BRIDGING THE GAP PEER KIT

FOR AGENCIES EMPLOYING YOUNG ADULTS IN PEER ROLES

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For Agencies Employing Young Adults in Peer Roles

This kit provides resources, processes and practices to support young people in peer roles working in community mental health settings.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Bridging the Gap?
- Glossary of Terms 4
- What is Bridging the Gap? 5
- BTG Peer Support & Mentoring Model 6
  - Team Structure
  - Model for Thriving Young Adult Peer Support Providers 7

Young Adult Peer Supervision Practice
- Resources for Supervisors of Young Adult Peer Support Providers 8
- BTG Supervision Practice Philosophy
- Supervision Session Template 10

Peer 8-Week Onboarding Plan 11
- Weeks 1-4 12
- Weeks 5-8 16

Key Meetings & In-Meeting Practices 19

Daily Learning Plan 20

Observation & Reflection Sheet 21

Getting Started with 1:1s 22
What do we know about engagement? 23

Goal Setting Worksheet 25

Agenda Setting Chart 27

Ongoing Professional Development Resources 28

Appendices 29

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bridging the Gap (BTG): Described in detail on the next page.

Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS): Girls Educational and Mentoring Services empowers girls and young women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and domestic trafficking with a foundation and focus on survivor leadership. GEMS was a community partner in BTG development.

Martha K. Selig Educational Institute (MKSEI): is the training and organizational development center of The Jewish Board, one of the nation's leading behavioral health and social service agencies.

Member: The BTG team chose the term "member" to describe youth and young adult clients of The Jewish Board who elected to participate in BTG services, in order to emphasize their active choice to participate in voluntary services and to welcome them into our community.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is administered by SAMHSA and includes currently and formerly funded centers, individuals, universities and community-based programs providing child trauma treatment.

Peer: In this guide, the word "peer" is often used interchangeably with YDC and YDS (defined below).

Youth Development Coach (YDC): The Youth Development Coach role was developed after recognizing a need for a "Senior Peer" role and to create a career path for experienced Youth Development Specialists. The YDC supplements supervision provided by the BTG Coordinator by providing coaching and support to YDS team members.

Youth Development Specialist (YDS): The YDS is a Near-age Peer Support Provider. Initially, peer providers had the job title *Peer Support Specialist*, but this was changed to *Youth Development Specialist* to: (1) remove the stigmatizing word "peer," which in this context meant possessing a mental health diagnosis and/or complex trauma history, as well as experience in navigating mental health systems and treatment, and (2) more fully describe the purpose and focus of their work.

WHAT IS BRIDGING THE GAP?

Bridging the Gap (BTG) engages adolescent and transition-aged youth (TAY), and provides specialized support for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ+) youth at risk of homelessness. BTG was developed and implemented at The Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services, a large community mental health and social services provider in the State of New York.

Youth and families have described their experiences with the mental health service system as disconnected, disempowering and challenging—particularly in the areas of coordinating care and navigating the transition from child to adult services. BTG was created to address these challenges, and those specific to young people aging out of foster care to support their transitions to living in the community from years of living in institutions and experiencing trauma related to commercial sexual exploitation and identity-based stigma.

BTG "bridges gaps" in care within and across the continuum of TAY programming at the Jewish Board and within several New York communities. Primarily composed of young adult Peer Support Specialists, the BTG Team developed a service and treatment continuum that reached across our residential treatment programs into community and outpatient settings to provide trauma-informed, youth-centered support and coaching to engage and empower youth to pursue their treatment and broader life goals.

Youth who participated in BTG ranged from ages 13-25 and primarily resided in or were referred from New York City. Participants were engaged in both child residential settings and outpatient clinics located in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Westchester County. BTG developed a collaborative network of Jewish Board programs, including "Partner Programs" with highly engaged staff and leadership who hosted onsite BTG services, and "Affiliate Programs" who benefited from training initiatives, referrals for individual services and indirect services.

Over the 5-year lifespan of the project, BTG developed a series of program practices and tools while cultivating a string youth and peer development team. The team worked actively and collaboratively toward. This team worked actively toward professional growth and development, while increasing capacity to effectively support and service a community of over 450 adolescents and young adults.

BTG PEER SUPPORT & MENTORING MODEL

BTG created a peer service delivery model to empower TAY to engage more fully in community mental health services, including a full menu of peer mentorship services. This model was guided by youth input and developed collaboratively with BTG team members and partner staff. Our approach is based on the philosophy **"nothing about us, without us,"** and best practices recommended by our local and national partners: GEMS, Thresholds, and Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center.

The BTG Model evolved to include the following philosophies & practices:

- TAY-driven referral & intake process with a focus on transparent informed consent processes, with opportunities to confidentially share info about sexual orientation, gender & other identities
- TAY (not providers or caregivers) select services from a menu of BTG offerings: 1:1 mentorship, Open Space (peer-led) groups, LGBTQ+ Allies Support Groups, Job Readiness Workshops, Healthy Relationships/CSEC Prevention Groups, Youth Advisory Groups, & Special Events.
- TAY participation is voluntary & may be ended by the young person at any time.
- Incentivized outreach, leadership, & internship opportunities for TAY participants.
- TAY-centered approach to program partnership & the selection of onsite services including outreach events, short-term youth advisory groups, & youth participatory outreach plans.

TEAM STRUCTURE

BTG Coordinator: This senior peer role was created at the launch of the BTG project, laying the foundation for a unique team structure that was fully peer-run.

Youth Development Coach (YDC): The Coach role was developed over the course of the project, creating a career growth opportunity for Peer Youth Development Specialists.

Youth Development Specialist (YDS): The first rung on the peer role "ladder," the YDS provides direct engagement and support services to program members and families. Having lived/living experiences with overcoming childhood adversities is a requirement for the YDS role.

MODEL FOR THRIVING YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPPORT PROVIDERS

BTG developed a 4 component "*on-the-job peer development model*" for improving YDS skills and strategies for supporting youth & families and developing ways to integrate YDS lived and living experiences into their work, described below:

(1) Individual Supervision—1 Hour/Week
Facilitated by Program Coordinator/Supervisor

Primary goal is to build and maintain trusting relationships between peers and supervisors. Includes strategies to:

- Empower YDS to bring authentic selves to their work while caring for selves
- Identify & monitor YDS progress toward individual & program goals/tasks
- Ensure YDS have necessary support, tools and information to work effectively

(2) Group Supervision—1 Hour/Biweekly
Facilitated by Program Coordinator/Supervisor

Created to supplement individual supervision and promote shared learning & planning.

- Review program calendar and upcoming services
- Create and review group agendas
- Support data collection and documentation practices
- Discuss and practice strategic sharing
- Ensure staff receives support and resources to complete job responsibilities

(3) Peers-4-Peers Group—1.5 Hours/Monthly
Facilitated by Youth Development Coach/Senior Peer Role

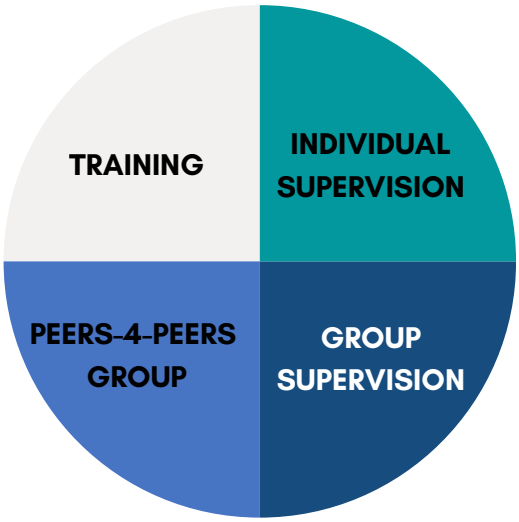
A space for peer staff to provide mutual support around work and recovery-related needs.

