer education we mean youth actively participating in their own peer group, while the peer educator by his activity supports the realization of his and other young people's well-being and spending a meaningful leisure time. Peer educating is one way to create democratic and participatory activity cultures in the youth work.

The peer educator may work in many different ways and the forms of activity develop according to the personality of the leader and his peer group. The peer leader can literally lead and encourage other youths. He can be a motivator and an animator in his group. The peer leader can be something of a promoter and an implementer when meaningful activities are planned. He can also report desires from the young to adults working with youths, and vice versa.

Depending on the nature of the community the peer educator works in, the guiding, the encouraging, the planning of the activities and delegating of the tasks get different contents. E.g. at youth centres the employees may devolve part of the responsibilities to the peer educators: These may lead clubs for other youths or take part in planning and implementing youth house excursions.

The peer activity can roughly be divided into three parts:

- 1) **The peer educator acts as a co-leader for the adult**
The peer educator leads clubs for interested in a subject where he is an expert or a subject he wants to learn about.
- 2) **The peer educator activity supports a tentative youth**
Training and activities encourage and develop the self-esteem of the young, the social skills and a social network, the young gets himself an own peer group from the participants.
- 3) **The peer educator "hangs around" the youth house**
The peer educator conveys what he has learnt in everyday life, supports his peers in the situations where he already is present.

The target in the peer educator training is to get the youths to act to promote their own well-being. The young are given the tools to influence actively their own lives and act as peer educators for other youths. This alone is not enough to implement the peer activity, as the peer educators always require an adult's support. In a peer educator's role the young is never supposed to work alone or completely independently, but instead the youth should after the finished training have the prospect to get mental support, encouragement and spurring as well as help to solve practical problems, e.g. with communication and organizing the activities.

Young peer educators need some kind of background community (e.g. a youth centre) to back up their activities, offering spaces, resources and financial support to implement the activity. Apart from that, the peer educator needs

practical tips, advice and connections. Part of the work instruction is to give feedback to the young, offering a chance to talk and to give appreciation to the work of the young.

2.5 What is an adult's role in the peer educator activity?

The role of an adult in the peer educator activity is to be

- a) initiator and promoter of the whole activity
- b) arranging the training and trainer of the youths and
- c) leader of the youth activity and supporter after the training.

A municipal youth worker, a parish youth instructor, a school counsellor, a teacher or any expert adult interested in the activity can work as a trainer / instructor. In this text we use the term "instructor" for the adult.

In the peer educator activity the adult's task is to *make* the youth *participate*. The participatory methods have been the basis of the whole ASK project and they have appeared specially in the training methods when developing the peer educator activity.

When making the young people participate, the young is received as an actor, able to make decisions regarding his own life, but non the less in need of support and means to fulfill himself. The task of the adult is to help the young with bringing forth knowledge, skills and ideas, and to facilitate the spontaneous activity of the young. Through the training methods and the concrete exercises, the aim is to lead the youths, to an independent and reflective activity, and make them aware of their own possibilities to influence.

Participatory methods represent in youth work an effort to create a democratic and equal activity culture both among the young people and between them and adults⁹. Making participate builds on three principles:

1) ATTITUDE

With attitude we refer to the outlook and approach of outsiders, intermediaries or trainers (here: youth instructors) to the community or group (here: the youths), with whom they work. Above all it signifies, however, the continuing self-reflection, self-evaluation and shouldering the responsibility of the mentioned actors. A critical awareness of one's action also means to admit one's mistakes and to learn from them as well as evaluating and developing one's values and behaviour. Attitude also means discussing power; the power is shared, all group members should have an equal share.

⁹ Vesikansa, Sari (2002): Demokratia kouluissa ja nuorisotyössä. Gretschel, Anu (Editorial Work): Lapset nuoret ja aikuiset toimijoina - Articles of Participation. Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki.

2) SHARING

Sharing spells equality between all the participants. Knowledge, experiences and resources are tried to share equally and the instructor's task is to encourage and aid strengthening groups, which are in a marginal position, divergent or reserved in relation to the others. All have equal opportunities and rights to generate knowledge and different views are seen as a richness. Diversity serves as a resource, not a hindrance. Shared knowledge is not just generated by all the participants, it is also available to everyone. Knowledge should be equally available to the organizations, the managements as to the individual participants.

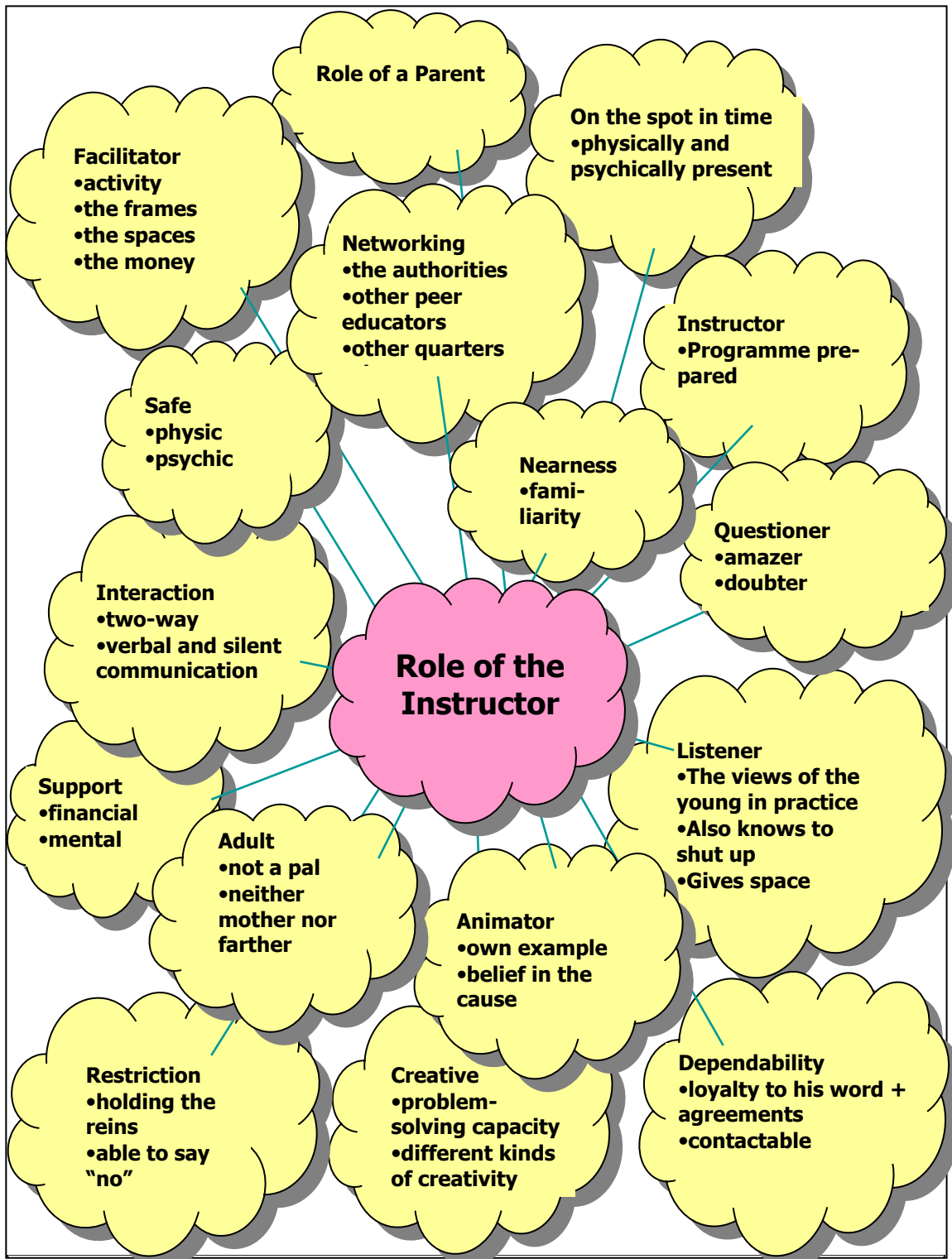
3) THE METHODS

Almost any exercise can be made participatory when the attitude, the approach, and the principles of information sharing are taken into account. In practice, participatory exercises are e.g. group discussions and the drawing of social charts. The educator's knowledge is not primary in relation to that of the youth - on the contrary; it starts from the knowledge and know-how of the participants, and their desires and strivings are to be charted. Learning, change in practices and attitudes come true 'bottom-up'.

