Post-Secondary Peer Support Training Curriculum: Facilitator's Guide for Use With Students

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Including B.C.'s Peer Support Standards of Practice

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Contents

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See Appendix 3 for authors and contributors.

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Introduction

This guide is written for anyone who will be facilitating peer support training for students engaging in post-secondary peer support work.

In this guide we will cover:

- Which modules and sections should be covered for various roles under the umbrella of peer support
- What to encourage students to read on their own
- How to create a lesson plan
- Ideas for discussion questions
- Ideas for group activities

This guide must be read in conjunction with the <u>PSI Peer Support Training Peer Leadership and Facilitation (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/peer-leadership-and-facilitation/)</u> module, which covers the basics of facilitation. We will not be covering those here.

Glossary of Terms

Colonization: The practice of domination of another culture. Colonization is when a country violently invades another and claims the lands as its own. New inhabitants move in, displace, control and oppress people who were indigenous to the land.

Compassion: According to UC Berkeley's *Greater Good Magazine*, "Compassion literally means, "to suffer together." Among emotion researchers, it is defined as "the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering."

Critical Thinking: The disciplined process of actively processing information, with the intention of deliberately trying to suspend one's own judgements. Critical thinking involves conceptualizing, analyzing, synthesizing, reflecting on, and/or evaluating information.

Decolonization: The process of examining oppressive beliefs about Indigenous Peoples. It's about releasing oppressive practices, and supporting Indigenous Peoples to reclaim land, culture, language, community, family, history, and traditions that were, and continue to be taken away through the process of colonization.

Empathy: Empathy is about perspective-taking or mirroring someone else's feelings. Empathy is about sensing someone's feelings and imagining oneself in someone else's shoes. Empathy doesn't always motivate us to action, as compassion does, but it is often the first step towards compassion.

Equality: The state of all people having equal value in terms of status, rights and opportunities.

Equity: Promotes overall fairness. Fairness can only work if all people start from the same place. For people who are experiencing systemic oppression, they might need extra support to get them to an equal place of opportunity as someone not experiencing systemic oppression. In getting everyone to an equal place, some people might receive more support or resources than others.

Generosity of Assumption: Assumptions happen when we don't know the whole story and allow our brains to fill in the blanks. Often, we make negative assumptions about people or situations. Generosity of assumption means that we extend someone the most generous interpretation of their intent, actions, or words

Holding Space: This means to be with someone without expectations or a desire to fix or save. It means that we choose to be fully present without taking the other person's power away. When

we are holding space for someone, we are humble, and we mindfully challenge any judgements or assumptions we may find stirring up for us.

Humility: This means we approach a person or situation knowing that there is much we don't know or understand, and we are not better than anyone else.

Identity-first language: This is common with specific disability communities. Identity-first language was born from the Disability Pride movement, because it is something to be embraced, proud of, and not shamed for. The descriptor is in the identity category. For example, "Autistic" is preferred over "person with autism." "Deaf person" is preferred over "person with deafness."

Implicit bias: Judgements, prejudices, and attitudes that live deep in our subconscious and affect our actions and our understanding.

Intentional: Done with purpose–deliberate and consciously.

Lived Experience: In the context of mental health and substance use, this means having personal lived experience with a mental health issue, substance use, and/or trauma issue.

Peer-Delivered Services: Many services can be delivered by people with lived experience, while holding a peer, or mutual approach. These services aren't always formal peer support. Some examples of peer-delivered services are employment counselors, substance use counselors, job coaches, peer navigators, clerical workers, or organizational leaders.

Person-centered: This is a process of service delivery that puts the person receiving services in the center of their own care. This means professionals see the person as an expert on their own life. This means that professionals continually keep them at the center of all decision-making that affects their well-being.

Person-first language: Puts the person before the diagnosis. This is about avoiding labels to identify a person. For example: Person with diabetes, instead of "diabetic." Or person with schizophrenia, instead of "schizophrenic."

Social Determinants of Health: From the Public Health Agency of Canada, "The social determinants of health influence the health of populations. They include income and social status; social support networks; education; employment/working conditions; social environments; physical environments; personal health practices and coping skills; healthy child development; gender; and culture."

Trauma: The word "trauma" means wound in Greek. Trauma doesn't refer to a specific event, but rather the psychological feeling of overwhelm and helplessness that may follow a traumatic event or series of events. An event is considered traumatic when our experience of it overwhelms our capacity to cope with, process or integrate it. Traumatic events can be difficult to define because

the same event may be more traumatic for some people than for others – i.e. they may overwhelm. Trauma can result from a single distressing event (e.g., car crash, violent assault, death of a loved one, war or natural disaster) or from a long-term, chronic pattern (e.g., ongoing childhood neglect, sexual or physical abuse).

Trauma-Informed: This means that a person or agency has deliberate intention to create an environment that is very safe for anyone who has a trauma history and can be triggered and re-traumatized.

Worldview: The lens through which one sees the world, based on all their past life experiences.

Facilitating With a Peer Approach

Mutuality is a core value of this work. This means that anyone who facilitates this training, must facilitate in a way that honours this value.

In community-based mental health and substance use peer support programs, facilitators of peer support training are co-facilitated by people with lived experience. It is this way for a few reasons;

- The philosophy of peer support is not based on a clinical paradigm. Peer support is relationship-based in a way that clinical services are not designed to be. It can be challenging for a clinician to deliver a training that is so different from the paradigm they work within.
- Someone with lived experience knows what it feels like to feel despair, and work through really hard times. This is at the heart of peer support.
- It is often easier for someone with lived experience to embody the mutuality that is at the center of peer support. Mutuality doesn't negate the need for strong boundaries and professionalism.

We recognize that peer support in Post-Secondary Institutions works differently than peer support in the community. Peer support in PSIs is broader, and includes a wider demographic. People move through the program faster than in community programs, therefore PSI staff will most likely be the facilitators of the training.

We encourage facilitators to embody the core value of mutuality while facilitating. This means taking a peer approach through sharing personal stories, letting go of the need to be an expert, and intentionally breaking down hierarchies as much as possible. If you are able to bring in students to support the training process, that will support a peer approach.