- Peers will drive the agenda, identify priority topics for discussion
- Administrators and other guests participate at the request of Peers
- Peers identify priority areas for professional growth and development and discussion

(4) Training—8 hours/week for first 2 months, then 8 hours/month, Facilitated by Director

Monthly training series focused on building agency/program knowledge, role understanding and skills for peer support practice.

- Agency & BTG orientation
- Developing your professional identity
- Engaging youth 1:1
- Safety & confidentiality
- Mentorship from start to finish
- Documentation



YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPERVISION PRACTICE

Young Adult Peer Supervision Resources

We recommend that anyone supervising young adult peers review following resources which provide information and insights on organizational context:

- **Effectively Employing Young Adult Peer Providers: A Toolkit** (Delman & Klodnick, 2017)
- **A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors** (Klodnick, 2019)
- **Core Elements of Young Adult Peer Mentoring Training Overview** (Transitions ACR, 2017)
- **Effective Clinical Supervision for Young Adult Peer Mentors, Part 1** (Klodnick, 2018)
- **Effective Clinical Supervision for Young Adult Peer Mentors, Part 2** (Klodnick, 2018)
- **Reflective Supervision** (Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership, 2020)

Supervision Practice Philosophy

"Supervision" at BTG supports the process of personal, professional, social and relational development. Supervisors and staff create goals together by assessing strengths as well as opportunities for growth and skill development. Supervisors cultivate strong working alliances rooted in trust, and to strive for supervision meetings to be spaces where staff are empowered to communicate about, advocate for and reflect on work experiences. Conversations are rooted in mutual curiosity, discovery, and increased understanding.

Supervisors explore staff members' experiences and encourage ongoing reflection before decision making. When a peer struggles on the job, supervisors help them identify areas where changes need to be made in order to be successful. Supervisors help staff connect with other peer providers to foster validation, empathy and learning.

BTG views supervision as a co-learning, joint discovery process. Supervisors share their own lessons and struggles with navigating the transition to adulthood and work situations. This mutuality is important because it mirrors the individual relationships staff create with their members. Together, supervisors and peers explore perspectives of an identified issue or challenge. Then, they brainstorm solutions and choose an action plan. In the next meeting, they reflect on what it was like to implement this plan and the outcome. Supervisors encourage staff to reflect on and consider potential solutions prior to a supervision meeting.

Supervisors also help staff members address microaggressions experienced on the job by educating and intervening when necessary. When staff experience challenges with relational work, supervisors support them by reflecting, providing organizational context, promoting wellness and promoting resiliency on the job. Supervision is most effective when supervisors are practicing self-care and reflecting on their own growth in tandem with the growth of their staff.

YOUNG ADULT PEER SUPERVISION PRACTICE

BTG Supervision Setting & Frequency

Supervision meetings occur once a week for an hour in a private space. Supervision should not be cancelled unless absolutely necessary and must be rescheduled when needed. Meetings will focus on developmental and administrative support, as both are needed for peers to thrive in their roles.

BTG Supervision Meeting Agenda & Flow

The BTG Director, Program Coordinator, YDC and YDSs co-created the weekly supervision agenda structure for supervision meetings to be holistic and rooted in learning. ***See BTG's Supervision Template on the next page.*** Prior to meeting each week, the supervisor and peer develop agenda content together. The day before scheduled supervision, a peer sends agenda items to their supervisor, who then reviews and adds to the agenda, which includes:

- **Administrative Items:** Basic performance of job duties; professionalism; project updates; accommodations; documentation; assigned task follow-up; required trainings

- **Development Items:** Professional goal and skill development; learning and sharing knowledge with team and members; relationships with colleagues; any challenges on the job (or personal life) that are impacting performance; wellness planning, career development, resource sharing.

- **Topics that emerge during the meeting:** These are also included in supervision notes.

The meeting starts with a general, informal check-in. The peer shares something positive that happened at work in the past week before moving on to administrative and development items. The supervisor uses reflective, processes-oriented questions throughout the meeting (e.g., W*hat's this experience like for you? What are you learning? Why do you think that is happening?)*

The peer takes brief minutes, listing next steps for both supervisor and peer. Peers should leave supervision feeling heard, with an understanding of next steps and how their supervisor will support their work. Supervision notes should be reviewed together quarterly to reflect on growth and identify areas of opportunity for additional coaching/training.

Performance Evaluations

Each peer develops 2-3 personal **SMART** goals for the year which are reviewed quarterly in supervision. Staff and supervisors develop and revise plans to achieve these goals together.

Support beyond Supervision Meetings

In addition to supervision meetings, supervisors support peer staff through:

- Daily email and text-based communication to provide information and reminders.
- Coaching on tools to manage schedules and organize projects.
- Sharing calendars so staff are aware of what others are doing and where support is needed.
- Sharing resources and development opportunities, including trainings.
- Encouraging/facilitating relationship development within the team opportunities for connection with other peer support professionals.

SUPERVISION SESSION TEMPLATE

What has gone well this week?

Peer Perspective:

Supervisor Perspective:

Anything on-the-job that the Peer needs guidance and/or consultation?

Peer Perspective:

Supervisor Perspective:

Tasks/Discussion to follow-up from last supervision session?

Peer Perspective:

Supervisor Perspective:

Any administrative tasks that need addressing?

Peer Perspective:

Supervisor Perspective:

Progress on Personal Development Goals

Goal:

Reflect on goal progress...

Peer Perspective:

Supervisor Perspective:

What is our to-do list? What are we responsible for until we meet next?

What is the Peer responsible for?

What is the Supervisor responsible for?

PEER 8-WEEK ONBOARDING PLAN

Key learning objectives during the first 8 weeks in new role include:

- Orientation to the program and agency including mission, culture, policies & practices
- Support development of a professional identity and strategic use of self-skills
- Preparation to begin engaging youth effectively
- Promoting self-awareness and wellness for staff, members and partners

Supervisors hold the primary responsibility for training and orienting new peers. Supervisors hold daily check-ins using the **Daily Learning Plan (see pg. 22)** during the first 2-4 weeks of employment.

The full team supports onboarding and educating their new colleague through a mix of meetings and trainings. Activities are designed to encourage staff to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth in a supportive environment. Staff strategically share their own experiences to foster working alliances and demonstrate role modeling.

During the first 4 weeks on the job, staff complete agency orientation trainings as well as self-paced, online trainings. Training and learning activities are informed by **A Guide to Supervising and Developing Young Adult Peer Mentors** and are linked to **Young Adult Peer Mentor Peer (YAPM) Profile Practice Domains**.

These Profile Practice Domains were created in the state of Massachusetts to support coaching young people in peer roles. Each domain listed below is linked to the CBH Knowledge Center's website where practice profiles, online training and professional development activities are available.

1. **Practicing Cultural Responsiveness**
2. **Building Relationships & Collaboration**
3. **Supporting Youth Adult Vision & Goals**
4. **Role Modeling**
5. **Promoting Self-Care**
6. **Demonstrating Safe, Professional & Ethical Behavior**

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 1-4

The Basics of Being an Employee at Your Agency

- **Attend New Staff Orientation**
- **Overview of agency intranet page**
- **Complete required online trainings/e-learnings**

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives

It's critical to connect those starting in peer roles to resources promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)—such as advocacy groups and initiatives focused on confronting structural racism, ableism, LGBTQ+ rights and other relevant issues that intersect with our work. Such initiatives may exist within and/or outside of your agency. For example, many agencies have staff-run boards or committees dedicated to improving DEI. Inclusion of peers and peer staff is critical to the success of these initiatives.

