

Learner Manual



Health & Wellness Promotion Session 5: The Peer Role in Health & Wellness

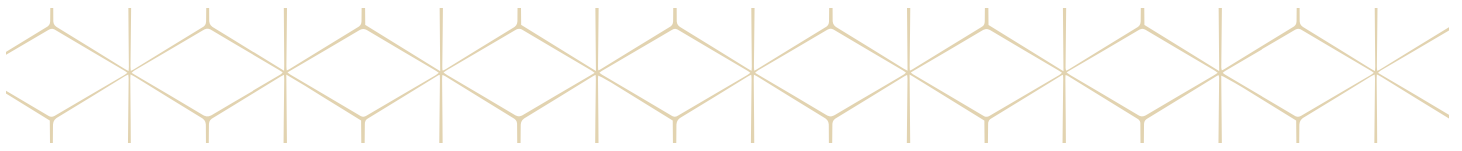


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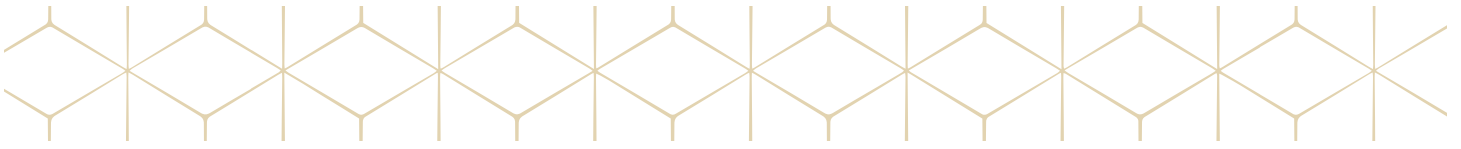


> Session 5: The Peer Role in Health and Wellness

Session 5 Learning Objectives

We will be focusing today on the following objectives:

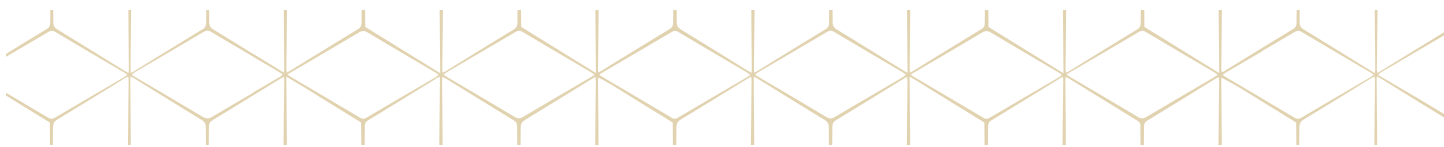
- Understand the role of advocacy in health and wellness promotion.
- Identify the 6 physical health dimensions (sleep, rest, eating well, movement, balanced habits, preventative screening, and Planning health regimes) discussed in a scenario.
- Identify strategies for listening, open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summarizing (OARS); these are considered effective health communication techniques.



Welcome

Welcome to session 5 of the six-part series on Health & Wellness Promotion in Peer Support. This session focuses on The Peer Role in Health & Wellness.

- Session 1: Health and Wellness Promotion
- Session 2: Health Communication
- Session 3: Health Literacy Basics
- Session 4: Characteristics, Competencies and Resources for PSS in Health & Wellness Promotion
- **Session 5: The Peer Role in Health and Wellness**
- Session 6: H & W Learning Collaborative Overview



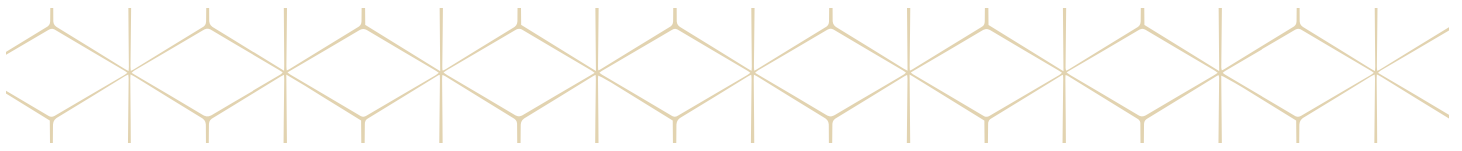
Topic 1: Peer Specialists as Advocates

At the heart of health and wellness promotion is the idea of advocacy. Advocacy is also about helping people find their voice. There are three types of advocacies: self-advocacy, individual advocacy, and systems advocacy.