The following section comes from the Peer Support Services in Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI): An Overview

While taken directly from PSI Peer Support Training modules, we are including the following

sections in the guide in order to bring context to different roles and to highlight different training recommendations for each role.

Peer Services in Post-Secondary Institutions

British Columbia mental health and substance use peer support services have a long history. Today, most government and nonprofit clinical mental health and substance use services include peer support services. This includes both community care, and in-patient hospital care. Here in B.C. some of the earliest formal, health authority funded peer support programs began in the 1990s. Although some agencies are further ahead than others, in general peer support in the community is now viewed as a valid career choice. Peer support workers receive competitive compensation and benefits. There is a common understanding of what peer support is, and what it isn't within the healthcare sector.

Currently, peer support in post-secondary campuses is not standardized, and there is much variance between programs. Some peers are volunteers and others are paid.

Peer support can mean varying things within each post-secondary institution. The purpose of this document is to offer a framework that can be used to provide definition and context to the different roles within the umbrella of peer support in PSI settings. In order to create continuity, it's important that institutions work from a similar framework, and that there is some level of cohesion with peer support in the larger community.

Each campus has a diverse set of needs, available resources and infrastructure for the delivery of services. We recognize that students are busy and have limited availability to provide peer services. Some campuses may deliver a more traditional peer support model, and others may offer a more streamlined resource-based service. Some campuses offer drop-in peer services, and other peer support workers might have ongoing relationships with students. Therefore, peer support will continue to look different throughout B.C. campuses.

What Sets Peer Support Apart

Peer support is about tapping into one's own lived experience of struggle and resilience while using the wisdom gained from it to support someone else who is on a similar journey. Though many healthcare clinicians, campus staff, and social workers have lived experience, not all of them are able to share it within the scope of their role. This is what makes peer support unique. The people in the support roles have all been through something similar and are free to share their story.

When we are struggling with something like severe anxiety, depression, managing a chronic

illness like diabetes, or dealing with a substance use issue, it's a gift to have someone to talk to and listen to us who personally understands what we are going through. It is inspiring to see someone come out the other side of a situation that we feel stuck in.

The following is a simple adaptation of the definition of peer support worker that is used within community mental health and substance use programs:

A *peer support worker is someone who*:

1. Has lived experience,
2. Can draw from their lived experience and
3. Engages in a mutually supportive relationship with someone struggling with a similar issue.

While the service scope may look different depending on the unique people within the peer support relationship, the relationships are always intentional and purposeful. Everything begins with connection and mutuality. Peer support is about coming alongside one another and walking together.

Peer support is all about relationship and connection. What brings together a peer and a peer support worker is the lived experience of struggle and the desire for growth.

We recognize that within PSI peer support services there will be less time available for an ongoing relationship. Many connections will be a one-time conversation. However, we also recognize that there is still a relationship and connection that can be formed in a very short-term exchange. Many people receive support from someone just once, and it can impact their lives in a positive way. Because of this, within this training we still choose to focus on building capacity for relationships. These skills that students receive through this peer support training are also transferable to their relationships outside of peer support services, and could be applicable in their future employment.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training in British Columbia recognizes that many post secondary students are struggling with their mental health. There has been a significant effort to increase mental health resources within the sector, including counselling through the Here2Talk app and other similar initiatives. Peer support services in mental health

are evidence-based best practices, and integrating peer programs can provide a significant impact on the mental health of post-secondary students.

Peer support practices, applied with intention and adherence to the standards of practice as outlined in this document, can be a major catalyst to support change. That change can show up as personal individual growth, overall systems change, and in the development of more inclusive communities.

Peer Support vs. Peer or Student–Delivered Services

There are several different roles under the umbrella of peer support. Some campuses may have funding to pay students, others may offer volunteer positions. In this section, we'll take a look at some of these roles.

Traditional Peer Support

Traditional peer support is when people with lived experience (mental health/substance use/ eating disorder/health issue) receive training to provide support to others who are also struggling. The person receiving peer services is dealing with a similar condition and is likely not as far along in their journey. It can be encouraging for them to engage with someone who has walked a similar path and come out the other side. Sufficient and intensive training is an important aspect of this form of peer support.

Traditional peer support services can be delivered in different ways, including:

- **One-to-one drop-in services:**
  The peer support workers take shifts at a student center, and work with anyone who comes in looking for support or resources.

- **One-to-one ongoing support:**
  Peer support workers are assigned students to work with on an ongoing basis. The length of time should be established at the start of the relationship, as there is likely a limited amount of available sessions. It's important that people know about that from the onset of service.

- **Group facilitation:**
  Many campuses provide regular support-type groups for students led by a peer support worker. If this is the case, the peer will need traditional peer support training, and some guidance in facilitation.
- **One-time events:**
  These events can be workshops, or gatherings that are peer-led.

Some campuses simply do not have the infrastructure to run a more traditional peer support program. Utilizing peer support in whatever capacity possible is the best thing we can do.

Some of the challenges that make implementing a tradition peer support program challenging for post-secondary campuses are:

- Lack of funding and staffing to provide mentoring and supervision for peer support workers
- Limited amount of time for training based on resources, facilitators, and student availability
- Lack of available physical spaces appropriate for offering confidential peer support services
- Limited student availability: Students are busy. Some campuses only encourage student involvement from second year up, and that means the time people can serve in peer support is three years maximum. This leads us to;
- High turnover for peer support workers

Student-Delivered Services

On many post-secondary campuses it is common to classify peer support as students supporting students. When used this way, the term peer may not refer to someone who has lived experience with mental health or substance use. The commonality is that both people are students, even though they might have very different backgrounds and life experiences. Students supporting students in this way would be considered student-delivered services.

Student-delivered services, however, are not the same thing as peer support. Student-delivered services are less focused on mental health and emotional support, and more targeted toward accomplishing specific tasks and providing resources. It's important to be clear about the difference to avoid confusion.

Role Definition

In this section, we'll look at some ways to label the different roles that can be housed under Post-Secondary Peer Support Services. In the Facilitation Guide, we will cover the minimum level of training needed for each. We recognize that there may sometimes be significant overlap between roles; doing our best to clarify roles and ensure appropriate support and training is key. Program coordinators may benefit from reflecting on which parts of these training modules may be relevant for student leaders from a variety of roles.

