

Key 4: Interventions for Peer Specialists

Interventions are strategies that help bring about change in individuals. Peer Specialists have a responsibility to ensure their interventions are supporting an individual's recovery process. Interventions often walk a fine line between promoting self-efficacy and reinforcing reliance on people and systems. An example of this is, "I will help you, but you will do it," versus, "I will do it for you".

A systematic review of papers on personal recovery found five consistent recovery processes: connectedness; hope and optimism about the future; identity; meaning in life; and empowerment¹. These processes create the acronym CHIME. Peer Specialist interventions should support the five CHIME recovery processes as they are grounded in research.

When considering whether an intervention, action, or function is consistent with the role of a peer specialist and recovery principles, measuring it against CHIME is recommended.

1. **Connectedness** - Does the intervention promote human connection?
 - a. Examples: peer support and support groups; relationships; support from others; being part of a community
2. **Hope and Optimism** – Does the intervention promote hope and optimism?
 - a. Includes: Belief in possibility of recovery; motivation to change; hope-inspiring relationships; positive thinking and valuing success; having dreams and aspirations
3. **Identity** – Does the intervention promote a healthy identity? Or does the intervention help create a new identity?
 - a. Includes: Rebuilding/redefining a positive sense of identity; overcoming stigma; exploring dimensions of identity
4. **Meaning in Life** – Does the intervention promote a meaningful life? Or does the intervention increase meaning for the person?
 - a. Includes: Quality of life; Meaningful life and social roles and goals; meaning of mental illness and/or substance use experiences; rebuilding life; spirituality
5. **Empowerment** – Does the intervention promote empowerment?
 - a. Includes: Personal responsibility; control over life; focus on strengths

¹Leamy M., Bird V., Le Boutillier C., Williams J., & Slade M. (2011). *Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: Systematic review and narrative synthesis. British Journal of Psychiatry.*

The following is a list intervention for Peer Specialists that support one or some of the CHIME processes. This list is not exhaustive.

General

1. Listen non-judgmentally
2. Refer to a support group
3. Provide educational resources on a specific diagnosis or medical health condition
4. Support peer in creating/maintaining a whole health goal
5. Support peer in creating a WRAP
6. Offer experience, strength, and hope to peer through sharing personal story of recovery
7. Help peer develop a mental health advance directive

Mood

8. Refer to a DBSA, NAMI Connection, or Recovery International Support Group
9. Encourage talking to other people such as family or friends
10. Help peer observe their environment and focus on one of their five senses (example, hearing by listening to nature sounds, or sight by looking at art.)
11. Teach a mindfulness exercise
12. Encourage self-care
13. Support peer to make and follow a schedule
14. Ask peer to go back to a time when they felt good, and identify what they were doing differently
15. Help peer focus on today and what they can do to feel better in the moment

Hearing Voices

16. Talk to peer about what they are experiencing
17. Ask peer what the voices mean to them
18. Help peer to learn skills to set limits with voices or listen to them selectively
19. Support peer in accepting their voices
20. Help peer identify what triggers their voices
21. Refer to a Hearing Voices Network Support Group

Anxiety/Worrying/Fear

22. Accompany peer to the situation/environment that gives them anxiety
23. Encourage peer to journal
24. Encourage peer to eat regularly and avoid stimulants
25. Help peer to identify his or her fear (Facing One's Fear Worksheet)
26. Lead peer through breathing exercises
27. Help peer to learn creative visualization techniques
28. Encourage peer to practice relaxation exercises
29. Educate on the difference between panic attacks and general anxiety (symptoms and feelings)

Self-Esteem

30. Help peer identify their strengths and affirm them
31. Help peer examine their core beliefs
32. Create affirmations with peer
33. Supporting peer to think about what gives their life meaning and purpose
34. Support peer in setting small measurable goals so they can see accomplishments
35. Help peer create a daily/weekly list of accomplishments