The role of an outside instructor is to be a mediator or facilitator in the analysis, presentation, planning and implementation of these strivings. The intention is that the group members get at their disposal or find by themselves the means to actively evaluate and develop their activity themselves. It is essential that all group members participate in the activity on equal basis in relation to each other. The instructor's task is thus to monitor the internal relative strengths of the group and support members, who at the outset have very little influence in the group.

In the peer educator's instructor training of the ASK project, the adult instructor's relation to the young peer educators, when he is training the youth, was debated upon. Figure 1 specifies the peer educator's instructor's role from different angles.

Figure 1. The instructor's role in the peer educator training



The adult is above all a facilitator, who creates the frames and resources for the young to function as peer educators. He works as a trainer preparing the contents of the schooling and taking care of the practical arrangements. He should be present both physically and psychically. Apart from facilitating, the adult also sets limits, holding the reins and taking responsibility for the success of the training and the activity.

The adult's task is first of all to act as an animator for the youths and get them interested in the peer educator activity. This will only succeed, if the trainer is genuinely interested. The interest for the training is aroused, when the instructor manages to make the participating easy and he has got incentives to offer; being able to give reasons for the young, why participating in the training would be a good thing. Motivation of the youth comes from offering challenges and giving responsibilities. The better the youths are aware of their possibilities to influence the easier will they be enthusiastic to act.

The adult instructor's role in the peer educator training is not easy: He should give the youth's own ideas enough space and see to that everyone participates equally in the activity. Then the instructor should support the young after the training. The instructor's qualities are honesty, dependability, and flexibility. He is genuinely interested in young people, their ideas and their peer groups. The instructor can listen to the young and give them the necessary space to act. Making the young participate also comes evident from that the youth group has all the necessary resources for the peer education; the young have to decide what to do. During the training by reflecting and talks, the young people are pondering on their own strengths and object of their interest. Everyone has got something to give, and it pays off to utilize the young people's own hobbies and their expertness. With the cooperation of all the members in the group the ultimate content of the training and the activity emerges.

3 Peer educator training for the young

3.1 Planning the peer educator training

It pays off to plan the peer educator training well to get suitable young people involved and to ensure the continued activity after the actual training. This chapter gives hints about matters you should pay attention to when planning the peer educator training.

3.1.1 Estimating the situation in one's own neighbourhood

It pays off to start planning the training with mapping the need: Is there a need for the training in the neighbourhood, and what kind of youth do we address the training. It pays off to think about the target of the training i.e. for what kind of activity will the peer educators be trained. The peer education is expressly interlaced with the subcultures of the youths and with their activity interests, which should be paid attention to when planning the training.

It is worth first to think about what kind of young people should be admitted to the training. The instructor is well advised to think of the kinds of youth subcultures there are in his own neighbourhood, then ponder over the aim of the training; is it more important to support the young people themselves or influence the whole peer group through them. Is the training intended for the "skulkers" or "opinion leaders"?

In the local situation estimate it is also worth thinking of what activity the neighbourhood is short of and could the peer activity help to find new leisure time activities for the young. In this way it also becomes clear what the young possibly will do after the schooling, whether it is more useful to train peer educators to co-leaders at the youth centre or will the youths require peer support in their own groups.

In the situation estimate, it is also worth to take into account with what schedule training and the continuation meetings will be arranged, and in what localities the training and the activities will take place. The instructor has better to sort out the practicalities as early as possible.

3.1.2 Contact with the young

Making contact with the young is facilitated when information about the training can be part of everyday activities at, say, the youth centre. The peer education might as concept be unfamiliar to the young, why it should be clarified when marketing the training what it is all about.

It is important to pay attention to the factors which further the motivation of the youth to participate in the training. A motivating factor could be to be admitted to participate in planning the youth house activity or to organize fun to do in the locality. The whole training can be organized following a theme, depending on the objects of interest and the hobbies of the participants.

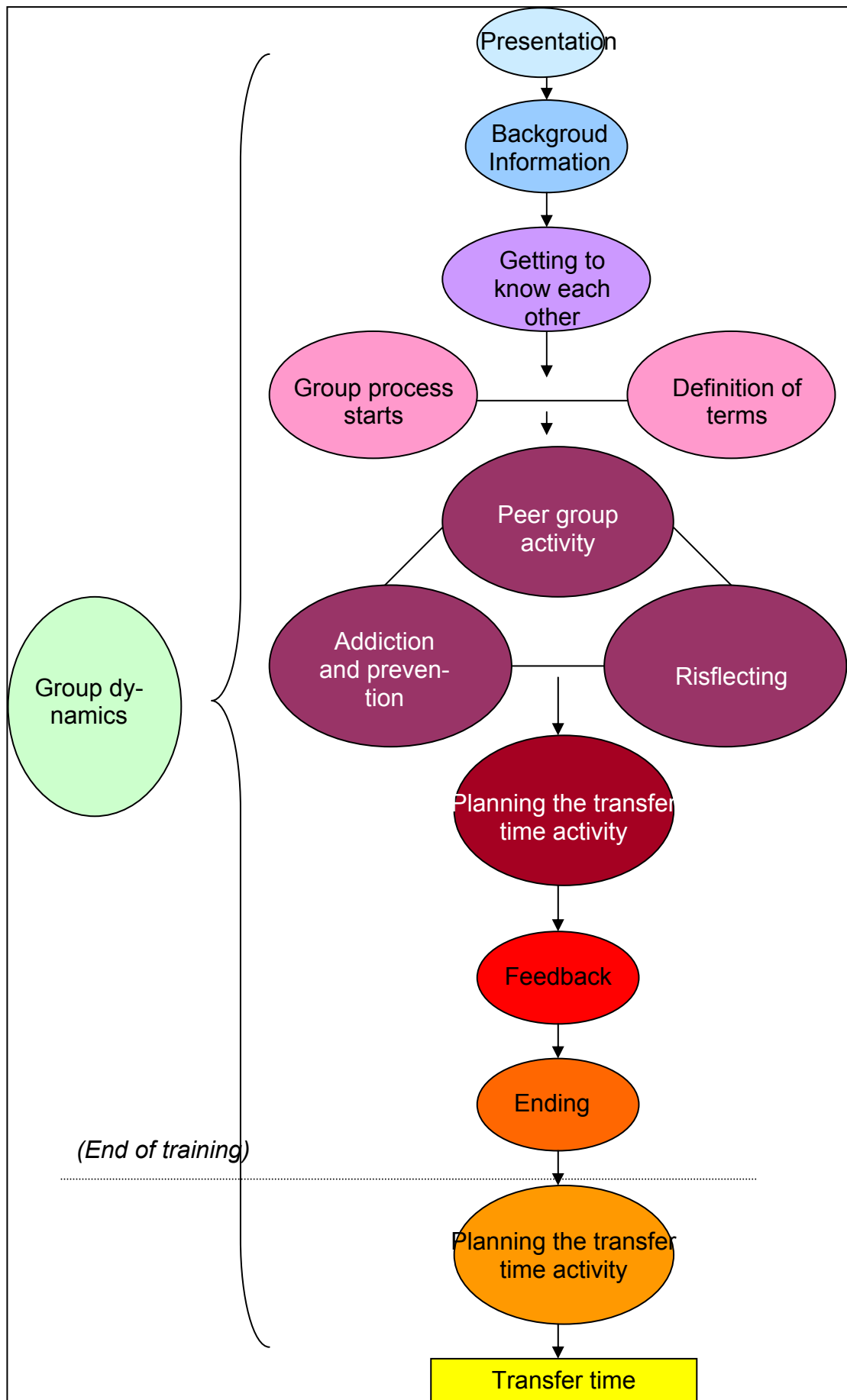
3.1.3 Selecting the young

There are different ways to select the young. If the instructor is familiar with the young, he might select the participant young people himself. The selection is affected by the motivation of the young as well as how the peer educator method is intended to be applied. If natural peer leaders are wanted, the young may themselves vote for the participants among them. This puts an emphasis on the advance information, as all of the young must know what the peer educator activity is about to be able to choose the right participants.

