

Briefing for PWSRCAC Board of Directors – May 2025

ACTION ITEM

Sponsor: Danielle Verna and the Scientific Advisory Committee

Project number and name or topic: 6560 - Peer Listener Manual Distribution

1. **Description of agenda item:** The Board is being asked to accept the distribution plan and outreach materials for the Peer Listener Manual finalized by Agnew::Beck Consulting in April 2025. The Peer Listener Manual is an appendix to the Council’s “Coping with Technological Disasters – A User-Friendly Guidebook.” Originally developed in the 1990s, the Peer Listener Manual has recently been updated and revised to reflect our current understanding of mental health and community resiliency. In this project, a distribution plan was developed and outreach tools were created to aid Council staff and others when sharing and broadening the reach of the manual within our region and beyond. These outreach tools include a one-page version of the manual, a rack card, social media posts, and an audio version of the manual. Project Managers from Agnew::Beck will present the plan and outreach materials, and will be available to answer questions.

2. **Why is this item important to PWSRCAC:** The Peer Listener program was a flagship social sciences program of the Council when it was first offered in the 1990s, and at the time was cutting edge in its acknowledgement of the pervasive impacts of technological disasters in a community. The extensive human impact of a major oil spill continues to be largely overlooked in contingency planning and response structures. The Council recognizes the importance of helping local residents cope with the sociological effects of an oil spill. The fields of peer-to-peer support and mental health have evolved substantially since the original manual was developed. The revised manual builds on the latest understanding of active listening and informal support needs and benefits. The intended outcome of the Peer Listener program is resilient communities with strong social support systems in place before an incident occurs. In order for this to happen, community members must be aware of the manual and how to use it.

3. **Previous actions taken by the Board on this item:**

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
Board	9/21/2023	The Board accepted the “Peer Listener Training Manual” by Agnew::Beck Consulting, Inc., dated August 1, 2023, as meeting the terms and conditions of Contract 6560.23.01, and for distribution to the public.
Board	5/2/2024	The Board adopted the FY2025 budget as presented during the Budget Workshop on April 25, 2024, to include this project.

4. **Summary of policy, issues, support, or opposition:** None.

5. **Committee Recommendation:** The Scientific Advisory Committee recommended the Board of Directors accept these materials as revised at its meeting on March 20, 2025.

Report Acceptance: Peer Listener Manual Distribution Plan 4-9

6. **Relationship to LRP and Budget:** Work associated with this project was completed under contract 6560.25.01 with a not to exceed amount of \$32,885.
7. **Action Requested of the Board of Directors:** Accept the Peer Listener Manual distribution plan and outreach materials prepared by Agnew::Beck Consulting, Inc. dated April 2025, as meeting the terms and conditions of contract number 6560.25.01, and for distribution to the public.
8. **Alternatives:** None recommended.
9. **Attachments:**
 - Peer Listener Manual Distribution Plan
 - Peer Listener Manual Article
 - Peer Listener Manual One Page Manual
 - Peer Listener Manual Rack Card
 - Peer Listener Manual Social Media Carousel Posts
 - Peer Listener Manual (audio version)
 - Peer Listener Moments (audio)

PWSRCAC Peer Listener Training Manual Distribution Plan

April 3, 2025

Agnew::Beck Consulting, Inc.

PWSRCAC Contract #6560.25.01

The opinions expressed in this PWSRCAC-commissioned report are not necessarily those of PWSRCAC.

PWSRCAC Peer Listener Training Manual Distribution Plan

1 Overview/Background

After the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill (EVOS), social scientists working with impacted communities developed a Peer Listener Training Program to help build community resilience. Created in 1999, and revised in 2004 and 2023, the training was designed to teach peer listening techniques that allow community members to better support each other.

The Peer Listener Training Program has a corresponding manual, which is included as Appendix F in the Council's "Coping with Technological Disasters – A User Friendly Guidebook."

PWSRCAC aims to **promote distribution and accessibility of the Peer Listener Training Manual** for community members within the EVOS region, acknowledging that the manual may also be useful across a broader audience.