Agency Peer Support Services

- Peers 4 Peers (A peer-facilitated reflective supervision group for individuals in peer roles) or other agency Peer group/collaborative.
- Peer In-service Training with MKSEI training institute
- Consultation and support from former and current peer providers

Payroll

- Payment schedule, timesheets submission and payroll information

Setting-up Tech for Effective Communication

- Setup agency provided technology, network access and review technology use policies, etc.

Being an Effective Team Member

Get Oriented

- Review program services, website, organizational chart, key meetings and practices
- Discuss & Reflect:
  - *What was it like to hear about our program and the range of work we do?*
  - *What questions do you have about our team?*

YDS/C Roles & How We Work Together

- Review job descriptions and provide examples of what job duties looks like in the real world
- Describe how the team works together
- Describe how we partner with other programs and departments

Review Job Expectation Basics

- Daily and weekly hours and scheduling
- Travel protocols
- Managing your time and schedule
- Guidance for Attendance and Making Schedule Accommodations

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 1-4

Bringing Your Best Self to Work, Managing Safety & On-the-Job Risks

- Define & Discuss "professionalism" : what does it mean to be a "professional," and still a peer?
- How to dress and act, what to say and not to say

Review Confidentiality & Privacy

- *What does confidentiality mean in my new role?*
- *What is the key information that they need to bring to a supervisor immediately?*
- Review how HIPAA does not protect peers in regard to self-disclosure with members. The law does not apply equally or reciprocally to peer staff and members.
- How to respond if a member tells you to keep something secret, rules for sharing amongst a team and the importance of discussing the experience with your supervisor.
- How to handle running into a member outside of work, in the community.
- **Complete & Discuss "Processing the Ethics of Being a YA Peer Worksheet" (Appendix F.1).**

Review Agency Risk Management & Reporting

- Review risk management guidelines
- Ensure that Mandated Reporter training is completed
- Debrief guidelines and address questions

Complete Trainings:

- Strategic Use of Self
- Role Modeling
- Building Strong Working Alliances

Using Tech to Communicate, Collaborate & Access Resources

- Update and share program contact information list
- Setup email and review email guidelines; review calendar and schedule
- Familiarize yourself with agency network and how to contact the IT help desk for tech support

Supervision Philosophy & Practice—We Are an Alliance!

You will meet with your supervisor weekly for 1 hour and use a template to guide your meeting

- Review Supervision Philosophy & Practices document & discuss how supervision works:
  - Bi-weekly individual supervision
  - Bi-weekly team supervision
  - Monthly peer supervision (Peers 4 Peers)

Introducing Yourself

- Share team bios and the purpose of sharing; prepare bio and elevator speech

Get Acquainted with Spaces & Partners

- Visit program sites and meet partners
- Practice introducing yourself to partners, colleagues and members

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 1-4

Observe Meetings, Groups & Individual Sessions

Shadow YDS colleagues during activities:

- **Youth View Group:** Youth pick the topics and YD/C create group discussions and activities based on their ideas. A fun place for youth to learn and socialize.
- **Psychoeducation or Support Group:** The LGBTQIA+ Allies and Not a Number groups are delivered by multidisciplinary providers. These trauma-informed groups provide a confidential space for young people to learn and build skills.
- **1:1 Mentorship Session:** YDS/C provide one-on-one mentorship in a confidential space. Sessions are held weekly to monthly, depending on needs. Phone and text support can also be provided.
- **New Member Meet & Greet:** Opportunity to meet with members of the BTG team to learn more about the program and explore the possibility of membership.
- **Intake Assessment:** Youth are asked to share contact information, select services, create a safety plan and identify members of their support network to include in their services.

Develop an On-the-Job Wellness & Stress Management Plan

- Understand how Resiliency on the Job evolves over time as you develop personal wellness and stress management practices.
- Recognize how this work can be stressful and identify signs of when you are struggling to share with your supervisor and peers. On-the-Job Wellness is an active process that we have to make time for.
- Team members share how they build resiliency

Create Wellness Plan

- Reflect on your current health and wellness practices and commit to making time for these in your new role
- Share with your colleagues and supervisor
- Listen to team members describe their wellness plans and how they have evolved over time

Create a Stress Management Plan

- Reflect on what stress looks like for you
- What practices will you employ when stressed and for stress prevention?

Keep a Self-Awareness Journal

It's important to set aside time for reflection in our work; this will be supported in supervision and debriefs. Staff are encouraged to find ways to regularly practice individual reflection .

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 1-4

Gain Self-Awareness to Strategically Use On-the-Job

- Provide overview of cultural responsiveness—practicing awareness of our own backgrounds and personal biases and how they impact our work with others
- Complete OnTrack Maps reflective exercises
- Use supervision or 1:1 coaching sessions to promote awareness and reflection around self-esteem and respect, respect for others, and conscious communication

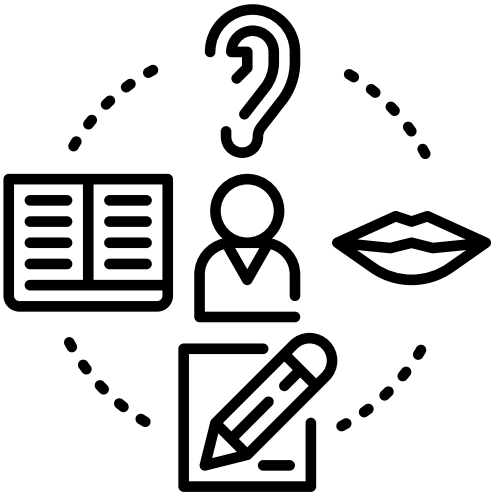
Adopt a Trauma-Informed Approach: Webinar Series on Trauma

Introduce NCTSN webinars:
These resources were designed to help providers working with trauma-impacted youth and families understand the needs of their clients and how best to support them.

- **Create a NCTSN Account** to access NCTSN Learning Center Trainings

- **Webinar: Complicating Complex Trauma: A Look at Families Who Experience Chronic Trauma**
  - Laurel Kiser discusses the effects of complex trauma on families. She discusses family exposure to trauma in the context of family life events, adverse life events, and trauma. An individual's response to trauma and the effect on family is also addressed. Family patterns stemming from intergenerational trauma exposure are also discussed. Staging and sequencing of family trauma treatment is included in the presentation.

- **Webinar: Secondary Traumatic Stress... What is it**
  - Learn about Charles Figley's definition of Secondary Traumatic Stress, outline assessing for Secondary Traumatic Stress through instruments and self-examination and discuss strategies for coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress at the supervisor and worker level.



PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 5-8

Strengthen & Expand Peer Support Skills Through Additional Trainings with Supervisor & Team:

Watch video: Youth Power! The Power of Peer. *What is youth support and why is it important?*

Build trauma-informed care skills through completing more NCTSN trauma-informed training:

- **Introduction to Motivational Interviewing**
  - Share MI webinars and invite them to complete and debrief afterwards
  - Observe another peer using MI with member
  - Practice using MI with member
  - Process experiences with your supervisor

- **Recognizing and Supporting Children at Risk for Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking:** Participants will learn key concepts about commercial sexual exploitation including risk factors and impact. Participants will leave with strategies for supporting colleagues, youth and families.

- **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention:** Course provides child care workers with the skills, knowledge and confidence to help youth in crisis and to gain control in crisis situations.