It is important that the young participating in the training have got something in common and that they represent the same peer group. It is easier to implement the training when the participants are roughly of the same age. The young should preferably be extrovert and open-minded, ready to accept criticism and feedback from their own doings and able to assess and reflect upon their own way of living and intoxicant abuse. Apart from that you can pick up young persons in the group, who not necessarily are capable to lead their peer group, but who will benefit from the training themselves.

It pays off to choose a relatively small group to the peer educator training, say, 12 young people. The number of instructors have an effect on this matter, if there are many instructors involved, there can be more youths as well. However, a too large group size makes the group forming process and the equal regard to all participants more difficult. A too small group is nor allowable, in that case the co-operative exercises will not succeed.

Figure 2. The structure of the peer educator training



3.1.4 Planning the content of the training

The peer educator training is composed of several small sectors, of which those crucial from the peer activity's point of view are: the defining of concepts, leading the group, mastering risks / coping with life / the intoxicants, reflecting upon one's behaviour and planning the peer activity. It remains for the instructor to decide how much each sector is treated, in what order and how. This is why the peer educator training's content have to be planned carefully.

The peer educator training is tailored to suit the participating youth. Considerable matters apart from the youth peer group, the interests and hobbies, are the nature of relation the young have to intoxicants or the risk behaviour in general, do they know each other from before, what proficiencies in steering the group they have, etc.

Figure 2 shows a graph of the scheme and progress of the training. The training scheme is designed to put limits, still allowing variations both in the emphasis of the sectors and in their order. It pays to emphasize the various sectors in the training scheme according to what seems necessary from the own target group's point of view.

The training starts with *the presentation*. This means that the instructor or instructors present and introduce themselves, possibly the training locality as well. In the ASK project, a pilot course started with an introduction of the youth house, which was functioning as the training locality, as all the participants had not been at the house before.

Next in turn is the providing of *the background information*, i.e. the instructor explains why the participants are in the class. In the ASK project pilot courses they were a.o. informed that it was an international project and the participants were in them to develop a peer education model. The background also contains all kind of practical information; the training program, mealtimes, accommodation, rules, evening programs, the next meeting, etc., which preferably should be dealt with at the very start.

After the basic matters have been made clear, the active part of the training begins and *getting to know each other* follows. Even if the participants in the training are familiar to each other from earlier, the time is well spent on getting acquainted, learning or repeating names. This builds a foundation for co-operative activities.

At the same time *the group process* of the participants gets under way. Group process means the generation of a group spirit or a we-spirit. The group formation can be encouraged by means of group forming exercises; in these you train for functioning in a group and create an open and joyful atmosphere throughout the training. Group forming on the other hand, is a process which goes on throughout the schooling, as a part of all exercises. Group forming exercises can be carried out during the first half of the schooling, after the familiarization exercises. You can also "spread" them between other exercises, to liven up more theoretical parts of the training.

At the beginning of the training it is useful to treat also the central concepts and *definitions*. These are, e.g. defining the parity, the youth and the peer activity. By defining them you can utilize chapter 2 of this material "Peer educator activity concepts". Following a participatory work mode you can use also the knowledge of the group and let the young do the defining themselves. The aim, however, is to make the participants understand what a peer educator is and what they are supposed to do after the training.

In figure 2 the *peer group activity*, mastering risks and life (*risflecting*), and *addiction and prevention* form a triangle. The corners of this triangle are the core of the peer educator training. They may be treated each as an entity of their own or alternatively as overlapping each other. The succession does not matter. Instead you should consider what skills and experiences the young entering the training already possess and what the targets of this schooling are. According to this you can plan for what matters you will go through with these young.

Mastering of risks in the contents of this course points mainly to the intoxicants and risks involved in them. Coping with life is a wider concept. One might also call it familiarity with life's problems. The target of this sector is to go through those risk and critical situations, which are part of young people's life situation, and to look together for ways of dealing with them. In the ASK project trainings, problems related to alcohol, courtship and situations in school and studies were gone through. The methods used were drama exercises and talks. Adventure and experience methods also suit the treatment of this sector.

Reflecting upon one's behaviour is closely linked to the mastering of risks. The aim is to ponder personally different problem situations and to recognize reasons behind certain behaviour modes. The target is for the young to learn in the training by insights and peer support new behaviour models instead of the risky ones and to be able to convey what he has learnt to his peer group after the training. In one pilot course of the ASK project e.g. group discussions about intoxicant abuse were held; there were some youth above the age of 18, older than the other in the group, one who told he had cut down on his weekend drinking as he did not find it fun or sensible any more. Another on his part told he had never even consumed alcohol. For the younger people this served as an example, making them question their alcohol consumption every weekend.

The leading of the group is marked, if the peer educators are expected to lead clubs of other activities for their peers. In the ASK project this sector was important, as almost all of the peer educators were, after the training, working as co-leaders for adults at the youth centre. The peer educator does not, however, have to be a group leader. The target of the peer educator training is not to train youth to be adults' assistants, but to give the youths means of functioning in a group and activate them to influence their own lives." Leading a group" might rather be "acting in a group", containing social, self-expression and problem solving skills.

The planning of the transfer time activity directs one's eyes to the time after the training. The purpose is to ponder on how the youth could utilize what they have

learnt working with other youth, in their peer group. The peer activity ideas come from the youths themselves. In the pilot courses of the ASK project the young peer educators were eager to arrange events and activities, though peer activities need not always be organized activity. The peer educator may act as a support for other youths in everyday life; at the school, in hobbies, at the youth centre and among friends. Planning the peer activity may continue even after the training. In part of the courses of the ASK project the planning of the activity had been left completely outside the actual training due to lack of time, and it went on at separate sessions.

The last sectors of the training are feedback and breaking-up. There are various exercises on how to give *feedback*, one example is shown in chapter 3.2. The feedback can also be gathered on a feedback form.

Ending means the ending of the training. It is important to go through what has been decided during the training and possible continuation meetings. For the young the training is often an experience connected with strong feelings; it is okay to give a place to express the feelings. With the use of breaking-up exercises you can thank and say good-bye to all the participants and end the training in a pleasant atmosphere.

As stated earlier, the planning of the peer activity can be continued still after the actual training. *The transfer time*, either as a guided operation or the youths' own "hanging around", takes also place after the training. The pilot courses of the ASK project have gone on with an intense peer activity; meetings, clubs and events are planned up to early summer in 2003. The peer activity, though, also needs the support of an adult, therefore, it should be thought of, already at the planning stage, what the adult instructor's resources are and the possibilities to commit oneself to the activity.

The training can be arranged either as a camp or in the form of shorter gatherings. The advantages of a training camp are the faster and stronger group forming of the youths in camp conditions and the opportunity to arrange auxiliary activities, such as wandering, around the peer educator training scheme. The disadvantages of the camp are its larger costs and it takes time - both for the instructor and the youths.

Below is shown an example of two days' program in a peer educator camp. In this instance the educational part lasts for 16 hours, but on the understanding that the youth will keep meeting even after the training camp and keep the planning of the activities going on.

An example of the peer educator training program:

T = Theory, L = Playing

Training Day One

T+L	Introduction and the youth house rules, familiarization, introducing the principle	1 h
T+L	Defining the terms of the peer education a) What does a peer educator denote? b) We are going to become peer educators c) > Group Forming	1 h
T	Background + House Introduction	1 h
L	Group Forming (Designing the peer educator's logo)	2,5 h
T	How to lead a group and qualities of leadership	2 h
T+L	Summary of the Day	0,5 h

Training Day Two

L	Warm-up exercise and introducing the logos	1 h
T	Intoxicant abuse and coping with life	3 h
T+L	When do you need a friend? - Exercise	1 h
T	Planning of the Peer Activity	2 h
T+L	Feedback and Breaking-up	1 h

It pays off to take into account the supporting of the young after the training already at the planning stage and schedule continuation meetings after the actual schooling. Even if the young are thinking up ideas for the peer activity by themselves, the instructor may beforehand find out, what the locality can offer or what resources e.g. the Youth Department has got to support youth clubs and other activity.

