



# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES\*

## ▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 60 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- List 4 general workplace challenges.
- Identify the challenges that are most relevant for themselves.
- Discuss how to make decisions about workplace issues.

 **Training Methods:** Brainstorm, Small Group Case Studies, Large Group Discussion

 **In This Activity You Will...**

- Ask participants to brainstorm challenges in their work as a peer (10 minutes).
- Break into groups to discuss scenarios (10 minutes).
- Report back the results of the group discussions (40 minutes).

 **Materials:**

- Handout - Challenges list
- Handout - Scenario
- Trainer guides - Scenario
- Flip chart - Decision-making
- Handout - Decision-making
- Tape
- Flip chart and easel
- Markers

 **Preparation:**

- Prepare flipcharts
- Prepare handouts

## Instructions

1. Introduce session.
2. Explain that participants will first brainstorm to identify workplace challenges. Clarify that experience within the group varies widely but that challenges can crop up even for the most experienced peer, and while there will be fewer over time some may be ongoing challenges while new ones can also crop up.
3. Ask participants what are the most challenging aspects of returning to work, changing jobs and working as a peer in general. Give examples as needed to start conversation.
4. Write comments on flip chart.
5. When there are no more new ideas, ask participants to help group comments and summarize what the core issues are.
6. Once the list has been generated bring out challenges list and review if there is anything not discussed already.
7. Explain to participants that these are complex issues and we will have time to only look at a few of them today.
8. Instruct participants that they are going to discuss real life situations in their table groups and then will report back to the whole group on how they would handle the situation and what issues are involved.
9. Give each group a copy of the scenario and allow participants 10 minutes to discuss.
10. After 10 minutes lead a discussion of the first scenario with each group reporting.
11. Repeat for remaining scenarios until 10 minutes left in session.

\* This module comes from the Comprehensive Peer Worker Training, Peer Advanced Competency Training (PACT) Project Harlem Hospital Center, Division of Infectious Diseases, 2008.

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## ► TRAINING TIPS

- This exercise can be done with varying number of scenarios – pick the ones most relevant to your training group. Three is usually the minimum unless time is very short.
- This exercise can be expanded using more scenarios.
- Ask participants who they represent; the agency, peer group, themselves? Discuss if there is time.
- If a group comes up with a suggestion that might not work well, ask them: “What would be the outcome of that?”
- Remind peers that as a peer they have access to money (even if not a lot), resources, information, talking with staff, so you are no longer exactly like your community/peer group. This can be difficult to deal with.
- This exercise can be done with varying number of scenarios – pick the ones most relevant to your training group. Three is usually the minimum unless time is very short.

12. Ask what the common elements were in each scenario.
13. Discuss how relying on workplace policy and referrals can be the easiest way to handle challenging situations.
14. Ask participants who they represent; the agency, peer group, themselves? Discuss if there is time.

## Summary

Summarize by talking about how some situations are clear cut and others have many shades of grey. Discuss how the degree of the situation can sometimes influence the decision of how to handle it although that can also obscure the real issue. Use “decision-making list” to discuss issues involved in decision-making.

Source: Inspiration and some scenarios from “Thinking on our Feet” exercise from The Community Health Worker Network of NYC

\* This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit [http://www.hdwg.org/peer\\_center/training\\_toolkit](http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit). This module comes from the Comprehensive Peer Worker Training, Peer Advanced Competency Training (PACT) Project Harlem Hospital Center, Division of Infectious Diseases, 2008.

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION HANDOUT # 1 of 3

### WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

- Accepted by professional staff as part of team
- Benefits
- Boundaries (financial/attraction/information)
- Confidentiality
- Communication styles (street versus office)
- Contact info (cell/home numbers)
- Disclosure
- Health limitations
- Over-identification with client/counter-transference
- Personal relationships between peers
- Professional Attire
- Professionalism
- Staying open-minded
- Supervisory issues
- Working as a team player
- Working in structured environment
- Work hours/flexibility

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION HANDOUT # 2 of 3

### CASE STUDIES/SCENARIOS

#### Scenario A

You are just finishing meeting with a client that you have known for a long time. As you are ending the conversation, she asks you “Can I borrow \$20 to feed the kids? I promise I’ll give it back to you next week when I get my check.”

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### Scenario B

When you arrive at the office, your co-worker tells you that your client Sally Brown stopped by and left something on your desk. When you get to your desk you see that she left you a birthday present.

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### Scenario C

As you get on the elevator your co-worker spots you and says, “Can you believe that our client, Mrs. Smith who lives on 125th Street had another baby?”

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### Scenario D

You and another peer are running a support group. Today your co-leader once again starts to use a personal story as an example. His story goes on for quite a while and he seems to be upset about the story he is telling.

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION HANDOUT # 3 of 3

### DECISION-MAKING

(Flipchart and Handout)

What are the issues involved?

Is there a workplace policy about this issue? Can your supervisor help you with this issue?

How might your decision affect your relationship with the client?

How might your decision affect your work with the client?

How might your decision affect the care this patient receives?

How might your decision affect your relationship with other clients?

How might your decision affect your position within the program?

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION TRAINER'S GUIDE

### CASE STUDIES/SCENARIOS

#### Scenario A

You are just finishing meeting with a client that you have known for a long time. As you are ending the conversation, she asks you “Can I borrow \$20 to feed the kids? I promise I’ll give it back to you next week when I get my check.”

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### **Trainer notes:**

Does the dollar amount make a difference?

Does it matter how long you have known the client?

Does it matter if the money appears to be for food for the children or for something else?

How could giving money affect the care this client receives?

How could giving money affect your relationship with the client?

What makes lending money a good or bad gesture?

Is this an act of caring for your client? Why or why not?

Would lending money empower or enable a client?

Has this ever happened to you?

What did you do?

What was the outcome?

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION TRAINER'S GUIDE (cont.)

### CASE STUDIES/SCENARIOS (CONT.)

#### Scenario B

When you arrive at the office, your co-worker tells you that your client Sally Brown stopped by and left something on your desk. When you get to your desk you see that she left you a birthday present.

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### **Trainer notes:**

Does the dollar value of the gift make a difference?

What if you knew the client before you started working as a peer?

Would you accept a gift from certain clients but not others?

How could accepting gifts affect the care this client receives?

How could accepting gifts affect your relationship with the client?

Does your workplace have a policy about gifts? What is that policy?

Do you know your organization's general workplace policies?

Has this ever happened to you?

What did you do?

What was the outcome?

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION TRAINER'S GUIDE (cont.)

### CASE STUDIES/SCENARIOS (CONT.)

#### Scenario C

As you get on the elevator your co-worker spots you and says, “Can you believe that our client, Mrs. Smith on 125th Street had another baby?”

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### **Trainer notes:**

Is this a breach of confidentiality?

Has this ever happened to you?

What did you do?

What was the outcome?

# WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

## SESSION TRAINER'S GUIDE (cont.)

### CASE STUDIES/SCENARIOS (CONT.)

#### Scenario D

You and another peer are running a support group. Today your co-leader once again starts to use a personal story as an example. His story goes on for quite a while and he seems to be upset about the story he is telling.

How would you handle this scenario?

What issues are involved in this scenario?

#### **Trainer notes:**

How might sharing your experience affect the group?

How might sharing your experience influence participants' view of you as the leader?

Is there a place to share your experiences while you are running a group?

How do you decide when it is appropriate to share your experience?

In what way do you share your experiences?

How would you discuss this with your co-leader? When would you discuss this?

Would you take this issue to your supervisor?

Has this ever happened to you?

What did you do?

What was the outcome?