



## Session 1: What is peer education? Is peer education for me?

**Time:** 90 minutes

### Objectives

- To come to a common understanding of peer education
- To explore the added value of peer education
- To give people the space to decide if they want to be peer educators

### Materials

- Post-it notes
- Pens
- Definitions of the term 'peer'
- Flip chart or other paper

### Preparation

Copy the definitions of the term 'peer' onto larger pieces of paper to stick on the wall.

### Instructions

1. Ask the participants to close their eyes and think back to three important learning experiences they had in their lives. They can write them down if they feel more comfortable doing so. Ask them the following questions. (10 minutes)
  - What did you learn?
  - How did the learning take place? What was the context? Where were you?
  - Who was involved in this learning experience? Who did you learn from?
2. Ask a few people to share their learning experiences briefly with the group. (5 minutes)
3. Ask the participants to write the names/ roles of people they learned from on post-it notes. Collect the post-its on the wall, grouping them. (10 minutes)
4. Discuss in a large group: Which of these people are your peers and which are not? Divide the post-it notes into two groups on the wall. (5 minutes)
5. Give a couple of definitions of the word 'peer', stick them on the wall and allow time for questions/ short explanations. (5 minutes)
6. Form groups of four or five. Ask them to brainstorm the added value of peer education: Does it make sense to be educated by a peer? Why? Report back. (10 minutes)
7. In the same groups, the participants draw a person on a flipchart poster. On one side of the person they write qualities of a good peer educator, on the other side things to avoid as a peer educator. (15 minutes)
8. The groups should present back. They should only say new things, not repeat what groups before them have already said. Add qualities from the list below that are missing. Ask the whole group which of these things are only valid for peer education and which are valid for all kinds of education. (15 minutes)
9. Draw a simple mountain slope on a piece of flip chart paper on the wall. Take each quality, asking individuals to say how far they are up the mountain with that quality. Ask individuals to



share with the group. (10 minutes)

10. Point out that qualities, although part of our personality, can be developed. Also highlight that 'skills' such as speaking to groups or leading discussions are not included - they can be learned. Draw together other points made. (5 minutes)

## Some qualities of a peer educator

**Interested** - genuinely interested in the issues

**Concerned** - want other people to learn about the topic/ issues

**Committed** - able to give of your time and energy

**In touch** - aware of interests and attitudes of young people today

**Accepting** - tolerant of people and their opinions, regardless of race, culture, sex, ability

**Respectful** - respect peoples' rights to their own choices, ideas, opinions

**Confident** - but not arrogant

**Good at relationships** - forming friendships and maintaining them

**Approachable** - others talk to you openly and trust you

**Self aware** - know your own strengths and needs

**Open** - ask for help and learn from mistakes

**Trustworthy** - can be relied upon to keep an agreement

**Good team member** - can work with others towards a goal

## Definitions of the term 'peer'

A peer group is a social group consisting of people who are equal in respects such as age, education or social class. Peer groups are an informal primary group of people who share a similar or equal status and who are usually of roughly the same age. Members of a particular peer group often have similar interests and backgrounds. However, some peer groups are very diverse, crossing social divides such as socioeconomic status, level of education, race, creed, culture, or religion. Wikipedia

Peer: one that is of equal standing with another, especially one belonging to the same societal group based on age, grade, or status. Webster's dictionary

Peer

1. A person of the same legal status: 'a jury of one's peers'
2. A person who is equal to another in abilities, qualifications, age, background, and social status. Dictionary.com