It also pays to take the human resources into account in the planning. It pays for the instructor to choose himself a partner among the municipal or parish youth workers or e.g. a volunteer from the Local Branch of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. When making plans for the training, it thus pays to try to use all local actors: The parishment might have an advantageous camping centre, premises in the youth centre or the school might be used for meetings, local

firms could embark upon sponsored meals or various non-governmental organizations might participate in the training.

3.1.5 The quality criteria for the peer educator training

The peer educator training for the young is a fairly loose model allowing of side-tracks and variations. Peer educator trainings implemented in different places and in different youth groups might be widely different from each other. How do you ensure that the trainings, in spite of their differences, are of good quality? In the instructor training of the ASK project the quality of the training was pondered upon and the quality criteria below were put down:

The quality criteria for the peer educator training for the young

- The instructor has a good grasp of his subject
- The young is offered education
- The training gives a report
- The training lasts 20 h + continuation gatherings
- The young people carry out their tasks carefully, participate actively
- The young person feels ready to become a peer educator
 - making good use of oneself
 - an own idea of how to get to work
 - the young person knows, what is meant by a peer educator
 - the young person knows, what the peer educator activity is all about
- training > know-how
- guidance > the young person knows, where to ask for help; he does not feel left alone
- the training supplies you with " bunches of keys"
- the background information is gone through right at the start of the training, and it is in order and up-to-date
- experience of succeeding
- the training leaves a training scheme, materials, a report, etc.
- the feedback is utilized

The implementation of the quality criteria was not supervised in the pilot courses and they were not meant to be the only right instructions on how to organize the training. These quality criteria are, however, useful when planning courses, as comparing his own plan to them, the instructor might more easily find the developable spots and the central ideas.

The peer educator training has succeeded, when the young feels he has got something out of it and is able to apply the contribution from the training or

something he has learnt there in his own activity. The important thing is that training offers the young to experience intuitive understandings.

The trainer who is an instructor should be skilled in his work. A good trainer is prepared for the course and knows what he is talking about. The instructor's close contact with the youth is important, too; he knows what kind of group he is dealing with and sees to that the group is well-matched.

The quality of youth training is not merely stressed on expertise and control of the contents. Youth training should be safe and fun: When these two factors come true, the participants are enjoying the course and are willing to take part in the exercises. It is important to show consideration for the needs of the young. High quality also shows in that the external circumstances of the training correspond to the advance information.

3.2 The content of the peer educator training

This chapter deals closer with the sectors of the peer educator training and demonstrates some example exercises, which can be used in the training. All the exercises shown here are not intended to be carried out at the same occasion, but the instructor may choose the ones he feels come most naturally. It is perfectly OK to use also the instructor's own exercises! At each sector there are defined the targets which should be achieved by the exercise.

The exercises are grouped according to the training scheme headlines in fig. 2.

A PRESENTATION

Target: Adult instructors (the trainers) introduce themselves, then also the course participants present themselves. The training locality may be introduced, too, unless it is a familiar place already. The instructors also introduce the idea of the training.

B BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Target: The training and the peer activity schedule, program, the aims, the rules, and other practical matters are gone through. It will be explained in more detail, how the training is linked with the activity of the surrounding community, and also other vital matters regarding the training are dealt with.

C GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Target: The names of the group members are learnt as well as some of their characteristic properties. The atmosphere is relaxed and the functioning together is prepared. It is not necessary to deal with the backgrounds of the young people thoroughly. Differences need not to be brought up, instead the focus should be on regarding the youths equal in this training.

Exercises: ME AND A COLOUR
The players form a ring and one of them starts by introducing himself telling his first name and a colour, which begins on the same letter as the player's first name. E.g. "I am a Gene Green" or "I am Pete Pitch-Black." The next player repeats the name and colour of the previous one and adds his own. The player after him repeats all the previous' and adds his own at the tail. This goes on until all the group members have told their names.

I AM ... AND I LIKE ...

One of the players tells his name and something typical for him (e.g. something he hates or likes, his favourite dish or favourite pet - the topic may be chosen in advance). The next one tells the previous one's first name and his choice and adds his own at the tail. The third repeats the previous' names and descriptions and adds his own, etc. This exercise fits well the first meeting turns, as it helps to look each other in the eye when talking and to talk directly to the other. E.g.: "Your name is Anthony and you like carrots. Your name is Sarah and you love chocolate. My name is Kate and I like cabbage casserole."

D DEFINITION OF TERMS

Target: To reveal the concepts "peer", "peer educator", "peer education" and "peer educator activity" for the young people in the light of examples. Note! The young person does not have to "become someone", but he can be a peer educator in the neighbourhood, the group and role where he is active anyway.

Exercise: Talk and pondering on equality. The exercise can be carried out either in pairs, in small groups or elaborating in larger chatter groups on views brought up in pair discussions. The pondering can be initiated e.g. by answering the questions below:

- What is a peer?
- What kinds of peer groups are there?
- To which peer group do you belong yourself?
- What other factors exist which define peer?
- Who is a peer educator?
- How does a peer educator work?
- What is the peer activity of the youths in practice?
- What does a peer educator need to manage to work?

E GROUP FORMING EXERCISES

Target: With the group forming exercises the group forming process is started and the introduction is continued and intensified. The progress of the group forming process depends on the group members, and it sure is important that the instructor has an eye for the group and thus is able to decide how much time should be set aside for group forming exercises.

Exercises: BLINDFOLDED IN ORDER OF TALLNESS

A group of blind and dumb people. They are to arrange themselves in order of tallness. When this is done, the leader might say that the order of tallness was supposed to be the opposite.

BLIND MAN'S SCHOTTISCHE

The players line up, their eyes closed, holding the one in front of them from the shoulders. The last person in the line has his eyes open. He steers the line by pressing the shoulder of the one in front of him either with his left or right hand. The one in front of him repeats this command. When the command reaches the first person in the line, he turns in the direction ordered by the press. If the size of the group is large, the group can be divided into smaller groups (4 - 8 persons).

DIVIDING INTO GROUPS

You can divide into groups amusingly and in various ways, e.g. based on different qualities of the participants. You can divide into groups based on, e.g. tallness, length of a person's hair, size in shoes, date of birth, the initial letter of mother's maiden name or the length of the little finger.

FORMING GROUPS ACCORDING TO SHAPE

Also with this game you can divide people into groups. The players get paper slips of different shapes (like a star, a square, a triangle, a circle...) attached to their backs. The players are 'mute' and should find their own group, to which belong those, who have a similarly shaped slip on their backs. You can make the game easier, if the game leader whispers to each player at the start, what shape the slip on his back is.

A COMMON PROBLEM

One in the group, the guesser, steps outside the room. Meanwhile the others decide on a common problem, say, to stand at the shop counter and find that the wallet has been left at home. The guesser enters and asks each one, how he would act in a case like this, trying to figure out, what kind of problem it is.

THE CHAIRS IN LINE!

The group is seated on chairs placed in a circle. The instructor asks all to think of, where in the room or locality he would rather be, and shift his and his chair's position there. After everyone has found himself the most preferred place, the instructor asks the participants to get up standing on their chairs. He also tells them that from now on talking and making sounds are forbidden, and so is touching the ground or the floor. The participants are able to communicate with each other only by expressions and gestures. Then the instructor asks the participants to form a solid line of chairs at the front of the room. The gesture language, the cooperation and taking all the group members into consideration are keys to the solution. The exercise is brought out by talks.

F PEER GROUP ACTIVITY

Target: To give the young the skills they need when leading other youths and working in a group. The instructor can choose the best method for himself to treat the subject; such are e.g. group work, lecture and small-group discussions. The young may also put on a list those mental pictures, which come to their mind from the defined concepts. Thinking on the character of the group, the subject might be analyzed, e.g. with help from the questions below:

Exercises: **DEFINING THE GROUP**
Searching together for a meaning of the concepts: group, leader and leading. Meanings could be found by e.g. answering the following questions:

- What is a group?
- What characterizes a safe group?
- What are the stages of a group?
- What is a suitable group size?