Distribution for previous versions of the manual included:

- Sharing with communities within the EVOS region
- A video series of the training produced on DVD and available online in 2010
- Adaptation and use in the Gulf of Mexico after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill
- PWSRCAC hosted a Train the Trainer event with the intention to seed more trainers in Alaska communities in 2016
- A blog post and article in The Observer newsletter highlighting the 2023 version:
<https://www.pwsrcac.org/observer/how-learning-to-listen-can-help-communities-heal-from-disasters/>

2 Goals

The intended outcomes of the Peer Listener Training Program are to:

1. Train community residents with active listening skills
2. Provide the tools and resources necessary to promote informal social support in response to traumatic events

Goals for this distribution plan:

- 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

Goals for subsequent phases of the Peer Listener Program, pending funding availability and Board approval:

- Identify current barriers for participating in the Peer Listener Program
- Develop a support network for Peer Listeners
- Develop metrics to assess the effectiveness and reach of the program
- Assess the value and feasibility of partnering with other community-based organizations to achieve the goals of the Peer Listener Program

3 Audiences

Primary Audience

People aged 18+ years who live and/or work in the EVOS area

This audience is likely unaware of the Peer Listener Training Manual. This audience encompasses two categories to consider when developing products and messaging: those who lived through the oil spill and remember it, and those who did not.

Summary of demographic data regarding this audience (data tables are included in the appendix):

- The total population in the Chugach Census Area (Prince William Sound), Kodiak Island Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough is 79,685. Roughly 77% of this population is over age 18.
- The most frequently used language in the region is English, followed by Tagalog. This informs potential future translations of the manual or accompanying materials. Other languages spoken in-region less frequently (or not captured in census data) include: Spanish; Russian, Polish, or Slavic; Alutiiq (Sugcestun); Ahtna/Dena'ina (Dene); Eyak.
- Roughly 22% of this population has attained a bachelor's degree. To keep products accessible for a wide audience, writing should be at an eighth grade reading level.
- Having multiple variations of the manual (digital, audio, print) can increase access for those with hearing, vision, or cognitive impairments (approximately 1%-7% of the population has one or a combination of impairments, depending on the region).
- Most people have internet access and smartphones or other devices, meaning they will be able to access online versions of the manual under normal circumstances. However, some smaller communities and villages have limited internet access or bandwidth issues. During an incident, internet access would only become more limited. This emphasizes the need to distribute the manual before an incident occurs, and to ensure various formats of the manual exist (digital, audio, print).
- Specific commute times in each region can inform optimal times for radio PSAs (if utilized).

Secondary Audiences

This audience consists of people/groups who influence the primary audience now or in the future; people who can help distribute the manual; people beyond the EVOS region who should receive the communications campaign messages; or others who will also benefit from hearing the messages.

PWSRCAC Member Entities

The Council's member entities represent communities and interest groups that were affected by EVOS. This audience can be a critical partner in helping to distribute the manual. Board members could be asked to relay information and materials to their respective member entities.

- Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- Chugach Alaska Corporation
- City of Cordova
- City of Homer
- City of Kodiak
- City of Seldovia
- City of Seward
- City of Valdez
- City of Whittier
- Chenega Corporation and Chenega IRA Council
- Cordova District Fishermen United
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Kodiak Village Mayors Association
- Oil Spill Region Environmental Coalition
- Oil Spill Region Recreational Coalition
- Port Graham Corporation
- Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation
- Tatitlek Corporation and the Tatitlek Village IRA Council

Potential Partners

The list below represents a wide range of potential partners that are not members of PWSRCAC. This audience could assist with distribution of the manual, may have an interest in building a resilient community, or could benefit directly from knowing about the manual. Not all partners need to be engaged for a successful distribution effort.

Additional organizations and groups within the region, especially those that work directly with people, can be added to this list at any time to develop a more comprehensive network of potential partners.

Native Entities

- [Chugachmiut Corp](#)
- [Kodiak Area Native Association](#)
- [Chugach Regional Resources Commission](#)
- [Koniag](#)
- [Old Harbor Alliance](#)

Local and Tribal Governments

- [Native Village of Eyak](#) (Cordova)
- Tribal Administrators
- [Qutekcak](#) Native Tribe (Seward)
- [Valdez Native Tribe](#)
- [Seldovia Village Tribe](#)
- Port Graham Village Council
- Nanwalek IRA Council

Chambers and Economic Development

- [Seward Chamber Economic Development Partners](#)
- [Valdez Economic Development Department](#)

- Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau
- [Prince William Sound Economic Development District](#)
- [Kodiak Chamber of Commerce](#)
- Cordova Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Whittier Chamber of Commerce