- **Working with LGBTQIA+ Youth:** Participants will learn strategies for creating inclusive, youth-centered spaces and programming, as well as skills to empower and advocate.

- **Peer In-service Training Program:** Training series Includes eight, 3-hour sessions teaching coping skills to empower culturally and trauma-informed care.

- **Learn How to Explore & Develop Goals**
  - Exploration is a key experience for our members transitioning to adulthood
  - Supervisor and team will support you in developing and pursuing your professional goals
  - Introduce & discuss the 6 YAPM Practice Domains
  - Complete YDS Peer Development Brainstorm
  - Observe and participate in a goal planning session with a member
  - Process experiences with your supervisor

- **Introduction to Strategic Sharing**
  - Sharing life experiences demonstrates resiliency while also providing validation
  - Storytelling is an art and comes with risks for staff
  - You control what is shared, how and when
  - Discuss and practice development and sharing of stories
  - Which stories are OK & which stories are never OK to share?
  - Peers discuss what they share and why

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 5-8

Relating when you feel like you can't relate...

"We've definitely been to the same shoe store,
but we're not wearing the same shoes."

Discuss what it means to be a peer: we will have things in common but there are also differences we will need to be aware of. Complete "Empathy in the Working Alliance" activity to gain insight about ways to work with alliances (Appendices, p. 35).

Become Effective at Documenting Services

Introduce documentation guide

Best practice at the end of each session is to reflect on:

- How you and the member each contributed
- What was achieved
- The plan moving forward

Complete agency electronic record system training

- Learn how to navigate the documentation system
- Practice creating notes and assessments

Intro to data collection & storage

- Introduce the methods used to enter and collect data

Begin documenting activities in relevant systems

- Apply reflection and writing skills
- Practice documentation with supervisor and peers after observing sessions

Build Confidence & Competence for Engaging Members

- Move from being an observer to an active participant
- Co-facilitate a session/group with supervisor and provide feedback
- Continue shadowing colleagues
- Begin meeting individually with young people
    - Debrief after meetings with team/supervisor
    - Connect with colleagues to create activities and document

PEER ONBOARDING WEEKS 5-8

Online Training to Build Skills & Awareness for Working with Specific Populations

- **Safe Places, Safe Spaces: Creating Safe and Welcoming Environments for Traumatized LGBTQ Youth**

LGBTQIA+ youth experience trauma at higher rates than others. Providers need to familiarize themselves with the issues facing this community to ensure these youth receive informed care.

- **Welcoming Environments for LGBTQ Consumers in Care**

In this webinar, speakers share strategies that organizations and providers can implement to improve access and responsiveness to LGBTQ+ individuals and families.

- **Improving LGBTQ Treatment Outcomes through Integration of Sexual Health**

By understanding the principles of sexual health, clinicians will uncover attitudes and taboos that are barriers for attaining sexual health knowledge among LGBTQ+ youth.

- **Responding to the Complex Issues of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Child Welfare**

This webinar provides an overview of current issues, challenges and emerging practices facing child welfare jurisdictions across the country, relating to children who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

- **Mental Health Interventions for Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth**

This webinar presents the current status of mental health assessment, intervention and prevention for commercially sexually exploited youth, and future steps for improving mental health services.

Evaluate & Revise On-the-Job Wellness & Stress Management Plan

- What have you learned so far about self-care on the job?
- Review plan with supervisor and revise based on experience
- Plan to review again and make an appointment for 1-3 months

KEY BTG MEETINGS & IN-MEETING PRACTICES

MEETING	DESCRIPTION
INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION SESSION	• Review purpose of meeting & how it will be structured • Collaboratively set agenda • Process how session went & schedule/structure moving forward • Supervision Session Guidance Form (pg. 10)
ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT MEETINGS	• Review meeting schedule • Quarterly Advisory Committee Meetings • Discuss how to be on time and prepared
SANCTUARY CHECK-IN	• Invite a team member to describe the check-in, informed by the Sanctuary model, to start every team meeting and supervision session: ◦ *How are you feeling? What is your goal for the meeting and/or day? Who will you ask for support?* • Practice with new employees

TEAM INTROS	• Team members review how we introduce ourselves and share:
	  ◦ *What attracted us to our positions and what we have learned so far in our work?*
	  ◦ *What we hope to learn together?*

PEERS 4 PEERS	• A staff member describes the purpose of the P4P group and how it was formed • Extend the invitation for new peers to join
TEAM MEETING	• Ice Breaker & re-introductions • Sanctuary Check-in • Team Topics: Staff are invited to share news, resources and experiences before moving onto other agenda items • Team reviews their schedule for the week ahead including travel & planning needs • Everyone takes their own notes
MEMBER DEBRIEF	• Weekly team meeting to review member engagement, goal progress & risk management • Provide updates about the member, family & contacts • Address/explore engagement challenges • Review high risk list and protective factors • Create plans for supporting at-risk members • Notes shared with expectation that team reviews before next member meeting

PEER DAILY LEARNING PLAN

Peer and supervisor create and review this plan at the start of each day and identify the team members who can provide support. Review the plan at the end of the day to reflect on what was learned, respond to questions and provide any clarification.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TEAM SUPPORT
MORNING CHECK-IN	• Welcome & re-introductions • Complete any necessary paperwork • Describe orientation process: purpose, daily check-ins, task planning and learning objectives	Identify team members & support needed
END OF DAY REFLECTION	• What did I learn today? • What questions do I have? • How will I start the day tomorrow?	

OBSERVATION & REFLECTION SHEET

What service are you observing or practicing?
Who are you shadowing/who is supporting you?
What is your role...

- Observer
- Practicing: doing with someone
- Practicing: taking the lead while someone observes me

BEFORE YOU OBSERVE, DISCUSS:

- What is the purpose/goal of this interaction?
- What type of preparatory work happens before the interaction?
- Are there any special considerations I am making?
- How are we going to introduce your role as the observer?
- What kind of support do you think you'll need?

NOTES/ COMMENTS WHILE OBSERVING:

AFTER YOU OBSERVE/ PRACTICE, DEBRIEF:

- What did I learn today?
- What questions do I have?
- How will I start the day tomorrow?

GETTING STARTED WITH 1:1S

Follow this guidance when you begin working 1:1 with a new member. This includes members who are new to the program as well as those who are new to you.

Before you start...

Prepare for your first session

- Learn and talk about your new member in a debriefing meeting and during supervision. Review their personal information including their preferred name, pronouns, supportive adults, risk and resiliency factors and the types of services they're interested in receiving.
- What questions do you have for this person? Is there anything you want to ask them more about? Make notes for yourself to help with following up during your first few sessions. Seek additional guidance from your supervisor if you have questions about confidentiality, risk or anything else.
- Think about what could get in the way of your member engaging in services and how you might explore that with them over time.

Pause and check in with yourself

- How are you feeling?
- Do you anticipate any challenges for this meeting?
- What would help you feel confident and prepared?

Where will you meet?

- Different spaces present different options and opportunities. It's important to consider how the location and space of any setting will be most conducive to each individual meeting.
- Virtual Connecting: Many agencies have adapted telethealth practices to virtually connect with clients. Some forms of virtual connecting include video chat, phone calls and texting.

When will you meet?