Interpersonal Issues

36. Role play challenging conversations

37. Weigh the pros/cons of reconnecting with a lost family member/friend
 38. Help peer identify their role in the conflict and encourage personal responsibility
 39. Help peer identify healthy boundaries in their relationships
 40. Encourage self-advocacy to address issues in a calm manner
- Procrastination/Assertiveness**
41. Role play talking with their doctor
 42. Assist peer in creating a “to-do” list with a completion date next to each item
 43. Assist peer in breaking down large tasks into small, measurable steps
 44. Help peer to identify when they are procrastinating, for example: thinking ‘I’ll just do this later’ or “in a few minutes, I will start’
 45. Help peer to identify distractions (Television, social media, roommates, etc.) and encourage him or her to reduce them as much as possible
 46. Encourage peer to take time after completing a task to reward him or herself with an activity, T.V. show, etc. that he or she enjoys
 47. Encourage scheduling their own appointments with peer specialist present
- Sleep**
48. Support peer to create a sleep diary
 49. Talk with peer about strategies to enhance sleep, such as keeping a routine sleep schedule, limiting caffeine, physical activity, meditation, taking medication if needed
 50. Support peer in creating a Peer Support Whole Health & Resiliency goal around restful sleep
 51. Educate peer on the value of sleep for stress reduction
- Unhelpful Thinking**
52. Support peer to “Catch it, Check it, Change it” when having negative thoughts
 53. Support peer in creating a thought diary to challenge thinking and learn how to think differently
 54. Help peer challenge a negative thought with a positive thought
 55. Create a list together of negative words/expressions and come up with alternatives
 56. Support peer in creating a Peer Support Whole Health & Resiliency goal around negative self-talk
- Medication Management**
57. Teach peer how to create a weekly schedule and maintain it
 58. Teach peer how to create medication reminders that work for him or her
 59. Help peer to identify barriers to appropriate medication management and problem solve around those barriers
 60. Educate on each medication taken and proper way to take it (i.e. with or without food or a.m./p.m.)
 61. If peer is experiencing negative side effects, discuss strategies to reduce impact
 62. Role play talking with doctor about concerns with medication
- Smoking Cessation**
63. Encourage participation in smoking cessation groups
 64. Educate on free/discounted smoking cessation tools
 65. Support peer to identify habits/environments associated with their smoking
 66. Teach strategies to decrease frequency
 67. Help peer identify how much money they are spending on the habit and how they could use that money differently
 68. Help identify the negative consequences of smoking and benefits of quitting, including impact on their and other’s (partner, children’s) health
- Substance Use/Addiction**

69. Support peer in attending a 12 Step group Meeting (AA, NA, Celebrate Recovery, etc.) If peer is hesitant, offer to attend first meeting with him or her
70. Support peer in building a sober support network
71. Help peer to identify their triggers (people, places, and things)
72. Support peer in completing WRAP for Addictions
73. Link peer to detox/rehabilitation facilities, if necessary
74. Help peer identify what recovery looks like for them
75. Teach strategies to reduce use if abstinence is not their priority
- Crisis**
76. Seek to help peer gain understanding and insight of the crisis/trauma
77. Discern whether the crisis is immediately threatening; ask “Are you safe right now?”
78. If the peer is in danger, guide him or her to safety
79. Offer an opportunity for peer to vent frustrations and offer validation
80. Identify wellness tools that could support them in the moment
81. Remind peer of their resiliency with examples of overcoming past crises
- Post Crisis**
82. If necessary, refer peer to a crisis counselor, life coach, or support group for long-term support
83. Facilitate peer in building resilience by offering alternative coping skills (physical & emotional health, strengthening relationships, trying something new like yoga, practice problem-solving, set whole health goals, etc.)
84. Help the peer in creating a plan which includes small steps toward a positive change
85. Help peer identify things they need to change in their daily maintenance plan
86. Help peer prioritize things that need to be done immediately and those things that can wait
87. Help peer identify people they need to thank
88. Help peer identify things that they can ask for help with (pets, laundry, meals)
89. Help peer identify people and things (triggers) they should avoid while recovering
90. Help peer identify individuals they need to make amends to and role play those conversations
91. Help peer identify signs that they are feeling worse and make a plan for how to address those
92. Help peer identify natural supports and ways each one can help
93. Discuss with peer what they learned from the crisis and where they need to make changes based on what had occurred
- Specific Health Issue**
94. Encourage peer to focus on what they can control and shift the focus away from limitations
95. Encourage peer to think of new hobbies and activities he or she might enjoy and work around any limitations
96. Encourage peer to be as physically active as possible
97. Encourage peer to become involved in a support group for his or her specific health issue
98. Help peer to create medication and appointment reminders on his or her mobile phone or on a calendar
99. Help peer find education on a specific health issue
- Healthy Eating**
100. Help peer navigate a farmers market to find fresh fruits and vegetables
101. Teach peer how to shop for healthy food on a budget

