

Peer Listener Training Manual Distribution Plan and Outreach Materials

PWSRCAC Board Meeting
5/2/25

1

Previous Work

- Revised the Peer Listener Training Manual in 2023
- Recommendations for future distribution efforts

2

Project Understanding

- Develop a **distribution plan** for the Peer Listener Training Manual and **supporting materials** that make the manual accessible to communities in the region
- **Distribution Plan Goals:**
 - Build awareness about the Peer Listener Training Manual among EVOS region communities
 - Increase knowledge about and use of active listening skills among audiences
 - Secure the commitment of PWSRCAC member entities in sharing the manual

3

Distribution Plan Contents

- 1: Overview/Background
- 2: Goals
- 3: Audiences
- 4: Key Messages Per Specific Audience
- 5: Products
- 6: Products: Details and Development
- 7: Distribution
- 8: Evaluation
- 9: Appendix

4

Audiences

Primary:

- People age 18+ in the EVOS area
- English is most frequently used language, followed by Tagalog
- 1-7% of the population has one or a combination of hearing, vision, or cognitive impairments
- 22% have a bachelor's degree
- Most people have internet access and smartphones or other devices (however, some areas have limited access or bandwidth issues)



5

Audiences

Secondary:

- PWSRCAC member entities
- Potential partners in the region
 - Native entities
 - Local and Tribal governments
 - Chambers and economic development
 - Tourism industry
 - Cultural institutions, religious organizations
 - Education institutions
 - Libraries
- Healthcare/social services/mental health providers
- Fishing industry
- Environmental research and education
- Local/State emergency management
- Federal entities

6

Distribution

Distribution channels:

- Media channels such as radio
- Online channels such as websites, e-newsletters, social media, audio platforms
- Print materials in physical locations, e.g. flyers on a grocery store bulletin board
- In-person: counseling centers, libraries, festivals, conferences, events

7

Audio Products

Audiobook of manual

- Lightly edited audio recording of the manual available for download or listening

3-minute “Peer Listener Moments”

- Feature information from the manual and some audio clips from Project Jukebox
- Can be played on the radio in between programs
- Can be housed on audio streaming platforms and manual webpage
- 4 recorded segments:
 - Dos and Don'ts of Active Listening
 - What is a Peer Listener
 - Patience Andersen Faulkner on How to Help
 - Katie Gavenus on Pulling Together

8

Peer Listener Moment

“What is a Peer
Listener”



9

Outreach Materials

Toolkit for partners

- One-page manual
- Rack card
- Social posts
- Short article

10

Resilient communities start with GOOD LISTENERS.



Be prepared to help your community.

This is a quick guide for those who want to help after their community has been through a disaster by being a Peer Listener. The Peer Listener Training Manual teaches additional active listening skills so you can support your friends, family, and neighbors through the healing process.

What are Peer Listeners?

Peer listeners are members of the community who have been through the same disaster and have learned how to actively listen. They can informally support others who want to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences without judgement. *Peer listeners are not therapists or social workers.*

Remember that integral to being a peer is having gone through the same experience. This means that you are going through the healing process too. Only you will know how much time and energy you can give while still taking care of yourself. It is equally important that you are prepared to seek help when the problems you encounter are overwhelming.

What Peer Listeners Do:

- 1 Listen to someone's story to help them process the situation.
- 2 Provide information about community resources and encourage seeking additional help if needed.
- 3 Recognize the additional stress and unique needs of disaster survivors.
- 4 Learn communication skills.
- 5 Respect and try to understand emotions.
- 6 Encourage self-advocacy and decision-making.



Learn more in the Peer Listener Training Manual, including:

- The difference between natural disasters and human-caused disasters, and how the effects differ.
- How individuals can build better listening skills and provide support for their neighbors.
- Where to find additional help when needed.



www.tinyurl.com/Help-Your-Community

What is Peer Listening?

Communicating our feelings to others is an important part of coping with, and healing from, any crisis situation.

Peer listening is an active form of listening: listeners use empathy and caring to reflect the thoughts and feelings of the speaker back to them.