It's important to acknowledge that sharing stories from lived experience is the basis of all roles under the umbrella of peer support and peer-delivered services. Many peer support volunteers/ staff will have lived experience with mental health, substance use, eating disorders, trauma, health issues, disability, etc.. Others might be tapping into their experience of coming from a different culture, or simply being a student.

Regardless, utilizing lived experience is what differentiates peer support from clinical or administration staff. Sharing stories in an authentic, open, honest, and empathetic way breaks down hierarchies. Some of the following roles will require more intensive training than others, and therefore some will be more equipped to deal with difficult situations than others. Supervision is always important, so that peer support volunteers/staff can feel supported when difficult situations come up.

Role Definitions

Peer Support Worker/Facilitator: Someone with lived experience (e.g. mental health, substance use, eating disorder, trauma, health issue, disability) who is providing emotional support and a listening ear to another student who has a similar struggle.

Student Support Worker: This is a student who wishes to support other students with various aspects of student life. Though there is no required element of mental health to this role, it might still come up from time to time.

Student Resource Navigator: These students would be trained to support other students in finding and accessing relevant resources both inside and outside the campus. They are trained about campus policies and procedures and support other students with navigating the system.

International Peer Support Mentor: This worker is also an international student who has had some time to adjust to life on campus and has settled into the local community. They work with new international students and share their lived experience of adjusting to a new culture with them.

International Student Peer Mentor: This is a student who is local to the area, or from another city in Canada. They are not peer in the sense that they have a similar lived experience. However, they are interested in supporting new international students to get comfortable on campus and want to support them to get plugged into student life.

Peer Academic Coaches: Students who provide support with topics such as time management, goal-setting, study strategies, giving presentations, note-taking, test-taking and dealing with exam anxiety. Though there is no required mental health element to this role, it might still come up from time to time.

Peer Educator: Students who lead workshops, small groups, or even provide one-to-one support on a specific topic related to student life. Topics can range from self-care, health tips, academics, writing skills, finances, studying habits, adjusting to student life. Minimum training for peer educators will depend on the topics they are covering in their sessions.

Things to know about the Training

Who Should Deliver this Training?

Facilitators of this training should:

- Be very familiar with peer support–make sure to read the entire curriculum before facilitating, so that you can be prepared for anything that could come up in a training
- Read the Leadership & Facilitation module
- Facilitate with a trauma-informed approach
- Be familiar with mental health and substance use issues
- Be open to a co-learning approach–you don't have to be an expert, but be open to learning from participants and others
- Bring in guest presenters for topics you are not comfortable facilitating
- Be able to tap into lived experience, and be willing to share personal stories and anecdotes

If you are a staff or faculty member, please consider bringing in a student peer who has been doing this work for a little while, to co-facilitate with you. This whole training is grounded in mutuality, and breaking down hierarchies, it is important to bring some mutuality into the training itself.

Timeframes

Each campus and group will have different amounts of time available for training. We recognize that students will only be providing peer services for one–three years maximum. This means that you will be delivering this training often so that you always have students available to provide services. You must figure out what timing and format works for you, and fits with the timeframe you have available. Anything we recommend in this guide is just that–a recommendation.

You have freedom to use this curriculum in whatever way works for you, your students, and your program.

In-Person vs Self-Study

Because of the length of this training, it will be impossible to cover all of the material in an in-person training. This means there must be a component of self-study for students to cover on their own, or on their own in small groups.

Pick the modules that you feel are important to cover in-person, and then ask students to read the others on their own.

We know that in-person learning can be a richer experience for people, as they get a chance to dialogue about it with their peers. You may want to open up time during in-person sessions for students to discuss the most important points from modules that are read-only.

You can also use some of the modules as continuing education throughout the year.

Training Essentials

Learning Objectives

As you will have seen throughout the training, each module has a set of important learning objectives. Learning objectives tell participants what they're going to be learning. Learning objectives are always actionable. They're also a powerful tool for facilitators, as you can use them to guide activities, discussions and structuring facilitation and focus for each module.

Each module has 3-5 key learning objectives. Before you facilitate, be familiar with these objectives, as this will help you to decide what is important to cover and what can be left out.

Feel free to adjust the learning objectives if you feel they need to change for your particular group.

When we facilitate, we must "begin with the end in mind." This means we need to be clear about what we want people to leave the session with and then facilitate the training with this goal in mind. We want clarity about what we're doing at each step, ensuring that all learning objectives are clear and measurable.

Core Values

Everything we do in peer support work, and in this training, is built on the core values. Make sure to talk about the core values at the beginning and throughout each session.

Give participants a handout with the core values and definitions on it, so everyone can refer to it often throughout the training. Consider printing a larger version to keep in a visible spot during the training.

There is a handout included at the end of each module that you can print.

Modules

The modules are written to be stand alone rather than to build on each other. This is because we recognize that many post-secondary institution (PSI) peer support teams will not be able to cover all of them during their training.

This is how the modules are organized in the training:

- Introduction to Post-Secondary Peer Support Training (*this is meant to be a pre-reading for participants, although you could cover some of these topics in-person if you wish*)
- Creating an Ecology of Self-Determination
- Cultural Humility
- Boundaries
- Principles in Trauma-Informed Care
- Connection & Communication
- The Hard Stuff
- Social Determinants of Health
- Building Personal Resilience
- Leadership and Facilitation

Foundational Modules & Topics for In-Person Training

We recommend covering the following modules and topics when training individuals for any role within the peer support umbrella, whether it's a more mental health focussed role or a peer academic coach. Someone who is working strictly as an academic coach will not likely need to

cover topics from The Hard Stuff module, like what to do when someone is having an acute psychiatric crisis, but they will need to cover topics such as communication, boundaries, cultural humility, and self-determination. It will ultimately be up to you to decide what you think your students need to cover, but we will give you some suggestions as a jumping off point here.

Again, it is best practice to ask students to read the entire module that you are covering. However, you won't have time to cover all of it during the training itself. You can pick and choose what you think are the most important topics for your group to cover. We are listing some ideas here to support you with your decision.