EXERCIZING LEADING

The young are given the task to plan and prepare some game or exercise, which they perform for the rest of the group. Leading the game can also be learnt in pairs. In this way the peer educators get to try leading. The rest of the group gives the educands constructive feedback specifying the succeedings and the weak spots. Leading a group may be exercised before going through the theory of leading, and once more after the theory study. Did anything change in the leading?

BASICS IN LEADING A GROUP

When dealing with leading a group, the treating of the following subjects facilitates the understanding of the youths' peer educator role and the work description and the responsibility linked to it:

- The role of the peer educator
- The group dynamics
- Problem situations (when a young person contacts the educator)
- Right and duties
- Suggestions / Ideas concerning the continuations
- From where more details

G RISKS: ADDICTION AND PREVENTION

Target: How to master risks is dealt with according to the qualifications of the group. The instructor may apply a method he knows the best and what appears to him the most natural ways, like e.g. adventure, talks, role-playing, drama, group works, etc. Instead of risks and risk factors you might talk about coping with life or, say, dreams and targets. Depending on the group, you might deal with themes on a

very general level and focus on general matters concerning all youths. You can also bring up intoxicant abuse, truancy, violence or other more problematic themes.

Exercises: GROUP DISCUSSION

The young people are divided into small groups and each is given 5 - 6 questions dealing with a selected subject on a general level. In each group there is a recorder (preferably the instructor, if there are several), who records all comments and views expressed on the subject. The recorder's task is also to step in, if the discussion is at risk of getting off the track. He does not otherwise intervene in the course of the discussion (unless being one of the youths in the group - then, of course, he is entitled to state his views).

After the discussions in small groups, all assemble into one large group, where the contributions from earlier discussions are brought out.

Themes for group discussions:

- Human relations / Courtship
- Bullying
- Dreams and Plans
- Vandalism / Pilferages
- Respect for femininity and masculinity and growing
- Schooling / Occupation / Work
- Choices - Everything affects everything else
- Control / Rules
- Accepting differences
- Happiness
- Confidence
- Security

INTOXICANT DEBATE - 10 questions about intoxicants:

1. What kinds of drinking habits are there in Finland?
2. How do drinking habits of young and old people differ from each other?
3. Is experimenting with intoxicants part of the youth?
4. Should there be age limits for buying alcohol and tobacco?
5. Why do Finnish youths drug themselves?
6. Why don't young people use drugs?
7. Is intoxicant addiction a problem among the young or the old?
8. Do the smokers experiment more readily with drugs than others?
9. How do you say 'no' to intoxicants?
10. How would you influence the drinking, smoking or drug habits of your friends?

H RISK-REFLECTING: REFLECTING UPON ONE'S BEHAVIOUR

Target: To learn to think upon the causes and effects of one's own behaviour. The exercises are closely linked to the chapter on risks and coping with life. Also in this chapter the methods used may be group discussions, drama and role-playing.

Exercises: CAUSE AND EFFECT

The young form a circle. The first player comes up with a simple statement, say, "I'm hungry..." and an explanation why, like "...because my fridge is empty". The next player goes on with the next explanation "...as we are just back from our vacation". The game goes on until everyone has had his turn or as long as there are sensible explanations to be found.

AT THE CROSSROADS

The instructor sketches a crossroads on the board or the flip chart; the crossing symbolizes the place where the choice is made. One fork in the road denotes affirmative, the other negative. The choice might e.g. be to experiment with drugs when the best pal offers them at a party. The group ponders on pros and cons for both the affirmative and the negative answers, the good and the bad effects.

DISAGREEING - AGREEING

One wall in the room functions as the "disagreeing" wall, the opposite wall is the "agreeing wall". The instructor produces statements (smoking beautifies, cannabis relieves menstrual pains) and the group members place themselves in the room at the spot according to what their opinion is.

WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

The young people are divided into smaller groups and paper and pencils are distributed to everyone. First all are talking about what would be each one's big dream, how it could be achieved, what might endanger it. You can choose one common or interesting dream to focus on more closely. The talks are brought out as drawings to be shown to the whole group.

WHEN DO YOU NEED A FRIEND?

The participants think of what situations you need a friend in, and ponder upon the qualities of a good friend. The qualities of a friend are written visibly on a large piece of paper or a board. The exercise continues as a drama: Two of the young people work as actors and show the initial situation; Jesse is down, because something sad occurred during the weekend. Jesse's friend Jessica has heard that the school's windows have been smashed and the localities messed up. Jessica questions Jesse more exactly about what happened and tries to help. The rest of the group suggests what Jessica should ask / do. Finally there could be a discussion all together about which qualities of a friend showed up in the sketch.

I PLANNING THE PEER ACTIVITY

Target: The opportunities of the peer activity in the own peer group and in the background community are being considered. Essential is that the youths themselves plan the activity, and that there really is an ambition to implement the activity. The planning of the peer activity need not be completed during the training, but may continue during the continuation meetings. As an aid in the planning you might utilize e.g. brainstorming and the network chart. The aim is to find out what can be done and with whom.

Exercises: A BOAT TRIP

First the instructor tells a little story: The youths travel as passengers on a ship sailing the Baltic Sea. The ship runs aground and the passengers (the youths) are wrecked on three islets. A distress signal has got dispatched just before the ship founders, but the islets are so remote that it takes a week before the rescuers can reach the site. The young people divide into three groups and hit on ideas how to spend the time, before the rescuers arrive. Finally the ideas are presented to everyone and all contemplate, whether any of them could be seriously implemented as a peer activity.

THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF A PEER EDUCATOR

The group contemplates the right and duties of the young working as a peer educator: What goes with the peer educator's activity; what a young person is supposed to do and when he should turn to an adult. The instructor might well point out that the peer educator does not need to act as a psychologist or a social worker, but he has always in problematic situations the opportunity to get support from the instructor.

I AM IN A SPIDER'S WEB

Every participant gets paper and pencil. In the centre of the paper sheet everyone draws his self-portrait (the appearance is of no importance) and a spider's web is outlined around the portrait. The participant fills in the names and characteristics (mother, the best pal, the bus driver, the doctor, etc.) of those he has met and talked to during the seven previous days. Everyone - even those to whom he has said just a few words - are recorded on the sheet i.e. all the meetings during the week. You can locate people at different places in the web. If there is more time available, more thought can be given to place people closer or further off oneself depending on, how much one has dealt with them during the week.

When every participant has got everybody added to his sheet of paper, there is a talk generally how much people you can find around you. You do not have to show your network to the others, but the group deals in general terms what kind of people you may find in the network and whom you might meet during a week. The spider's web also shows how important the social skills are. The

better we are in control of our interaction skills, the more pleasant are the encounters.

J FEEDBACK

Target: To give everyone a chance to express his feelings about and views on the training. Feedback can also be gathered in order to develop the activity, in which case the focus is on how to further improve the training.

Feedback can be given through exercises, a learning log, a serial, a written feedback form, etc.

Exercises: A LEARNING LOG

Keeping a learning log starts right at the beginning of the first training. The participants are given a booklet or notebook, where they can regularly throughout the process put down their thoughts about the training. Notable matters could be ideas, feelings, responses, the learning of new things and working in a group.

SELF-EVALUATION

The participants are asked to observe and evaluate their own activity in class: What they are learning; what their role in the whole group or the small groups was; where they did succeed; what could have turned out better. It is important that the young write down also positive observations on their behaviour, like their own strengths and their good points.

THE CIRCLE OF GOOD MOOD

The participants sit in a ring and one of them begins by saying something constructive about the guy next to him. He carries on uttering a sympathetic thought about the other sitting next to him and it goes on like this until the circle closes and the last positive comment goes to him who began the game.

THE WEATHER MAP

Giving feedback from the day as weather symbols.

K ENDING

Target: At the end of the training all that has happened and how to carry on is summed up and gathered. The aim of the exercise is to create a nice atmosphere and provide a distinct finish of the schooling.