It's up to you and your members to figure out the schedule and frequency that works best. You'll receive support with schedule planning in supervision and team meetings. Some important points to consider when planning your own schedule:

- Length of sessions
- Destination, route and travel time
- Time to decompress. You shouldn't book several back-to-back meetings.
- Avoid scheduling sessions during team meetings or other obligations; don't "double book"

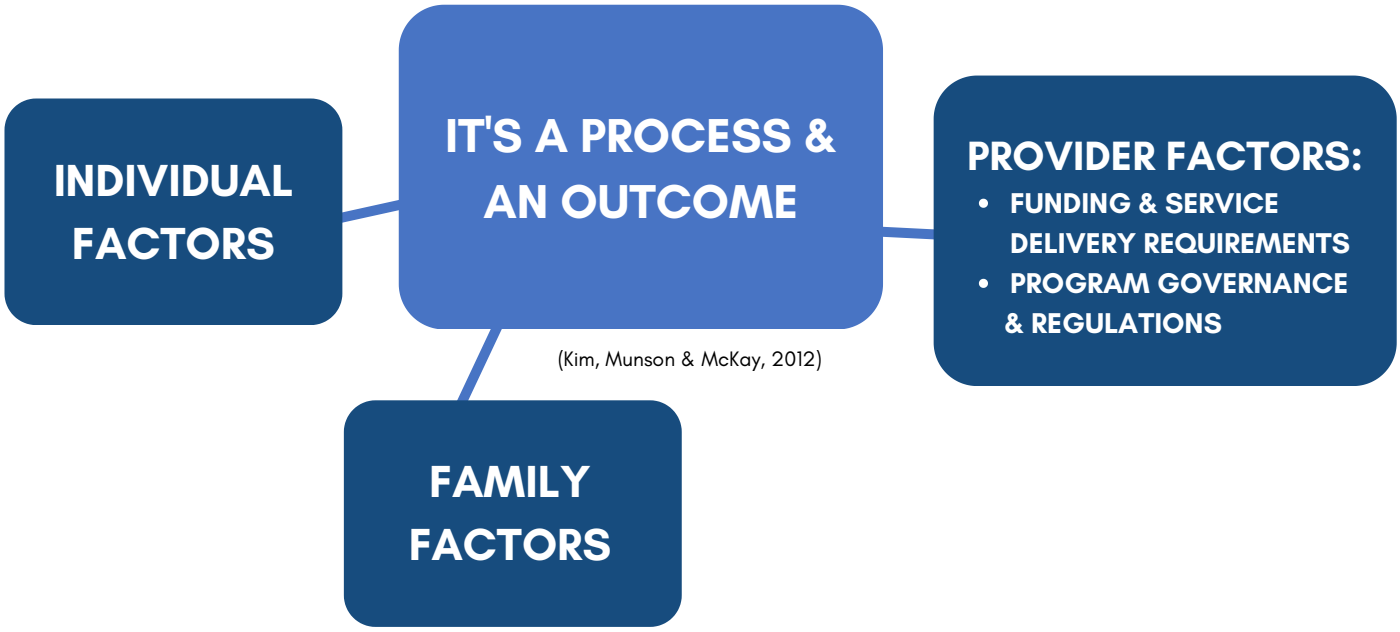
The Engagement Phase

Your goals for the first 2-4 sessions are to get to know each other, build rapport and identify your member's personal goals.

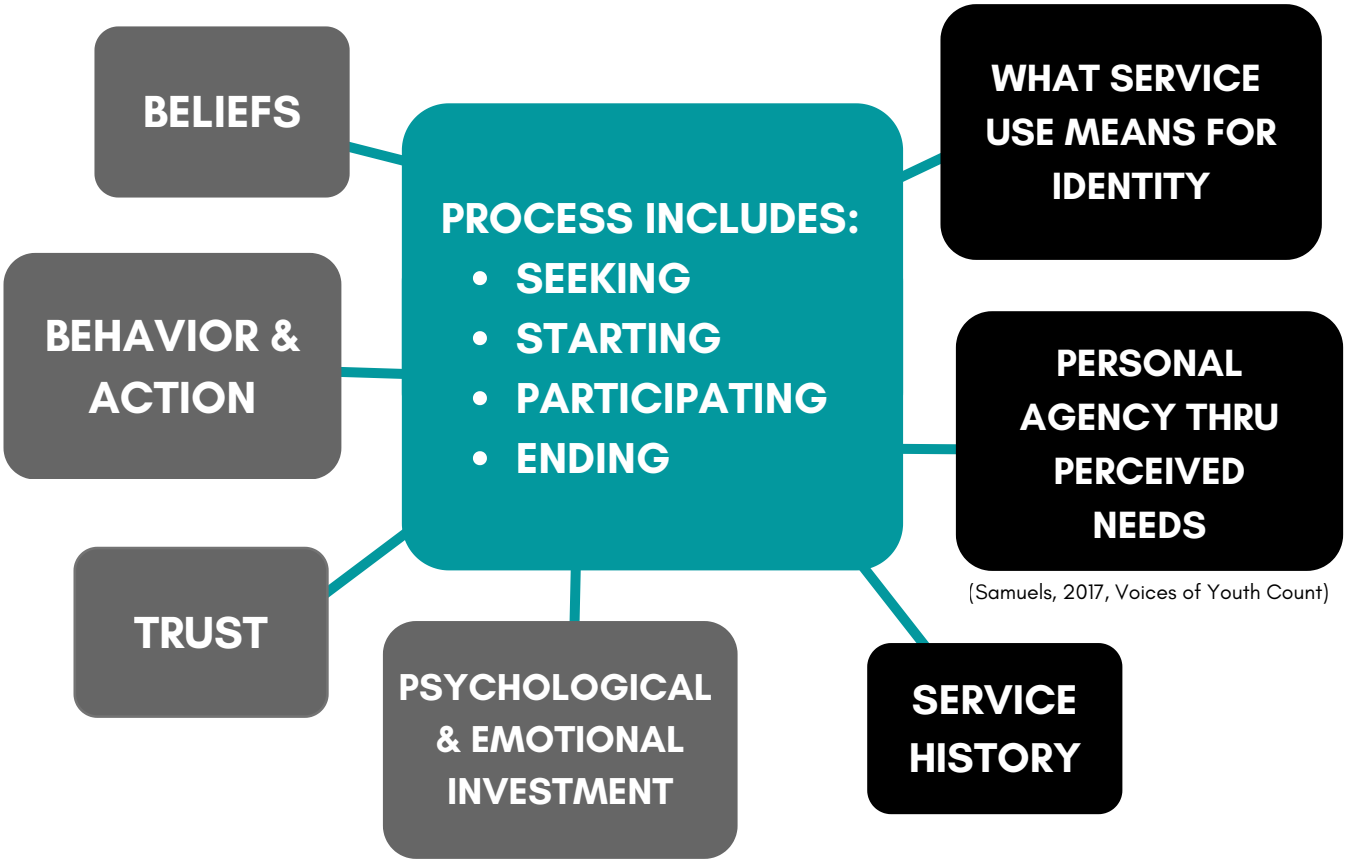
(Re) Introduce yourself

- Describe your role. Explain how you will bring your lived experience to your work together and discuss the role of disclosure.
- Describe the approach & goals for peer support

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ENGAGEMENT?



(Kim, Munson & McKay, 2012)



(Samuels, 2017, Voices of Youth Count)

(Staudt, 2007; Yatchmenoff, 2005)

GETTING STARTED WITH 1:1S

Describe approach & goals for peer support

- Discuss how your work together may differ than with providers. Talk about what peer support looks like in terms of goals, needs and interests.
- Discuss confidentiality & informed consent
- Consider things that may get in the way of them being able to meet, such as school, work, other appointments, time with friends. Sometimes participants may not be feeling physically or emotionally well, or just don't feel like meeting. Explore what might get in the way of them engaging with you and how you might be able to support or advocate for them. Encourage participants to share these challenges with you, without fear of judgment.