Self-Advocacy is usually the foundation for all other kinds of advocacy. Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights (VanReusen et al., 1994). Self-advocacy means understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others.

Individual advocacy is most likely what you use in your work as a CPS and may be needed as you work with a peer on health issues. There are two common forms of individual advocacy - informal and formal advocacy. When people like parents, friends, family members or agencies speak out and advocate for vulnerable people this is termed informal advocacy. Formal advocacy more frequently involves organizations that pay their staff to advocate for someone or for a group of individuals." (West Virginia University, (n.d.)

Systems advocacy is about changing policies, laws or rules that impact how someone lives their life. These efforts can be targeted at a local, state, or national agency. The focus can be changing laws, or simply written or unwritten policy. What is targeted depends on the type of problem and who has authority over the problem (Brain Injury Resource Center, 1998, as cited in West Virginia University, n.d.).



Activity #1: Scenario

John is meeting with you, the Certified Peer Specialist, today. John has struggled to manage his diabetes for several years and over the past few weeks, his sugar values have been high. At John's job, he often doesn't have the time to test his sugar values and has been told that due to staffing issues, he needed to work through his lunch time. John has heard that there are newer treatments for managing diabetes that may be better at keeping his blood sugar values stable and require less frequent monitoring. He has called his primary care office several times to speak to his doctor, but no one has responded to his calls. John left you a voicemail that he is really concerned about his health and about losing his job and wants your thoughts about the situation.

What issues with health and wellness do you think John is experiencing?

What questions might you ask John?

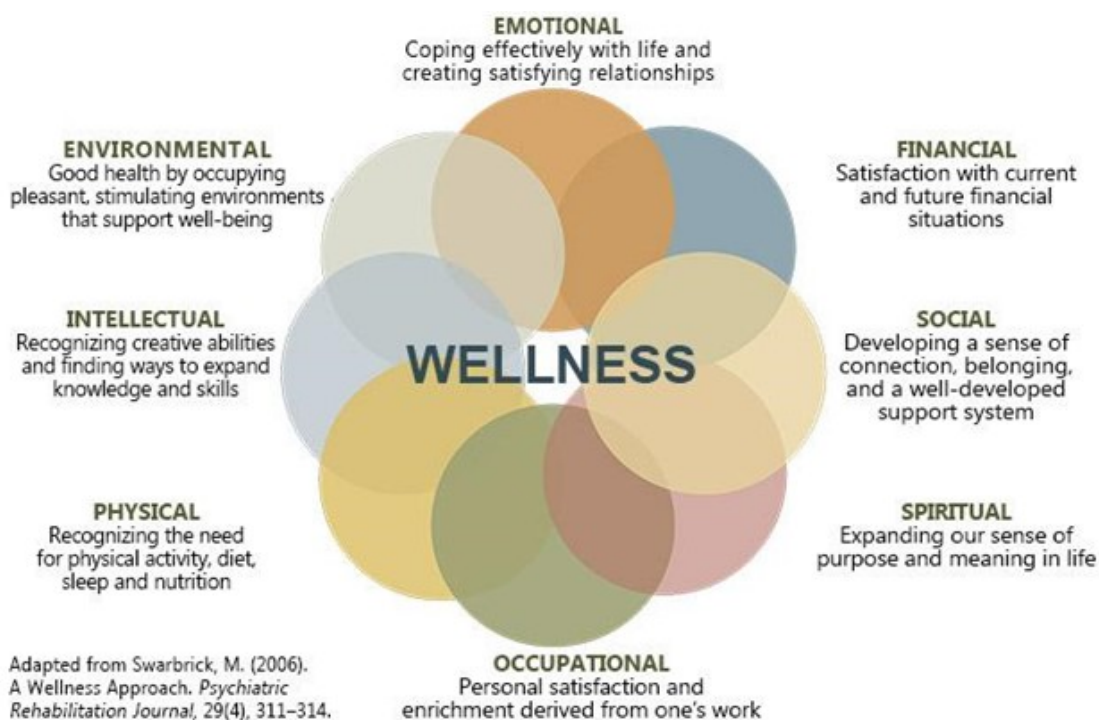
What type of advocacy do you think might help John right now?

What could a CPS do to advocate for John?

What could John do for himself to advocate?