Exercises:

JOINT HUG

Everyone embraces everybody else. The joint hug can also be done in a line or circle. In this case everyone hugs in turn

everybody else personally. As touching might not feel comfortable to everybody, it could be agreed on some alternative to hugging, handshake, waving, etc. Important is, however, that everyone says goodbye to all the other group members.

FEEDBACK TO TAKE HOME

A paper sheet is fastened to everyone's back reading "I'm a good peer educator, because...". Everyone writes a constructive feedback on the others' backs. The sheets are folded so that the feedback is not visible, and they may be unfolded only at home.

FISHBONE

The first one lays down on his back on the floor and the next one on his back with his head on the first one's belly. This forms the fishbone. Everyone says in turn what stayed in his mind from this day.

A STORY THEATRE

Telling a story, say, about a usual morning whereby each group member may utter just one word in turn. Further everyone is given some compulsory words, which must appear in the story.

AN APHORISM A SECOND

The group is divided in two and one half stands up in a line. The instructor puts in a word to the first one, who takes a step forward and says an aphorism / maxim containing that word. The instructor then picks a new word out of this aphorism for the next one to tell a new aphorism. Tip: Just fire off whatever comes to your mind first!

4 Experiences from peer educator training courses for the young

Within the ASK project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare four pilot courses for the young focusing on preventive drug and intoxicant work were organized in Finland. In the planning stage the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare contacted the A-Clinic Foundation and through it the EU-funded EuroNet network where a practical peer education had been developed as a method in the preventive drug work. Youth Against Drugs (YAD) as well as the Youth Departments of Helsinki and Hämeenlinna also joined in to develop the Finnish peer educator training model.

The ASK project arranged in August - September 2002 during two weekends an instructor training for 12 youth workers. The group comprised youths and YAD workers from Helsinki, Hämeenlinna and Kuusankoski. The instructor training contained peer education, participatory methods and planning a youth peer educator training for the own locality. The instructor training was carried out participatorily, utilizing the skill and experience of the whole group.

After the instructor training, each participating quarter organized its own youth training. Below are reports on these peer educator training pilot courses.

4.1 City of Helsinki, Youth Department: Pakila and Torpparinmäki Youth Houses

The employees at Pakila and Torpparinmäki youth houses decided jointly to carry out the peer educator training for the young with the aim to facilitate the free movement of the young and dispel prejudices between the youths in the quarters of Pakila and Torpparinmäki as well as between various youth culture groups. In Helsinki, the quarters and suburbs form in some parts rather strong invisible barriers for the movement of the young. Besides, the aim for training peer educators was to make co-leaders and peer counsellors of the young for the youth houses, to influence a larger group of youths through the educators and support the young themselves through the training.

Owing to the diversity in targets, the participating crowd was very mixed. The youth workers gathered the participants by charting from the youth house visitors suitable and between themselves very different young people, as they saw fit, to join the training. Half of the participants were from Pakila (6 persons) and the other half from Torpparinmäki (5 persons). The ages ranged from a girl of 14 to two already adult boys of 18.

From Pakila four boys and two girls were selected. Three of the young belonged to those "hanging around" the youth house, whom the instructors considered passive youths at risk of becoming excluded. Two sporting youths represented the active ones. The sixth participant from Pakila was a 16 years old youth, whose intoxicant abuse had increased alarmingly within a short period of time.

From Torpparinmäki two active girls, who joined through the general advertising at the youth house and at schools, participated in the peer educator training. Through personal interviews three more passive and reserved youths were enrolled.

The entire Helsinki peer educator group was thus quite heterogeneous, and one training target was actually to test if the more passive youths would activate themselves when being brought together with active youths.

The training took place at the Pakila youth house during one weekend. People slept over at the youth house, and in all the training lasted for 32 hours. The contents of the training were composed of the topics below to be dealt with:

- Introduction, rules, familiarization and background 2h
- Group Forming 2.5h
- Going through Day One 0.5h
- Evening Program, a.o. Designing a common logo and Printing it on T-shirts 4h
- Intoxicant Abuse and Coping with Life 3h
- When do you need a friend 1h
- How to lead a group and qualities of leadership 2h
- Breaking-up 0.5h

Furthermore the participants were divided into cooking teams, which in turns prepared the meals (4 x 1.5h = 6h). The teams were formed so that the members in one group did not know each other from before. The aim was to make the young better acquainted with each other and promote the forming of a team spirit.

After the training the youths have gathered once together to plan coming activities. They have also visited "each others' " youth houses. Up to now part of the young has been having jobs at, say, the youth house band nights. It is part of the plans to use the peer educators as co-leaders on the youth house outings, as well as to let them in on planning and implementing youth house events. The youth houses plan to reform the house democracy and the instructors actually brought up the idea that the young would have the responsibility for managing the house meetings and that the employees would be present there as participants and in problematic situations as supporters and promoters. In a planning stage is also to implement a Banned-under-16 Day (wished by the youths having activity or time of their own for the slightly older youth house visitors) on Sunday afternoons, when peer educators above 18 years of age would be in charge of the youth house localities and function as supervisors. Encouragement for their peer educator activity the youths are

getting by personal talks at the youth houses, because the instructors are employees there and the youths who took part in the training are visitors there.

The instructors have been very satisfied with the training and they also conveyed the feedback from the young to the planning team of the training. The targets set for the training were fulfilled even beyond expectations. One of the unemployed youths involved got as a result of the training busy looking for a job and was employed, too. Further the instructors told about small changes which had happened in the youths' behaviour, telling about a growing responsibility. E.g. one of the young, who earlier could not care less about the youth house rules, now puts his shoes on the shelf when entering and asks others to do likewise, too. The peer educators have also been emboldened to contact with other young people.

The group forming was carried out splendidly, which laid a good foundation for the success of the whole training. Also the different views from four different instructors and a successful joint cooperation made the training successful and efficient. Specially the group debate on intoxicants was rewarding; the young started to think about intoxicant abuse through the six general questions by really going into the matter. The variety in the group and its age distribution added on its part to the group dynamics and many angles to the discussions. The trainers said you could see how some kind of reflection started off in the heads of most of the young during the first training weekend.

The games and the theoretical portion were implemented too separately from each other in the training: During the First Day there were a lot of activity methods and less facts; Day Two the opposite. After the First Day the youths asked about getting down to actual training. On the other hand they were enthusiastic and gladly surprised that the training contained so much else but just lectures. In the future, theory and activity will be mingled with each other. Most of all the young needed help to understand the role of the peer educator.

The new training to the youth workers has been asked for and on the other hand the peer educators are asking for continuation meetings and a common activity. Also the other youth centres in Helsinki have shown interest to the peer educator training. The application of the activity model goes on at the youth centres and a new course is already being planned for the autumn 2003.

Further information from:

Maria Nordberg
Merja Sonninen
Maisa Suikkari
Jani Hoviario

maria.nordberg@nk.hel.fi
merja.sonninen@nk.hel.fi
maisa.suikkari@nk.hel.fi
jani.hoviario@nk.hel.fi

Tel. +358 (0)9 3108 9075

Tel. +358 (0)9 754 1704

4.2 City of Hämeenlinna, Youth Department

At Hämeenlinna nine girls took part in the training. The youth centre employees selected four participants by asking the girls directly about their interest in taking part in the training. However, one of the four skipped the training as it was about to begin. Also boys were invited, but for some reason or other they did not get excited about it. The rest of the participants were found through the schools, where the teachers were asked to recruit suitable young to the training. All the selected youths were quite active. In the group was a tacit girl with a cheerful disposition, though, and an active girl, however, needing support from the group, as her life situation was slightly without a course. The girls were aged 14 - 16.