Key points to explain:

"*What you share with us will remain confidential between you and our team. We share information with each other to make sure that we can provide you with the best support.*"

"You have a right to privacy around your identity and experiences. It can also be helpful for us to talk with other adults and caregivers in your life to help support you. If there's anything you'd like to keep private from your caregivers or other members of the team, let's talk about it."

"If there is a risk or safety concern, we will need to reach out to people like your caregivers, treatment team to ensure safety. We will do our best to let you know when this is happening and involve you in the conversation."

Use "Ask-Tell-Ask" to ensure that you and your member have a shared understanding of the boundaries of confidentiality:

ASK: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION	*"Can you tell me what you know about how confidentiality works?"* • Pause and listen to what they have to say. Is it accurate? Does it cover all of the bases? What's missing?
TELL: REFLECT BACK & CLARIFY	*"That's a great explanation. Yes, we will need to reach out to others if there is a risk for your or someone else's safety. If that happens, we'll talk to you about who we need to talk to and why, and ask if you would like to be a part of those conversations."* • Give information in bite sized pieces and provide space for questions
ASK: OPEN-ENDED QUESTION TO CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING & POINT OF VIEW	*"Can you share that back to make sure we're on the same page?"* *"What do you think of that?"*

GETTING STARTED WITH 1:1S

What will sessions be like?

During your first 1-2 meetings with your new member, discuss how often they'd like to meet and when they're available. Go over options and talk about your own availability. Some members may have strong opinions about when and how often to meet. Others may need more support to make a plan.

Goal Setting

Members may have very specific things they want to work on with you, or they may not be sure yet. They may not understand what peer mentorship is about.

Some members have specific goals that they are working on and want support with, like finding a job, preparing for discharge, moving into their own apartment, building healthy relationships or exploring their identity. Others are still figuring out their goals, and some are just looking for a supportive person to check in with.

Goal setting is crucial in your early sessions, and is also helpful to revisit when a member has made significant changes or transitions in their life, when you feel stuck, or after you have been working together for a while and want to check in.

Start with short-term goals rather than long-term outcomes. This will allow your member to experience a sense of accomplishment which can increase their self-esteem.

Visual tools can be helpful to create goals and agendas together. **What's Important to Me? (Appendix F.3)** guides young people by identifying all of the things that would happen for them in an ideal day.

Agenda Setting

Use an open-ended question to ask what they want to discuss during the session. If you have already identified different goals or areas of interest together, offer choices: *"Would you like to talk about your job search or how things are going in your relationship, or is there something else?"*

If there is something that you need or would like to bring into the session, ask permission: *"Is it okay with you if we talk more about the relationship issues you mentioned when we met last week?"*

GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

My Goal: _____

Why is it important to me? _____

_____

Outcome: how will I know I am successful in meeting my goal? _____

_____

STEPS Break your goal into specific, measurable, attainable steps	**POTENTIAL BARRIERS** What could get in the way of you completing this step?	**ALLIES & RESOURCES** People, places, things that can help you reach your goal	**TARGET DATE** Reasonable timeframe for completing this step	**ACTUAL DATE COMPLETED**

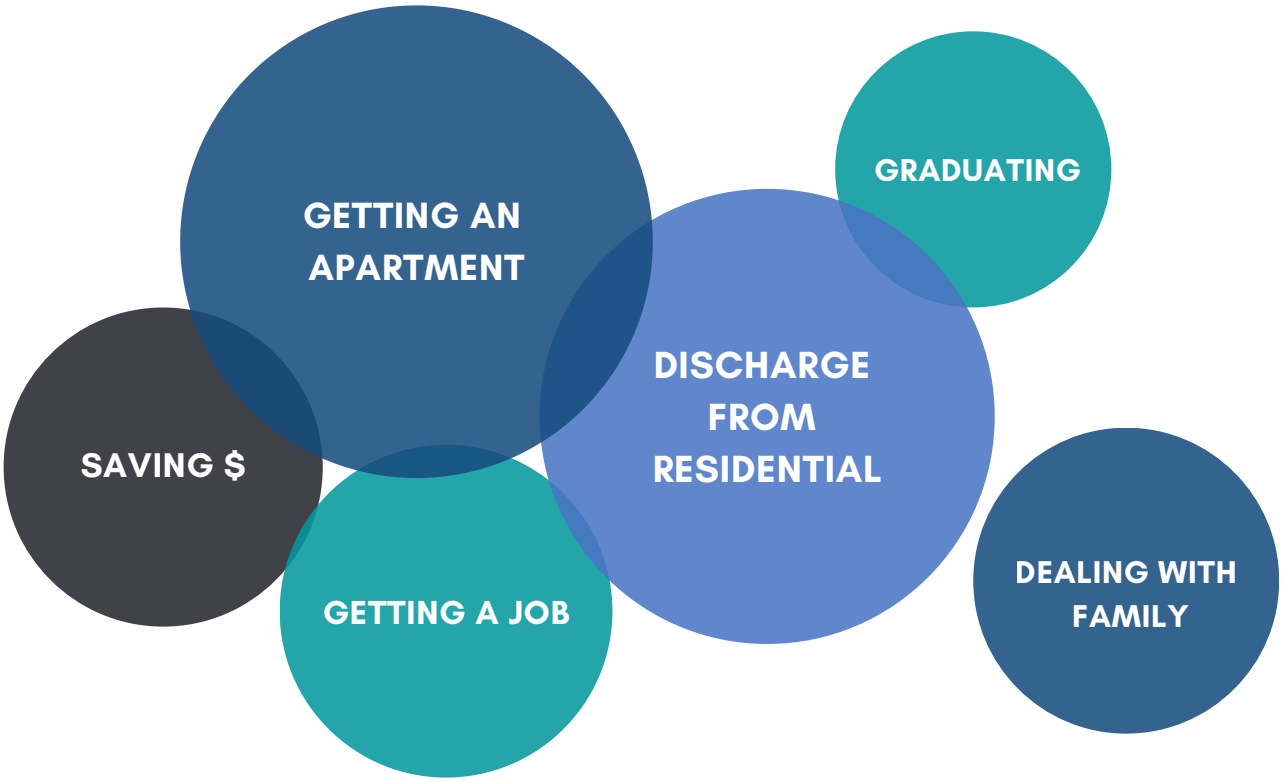
Target Date for Completion: _____

AGENDA SETTING CHART

Getting started on goals can be hard, especially if there are a lot of steps involved and you aren't sure where to start. If a young person is interested in a specific goal or behavior change, you can use this tool to help them get started. One way to break down your goals and understand how they fit into your life is by creating a visual map, or an Agenda Setting Chart, using these steps:

- Pick a goal you are working on. What are the steps you will need to take? What are aspects of your life that are important to you that are connected to this goal?
- For each thing you identified, consider how important is it to you? Each thing will become a circle on your page. The more important it is, the larger the circle should be. The less important it is, the smaller the circle.
- Are any of your items connected to each other? Circles can intersect if items are connected. Other areas of interest in their lives that are not connected to your goal can be written outside of the circles.
- After you have completed the map, take a look. Does anything surprise you? What is most important to you? Where do you think you might get started? Share this map with your mentor and use it to decide on the potential agenda items and goals for your work together.

EXAMPLE CHART



Adapted from Motivational Interviewing with Adolescents and Young Adults
by Mariann Suarez & Sylvie Naar-King

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

These resources were compiled to support YDS staff's desire to broaden their professional skill set, based on areas of interest that they identified during group and individual supervision. We prioritized virtual resources and trainings that are self-paced, so that YDS staff could complete them according to their availability.