Tourism Industry

- [Discover Kodiak](#)
- [Kenai Mountains - Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area](#)
- State of Alaska Marine Parks

Cultural Institutions, Religious Organizations

- [Copper Mountain Foundation](#) (annual festival)
- [Russian Orthodox Deanery](#)
- [Ilanka Cultural Center](#) (Cordova)
- [Alutiiq Museum](#)
- [Chugach Heritage Foundation](#)
- [Cordova Museum & Historical Society](#)
- [Cordova Arts](#)
- [Kodiak Arts Council](#)
- [Kodiak History Museum](#)
- [Kodiak Area Mentor Program](#)
- [Kodiak Churches](#)
 - [Kodiak Filipino Bible Church](#) – connect with Filipino-American Association
 - [Kodiak Christian Fellowship](#)

Education Institutions

- University of Alaska - [PWS College](#), [Kodiak College](#), [Kenai Peninsula College](#)
- Chugach School District
- Cordova City School District
- Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
- Kodiak Island Borough School District
- Valdez City School District

Libraries

- In-region libraries
- [Cordova Library](#)
- [Kodiak Public Library](#)
- [Kodiak Public Library Association Little Library network](#)
- State libraries

Healthcare/Social Services/Mental Health Providers

- Counseling centers
- Community health centers
- Hospitals
- Providence hospitals - [Kodiak Island Medical Center](#), [Valdez Medical Center](#)
- [Cordova Community Medical Center](#)

- [Sound Alternatives](#), behavioral health at CCMC in Cordova
- [Ilanka Community Health Center](#) (Eyak)
- [Kodiak Community Health Center](#)
- [Cordova Public Health Center](#)
- [Cordova Family Resource Center](#)
- Emergency Assistance and Food Bank of Valdez
- [Salvation Army Cordova Extension](#)

Fishing Industry

- [Alaska Sea Grant](#)
- [Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association](#)
- Valdez Fisheries Development Association

Environmental Research and Education

- [Copper River Watershed Project](#)
- [Prince William Sound Science Center](#)
- [Oil Spill Recovery Institute](#)
- [Prince William Sound Stewardship Foundation](#)
- Alaska SeaLife Center
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Alaska Fisheries Science Center
- Friends of Kachemak Bay
- [Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute](#)

Local/State Emergency Management

- Emergency/first responders
- [Kodiak Fire Department](#)
- [Cordova Fire Department](#)
- [Bayside Volunteer Fire Department](#)
- Village Public Safety Officers ([Chugachmuit](#), [KANA](#))
- Oil and hazardous substances
- State emergency operations center

Federal Entities

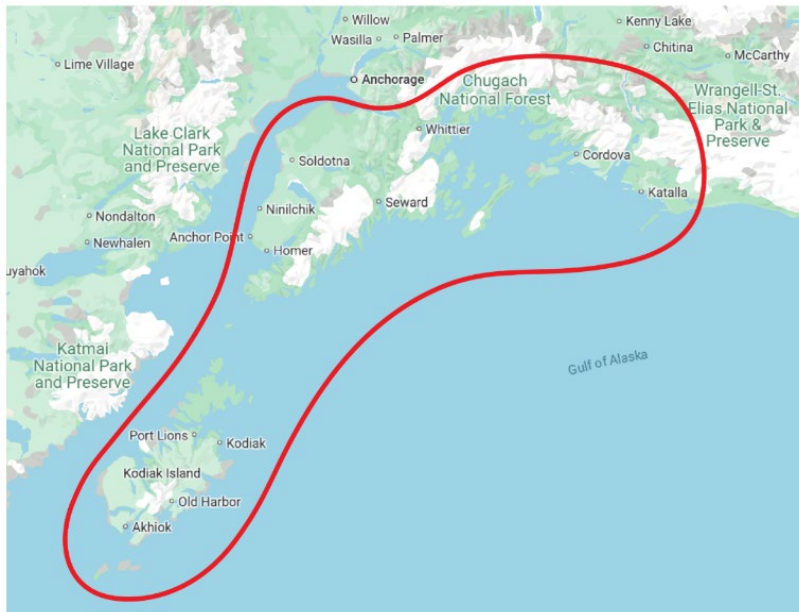
- United States Forest Service – Chugach National Forest
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service – Kenai Fjords National Park
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service – Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- [Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak](#)
- [Coast Guard Base Kodiak](#)
- US Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Valdez

Other

- [Cook Inlet Regional Citizens' Advisory Council](#)
- [Alaska Aerospace Corporation](#)
- [KANA CEDS committee representatives](#)

Geographic Location

This map shows the general area where the primary audience is located.