The target of the training was to make co-leaders at the youth centre of the peer educators, to influence a larger group of young people through them, to help youths in the class themselves (concerning just one), to make the young participate and to offer them ways of influencing. The training was carried through in stages, with six separate gatherings in evenings during the autumn, and after the first two meetings there was a camp during the weekend. After the training the group meetings go on in the spring 2003 and the peer educator activity is supported through the meetings. The training comprised a total of ca. 30 hours. The training divided from the point of contents as below:

- | | |
|--|----|
| - Project background and target and familiarization | 3h |
| - Defining the peer educator activity and making participate | 5h |
| - Leading the group | 6h |
| - Coping with life and reflecting upon one's own behaviour | 4h |
| - Planning the peer activity | 4h |
| - Visits and intoxicant problems | 4h |
| - Designing next year's activities and feedback | 4h |

During the training the group had a hoodie printed with "I am a true" on its front and "peer educator" on its back. The training comprised visits a.o. to the Youth Health Service Centre, Youth Welfare Office, the Family Centre's out-patient care and the town info-centre "Kastelli". The youths have expressed their wishes to be shown around in the Social Welfare Office and the Employment Development Centre.

For the coming spring the youths have composed these kinds of activities: Organizing a peer camp and winter events (say, a downhill skiing trip) and founding two club groups; one for the junior school pupils and the other for the seventh form pupils. At the beginning of every meeting there is an enquiry when the peer educators may tell about situations where they have made use of their peer educating skills.

The young had been pleased with the team spirit of the peer educator group. To every small group exercise, there was formed a new combination to prevent regular groups from forming during the training, but everyone was dealing with everyone. To the surprise of the instructors, in the part about coping with life, besides, drama the most important topic arising was the health issues and

based on them it was arranged for the group to be shown around at the Youth Health Service Centre.

The most difficult thing to understand for the young was what a peer educator actually was about. Thus it is important to not only clearly define the qualities of a peer educator but also his limits and go through the rights and duties of the young as a peer educator.

Further information:

Hanna Käppi hanna.kappi@hameenlinna.fi
Kimmo Laiho kimmo.laiho@hameenlinna.fi

Tel. +358 (0)400 430 141
Tel. +358 (0)40 520 3246

4.3 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and Kuusankoski Youth Department

The training participants at Kuusankoski were youths spending their time at the local youth café with hardly any other hobbies. Of the eight youths 5 were boys, 3 girls, and they were acquainted from earlier. The age range was between 15 and 19. A peculiarity to other pilot courses was that in the Kuusankoski training there were three dating couples.

The aim of the training was to activate the youths and help them themselves as well as influence a larger group of young people through them. The training comprised a weekend camp (15h) and two gatherings (2 x 2.5h).

The camp program divided from the point of contents as below:

- | | |
|--|------|
| - Familiarization and Group Forming | 2h |
| - Background | 0.5h |
| - What is a peer | 1h |
| - Clarifying the cases through the problem solving task | 2.5h |
| - Dreams Charting; preparation and presentation | 2 h |
| - Own Values | 0.5h |
| - Working as a peer educator, qualities of a good peer educator | 1h |
| - Planning the peer activity and making the schedule | 2h |
| - Risk behaviour, pondering upon the own intoxicant abuse and that of those born about the same year | 3h |
| - Feedback | 0.5h |

The themes of the continuation meetings are again the human relations skills and the recognition of feelings.

- Feelings and Human Relations 2.5h
- Planning the activity in practice for the spring 2003 2.5h
- Designing a logo and a slogan + Handing out the certificates 2.5h
- The Advent Party

The youths' activity plans contained a.o. to bring up the youths' views through the local newspaper in order to establish an own youth column or youth supplement. Part of the plans were to organize meetings and a weekend at a cabin as well as an incentive trip to Lapland next autumn. There is further a plan to carry out a non-intoxicant event for the young monthly during spring 2003:

- in January Glow Bowling
- in February St. Valentine's Day Disco
- in March Downhill Racing Weekend
- in April Adventure Day
- in May Youth Event Arrangements at the Kuusankoski Central Square

The instructors found the peer educator training to be a meaningful and inspiring tool, through which they themselves enjoy their work. They will in future, too, put the training into practice in their work. The instructors were also taken by complete surprise to see, how the passive young people at the youth café started to function actively during the training and how intensively they went into, say, the intoxicant discussion and got enthusiastic about their political influence possibilities. The instructors had also assessed that the youths should need more support than they actually need.

Also at Kuusankoski, a new peer educator training is planned for the next autumn and the model of activity will henceforth be put into practice.

Further information:

Rosita Juurinen	rosita.juurinen@yad.jiop.fi	Tel. +358 (0)40 727 5589
Elisabet Tarkiainen	etarkiainen@hotmail.com	Tel. +358 (0)44 223 8862

4.4 Organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD) and City of Tampere, Youth Services

At Tampere 11 young were selected to the peer educator training among the frequenters at the Tesoma and Lentävänniemi youth centres. During the training 3 youths dropped out in the middle of the training, due to own passivity, pressures at work or resistance from the parents. The final peer educator group consisted of eight youths, only one of them a boy. The young people were aged 15 -17. According to the instructors the youths participating in the training were in a sense already qualified peer educators; they just had to become aware of and understand it themselves. The training gave them more self-confidence to act.

The aim of the peer educator training was to make the young co-leaders at the youth centre and influence a larger group of youths through them. The training, therefore, focused specially on comprehensive entities supporting these skills. The training was carried out in several stages: Two night classes at the youth centre, an adventure and group forming meeting at the Antaverkka camping centre and finally a training weekend at the youth centre. The training totalled 20 hours.

The first gathering comprised the introduction of those present and getting acquainted as well as getting through the background and the training scheme. Finally the group made it clear to the members, what is meant by peer education (what is a peer group, to what peer groups do you belong).

The theme of the contents during the second meeting was the role and qualities of the educator and the group dynamics. Further the group got the advance tasks for the training weekend (everyone had to choose a game to lead during the training weekend), and subjects dealt with previously were put into practice through problem solving games.

The theme of the third meeting was group forming, which took place at the forest path of the camping centre, where there were various grouping and problem solving tasks, by means of confidential games and adventure (wall climbing).

The first day's content themes during the training weekend were:

- group dynamics and experience in leading (one's own games) as well as 3h
- coping with life 3h

During the second day

- the actual activity was being planned and 2h
- feedback from the training was given 1.5h

In the peer educators' activity plans is the foundation of a group leaders' group for girls aged 9 - 12 and leading a YAD group at the youth centre. The young are also thinking on how to gain from their training in practice when spending their time at the youth centre. The peer educator could e.g. act as an initiator for the young, visiting the youth centre for the first time, as a messenger between the employees and other youth, encouraging the young or generally as an active actor at the youth centre.

The young experienced the training as fun and inventive. A sound group spirit came true also in this training, and , moreover, the young felt they had learnt to cope with critical situations and to deal with other than children. They felt they had got experiences, ideas, group leading skills and found the discussions and the exercises fun. On the debit side according to the youths and the instructors was the brevity of the training and the fact that part of the group members interrupted the training.

The instructors experienced that, starting from ready material of the ASK project, it was quite easy to plan the training, even if the planning took longer than estimated. The circles established by the peer educators generate new activities for the local kids and from the YAD's point of view, the training produces more know-how to train the membership.

More information:

Susanna Raivio

susanna.raivio@yad.jiop.fi

Tel. +358 (0)40 769 0059

Janne Paananen

janne.paananen@yad.jiop.fi

Tel. +358 (0)40 551 9067

Henri Rikander

4.5 Summary of the experiences

The trainings were carried out in very different ways at different places. There were differences in the selection processes of the young, in the marketing of the training and its implementation as well as the practical realization (one weekend or several gatherings and a camp) and in the contents (focussing on different sectors of the training). Table 1 shows a summary of the central features of the pilot courses.

In Helsinki the young were selected fairly carefully following criteria agreed on in advance. Thus a group of very miscellaneous young people joined, which, however, formed an integrated group after the process of familiarization and group formation. One objective with the Helsinki class was to decrease the mutual biases among the youth, which succeeded well. At other places the youths selected to the training were similar between them and in several cases acquainted to each other from earlier. Almost everyone of the Hämeenlinna and Tampere youths were also active youths, as they are called. The group sizes of the classes were 8 - 11 young people per class, which proved beneficial both from the team works' and the debates' point of view.