The following modules we feel are important for all student peers to be exposed to prior to volunteering or working. While there is freedom and flexibility in implementation, in some cases a topic or module is so vital/crucial for anyone stepping into a particular type of peer support role (i.e. cultural humility for those working with international students) that we have used language that expresses the necessity of such training.

Module	Minimum Topics to Cover
Creating the Ecology of Self-Determination (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/creating-the-ecology-of-self-determination/)	- Worldview, categories and containers, and why we judge - Implicit bias - Self-Determination Theory including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and Competence, Autonomy, & Relatedness - Avoiding advice-giving
Cultural Humility (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/cultural-humility/)	- Culture defined & how you personally connect to culture - Impact of colonization - Worldview, culture, and belief systems - Cultural humility - Honouring other cultures in peer support work ***Anyone who works specifically with International students must cover this module in its entirety.**

Boundaries (https://opentextbc.ca/ peersupport/part/boundaries/)	• The difference between boundaries and ethics or a code of conduct • Role clarification & Boundaries: how to balance mutuality and boundaries in peer support work • Communicating our boundaries • Personal boundaries ***Include covering all of your program's policies and procedures around boundaries, modes of communication that are required, and social media usage.**
Principles of Trauma-Informed Care (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/ principles-in-trauma-informed-care/)	• Definition and principles of trauma informed care • Defining trauma and understanding its impact on the body • The importance of safety, predictability and choice in our peer support interactions
Connection and Communication (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/ connection-communication/)	• Listening to understand • Compassion and empathy, and learning to ask compassionate questions • Safety in communication • Working through conflict

Depending on the roles and experience of members on your peer team , you may want to cover some or all aspects of the following modules:

- **The Hard Stuff** (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/the-hard-stuff-mental-health-crisis-grief-loss-and-harm-reduction/) (In this module we cover the basics of mental health including acute psychiatric crisis, suicide, grief and loss, and harm reduction).
- **Social Determinants of Health** (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/social-determinants-of-health/) (This module focuses on social justice issues that could very well impact many of the students who utilize peer services. However, you may decide that this module is not necessary for all peer support roles. This module can be a good reference for you as a facilitator though. You can refer to it whenever you feel the need, or use some of the reflection questions and exercises in the training or at team meetings to get important dialogues going).
- **Building Personal Resilience** (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/building-personal-resilience/) (If your team is struggling with stress or any aspect of their own mental health, this module is a good one to cover. You can also cover sections of this module along the way at team meetings or group gatherings.)

- **Peer Leadership and Facilitation** (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/part/peer-leadership-and-facilitation/) (This module is an important reference for you as a facilitator of this training. However, it is entirely optional for the peer support workers/volunteers on your team. If you have anyone who is in a leadership role, or is facilitating workshops, then this is an important module for them to cover and continually reference as they facilitate).

Preparing to Facilitate

This may be your first time facilitating a peer support training, or you may have done it many times! There is always a learning curve when you use a curriculum for the first time.

This is a straight forward training, as we have written it to flow from one topic to another, and it includes a robust amount of content that you can pull from. However, you can't cover all of it. You will need time to sort out what you have the capacity to cover, and what you simply don't have time or need for.

Every time you facilitate, you will learn more about what worked and what didn't work. Take good notes so that you can incorporate your learnings into the next training you facilitate.

Let's look briefly at some important things to keep in mind as you facilitate:

- Facilitate in a way that is in line with the principles of peer support and the Core Values
- Create a culture of compassion, curiosity and empathy with everything you do
- Know the material & be prepared
- Focus on experiential learning–offer opportunities for participants to work together to engage with the material
- Read the whole Leadership and Facilitation module, and follow the guidelines outlined in the facilitation section
- Utilize a "power with, "power to," 'power within" approach in your facilitation style (this is covered in the Power and Leadership section of the Leadership and Facilitation module)
- Understand what it means to be trauma-informed, and facilitate every aspect of this training with a trauma-informed approach

Be Prepared and Flexible

In this guide we provide some tools that will support you as you facilitate this training. They include:

- A sample of how to begin each session
- Ideas for activities
- A lesson plan template
- Tools for facilitation

You will need to spend time preparing and learning the material before you facilitate. The more you do this training, the less time you will need for preparation.

However, as prepared as we may be, there will always be a need to pivot and be flexible. You never know what could come up in a training session. The need to be flexible and meet the needs of your group is always essential.

Facilitate for the Group you Have, not the Group you Expect

As we have talked about throughout the training itself, we all have expectations. We all come to the table with a narrative, because our brains are wired to fill in the blanks.

We may begin facilitating thinking that the group will need X, Y, and Z, only to discover that they actually already have a good handle on those topics, but they really need support with A, B, and C.

As facilitators we must always check in with the group. Ask them where they are at, and what they need. Then we might need to change course and adjust our plan to meet their needs. Ask the group what concepts and ideas they feel really comfortable with and what they need support with, and focus your time accordingly.

Find out what learning tools work best for them. Do they love group discussions? Do they love personal reflection? Do they love small group work?

Things to Keep in Mind When Delivering the Training

Use "The Garden" Facilitation Tool

Every time you get a group of people together, there will be lots of talking, and potentially lots of tangents. When a topic comes up that you don't have time to cover in the session, you can redirect the group to stay on task, and ask if they would like you to write the topic on easel paper so that you don't forget to come back to it later.

Lots of people call this a parking lot, but we prefer using the term "The Garden" as this is a more strength-based term.

When you find yourself with extra time, go back to the points in The Garden. You might also have to schedule a time to go over them.

Be Okay with Silence

It's very easy to want to fill up all the space with talking. Be okay with silence – even a couple minutes. If you put out a question to the group and no one answers right away, give them time. People need time to think and process. You could even write a few questions on a white board or easel paper, give people five minutes to process and think about it, and then start a dialogue.

If people are particularly quiet, you could try an activity or small groups to wake people up. If you are doing small groups, always lean towards groups of three, that way if someone isn't feeling up to talking that day, they have the option to remain quiet. In a pair, they don't have a choice.

Be Clear with Instructions

When you're explaining steps for group activities, try to be as clear as possible. It's very easy for people to get confused and mixed up when hearing instructions. Consider having the instructions written on a whiteboard if possible.

