


AM I READY TO BE A PEER?*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 55-60 minutes

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

- Develop an action plan for first steps as a peer.

 **Training Methods:** Individual Activity, Small Group Activity, Report Back

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

- Ask participants to complete an action plan worksheet (10-15 minutes)
- Break participants into small groups to share and give feedback (45 minutes)

 **Materials:**

- Handout - My Action Plan Worksheet (2 pages)
- Handout - 15 Steps to Starting a Support Group
- Handout - Tips for Writing an Effective Resume
- Handout - Sample Cover Letter
- Handout - Sample Resume

 **Preparation:**

- Write on flipchart:
 1. What do you see as the strengths of this plan?
 2. What concerns do you have about this plan?
 3. What suggestions can you make to strengthen this plan?

Instructions

1. Hand out *My Action Plan Worksheet* to each participant and explain that as we wrap up our time together, we have a great opportunity to be thoughtful about planning what we take away from all this great training.
2. Ask participants to complete the first page of the worksheet and encourage them to take their time and think about each answer. The point of this is to identify where they feel really confident as well as some areas they want to work further on. If all of these truly seem like they're no problem, ask them to add their own category/ies that they do see as challenging.
3. After they've completed the first page, ask them to choose one or at most two areas to which they answered "Not at all," or "Slightly" and to complete the second page of the handout with those in mind.
4. After everyone has finished completing their worksheets, break them into small groups of 3-4 people. Tell the groups they will get about 45 minutes to share their plans with the others, i.e., each person gets 10-15 minutes. This is a chance to get some feedback on their plan and to make it even stronger and more do-able. (Suggestion: have a facilitator sit at each end of the table, if possible.)
5. Point out the questions you wrote earlier on flipchart:
 - What do you see as the strengths of this plan?
 - What concerns do you have about this plan?
 - What suggestions can you make to strengthen this plan?
6. Tell the group: *As each of you takes your turn presenting your plan, the others should give you feedback based on these questions. You should also ask each other questions (open-ended if possible!) to clarify anything you don't understand.*
7. As the groups work, periodically remind them of the time so that everyone has a chance to present their plan and get

* This module comes from the Lotus Women's Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

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“...The main thing I like about [being a peer] is feeling like I’m making a difference. Even sometimes just a smile and a welcome word or two to someone can make a difference in their day.”

Carol Garcia,
Peer at Christie’s Place,
San Diego, CA

feedback on it.

8. When the groups have finished providing feedback to one another, ask them to take another five minutes and go around and have each woman tell the others one thing she feels “very confident” about. Ask them to congratulate one another and also to note if someone feels very confident about something that she does not, that she’s a potential resource!
9. After the groups are done, give everyone about 5-10 minutes to go back to her original plan and to fine-tune it based on the feedback she’s received.

Summary

- Point out the additional handouts as well as other resources.
- Wrap up session by reminding participants that they can continue to be resources for one another and can continue to share their ongoing plans, successes, and challenges with one another.

* 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. This module comes from the Lotus Women’s Peer Education Training Manual, Center for Health Training and Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Diseases (WORLD), 2008.

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SESSION HANDOUT #1 of 5

MY ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

How confident do you feel about each of these?	Not at all confident	Slightly confident	Pretty confident	Very confident
Help a client decide the reduce their drug use				
Discuss how to have safer sex with a client				
Help a client understand how HIV medications can improve their health				
Help a client talk openly with his or her doctor				
Go with a client to health care or social service appointment				
Provide emotional support to a client				
Talk with a client about a behavior change that impacts their health				
Help a client find or choose HIV services				
Help a client find or choose social or support services				
Help a client make choices about disclosing HIV status				
Help a client to take HIV medications correctly				
Set clear boundaries with clients				
Help a client understand what confidentiality means				
Others:				

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SESSION HANDOUT #1 of 5 (cont.)

AM I READY TO BE A PEER ADVOCATE?

In the next 6 months, I plan to do the following 3 things (steps) to either improve on my work as a peer educator or to start working as a peer educator:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

To be a stronger peer, I want to work on ...

I want to work on these issues because ...

Some challenges I may face in working on this is...

I'll get support from or find resources to address these challenges from ...

I'll reward myself by ...

My 3 biggest strengths are...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

AM I READY TO BE A PEER?

SESSION HANDOUT #2 of 5

15 STEPS TO STARTING A SUPPORT GROUP

1. Keep your meeting at the same place and at the same time during the beginning weeks. Have your meeting even if no outside guests show up. Sometimes it will take a few weeks for you to start getting participants on a regular basis.
2. Create flyer about your group and post at clinics, other agencies, churches, supermarket, etc.
3. Make phone calls to interested participants.
4. Search for volunteers to lead your support group.
5. Make a welcome kit for new participants: include a confidentiality agreement, contact sheet, fact sheet about HIV, and an outline of the general format of group meetings.
6. Make a sign-in sheet, and have participants sign it at every meeting.
7. Create group agreements on the first day of group and post the agreements at every session.
8. Have different topics available for each group meeting.
9. Provide incentives if possible.
10. Conduct a needs assessment every six months.
11. Providing food is very important; if you don't have money for food, then do a pot-luck style, or see if there are near-by restaurants willing to donate.
12. Choose a point person for the support group - someone who doesn't mind sharing their contact information or screening new participants.
13. Create a crisis plan in case your participants have serious issues going on in their lives.
14. Make a list of possible outside speakers for group meetings.
15. Give everyone a contact sheet with names and phone numbers of participants who do not mind sharing their information with group.