The youths' peer group was, at all localities, the own youth house. At Hämeenlinna part of the young was from the same school, thus the own school/class was the peer group for these young. The trained peer educators also had their more personal peer groups, e.g. in hobby circles. Through the trainings also the other peer educators became an important peer group for the participants.

At Helsinki, Hämeenlinna and Tampere, one function of the peer educator activity was to generate "co-leaders" to the youth centre. At Kuusankoski the main target was to support the youths themselves and activate them to act. At all places the peer educators have, after the training, been intensively involved in the youth centre activities, which has clearly increased their enthusiasm and commitment. In the peer activity other youths are being influenced during youth centre excursions, in circles and other group events.

The structure of the trainings was mainly the same at every place, and it followed the model shown in fig. 2 of this material. The stress on various sectors of the training model varied, however, quite a lot depending on the locality and

the local aims. In Helsinki the focus was on forming group and acting together, at Hämeenlinna the special feature of the training was the guided visits, at Tampere exercising leading was stressed and at Kuusankoski the human relations skills.

Common to all the trainings was the activity and motivation of the young in the class and their wish to make good use of the yield from the peer educator training in some way in the future. Many of the participants seemed to expect or hope for a continuation to the training. When writing this, in February 2003, a camp for all young people, who participated in the pilot courses, is in a planning stage. Moreover, each locality has planned continuation meetings for the peer educators during the entire spring.

Table 1.
Summary of the peer educator trainings of the ASK project

	HELSINKI	HÄMEENLINNA	TAMPERE	KUUSANKOSKI
Background Community	City of Helsinki, Youth Department	City of Hämeenlinna, Youth Department	Organization YAD + City of Tampere, Youth Services	Organization YAD + Kuusankoski Youth Department
Instructors	Jani Hoviario, Maisa Suikkari, Merja Sonninen and Maria Nordberg	Hanna Käppi and Kimmo Laiho	Susanna Raivio and Janne Paananen (and Henri Rikander at the youth centres)	Rosita Juurinen and Elisabet Tarkiainen
Group of the Young	11 youngsters, 5 boys + 6 girls	9 girls	8 youngsters, 1 boy + 7 girls	8 youngsters, 5 boys + 3 girls
Age	14 - 18	14 - 16	15 - 17	15 - 19
The Youths' Peer Group	Youth house visitors	School, Youth House	Youth centre visitors	Youngsters in the Youth Café
Selecting the Young	A group of miscellaneous young people visiting the youth centre; carefully planned in advance; active and non-active young people	Common, active young people from the upper level of comprehensive school and the youth work	Youth centre frequenters	Young people at the Youth Café and/or participating in a club organized by the Youth Welfare: the youths without hobbies
Time and Place for Training	A weekend camp (32h) + gatherings at the Pakila Youth House	A weekend camp + gatherings (30h) at the Youth Welfare Office, the Parish Hall, the Camping Centre;	A weekend camp + gatherings (19h + homework) at the Youth Centre and the Camping Centre	Camp (15h) + gatherings (2 x 2,5h) at the Camping Centre, the YAD House
Aim of the training	Co-leaders for the youth centre; Influencing other young; Helping the young themselves; Dispelling prejudices between different youth culture groups; Facilitating the free movement of the young	Co-leaders for Youth House; Influencing other young; Helping the young people themselves; Making the young people participate and giving them an opportunity to act	Co-leaders for the Youth Centre; Influencing other young	Influencing other young; Supporting the young people themselves and activating them
Peer Activity after the Training	As co-leaders during youth centre excursions; Participating in planning and implementation of the events organized at the Youth Centre	The youths' idea: a peer camp; Club leader; Activities in the youth premises; Activities in the hobby circles and with friends	Enrolled in the YAD Youth House group; Club activity; As an example/ peer young at the Youth Centre; Co-leader	Influencing through the local newspaper; Arranging activities a.o. a downhill skiing trip

The youths needed help to understand the role of the peer educator and in putting the peer educating into practice at the youth centre. Other themes, where the youths required guiding, were about coping with life and risks. After the training, the instructors supported the young through personal talks and regular meetings.

At every locality, the municipal youth work was strongly engaged in the training, also at those places where the YAD youth workers were acting as instructors for the young. The training model keeps staying at the localities as part of the municipal youth work. All participating instructors thought of the training model as appropriate and developable, and the intension is to make use of it in the local activity in future, too.

5. Summary

The ASK project at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare developed and tested out the peer educator activity for the young in cooperation with the municipal youth workers and the youth workers from the organization Youth Against Drugs (YAD). The experiences and the examples have been brought together into this report. The ASK project's application of peer educator training as a part of the preventive drug work among the young got an enthusiastic reception both from the instructors and the young.

Peer educating satisfies many of those criteria, which have on the primary level been defined for the preventive drug and intoxicant work among the young. The peer educator training promotes the intoxicant shield factors, as they are called, to realize in the life of a young person, giving him facilities to act in a group, for problem solving and expressing himself. Taking part in the peer educator training and club or other activities set up by the peer educators will also increase sensible opportunities to leisure time activities. In the long run, the most interesting outcome from the peer educating is the influence of the peer educators on the views and activity modes of the young in the peer group.

Taking peer activity into account as part of the preventive drug and intoxicant work field enlarges the contacting surface of the preventive work even to such realms of life of the young to which adults not necessarily have access. The idea of peer educator training is to fortify the position of the intoxicant shield factors in the experience sphere of the young people and give them opportunity to analyze and reflect upon risk factors influencing their lives. Parallel with the awareness and the pondering, the youths are given tools at their disposition, with which they may better than before make use of the skills they already have got and innovate such alternative occupations they fancy. Thus the peer educator training does not just reach the participants of the training, but possibly through their activity an even larger group of youth.

The training model was found to work, and based on the experiences from the pilot courses, it was developed further. The normative and flexible nature of the training is both its strength and weakness: It is difficult to assure the quality and follow it up, as individual youths' trainings may deviate from each other. On the other hand, thanks to the free application of the training, it reaches very different youth groups and works in them. One basic criterion on implementing a high-quality training is going through all the content sectors during the course and thereby stressing the special character of peer education.

An adult instructor has a great responsibility for the implementation of the training and the peer activity afterwards. The instructor must commit himself to work with the young people and guide and support them also after the training. Apart from that, should the instructor himself have a clear idea about the peer educator

activity: He has the skill and will to leave space for the young themselves, he acts as an equal and honestly towards the young, however, without losing his position as an instructor.

A few already socially active youths, as they are called, experienced that the contents of the course hardly offered them anything new, though they found the training funny and successful. This demonstrates that the young already possess the tools for coping with life and risks. Maybe the youths should be even more encouraged and guided to utilize these tools concretely. The more passive youths again got enthusiastic and active by means of the training and even surprised the instructors with their ideas and readiness to operate.

It is difficult to assess, how the peer educating actually works as a method in the preventive drug and intoxicant work and promotes soberness of the youths. It is about starting the process in the youth, but a lot of other personal and social factors in the life situation of the young and in his neighbourhood influence the way he perceives the peer educating personally and how he applies and uses the offered tools in his work. Based on the pilot courses, the youths are eager to influence their own business and arrange sensible and compelling occupation for themselves and others: Youth centres, which have carried through the pilot courses, have got new activity forms and the youths have joined as co-leaders in already existing activities.

The instructors of peer educators, who had been in the ASK project, were so exited by the peer educator training that they intend to integrate it as part of the modes of operation in their own work community. Still it is necessary to consider the practical application problems of the activity model. How will the peer educators be selected in future? Or could anyone willing take part in the training? In the light of these experiences almost anyone makes a peer educator. A crucial factor inspiring the young is the group formation taking place in the peer educator training and the support other peer educators are giving.

The activity model of the peer educator training and the experiences from the ASK project are there for anyone to use and apply. This material can be found on the project's Internet pages www.ask-project.org up to 2003 and henceforth from the pages www.mll.fi of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. More information, advice and tips can also be asked from the youth workers on the place or the employees at the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

This report was produced by a contractor for Health & Consumer Protection Directorate General and represents the views of the contractor or author. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and do not necessarily represent the view of the Commission or the Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.