Communication Tips

- 1 **Stop talking.** You can't listen while you are talking.
- 2 **Get rid of distractions.** Avoid fiddling with things, such as your cell phone.
- 3 **Tune in to the other person.** Try to understand their viewpoint, assumptions, needs, and how all three fit into their beliefs.
- 4 **Concentrate on the message.** Listen to how they say what they say. The speaker's attitudes and emotional reactions may convey as much—or more—meaning than the words they use.
- 5 **Paraphrase and ask for confirmation** about what you think the speaker means and wants.
- 6 **Look at the other person.**
- 7 **Avoid hasty judgment.** Hear the speaker out. Plan your response only after you have confirmed that you understand what the speaker is meaning.
- 8 **Give the other person the benefit of the doubt.**
- 9 **Leave your personal emotions aside.**
- 10 **Share responsibility for communication.** When you don't understand, ask for clarification. Don't give up too soon or interrupt. Give the speaker time to express what they have to say.
- 11 **Work at listening.** Hearing is passive; our nervous system does the work. Listening is active; it takes mental effort and attention. When you reply to the speaker, repeat some of what they told you using their words.

"Knowing we are not alone gives us courage."

Phrases to Avoid

As a peer listener, be aware that some commonly used phrases are far less helpful in crisis situations than they appear on the surface.

Don't use...
"I know what you mean."

Try instead...
"It sounds like you've been feeling... is that right?"

Why? While it's a peer listener's role to empathize, it's important to let the speaker have their own experience.

Don't use...
"You should..."

Try instead...
"What options do you see from here?"

Why? As a peer listener, your focus is to listen and empower, not direct or rescue.

Don't use...
"Calm down"

Try instead...
"This is a lot. Is there anything you'd like to focus on?"

Why? Telling someone in crisis to calm down rarely has the intended effect. A peer listener should offer a safe place for a speaker to explore their feelings.

Don't use...
"What were you thinking?"
or "Why would you do that?"

Try instead...
"You were under a lot of stress at that time."

Why? Even if spoken in a warm and inviting tone, these phrases might sound like judgment.

"Hearing, K. (2023 May 10). Toxic Positivity: Why It's harmful and what to say instead. In Good Mind. <https://www.goodmind.org/what-is-toxic-positivity-080908> and Cleveland Clinic. (2021 April 10). Why Toxic Positivity isn't always a good thing. Health Essentials. <https://health.essentialsclevelandclinic.org/toxic-positivity-why-is-it-always-a-good-thing/>



Peer Listening is for Everyone

Be prepared to help your community after a disaster.

Learn to be a better listener so you can support your friends, family, and neighbors through the healing process.

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Learn peer listening skills in the **Peer Listener Training Manual**, as well as:

- The difference between natural disasters and human-caused disasters, and how the effects differ.
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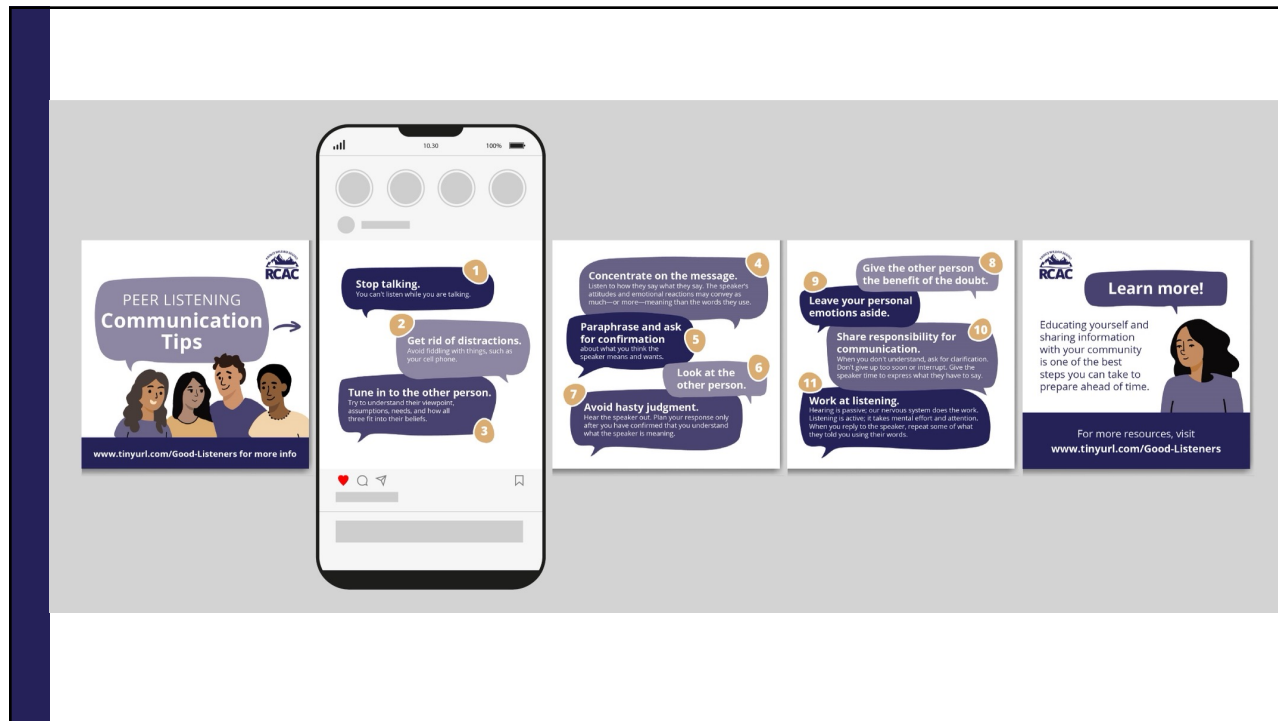
Flip to learn
communication tips!