Learn People's Names

Always have name tents and name tags – preferably for the whole time, but at least for the first

few sessions. It's important for you to learn people's names, and it's important for others to learn them too. People feel valued and accepted when others know their names.

Ask for Volunteers; Don't Call on People.

Many people had difficult experiences in school settings growing up. Again, we want to take a trauma-informed approach that creates safety and supports choice. One of the ways we ensure that safety is by never calling on people directly. If you want to ask a question, put the question out to the whole group, not directly to one individual. If you want someone to help with something in the session, ask for volunteers. Take a "popcorn" approach with everything. That means that people volunteer to speak up when they are ready, rather than going around in a circle.

Create a space where people feel empowered to take care of themselves.

As a facilitator, it's your role to guide the group learning process, present the material in a way that meets the group's varying needs and create a safe learning environment. However, it's not your role to take care of everyone's individual needs. This is why it's important to begin each session with a dialogue about supporting oneself; remind students that you'll give breaks according to the schedule, but if someone needs to take a break for a phone call or some fresh air, then create an environment where people feel empowered to do that.

Time Keeping

As a facilitator, it's essential that you're always aware of the time. Managing time can be one of the most challenging parts of facilitation, especially if you have a keen group of participants who like to share ideas.

Evaluations

Check in with the group throughout the training to see how things are going. Ask where people are at, if there's anything that needs more clarification. At the end of each session, you can spend a bit of time doing a little debriefing brainstorm. You'll also want to create an evaluation for the end of the training. You can ask them about the training space, the content, the learning, the facilitation, etc.

Agenda or Guide for Participants

Basic Elements of how to Start a Session

Taken from the Facilitation section of the Leadership and Facilitation module

- **Welcome & Housekeeping**: This is where you welcome people to the workshop. Let them know any details they might need to know including timing of breaks, where the washrooms are, whether there are snacks and food provided, where they can buy coffee or snacks if they aren't provided, etc.
- **Share a Land Acknowledgement**
- **Introductions:** Depending on how many people are in your group, introductions are a great warm-up. If it's a large group (more than 20) then introductions will take too long. You can instead ask people to introduce themselves to the people beside them.

  - You must give people some very specific questions to answer in their introduction.
  - The number of questions you ask will depend on your topic and the amount of time you have.
  - Remember that some people might be nervous or uncomfortable, so don't ask anything too personal or deep at this point.
  - Don't call on people ever. Make introductions voluntary. If someone chooses not to say anything, don't make a big deal of it, just move on.
  - Get people to share popcorn style. Which means people choose to talk when they want to, instead of going around in a circle. This is a more trauma-informed approach, because it's easier for someone to pass. They also speak when they are ready, as opposed to being put on the spot.
  - Here are some sample questions:

    - Name
      Pronouns
    - What do you hope to get out of this workshop? (*This question is really important for you as a facilitator, as it helps you to manage group expectations. You can address some things right then and there if expectations are different than what you are providing, or you can make spontaneous adjustments to your agenda.*)
    - What are you studying?
    - A fun question. (*What are you watching right now? What's your favourite ice cream flavour? What is one of your hobbies? What do you do when you have a break from school?*)

- **Icebreaker:** If you have time, this can be a fun way to start a workshop. An icebreaker can be

a little game or challenge that gets the group relaxed, talking, and comfortable. The workshop will flow better if people are warmed up. There are many websites that share ideas for icebreakers. Perhaps at a peer support meeting, together your whole team can brainstorm some ideas of potential ice breakers that will work with the groups you are working with. It can be helpful to have a list to pull from. Some people choose to have the ice breaker related to the topic, but that's not necessary.

- **Talk about Safety:**
Sometimes a participant in your workshop might feel triggered or overwhelmed. At the beginning of the workshop talk about what people can do when they are triggered. Let people know that it is ok if big emotions come up. As a group you can make an agreement that if someone leaves the room and wants support, then they give a signal. If you are co-facilitating, the person who is in the support role can leave to go talk with the person. Another option is to ask if someone in the workshop wants to be a volunteer support person, and they can go speak with the person if they want support. It's good practice to have a box of tissue in the workshop space, just in case someone needs it.
- **Check-in:** If you are meeting more than once, do a check-in at the beginning of subsequent sessions. You can ask questions like:

  ◦ What's one thing you did to take care of yourself this past week?
  ◦ Describe how you are feeling today in one sentence?
- **Community Agreement:** Take a few minutes to create a safe space by talking about what people need to be able to fully show up in the space. (We cover this in more detail above.) Encourage people to do what they need to do to take care of themselves. If they need to step out and take a break, even if it's not break time, that's ok. Since this isn't a class, the guidelines are different.
- **Preview the agenda:** Like we mentioned, it's great if people have a physical agenda in front of them. Share a little preview of what you will cover in that session
- **Prepare and Plan:** Be very clear on what topics you are covering in the workshop, and be prepared: New facilitators can sometimes go into a workshop underprepared and frazzled, or overprepared and rigid. The more practice you get facilitating, the more you will get to know your facilitation style. As a rule of thumb when you are presenting on a new topic, you will likely need to spend at least a few hours preparing.
- **If you are co-facilitating, be clear on who is presenting what topic:** Divide up the agenda in a way that feels good to both facilitators. This way you can spend more time preparing for the topics you are facilitating on. (However, there is always a chance that someone could be sick, so it's a good idea to be familiar with all of the content.)
- **Know exactly how much time is available for each topic:** We mentioned time-keeping earlier, as it's an important aspect of facilitating. Have a few questions or exercises up your sleeve in case you end early and need to fill some time. If you are co-facilitating, and you end your section a ½ hour early, that means your co-facilitator needs to fill that time. Also if you

go over, you will be taking time away from another topic.