- 102. Encourage peer to create a food diary
- 103. Encourage peer to identify healthy foods they like to eat
- 104. Encourage peer to find an accountability partner for healthy eating
- Support System**
- 105. Help peer identify qualities they want in a supporter
- ~~106.~~ Encourage peer to attend an appropriate support group
- 107. Encourage peer to attend local events/activities to expand support network
- 108. Help peer identify their support system (name specific people)
- 109. Help peer identify who they do not want in their support system
- Establishing a Relationship/Re-Connection**
- 110. Educate peer about what peer support is and what can be offered in the relationship
- 111. Identify what the peer believes the benefit from peer support would be
- 112. Identify the immediate needs of the peer
- 113. Explore with peer what their life would look like if there were no limitations
- 114. Share your life experiences and/or recovery story with peer
- 115. Talk with the peer about their perceived strengths and look for strengths and acknowledge them
- Handling Resistance/Motivating**
- 116. Address resistance with the peer to identify where the discomfort is
- 117. Discuss barriers to the resistance
- 118. Help peer reexamine goals and dreams and identify steps to achieve them
- Connection to Community**
- 119. Help peer identify volunteer opportunities
- 120. Help peer identify civic activities (voting)
- 121. Assertively link peer to local peer networks, drop-in center, clubhouses, etc.
- 122. Help peer learn how to use public transportation
- 123. Help peer learn how to use community resources such as libraries and the internet
- 124. Encourage employment and guide them how to look for jobs
- 125. Help peer identify their passions and hobbies and find outlets to meet other people with similar passions/habits
- 126. Help peer identify if they would like to pursue further education and link the peer to those resources
- 127. Encourage housing in a safe area where the peer will feel comfortable going out into the community
- WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Specific**
- 128. Talked with peer about hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy, or support
- 129. Help peer develop a wellness toolbox
- 130. Help peer identify what they are like when they are well
- 131. Help peer identify what they need to do everyday to stay well
- 132. Help peer identify things they might do to stay well
- 133. Help peer identify their triggers
- 134. Help peer create an action plan to address their triggers
- 135. Help peer identify their early warning signs
- 136. Help peer create an action plan to address their early warning signs
- 137. Help peer identify signs that things are breaking down
- 138. Help peer create an action plan to address when things are breaking down
- 139. Help peer identify signs their supporters need to take over when in crisis
- 140. Help peer identify their supporters

141. Help peer identify people they do not want to support them in a crisis
 142. Help peer create a list of their physicians and their phone numbers
 143. Help peer create a list of medications they are currently taking and why they are prescribed
 144. Help peer create a list of medications that have been and have not been helpful in the past
 145. Help peer identify treatments that make them feel better and when they should be used
 146. Help peer identify treatments they want to avoid
 147. Help peer create a plan for staying home or in the community versus going into the hospital
 148. Help peer create a list of their preferred treatment facilities if hospitalization becomes necessary
 149. Help peer identify the treatment facilities they want to avoid
 150. Help peer create a list of things others can do to help them when they are in crisis
 151. Help peer identify things that others have done in the past that made them feel worse
 152. Help peer identify what the signs are that indicate supporters no longer need to use a crisis plan
- PSWHR (Peer Support Whole Health and Resiliency)/WHAM (Whole Health Action Management) Specific**
153. Help peer identify reasons why they might want to improve their health
 154. Help peer identify causes of stress in their life
 155. Help peer identify favorite activities for fun or relaxation
 156. Help peer identify things they could do on a regular basis for self-care
 157. Help peer identify food/snacks they eat/drink on a regular basis
 158. Help peer identify healthy and unhealthy foods
 159. Help peer identify healthy foods they enjoy
 160. Help peer identify physical activity they enjoy to do by themselves and with other people
 161. Help peer identify how they feel after physical activity
 162. Help peer identify how sleep habits (how many hours per night; how many times wake up; how many hours they think they need)
 163. Help peer identify how they know they are getting enough or not enough sleep
 164. Help peer identify habits/rituals that help them sleep better or negatively ~~effect~~ affect their sleep quality
 165. Help peer identify things they have done or currently do that is service to others
 166. Help peer identify how helping others has impacted them
 167. Help peer identify places to volunteer
 168. Help peer identify people they trust who are supportive
 169. Help peer identify friends they enjoy doing things with
 170. Help peer identify people in their support network
 171. Help peer identify ways a support group may be beneficial
 172. Help peer identify things that help them stay positive
 173. Help peer identify things that help them become more optimistic when feeling pessimistic or negative about the future
 174. Help peer identify spiritual or religious activities that help them
 175. Help peer identify spiritual or religious beliefs that are important to them
 176. Help peer identify relationships that give their life meaning and purpose

- 177. Help peer identify activities that give their life meaning and purpose
- 178. Help peer identify involvement with group activities that give their life meaning and purpose
- 179. Help peer identify the ways their general health and current lifestyle are healthy
- 180. Help peer identify what strengths they could use to improve their health
- 181. Help peer identify actions they could take to improve their health
- 182. Help peer identify the benefits of taking these actions
- 183. Help peer identify their readiness to take action
- 184. Help peer create a whole health goal that they can achieve in 8 weeks
- 185. Check in with peer weekly on their whole health goal