► TIPS

- Observe time limits. Start on time and end on time so that members feel you are reliable. If they should have babysitters, they will be able to work with them easier.
- Be up front. If no child care is available, let members know ahead of time if children are welcome and if not, don't make exceptions.
- Be prepared to have you or your co-leaders do most of the speaking at the first few meetings until your members begin to feel comfortable with each other.
- Free space can sometimes be found at the local school, churches, non-profit and social agencies or at member's homes.
- Place chairs in a circle and close enough that all members can hear.

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SESSION HANDOUT #3 of 5

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

It isn't important to follow the sample resume exactly. What is more important is that you **represent your strengths** effectively. Follow these quick tips to make sure that your potential employer understands why you are a great candidate for the job!

1. **List your most important experiences closest to the top of the resume.** For example, if you haven't had a job or any education recently, put the "skills" section first. If you just took a continuing education or vocational class, list your education first.
2. **Don't hold back!** Make sure you list any experience that you have had that will make you better at the job you hope to get. Your resume is NOT limited to past jobs or formal college degrees! Include volunteer positions, certifications, language abilities, and any other important skills, training, or work experience.
3. When listing your experiences, **use action words** to describe your responsibilities at jobs and volunteer positions. Think about the specifics of important tasks you performed. Don't just describe your achievements by saying, "helped HIV positive women." Instead, say "coordinated weekly support group of 15 women aimed at building a local support network of positive women" or "motivated 4 HIV positive clients, through weekly meetings, to seek support services and medical treatment."

The best way to write an experience section is to brainstorm a list of accomplishments—in detail—that you had in each job, and then select one or two that best illustrate your skill set to include on your resume.

4. **Tailor your resume to each job that you are applying to.** When you sit down to write a resume, include every experience that you think might help you get ANY job. But when you actually apply, **look carefully at the job description** and include experiences and skills that fit the position. For example, if you are applying for a job as a peer advocate, your skill section should include skills like: "good listener, ability to work on a team, knowledge of local HIV support services, training experience, etc." If you are applying to an office job, your skill set will be different, including instead, "computer skills, organizational skills, writing and editing ability, etc."

Think carefully about what skills you bring to the table, and list them thoroughly.

5. **Proofread your resume!** And then have someone else proofread it! Your resume is an example of your writing ability and your work ethic; if it looks messy, has misspellings or grammatical errors, employers get a bad first impression.

If you are interested in a full step-by-step guide for writing resumes and cover letters, get in touch with us at the Center for Health Training (510.835.3700 x115 or x119) and we will send one to you!

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SESSION HANDOUT #4 of 5

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Your Name Here
Address: 555 Main Street, Apt. 3
San Francisco, CA 94100
Phone: 415.555.8000
Email: firstname_lastname@yahoo.com

Today's Date

Name of Contact
Title
Name of Organization
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. [Last name of Contact]:

I am responding to your posting for a peer advocate (or job title you are applying for) in this Sunday's *Chronicle* with excitement, as I recently completed a peer advocacy training program and, as an HIV-positive woman, am eager to help build a supportive community for HIV-positive women in the area. I have included my resume for your consideration.

I think that you will find that my skills and interests match well with [name of organization here]. At W.O.R.L.D. (Women Organized to Respond to Life Threatening Disease), I have been using my status as a positive woman to mentor other recently diagnosed women. I have provided emotional support and education for women whose experience I understand personally, and have also gained experience and knowledge of local support services available for women with HIV. I am dedicated to helping women learn more about and accept their HIV-positive status, and I look forward to having the opportunity to continue this work with your organization.

I am excited by the possibility of working with [name of organization here]! Please feel free to contact me at 415-555-8000 at your earliest convenience. Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name Here

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SESSION HANDOUT #5 of 5

SAMPLE RESUME

Your Name
Address
City, State ZIP Code
Phone Number
Email address

OBJECTIVE OR INTERESTS:

One to two lines about what are your interests in the field and what type of jobs you are looking for.

PAST EMPLOYMENT:

Title or Position

Year Started-Present or date ended, City, State

Description of Position: tasks you performed or job description

EDUCATION:

College or Classes you have attended

Training related to HIV and peer education (Lotus training)

SKILLS:

For example, computer skills, group facilitation, public speaking, etc.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:

Here you can list where you have volunteered: Planning Councils, advocacy, outreach, public speaking gigs, and board membership.