- **Facilitate group connection:**

    ◦ Avoid talking all the time, as it can get boring for participants
    ◦ Have some group activities planned
    ◦ Use small groups of 3 or more
    ◦ Ask lots of questions, and get lots of group interaction going

- **Summarize, debrief and check out at the end of the day** Give yourself about some time at the end of the day for this. You'll want to summarize everything you covered. Ask if there are outstanding questions. Spend some time debriefing the day ("how was today for you?"). You can do a check-out as well, asking questions such as:

    ◦ What was a takeaway from today?
    ◦ What will you do to take care of yourself tonight?
    ◦ What was something fun that happened today? As well as debriefing, and checking out, it's a great idea to create some time for self-reflection at the end of the day. Self-reflection promotes learning.

Find Ways to Make it Fun!

Having fun and laughing together is so important! Find opportunities to have fun! Here are some ideas:

- Have fidget toys, pipe cleaners, or play dough at the tables for people who are more kinesthetic.
- Have markers or pencil crayons and colouring sheets available for people who like to doodle.
- Use movie clips or YouTube videos when it works with the topic.
- Have dollar store stickers for name tags.
- Play music when people arrive and leave. (Pick something as neutral as possible.)
- Some people might like doing something crafty. (Although if you choose this, make sure to let people know ahead of time. If they aren't interested, then they don't have to come.)
- Add in a group meditation, but again make it optional, as it may not appeal to everyone.
- Serve snacks and beverages if you have a budget to be able to do so.

Community Agreements

We cover Community Agreements in detail in the Creating a Safe Learning Environment section of the Leadership and Facilitation module.

At the beginning of the first day, it's important to take some time to create a Community Agreement. This is a set of intentions that the group creates together to help ensure a safe

learning environment. It's best to keep this agreement strength-based. It isn't a set of arbitrary rules but instead a commitment to intentionally uphold the core values.

- Set aside about half an hour to create this agreement.
- Explain the purpose (this agreement is to support a safe learning environment).
- Explain what strength-based means in this situation. Given past experiences, when some people hear "Community Agreement" they jump to old ideas of "group rules" and negative statements (e.g. don't be loud, don't interrupt, etc.). You may have to kindly and compassionately support someone to shift their language to become more strength-based.

Agenda for Participants

We are covering a lot of material in this training, and it can be overwhelming for participants to keep track of where they are in the grand scheme of the training.

- On the first day of training, give each participant an agenda with the basic topics you are going to cover throughout the training
- Go over the agenda, and give a brief overview of the topics you will cover, and why they are included in this training
- At the beginning of each new session, briefly review what you have covered so far in the training, and then preview what is to come in that session
- Make sure people are aware of – and celebrate – the progress they have made along the way!

Activities

Both to break up the learning and to add opportunities for participants to process and integrate the material, it will be important to scatter activities and group work throughout the training. Feel free to pull some ideas from your toolbox of learning activities. We are listing a few broader ideas here for you to use as well.

Collaborative Learning: Group Work

When engaging the participants in small group work, as a general rule we recommend groups of three or more people. We believe this is a more trauma-informed approach, because people are less put on the spot in a group of three. If someone is having a rough day, then they have the freedom to take on more of an observer role. In a group of two, each member is expected to participate fully even if they are triggered or uncomfortable by a topic.

Life Application Stories

Several of the modules include Life Application Stories. You can feel free to create scenarios for the modules that don't have them. Each of the stories have reflection questions that follow and can be used for good group discussion.

- Break people into groups of three or four
- Ask them to take turns reading the story
- Have them dialogue about the reflection questions and develop responses
- Bring people back to the larger group, and ask them to summarize what they came up with in the larger group

For Reflection Sections of the Curriculum

There are "For Reflection" questions scattered throughout the curriculum. You can utilize the questions as dialogue topics within the larger group, or break people into small groups and have them discuss and report back.

Have Participants Teach Sections of the Curriculum

Adults tend to learn at a deeper level when they have to teach or present the material to others.

It's not so easy to check out and think about weekend plans when we know we have to get up in front of the group and share the material ourselves!

- Break people into small groups of three or four
- Assign a different section of the curriculum to each group
- Give them time (20-40 minutes depending on the amount of material they have to present) to learn the content
- Have learning tools handy, like markers and easel paper
- Ask the small groups to figure out how to present/teach the material to the larger group- they can present using the manual, write things out on easel paper, or they can utilize group dialogue
- Be clear with the instructions, as this can be confusing if not communicated well
- Give the group clear direction around timeframes: how much time they have to learn and prep for the presentation, and how much time they will have to present their topic to the larger group

Role-Plays & Simulations

Though most people dislike role-plays, they are actually a really powerful way to learn and apply new material. The word role-play doesn't mean that participants have to act, or pretend. You can ask them to be themselves and use real life examples and situations in their role-plays, as it will be a more powerful experience for them.

If you have enough time, you could spend some time developing simulations or role-plays for each module to help demonstrate or unpack some main ideas. Here are a few ideas of potential role-plays:

Creating the Ecology of Self-Determination:

- A peer support volunteer/worker is asked for advice by someone they are supporting. They get to practice avoiding advice-giving, and instead support the person to find the answers within.

Boundaries

In this module we give several examples of potential boundary issues that could come up in post-secondary peer support. Here are some potential role-plays from that module:

- You have told your peer that you will only respond to text messages about scheduling, but they keep texting you long messages about things happening in their life – how do you

respond?

- You have told your peer that you do not want to talk about mental health outside of your appointment times, but the peer keeps bringing it up during a class that you have together – what do you do?
- You work in a drop-in peer support role and the program does not want peer workers to give out any personal contact information to students seeking support. But one student keeps returning when you are on shift and shares how much they like talking to you, and keeps asking if they can have your phone number to contact you at other times. You've told them the program won't allow this, but they keep asking – what should you do?
- You have a lot in common with a peer that you are working with, and you get along very well. You know that your support relationship will come to an end with this person soon, and you wonder if the two of you could stay friends – what should you do?

Self-Reflection

Give people time at the end of each session to reflect on what they learned that day, what they still want to work on, as well as any topics or activities that challenged their beliefs. You can give them a journal or handouts in which to record their thoughts. Here are some sample questions that you can ask participants to reflect on:

- What did I learn today that really resonated with me?
- What can I do to make today's learning stick?
- Is there anything that came up today that caused resistance in me? Why? What can I do to continue wrestling with it?
- Did I give the material enough of my attention? If not, why?
- What can I do to enhance my learning?
- What can I do to support myself as I continue to learn this material–both in class and as I work on my own?
- What is something I appreciated about today's session?

