



PEER LEADERSHIP PAPERS



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(i)

You have been chosen to become a **Peer Leader**.

Peer Leadership calls for a particular kind of leadership, a leadership that does not involve controlling others' thoughts or actions, solving other people's problems, or making decisions for them.

Peer Leaders work to engage others, identify and build consensus, help others solve problems, identify goals, and make decisions – ***essentially Peer Leadership is the act of leading others to participate more fully in their own lives and the life of their community.***

The two styles of leadership may be contrasted as follows:

Controlling Leader

Leader responsible for decision making and setting goals

Tell

Direct

Teach

Delegate

Solve problems

Use authority to get things done

Peer Leader

Group members and Peer Leader share responsibility for decision making and goal setting

Listen

Ask questions

Coach

Inform

Build consensus

Empower others

When you practice **Peer Leadership** in the classroom and school community the effects of your leadership will not often be immediately seen because you are encouraging the development of your peers' social and emotional competency. But this social development is slowly taking place out of the act of your being there because you are demonstrating, by example, the beginnings of respectful relationships.

(ii)

In the practice of **Peer Leadership empowerment** and **recognition** are both your main tools and goals.

Empowerment in **Peer Leadership** means helping another person move from relative weakness to relative strength within themselves – and to do this a person must feel they are in a safe and caring environment,.

Recognition in **Peer Leadership** is the capacity to recognize the validity of another person as a person and their viewpoints even when you are in disagreement with those viewpoints.

We call our **Peer Leadership** program **Creating Communities We Want** because communities are built by diverse Peer Leaders working one person at a time, by individuals like yourself that realize that life is more than just what happens to you (and how you react), but is the result of many different individuals working alone and together to create the lives and communities they care about.

Thus, for **Peer Leaders**, the social environment of our schools' classrooms, hallways and other public spaces become our common community where we are all learning together to develop the social and emotional skills that will help us to:

- **Identify** what we care about
- **Diagnose** what the issues are that most affect us
- And **create strategies** to address those challenges that threaten our individual and community well being.

(iii)

Tips in presenting workshops:

The value of rehearsal

No matter whether a few words or a long speech, rehearsing what you're going to say will always result in a better presentation. Practice your delivery, choosing several focus points in an 'imaginary' audience using substitutes like a chair, window, table, etc. Practicing beforehand builds confidence and better prepares you to handle unforeseen interruptions, etc.

Increase your presence

Be more animated when you give a presentation. Let your 'audience' see your honest feelings, honest interest in others, and honest efforts to make interpersonal connections in public.

Building your confidence

The best way to build your confidence for presenting in public is to give presentations and learn from them. But to get you started in confidence building from scratch, here are two techniques that will help you:

Stay calm: Staying calm, instead of anxious or tense, in front of an audience helps you feel better about your self and communicates to your audience as confidence. To get calm and stay calm take five deep breathes before you begin a presentation concentrating solely on the air going in and out of your lungs as you breathe.

Be certain: Decide exactly what you want to say and say it as clearly and animatedly as you can. Appearing to be unsure by overly pausing, etc. can give the audience the impression of weakness in your presentation.

Managing stress, anxiety and fear

Stress, anxiety and the fear you may feel before making a presentation are not your enemies. For most people it would be unnatural if they did not experience these feelings.

Learning to manage stress, anxiety and fear begins in the following ways:

Don't fear fear The problem is not that you feel stressed, anxious or afraid but rather that you're worried about experiencing those feelings. Take time to try and identify the source of your fear. Did you once make a poor presentation when younger? Are you afraid your content is insufficient? Are you concerned how you will appear?

Channel the fear from source to resolution Decide that you are older now and have learned from previous mistakes. Make sure your notes on the subject of your presentation are as comprehensive as possible. Look in the mirror and decide you do look the best you possible can. In other words, don't persist in your fear feelings but rather address them with concrete resolutions.

Practice simple stress management such as deep breathing, visualization, etc.

Presentation phobias:

Fear of failure The opportunity to do something new, challenging, and exciting often causes one to feel a fear of failure. Think back on past successes in other challenging situations and try to carry that memory and good feeling with you into the presentation.

Fear of humiliation No one likes any experience that deflates their fragile self-esteem. If you knew for certain that this was going to happen at your presentation you'd be crazy to make the presentation. But the secret is that you don't know that this will happen, you're just afraid it will happen. Consequently, focus your attention on what is more likely to happen and then rehearse sufficiently to feel confident.

Fear of attention Most people would rather watch than be watched, and experience "stage fright" when called upon to present. The best way to overcome this fear is to build up your presentation skills in small stages. Take, or create opportunities to speak in public, or to be the temporary centre of attention. That way you will eventually become used to the feeling of being "centre stage".

All presentation phobias involve imagining dire consequences that are far beyond what a reasonable person would expect to occur. The remedy is to focus on more likely scenarios of what might happen during your presentation, and take precautions against them.

Rules for Workshops:

1. Participants have the right to pass on an exercise.
2. What is said in the classroom stays in the classroom. While reports of the workshop are being made public, using anecdotes for the workshop to hurt or humiliate participants through gossip, etc. is to be avoided.
3. If any participants' comments entail threats to themselves or to others, you are obliged to report their comments to a teacher or administrator in the school.
4. Participants have the right to be heard. Classroom management can potentially be a challenge, given the nature of the workshop. However, there are many techniques for keeping things quiet without having to resort to "SHUT UP!" Think of some of the ways your teachers get everyone's attention, both in high school and elementary school. Hands in the air until everyone is quiet; go silent and do not proceed with the workshop until you have everyone's attention; walk up close to the ones that are talking and wait for them to stop; use a rhyme from elementary school: "Mouths closed, eyes on me, 1,2,3." What other suggestions are generated by your leadership group?