Topic 2: The Physical Wellness Dimension

Swarbrick's focus on the concept of wellness, inspired by Dr. Jerry Johnson's "Wellness and Occupational Therapy" (1986), stemmed from a greater desire to address disparities facing people with or at risk of developing mental or substance use disorders.

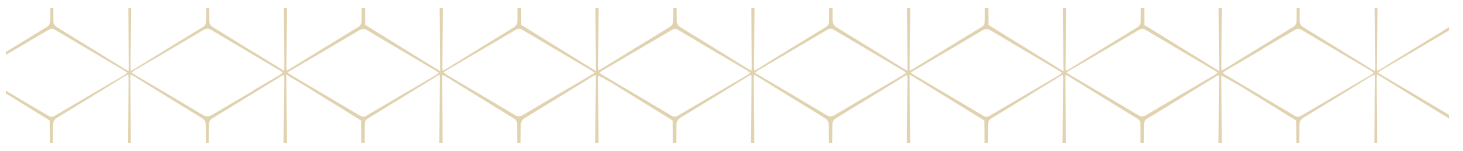


The 8 Dimensions of Wellness can serve as the basis for discussions that help people to focus on their strengths and to also identify dimensions they would like to change or improve.

The Physical Wellness Dimension of Wellness is further defined by 6 domains:

- Sleep
- Stress Management
- Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Promoting Healthy Habits
- Health Care & Screenings

Physical wellness involves the maintenance of a healthy body, good physical health habits, good nutrition, and exercise, and obtaining appropriate health care. As a CPS you can support the physical health and wellness of others by exploring these domains, asking open-ended questions, and summarizing the person's existing physical wellness strengths.



Activity #2: Support and Advocacy for the Physical Wellness Dimension

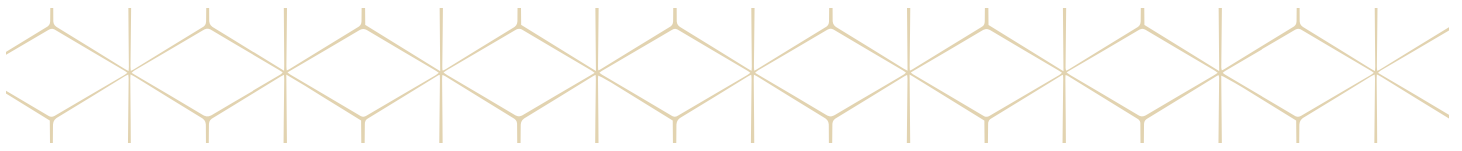
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What are some open-ended questions that you have used or might use to explore physical wellness in these domains?

How have you or might you support health and well-being in each of these domains as a peer supporter?

How have you or might you support health and well-being in each of these domains as a peer supporter?

What examples can you offer where your advocacy as a peer support helped another peer's physical wellness?



Topic 3: Health Communication

Peer support specialists are an important resource for supporting the health and wellness of people they support. The foundation of a health discussion between CPS and a peer is having (and using) good communication techniques.

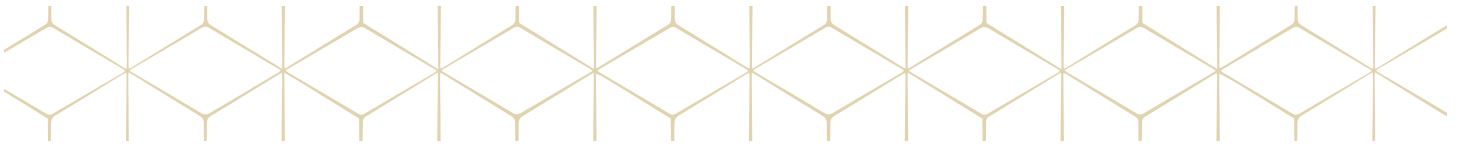
The steps in active listening and reflective responding are:

- Paying attention
- Reflecting back what you understand the person is saying in your own words
- Clarifying by asking questions
- Summarizing the information

The Steps for using the OARS method are:

- Ask Open-ended questions
- Offer Affirmations
- Reflective listening
- Summarizing

Having health discussions includes getting a clear picture of the person's current situation. A CPS can work alongside people to identify the strengths and resources for wellness that they already have (e.g., social supports, access to technology, current knowledge of health conditions) and to choose the resources they may need to improve their health (e.g., health literacy, removing medical jargon, having the most up-to-date health information).



Next Session:

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- Session 5: The Peer Role in Health and Wellness
- **Session 6: H & W Learning Collaborative Overview**

Learn More

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