4 Key Messages Per Specific Audience

Key Messages	Primary Audience <i>People aged 18+ years who live and/or work in the EVOS area</i>	Secondary Audiences <i>PWSRCAC Member Entities and Potential Partners</i>
What do you want the audience to know ?	How to find the peer listener manual or learn more information about active listening.	How to share the manual with their communities.
What do you want the audience to feel - what perception do you want to create?	Everyone can learn skills that will be useful in helping and supporting their community in times of need.	Building social supports and learning peer listening skills is an important step in preparing communities to be resilient in the face of technological disasters.
What do you want them to do ?	Read the manual, learn and practice active listening skills.	Support the project and share the manual with their communities.

5 Products

Products in development

Agnew::Beck developed:

- Audiobook of the manual available for download or listening (MP3).
- “Peer Listening Moments”: series of 3-minute audio segments that are motivational and/or instructional in nature. They include information from the manual and some audio clips and quotes from interviews on Project Jukebox. For radio and online platforms.
- Toolkit of products that partners can use to share information in their communities:
 - Short article for e-newsletters, websites to promote the manual
 - Social media content (e.g., communication tips from the manual)
 - Consolidated, one-page version of the manual (two-sided)
 - Rack card with QR code directing to webpage/resources for meetings or events
 - One-page manual or the rack card can be used on bulletin boards (grocery store, etc.)
- All native files will be shared with PWSRCAC once finalized. Print files were developed in Adobe Illustrator and raw audio files were edited in Audacity.

PWSRCAC to develop:

- Print copy of the manual to distribute (in booklet form)
- Landing webpage update for the manual (as needed)
- E-pub version of the manual

Potential future products to develop

This list includes products that could be developed in future phases, along with rough time estimates for product creation to inform future cost estimates.

- E-book or other accessible digital document [40 hours]
- Translation of the manual into languages other than English [50 hours]
- Newspaper opinion editorial or feature [15 hours]
- Self-directed presentation/learning tool (e.g., prezzi) [60 hours]
- Recorded webinar training [100+ hours]
- Video tutorial [100+ hours]
- Podcast: series of 4 or 8 episodes, 15-minutes or longer episodes, for radio and online [100+ hours]
- A Peer Listener Video

6 Products: Details and Development

Select products should be posted prior to distributing other products. For this plan, the audio version of the manual and the main webpage should be posted or updated **prior** to distributing social media content, print copies of the booklet, or the toolkit of materials, since all these materials direct to the webpage.

PWSRCAC would be responsible for the coordination and cost of printing physical materials and for hosting digital materials.

Product	Who (development)	Due date (development)	Due date (publication/ distribution)	Details and Notes Format (digital, print, radio, etc.) size/dimensions, quantity
Audiobook of manual	Agnew::Beck	April 3, 2025	June 2025	MP3 for digital access; potential additional formats
Audio segments "Peer Listener Moments"	Agnew::Beck	April 3, 2025	Summer 2025	MP3 for digital access on website and other audio platforms. WAV for radio publication (radio station KCHU requested a pilot episode for quality screening). Files should be 2:59 or 3:00 minutes to play between programs on radio. Quantity: (3-5) 3-minute segments <i>Note: Radio station has enthusiasm for emergency management and community resiliency content.</i>
Social media content	Agnew::Beck	April 3, 2025	Summer 2025	Digital, 1080x1080 Quantity: 3 carousel posts
Toolkit of products	Agnew::Beck, PWSRCAC	April 3, 2025	Summer 2025	Short article: digital distribution One-page manual: digital and print, 8.5"x11" Rack card: print, 4"x9", quantity: ____ *Can be housed on PWSRCAC website as a link to a folder (e.g., on Google Drive) or other downloadable formats.
Print copies of the manual (booklet)	PWSRCAC	June 2025	Summer 2025	Print, 8.5"x11", quantity: ____ Create new cover. Format for booklet printing. Staple saddle stitch for binding.
Webpage	PWSRCAC	June 2025	June 2025	Digital. PWSRCAC website. Upload toolkit files that can be downloaded. Embed MP3 audio files from SoundCloud or Spotify, or link to files on YouTube Music, Dropbox, etc.