www.tinyurl.com/Peer-Listening-Skills

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www.tinyurl.com/Peer-Listening-Skills



13



14

PEER LISTENING Responses and Phrases to Avoid

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Responses and Phrases to Avoid

Don't use... "I know what you mean."

Try instead... "It sounds like you've been feeling... is that right?"

Why? While it's a peer listener's role to empathize, it's important to let the speaker have their own experience.

Responses and Phrases to Avoid

Don't use... "Everything will be alright" or "It's God's Plan."

Why? These phrases can minimize real feelings and cause the speaker to feel shame for sharing them.

Try instead... "That sounds really hard. I'm glad you're sharing this with me."

Why? As a peer listener, your focus is to listen and empower, not direct or rescue.

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Learn more!

Educating yourself and sharing information with your community is one of the best steps you can take to prepare ahead of time.

For more resources, visit www.tinyurl.com/Good-Listeners

15

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16

PEER LISTENING Common Response Styles

As a peer listener, you play a specific role of support for another person—conversations are not as two-sided as typical social interactions tend to be.

Supporting and Reassuring Responses 1

- Demonstrate your concern and support
- Prompt speaker to continue or elaborate
- Validate a speaker's emotions
- Remain attentive
- Limit the number of questions you ask
- Allow for attentive silence

Be careful not to commit yourself or the speaker to any specific position or course of action that comes up during an emotional moment.

Understanding and Paraphrasing Responses 2

- Paraphrase to seek clarification
- Reflect the speaker's ideas in a way that allows for revision
- Ask open-ended questions
- Demonstrate that you are trying to understand

This response style demonstrates engagement and offers the speaker a chance to clarify or reconsider.

Recognizing and Interpreting Responses 3

- Acknowledge the impact of the disaster
- Recognize the experience and impact of feelings
- Acknowledge that feelings aren't rational
- Honor the needs that motivate the feelings
- Distinguish between feelings and behavior
- Allow the speaker time for self-reflection
- Give specific observations

Avoid recognizing and interpreting responses altogether in the early stages of peer listening; instead, spend more time listening.

Probing and Questioning Responses 4

- Empower the speaker to problem-solve
- Encourage thinking out loud
- Allow the speaker to explore multiple options
- Discuss available resources

Use this response style to help the speaker explore, but be careful not to advise.

Evaluating and Advising Responses 5

- Remember that your role as a peer listener is different from your role as a friend or neighbor
- You may need to use this response style if you are concerned for someone's safety

Avoid evaluating and advising responses altogether in the early stages of peer listening, and use only with extreme caution later on.

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17

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PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND RCAC

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18

Article

Partners can use any of this content, along with any shareable materials such as the one-page manual, to promote the Peer Listener Training Manual. It could be used for e-newsletters or other channels for promotion and distribution.



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Questions and Feedback