To kick off this initiative we had "Remote Week," where all regular groups and meetings were cancelled to create time for team members to explore resources and take online courses of their choosing. To build presentation skills and promote shared learning, we asked each team member to lead a brief overview presentation of their learnings during a future team meeting.

Children's Behavioral Health Knowledge Center: Tools and resources for Supervisors of Young Adult Peer Mentors

Intentional Peer Support: Resources and training for peers and supervisors based on "a way of thinking about and inviting transformative relationships" within peer support.

Martha K. Selig Educational Institute (MKSEI): In person and virtual trainings in foundational client practice including safety and risk management, engagement and assessment, trauma-informed care, and culturally-affirming care.

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network: Online courses, live virtual trainings, webinars and events focused on a wide range of mental health topics and practices.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NTCSN): In-person and online trainings and webinars related to child trauma-informed care education and interventions.

OnTrackNY Peer Specialist Guide: Guide includes creative approaches to providing peer support to individuals who are newly experiencing psychosis, including embracing creative narratives.

Pat Deegan's Recovery Academy & Library: E-learnings, consultation and library of peer recovery resources, including Personal Medicine Coach Certification training (paid membership required).

State-by-State Directory of Parent Peer Support Training and Certification Programs

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Library of Peer Support Video Trainings

Transformative Mutual Aid Practices (T-MAPs): Peer-to-peer tools that provide space for building a personal "map" of wellness strategies, resilience practices, unique stories, and community resources.

APPENDICES

A. Important Things to Know About BTG: Core Values 30

B. Role Descriptions
1. Youth Development Specialist (YDS) 31

2. Youth Development Coach (YDC) 32

C. E-mail & Phone Guidance 33

D. Transition Plan Guidance 34

E. Guidance for Attendance and Making Schedule Accommodations 35

F. Activities & Worksheets 36
1. Processing the Ethics of Being A Peer

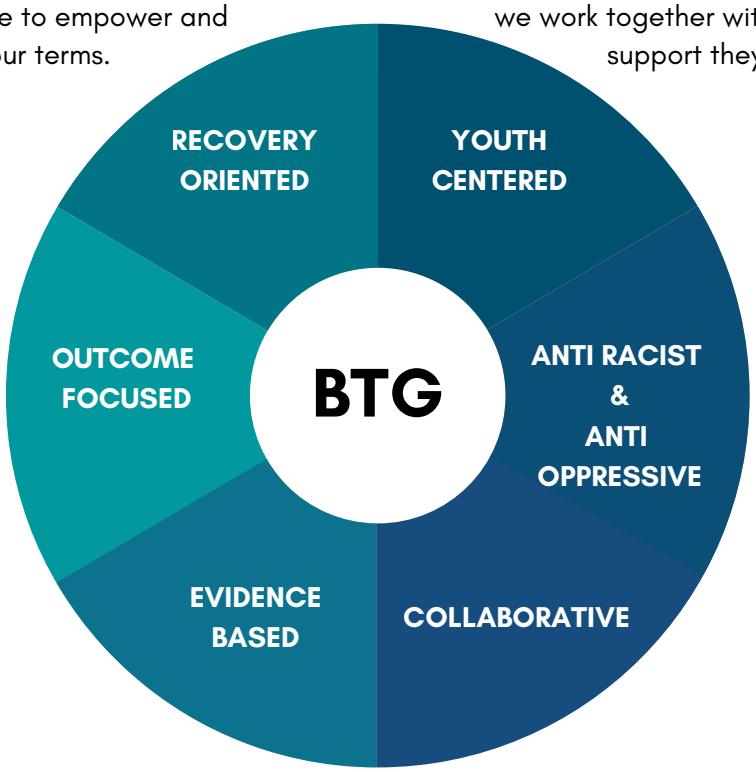
2. Empathy in the Working Alliance 37

3. What's Important to Me... 38

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BTG: CORE VALUES

BTG is **recovery oriented.** We believe in the ability to grow, heal, recover and discover who you want to be. Our services are provided by peer mentors who may have been through experiences similar to yours. We are here to empower and support you on your terms.

BTG services are **voluntary**. Members can opt in and opt out of the program and services without any judgment. Our services are **confidential.** We respect your right to privacy about your identity and personal experiences. When safety concerns arise, we work together with youth to seek the support they need to stay safe.



BTG services are **outcome-focused.** We do periodic screenings and assessments to track progress and ask partnering programs to track and share data to make sure our collective efforts are on track.

BTG strives to be **anti-racist and anti-oppressive.** We want all of our members to feel seen, heard and cared for. We hope to work with you to create spaces where everyone feels safe and accepted.

BTG services are **evidence-based** and **evidence-informed**. We believe that every young person and their family are entitled to high quality services. Our services and treatment recommendations are based on what research tells us is most effective and helpful.

BTG services are **collaborative**. We don't believe in doing things for our clients, we do things with our clients. We partner in the same way. When we bring services to your program we want to do it in partnership with you. We want to see and hear from you.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST (YDS) JOB DESCRIPTION

The Youth Development Specialist (YDS) has lived experience facing and overcoming childhood adversities (e.g., behavioral health challenges and treatment, participation in the child welfare system, and other youth-serving programs). The YDS is one member of a team whose goal is to enhance program outreach, engagement and retention efforts to help program participants and their families stay connected to care. The YDS receives ongoing training, coaching and support.

The YDS provides engagement and support services to adolescents, young adults and families using some or all of the following strategies:

- Provide one-on-one coaching and mentorship to youth
- Facilitate educational and social support groups
- Provide outreach to promote engagement in services and events
- Help connect youth and families to community services
- Participate in community outreach and awareness activities with the team
- Develop and practice advocacy skills through participation in trainings and supervision
- Learn how to use experience and recovery to promote hope, recovery and resilience
- Participate in the development of youth programming and services
- Complete necessary documentation

Role Requirements:

- Lived experience of facing and overcoming childhood adversities. Examples: behavioral health challenges and treatment, participation in the child welfare system and other youth-serving programs, commercial sexual exploitation, and other childhood trauma
- HS diploma or GED
- Prior work or structured volunteer work experience
- Willingness to selectively and appropriately disclose personal recovery experiences for the purposes of youth engagement
- Willingness to travel between programs and community settings
- Ability to empathize with, relate to and effectively work with participants of behavioral health services
- Strong interpersonal communication, organization and collaboration skills
- Experience in one or more of the following fields is desired: recovery-oriented services, child welfare systems, peer support/advocacy programs, or other participant run programs, sports leadership, youth leadership clubs or programs

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COACH (YDC) JOB DESCRIPTION

The Youth Development Coach (YDC) has lived experience facing and overcoming childhood adversities (e.g., behavioral health challenges and treatment, participation in the child welfare system, and other youth-serving programs). The YDC is part of a team-based approach to enhance program outreach, engagement and retention efforts to help teens and young adults and their families stay connected to care. The YDC receives ongoing training, coaching and support.