7 Distribution

Council staff will be responsible for contacting and interfacing with partners to distribute the toolkit; coordinating with relevant organizations for media buys, printing, uploading, or otherwise distributing the manual; attending or coordinating outreach events.

Distribution Channels

Below is an initial list of distribution channels that may be utilized in the scope of this project, though not all will be used. Additional details can be added as needed (e.g. specific events).

Press	Online	Print	Internal Communications	In-Person
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSAs • Radio • Newspaper • Media channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites • E-newsletter • Social media • Audio platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyers (one-page manual or rack card) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Emails • Newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling centers • Libraries • Festivals • Conferences • Other events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCHU (Public radio PWS) • KVAK (Valdez) • Cordova Times • KLAM & KCDV (Cordova) • Kodiak Daily Mirror <p>Kodiak Public Broadcasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KMXI 100.1 FM (HD) • KODK 90.7 FM <p>Kodiak Island Broadcasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KVOK Commercial 98.7 FM • HOT 101.1 FM (HD signals) <p>Turquoise Broadcasting – <i>Homer stations on translators in the Kodiak community</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPEN 102.7 FM • KBAY 107.9 FM • KWWV 104.9 FM • KGTL 620AM <p>Homer Public Radio – <i>Available to fishermen on north side of Afognak island</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KBBI 890AM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWSRCAC and partner websites, social media • Recommend hosting audio products on Spotify, YouTube Music, and possibly Apple Podcasts (all free to host). Or, can pay monthly fee for a platform that hosts and distributes for you (Podbean, Lisbyn, Soundcloud) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery store (bulletin boards) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make announcement, share materials and toolkit with partner entities at meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copper Mountain Festival • Valdez Gold Rush Days • Cordova Iceworm Festival • Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival • Cordova 4th of July • Copper River Salmon Jam • Cordova Fungus Festival • Eyak Sobriety Celebration • Kodiak Crab Fest • Islander Book Shop

Timeline

Distribution can be completed in phases during summer 2025 through fall 2025 (the final timeline would be dependent on staff capacity and how quickly PWSRCAC would like to distribute materials). Once all materials have received Board approval:

- Phase 1 can begin with posting all materials to the PWSRCAC website, printing any physical materials, uploading audio products to hosting platforms, and planning for attendance at in-person events throughout 2025-2026.
- Phase 2 would include toolkit distribution to member entities with a request that they share and distribute the manual within their own networks.
- Phase 3 would include social media outreach, coordinating with radio stations for distribution of audio segments, and outreach to potential partners in order to reach more audiences.

8 Evaluation

How will you know if you have succeeded and met your objectives? How are you going to evaluate your success? What performance indicators and evaluation measures will you use?

External

- Have you achieved your objectives (e.g., create awareness, etc.)?
- What was the reach of distribution?
 - How many toolkits were distributed?
 - Did you reach the right audience?
 - Do people feel more prepared to support their community in times of crisis?
- Did you use the right tools?

Internal

- Did you reach the right people within the organization?
- Did they understand what the message was - did they do what needed to be done?
- Did you use the right tools?

Web and Social Media Metrics

- Number of manual or toolkit downloads from website
- Number of page views where manual is housed (can be tracked with site analytics – check stats before posting new materials, then check at regular intervals throughout distribution to track usage)
- Media reach for Facebook or other social channels
- Media engagement: likes, shares, follows, click throughs
- Number of listens or ratings for audio products (can track on hosting platforms)
- Requests for information

Print Materials

- Number of print materials distributed (manual, one-page manual, and rack card)

9 Appendix

Demographic Data

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, 2023.

Total Population	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
79,685	6,964	12,878	59,843

Source: Table S0601

Gender (total population)	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Men	54%	54%	52%
Women	46%	46%	48%

Source: Table S0601

Ages	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Under 18 years	22%	24%	22%
18 years and over	78%	76%	78%
18 to 64	65%	64%	59%
65 years and over	13%	13%	19%

Source: Table S0601

Race	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
White	79.1%	50.9%	79.1%
Black or African American	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6.4%	11.4%	6.4%
Asian	1.8%	22.1%	1.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Some other race	1.7%	1.0%	1.7%
Two or more races	10.1%	14.0%	10.1%
Additional Race Characteristics			
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	5.2%	8.2%	4.3%