Facilitation Plan Templates

We have included a potential template in this guide that you can use. It will support you to plan out your sessions ahead of time.

- Sample Facilitation Plan [PDF] (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupportfacilitator/wp-content/uploads/sites/393/2022/03/Sample-Facilitation-Plan.pdf)
- Sample Facilitation Plan [Word doc] (https://opentextbc.ca/peersupportfacilitator/wp-content/uploads/sites/393/2022/03/Sample-Facilitation-Plan.docx)

If you have a template that you prefer to use, feel free to use that.

Things to consider when creating a facilitation plan:

- What are the learning objectives you wish to cover in this session?
- How much time do you have for each topic?
- What activities will you utilize to support the anchoring of the learning objective?
- How will you know that participants understood the learning objective? How will you assess the learning? Will you use quizzes, self-reflective assessments from the participants, or group projects?

Facilitation Plan Example

(This is an example only, you can feel free to create your own plan.)

Module: BOUNDARIES

How much time is needed to complete this module: 2.5 hours

Learning Objectives:

1. You will be able to recognize the difference between boundaries and ethics (including Peer Support Canada's Code of Conduct)
2. You will be able to integrate a mindset of mutuality in the co-creation of boundaries with the people you support.
3. You will recognize the importance of, and be able to integrate, boundary creation into your personal self-nourishment practice.

Previous knowledge we want to tap into:

We will tap into what we covered regarding self-determination theory and implicit biases. We will take a culturally humble approach to creating boundaries. We will reference the Core Values.

Resources & Materials Needed:

Core Values handout. Handout of the module, or access to a digital copy. **Have participants read the module ahead of time.**

Assessment (*How will we know that learning objectives have been met?*):

I will assess based on the small group presentations.

Time Needed	Module Section	Content/Key Points: Facilitator Notes and Activities	Participant Activities
15 Minutes	Fundamental Principles within Peer Support	TOPIC: • Code of Conduct from Peer Support Canada • Share campus policies and procedures.	Large group dialogue.

40 Minutes	Clarity on Boundaries	TOPIC: • Define boundaries • Role Clarification and Boundaries • Worldview and Biases • Social media and digital communication	**Large group dialogue questions:** *Some people find conversations around boundaries difficult. What challenges can you see happening in the relationship if this dialogue never happens?* *Why do you think some people struggle with boundary creation?* ***Small group work:*** *Social Media: Break into small groups. Have each group read the social media section together and process the reflection question. Then bring them back to the larger group to discuss together.*
50 Minutes	Communicating our Boundaries section of the module	TOPIC: • Talk about how lack of boundaries causes resentment • Boundaries and conflict • Share some examples from my life about personal boundaries I've had to create • Cover empathy, self-determination and boundaries	Role-plays: • Groups of three • Use the reflection questions in the *Kindness with Boundaries* section of the module, for the role-plays. Give each group 2-3 scenarios. • One person is the peer support worker, another is the program participant, and the third person is the observer • After they finish the role-plays ask the questions: how was that for you? What went well? What are some opportunities for growth that you can do differently next time?

35 Minutes	Core Values Review	TOPIC: • Have the group review the core values while considering what you covered in the about boundaries section.	**Small group work:** • In groups of 3 or 4 have them read each core value, and dialogue about how they hold up each core values when creating boundaries • If you need to save time, you can break up the core values between the groups so they are all covered, and then they present to the larger group
10 Minutes		**Summary/Closure** • Summarize what you covered today. • Tell the group about any homework or pre-reading for next session.	• Have the group answer some self-reflection questions on their own (5 min) • Ask "how was today for you?" record what the group shares • If you have an evaluation, give that out

In Conclusion

We're excited you're setting out on this journey! Our hope is that this training serves to support you to grow both in your peer support and facilitation work.

As with any journey, remember that you'll learn as you go, you'll make some mistakes, and need to course-correct. Be kind to yourself and ask for support when you need it! If you feel stuck on something, try reaching out to another facilitator, colleague or peer to talk it out. And remember you can come back to this guide and the leadership and facilitation module as often as you need.

As we have mentioned throughout the training, do your best to add some fun into the experience for people, and ground everything you do in the core values!

"Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain."
~Mead, Hilton, & Curtis (2001)

Appendix 1: Standards of Practice for Peer Support Workers

The following BC peer support standards of practice emerged from the provincial peer support project. They are written for peer support workers to guide their practice whether they work in the community or on a campus. They are also meant to be a guide for supervisors and leaders to support the oversight of peer services.

Depending on your role on campus, some of these standards will pertain to you, and some will not. Make sure to check in with your supervisor regarding the guidelines for your role.

Standards of Practice Components & Competencies

A. Peer Specialized Proficiencies

   1. Demonstrates understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to recovery and wholeness. Each person needs to discover what goals, values, and beliefs work for them. Peer support workers recognize that others' paths may be quite different from their own.
   2. Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of self-determination and is able to apply it to the peer relationship. Understands that advice-giving and fixing are antithetical to self-determination.
   3. Demonstrates a commitment to mutuality. The peer support worker does, however, acknowledge and recognize that there can still be a power differential when in a formal role. The peer support worker actively works to create mutuality and equality, while honouring boundaries and deeply respecting the well-being of the recipient of the services.
   4. Chooses to self-disclose and share aspects of their personal story in a way that supports the building of the relationship, connection, and inspiring hope. Understands the importance of avoiding the sharing of traumatic details that can trigger a stress response in someone else.
   5. Engages in active ongoing learning.

B. Principles of Supporting Wellness, Wholeness, Recovery and Social Belonging

   1. Actively creates and engages in self-care practices that support their own well-being.
   2. Demonstrates awareness of their own stressors and triggers and has a plan to support their own well-being through those challenges.
   3. Actively chooses to practice empathy and compassion in interactions.

4. Recognizes the importance of clear, well-defined boundaries. Practices co-creating boundaries with the person they are supporting. *Ask for support from your program supervisor when needed.

5. Demonstrates knowledge of recovery-oriented practices including but not limited to harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and the importance of person-first language.