In addition to the requirements of the YDS role, at least one year of experience providing peer advocacy or support services is required for the YDC position. The YDC provides engagement and support services to adolescents, young adults and families using some or all of the following strategies:

Provide direct support to adolescents and young adults

- Meet with youth for one to one coaching and mentoring sessions
- Develop and facilitate educational and social support groups for youth
- Develop and facilitate job readiness and financial literacy activities and programming
- Collaborate with treatment teams to help youth identify and reach goals
- Provide outreach to promote engagement in BTG services and events
- Participate in program and community-based events, activities, and vocational services
- Maintain connections with young people who leave treatment in order to promote their recovery

Provide coaching and support to Youth Development Specialists

- Facilitate and provide administrative support to Peers for Peers (a mutual support space for peer staff)
- Provide onboarding and ongoing support to Youth Development Specialists
- Assist with the recruitment of Youth Development Specialists
- Participate in Peer training initiatives

Build and strengthen connections with Jewish Board and community programs

- Help connect youth and families to community services
- Participate in community outreach and awareness activities with the team
- Attend and provide support to Youth Leadership Council meetings
- Attend Project Advisory Group meetings on an as-needed basis

Develop range of advocacy skills through participation in program training and supervision

- Learn how to use lived experience and recovery to promote hope and resilience
- Add lived experience voice to program training and outreach materials
- Participate in training, supervisory meetings, and individual supervision
- Complete necessary documentation

E-MAIL & PHONE GUIDANCE

Review your agency mobile device and other tech communication policies for specific guidance and protocols for email, phone and other forms of virtual communication. Use the following tips as guidance for your use of virtual communication on-the-job.

E-mail

- Respond to all emails by the date requested. If no deadline is provided, please respond within 1 day.
- Email sent outside the agency can only include personally identifying information or personal health information (PHI) if a secure process is used AND the information is requested by the participant or family member with the participant's consent.
- Email to participants and/or family should only be initiated during working hours. Staff should use the "send later" function if sending information after hours.
- "Reply all" if other agency staff have been cc'd, ensuring that everyone who needs access to the information will receive it, UNLESS:
  - You have follow-up questions that are just for a supervisor or the team, do not reply all.
  - Send a separate email/s or correspond directly with the appropriate person/people.
- Reserve 15 minutes at the end of each day to review and respond to emails.
- Create an email signature: Include your name, pronouns, job title and contact information. Save the signature in your desktop and mobile email settings.
- Create an out of office message and set to an auto-reply whenever you will be gone for a vacation or other planned period of time.

Mobile Phone

- Staff use an agency-issued phone OR a separate line (such as Google Voice) from their personal number.
- Staff do not respond to after hours calls or texts. Staff set clear boundaries for appropriate texting and ensure that participants and families have access to the after-hours crisis line information in case of an emergency.
- If you receive a voicemail or text that is concerning to you, immediately notify your supervisor for support on how to respond.
- Participants and guardians (if under age 18) must sign the consent form in order to communicate via texting.
- Staff texts to program participants never include any personally identifying information or protected health information (PHI).
- Examples of use for staff texts to participants:
  - Upcoming appointment reminders
  - Rescheduling missed appointments
  - Check-ins or follow-ups to an activity or appointment that staff is supporting
  - Prompting a phone call because the team has important information to share
  - Brief statements of encouragement before a big moment (e.g. job interview)

TRANSITION PLAN GUIDANCE

Use this to plan for a supportive and intentional transition of peer mentorship services when another team member exits the program.

It's important for YDS staff to have the support of their team when preparing to engage a new member—both during the time they're working together, and in the event of transitioning services due to changes in the life and/or job status of a Peer Mentor.

The BTG team developed this guidance to facilitate the transfer of mentorship responsibilities and relationships to ensure that youth, team members and collateral providers have the opportunity to process the change and convey key information.

Review your current list of members and create a summary that includes the following:

- Member's name and contact information
- Host program and any program contacts/point people contact information
- How frequently do you meet with this member and what is contact like? Do you have a regular meeting time and place? Include any information that will help the person who is taking over this member's care.
- The last day you had contact or communication with them.

Review your member summary and think about who would be a good match for each member. Bring this summary to member debrief and be prepared to share and discuss with the team. Reach out to the treatment teams/point people for each of your members to let them know you are leaving.

Final/transition meetings with member

- Before you meet, plan out what you'd like to share about why you're leaving and what your plans are. Think about what kinds of questions your member might have and how you might respond. Are there things that you don't want to share?
- When you meet:
- Let them know about your plan to leave and when your final day will be
- Reflect on the growth and progress you have observed in them during your time working together
- Use reflecting listening skills to validate their feelings and respond to whatever questions they have.

GUIDANCE FOR ATTENDANCE AND MAKING SCHEDULE ACCOMMODATIONS

This guidance was used for employees of Bridging The Gap at The Jewish Board

- All employees of Bridging the Gap must adhere to The Jewish Board Employee Handbook and attendance policy.

- The BTG Program Director can answer any questions you have about the policy and has discretion to make or help you advocate for accommodations.

- BTG employees are expected to monitor their own vacation and sick time balances. Your paycheck stub will show how many holiday, vacation and sick hours you take during each pay period and how many hours you have remaining.

- BTG employees are expected to request planned time off in advance in the following ways:
  - Consider how your absence might impact your scheduled services and member commitments
  - Discuss your request with your direct supervisor
  - Submit your request in the Dayforce system
  - Log your time off in BTG shared calendar so that your team members are aware of and can plan for your absence

- If you need to call out sick, please contact your direct supervisor to let them know as soon as you can. If an employee does not have any sick time remaining, it may be entered into Dayforce as time without pay.

- In the event of an emergency that may cause lateness or absence, please contact your direct supervisor as soon as possible.

- In some cases, the BTG Director may be able to accommodate requests to flex BTG employee hours, based on the following considerations:
  - Advance time given—last minute requests may not be honored
  - Shared responsibility—impact on BTG services, members and colleagues
  - Identified plan to make up hours missed
  - Nature of emergency/reason for request

PROCESSING THE ETHICS OF BEING A PEER

Ethical question	Always OK	Never OK	Sometimes OK: When?
Keep attraction to client secret from supervisor?			
Keep client's attraction to you secret from supervisor?			
Share religious/spiritual beliefs with a client?			
Advocate for client despite supervisor/team's opposing point of view?			
Share after-hours social time with a client?			
Share a meal with a client?			
Engage in common interest with a client?			
Spend time alone with client in their apartment?			
Loan money to a client?			
Hug a client?			
Loan personal items to a client?			
Accept gift from a client?			
Attend family event with a client (per client request)?			

Adapted from the Peer Education Evaluation & Research Center

EMPATHY IN THE WORKING ALLIANCE

You can do this exercise with anyone in your life to gain insight into the strength of your working alliance. It's helpful to do this exercise with a variety of alliances: including both those that feel challenging, as well as those that feel easy. Using this exercise for working alliances that feel less challenging is important, as it can help YA Peers maintain healthy relationship boundaries in these alliances.

By examining alliances that feel more challenging, YA Peers can gain insight into perceived differences and engagement barriers that will allow Peers to have increased empathy for participants that they are having a harder time bonding and connecting with.

It's necessary to acknowledge that we all act slightly different within each relationship that we have. We take on different roles within each of our relationships—we may feel closer (and can be more vulnerable) with some, and more distant (and less vulnerable) with others.

What is our alliance like?

Who am I (YA peer) in this alliance?

Who is _____ (participant name)?

How are we similar?

How are we different?

How can I help _____ (participant name) to understand me better?

What can I do to better understand where _____ (participant/peer) is coming from?

What have I taught or what can I teach _____ (participant name)?

What can or has _____ (participant name) teach me?

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME...

What are the things that are most important to you at the moment?
When you've had a good day, what are the things that make it good?

Are there particular struggles or challenges that you're facing right now?
What are your strengths?
How do you use strengths to face challenges?

BRIDGING THE GAP PEER KIT

FOR AGENCIES EMPLOYING YOUNG ADULTS IN PEER ROLES

2022