Source: Table S0601

Languages in households	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
English only	2,199	3,323	21,672
Other language in home	480	1,285	2,126
Tagalog	91	703	254
Limited English	28	312	38

Source: Table B16002

Industry by Occupation	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
% of Population Employed 16 years+	50%	51%	43%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21%	25%	9%
Public administration	13%	11%	10%
Manufacturing	6%	17%	5%
Retail trade	9%	10%	1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	10%	7%	10%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7%	7%	6%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11%	6%	1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	6%	7%	3%
Other services, except public administration	6%	4%	6%
Construction	6%	3%	27%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	3%	1%	8%
Information	3%	1%	5%
Wholesale trade	0%	1%	9%

Source: Table S2405

Bachelor's Degrees Reported	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
% of Population with a Bachelor's Degree	23%	20%	23%
Science and Engineering	33%	39%	39%
Science and Engineering Related Fields	15%	13%	10%
Business	12%	13%	11%
Education	8%	10%	10%
Arts, Humanities, and Other	31%	25%	25%

Source: Table B15012

Access

Disability	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Hearing	7.2%	3.1%	6.5%
Vision	3.2%	1.0%	3.1%
Cognitive	6.7%	3.8%	6.0%
Ambulatory	6.0%	3.6%	6.6%
Self-Care	2.1%	1.9%	2.3%
Independent Living	2.6%	2.9%	5.5%

Source: Table S1810

Connectivity	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
Has a device	98%	97%	94%
Desktop/laptop	88%	83%	79%
Smartphone	94%	94%	89%
Tablet	73%	74%	57%
Internet subscription	94%	92%	87%
High speed, non-cellular	82%	70%	53%
Cellular data plan	85%	87%	78%
No internet	6%	8%	13%

Source: Table S2801

Time of Departure for Commute	Chugach Census Area (PWS)	Kodiak Island Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough
7:00 to 7:29 a.m.	5%	18%	13%
7:30 to 7:59 a.m.	28%	19%	18%
8:00 to 8:29 a.m.	19%	9%	13%
8:30 to 8:59 a.m.	9%	5%	7%
9:00 to 9:59 a.m.	7%	7%	9%

Source: Table B08011

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.



Resilient Communities Start with Good Listeners

Be prepared to help your community after a disaster. Learn to be a better listener with the Peer Listener Training Manual so you can support your friends, family, and neighbors through the healing process.

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.

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.*

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.
- How individuals can build better listening skills and provide support for their neighbors.
- Where to find additional help when needed.

Find the Peer Listener Training Manual developed by the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council here: **www.pwsrcac.org/peer-listening**

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 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.

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 Respect and try to understand emotions.
- 4 Recognize the additional stress and unique needs of disaster survivors.
- 5 Learn communication skills.
- 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



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.
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"Knowing we are not alone gives us courage."

Responses and 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...

Why?

✗ "I know what you mean."

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

✗ "Everything will be alright" or "It's God's Plan."¹

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

✗ "You should..."

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

✗ "Calm down"

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.

✗ "What were you thinking?" or "Why would you do that?"

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

¹Cherry, K. (2023 May 15). Toxic Positivity – Why it's harmful and what to say instead. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-toxic-positivity-5093958> and Cleveland Clinic. (2021 April 15). Why 'Good Vibes Only' isn't always a good thing. Health essentials. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/why-good-vibes-only-isnt-always-a-good-thing/>

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 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.

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 Respect and try to understand emotions.
- 4 Recognize the additional stress and unique needs of disaster survivors.
- 5 Learn communication skills.
- 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



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.
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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.



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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www.tinyurl.com/Peer-Listening-Skills

**Flip to learn
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Visit www.pwsrcac.org for more free resources

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PWSRCAC Peer Listener Training Manual Distribution and Outreach Materials

The following materials have been created by Agnew::Beck Consulting, Inc. for PWSRCAC Contract #6560.25.01

1. Peer Listener Manual Distribution Plan
2. Peer Listener Manual Article
3. Peer Listener Manual One-Page Flyer (two options)
4. Peer Listener Manual Rack Card (two options)
5. Peer Listener Manual Social Media Posts
6. Peer Listener Manual Audio Training (audio file)
7. Peer Listener Moments (five options, audio files)

Audio files may be accessed at the following link: [Audio Files](#)