6. Supports peers to discover strengths, explore new possibilities, and continue to build resilience.

C. Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

1. Is aware of, and actively reflects on their own set of values and beliefs.

2. Is mindfully aware that they have a set of personal biases, and actively makes space for different perspectives.

3. Understands and can apply intercultural sensitivity towards all cultural groups. Works to avoid stereotyping.

4. Understands the harmful effects of colonization and privilege and works to reduce harm.

5. Understands how stigma and the Social Determinants of Health can affect someone's life experience.

6. Respects a diversity of modalities and interventions, even if different than their own personal approach.

D. Facilitating Communication and Connection

1. Demonstrates an understanding of, and sensitivity towards the effect of personal communication style on others.

2. Communicates clearly, respectfully, and effectively through spoken, written, and electronic modalities

3. Recognizes the importance of, and chooses to use, person-first language[1] in regard to physical and mental health challenges.

4. Uses identity-first language* for those who prefer that.

5. Understands the importance of community and belonging that is needed for one's sense of well-being and supports community inclusion.

6. Actively practices compassionate and empathetic communication.

E. Collaboration and Ethical Practice

1. Works respectfully and effectively with clinical and community staff, as well as with the peer's personal supporters.

2. Demonstrates an understanding of the non-negotiable nature of the Code of Conduct.

3. Effectively collaborates with stakeholders in a way that supports the overall existence of, reputation and respect for peer support within the province.

1. See Glossary of Terms for definitions.

Peer Support Canada's Code of Conduct

(Reprinted with permission from Peer Support Canada)[2]

Peer Support Canada is an organization that provides certification to peer support workers across Canada.

The following is the Code of Conduct that their certified peer supporters are required to follow:

- I will act ethically, according to the values and principles of peer support
- I will treat all people with respect and dignity I will respect human diversity and will foster non-discriminatory activities I will honour the rights, beliefs and personal values of individuals
- I will behave with honesty and integrity in providing support to peers
- I will respect the privacy of individuals and maintain confidentiality within the limitations of program policies and the law e.g. potential harm to self or others
- I will not knowingly expose a peer to harm I will not take advantage of the peer relationship for personal benefit, material or financial gain
- I will respect the boundaries of peer support work and will not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with the peers that I support
- I will not provide peer support in a manner that negatively affects the public's confidence in peer support

2. Used with permission. _Peer Support Canada Code of Conduct (https://peersupportcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Peer_Support_Code_of_Conduct-ENG.pdf)_. Peer Support Canada.

Appendix 2: Core Values of Peer Support

Despite the diversity and the potential differences in practice, there are common values and principles that are fundamental to all peer support.

Hope and Wholeness for All

Hope is the spark that motivates us to step into the realm of possibility. All growth and change, whether we realize it or not, begins with hope.

In peer support we choose to believe that everyone we work with has the capacity for healing, growth, and life satisfaction. Hope is a core value of this work, and we choose to nurture and cultivate it in ourselves and others.

We understand that healing and growth don't come easily, but that holding onto hope can make all the difference in someone's life.

Hope is different than optimism. There is much more to hope than looking at the bright side. Hope is messy and uncertain. Acting on hope is brave and courageous, and always involves risk of some kind. Hope is not sentimental. It's gritty and can sometimes feel scary.

> *"Wholeness does not mean perfection; it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life. Knowing this gives me hope that human wholeness–mine, yours, ours–need not be a utopian dream, if we can use devastation as a seedbed for new life."*
> *~Parker J. Palmer, (A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life)*

Wholeness means a coming together of all the parts of ourselves. It's about seeing our full selves as a wonderful whole, including our strengths, giftings, AND our imperfections.
In peer support we believe that this kind of hope and wholeness is accessible for everyone.

Hope and wholeness for all includes the practice of cultivating compassion for both self and others.

Core Value	Moving towards hope and wholeness for all:
Acknowledgement	All human beings long to know and be known–to be seen for who we are, and deeply heard, without someone trying to fix or save us.

Mutuality	The peer relationship is mutual and reciprocal. Peer support breaks down hierarchies. The peer support worker and the peer equally co-create the relationship, and both participate in boundary creation. *A mutual approach means that peer support workers always avoid advice-giving.
Strength-Based	It is more motivating to move towards something rather than away from a problem. We intentionally build on already existing strengths. We thoughtfully and purposefully move in the direction of flourishing, rather than only responding to pain and oppression.
Self-Determination	We support the facilitation and creation of an ecology where people can feel free to tap into their inner motivation. Peer support workers don't fix or save. We acknowledge and hold space for resilience and inner wisdom.
Respect, Dignity and Equity	All human beings have intrinsic value. Peer support workers acknowledge that deep worth by: • practicing cultural humility and sensitivity • serving with a trauma-informed approach • offering generosity of assumption[1] in communication and conflict • mindfully addressing personal biases Peer support is about meeting people where they are at and serving others with a knowledge of equity.
Belonging and Community	Peer support acknowledges that all human beings need to belong and be a part of a community. Peer support recognizes that many people have barriers that keep them from developing community. We actively work towards deconstructing those social blockades that prevent inclusion and acceptance. Peer support workers serve with a social justice mindset, and intentionally practice empathy, compassion & self-compassion.

1. Note on the meaning of the term "generosity of assumption" from the glossary of terms: Assumptions happen when we don't know the whole story and allow our brains to fill in the blanks. Often, we make negative assumptions about people or situations. Generosity of assumption means that we extend someone the most generous interpretation of their intent, actions, or words.

Curiosity	We are always intentional about how curiosity and inquiry support connection, growth, learning and engagement. This curiosity isn't fueled by personal gain but by a genuine interest in connection. We encourage curiosity while respecting the boundaries and protecting the privacy of the people we support. We are continually curious, but not invasive, while challenging assumptions and narratives. We ask powerful questions. We offer generosity of assumption* to those who think differently than we do. We know that listening and asking questions are more important than providing answers.

Appendix 3: Authors and Contributors

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Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

The files posted by this book always reflect the most recent version. If you find an error in this book, please fill out the Report an Error (https://open.bccampus.ca/browse-our-collection/reporting-an-error/) form.

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