PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAM PROFESSIONALS
STANDARDS BASED CHECKLIST FOR A PEER HELPING PROGRAM

I. PROGRAM START-UP:
   A. Planning
      □ Rationale
      □ Purpose
      □ Goals and Objectives
      □ Procedures
      □ Compliance
   B. Commitment
      □ High level of support
      □ Program Advisory committee
      □ Financial Support
      □ Resources and logistical support
   C. Staffing
      □ Positive rapport with population to be helped
      □ Experience with and knowledge of program needs and goals
      □ Knowledge of fundamental principles of peer helping
      □ Understand setting of program
      □ Articulate purpose of program effectively
      □ Serve as a positive role model to various publics
      □ Knowledge of different teaching/learning approaches
      □ Ability to work with groups
      □ Skills necessary for supervision and on-going training
      □ Sufficient time to train, plan, evaluate, and supervise
   D. Organizational Structure
      □ Clear lines of authority, responsibility, and communication
      □ Structure congruent with program purposes

II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
   A. Screening and Selection
      □ Establish appropriate criteria: seek prospective peer helpers who are helpful, trustworthy, concerned for others, good listeners, and positive role models
      □ Develop appropriate recruitment materials: develop and distribute criteria to potential applicants who represent the population that they serve
      □ Develop an application process
      Select appropriate peer helpers guided by the following criteria:
      □ Peer helper will demonstrate appropriate helping characteristics & skills
      □ Peer helper will show evidence of emotional security
      □ Peer helper will understand services peers will provide
      □ Peer helper will commit to program and be available for activities
      □ Peer helper will have ability to be sensitive to population being served
      □ Staff will manage size of group to ensure quality training & supervision
B. Training
- Role of the Peer Helper
- Confidentiality & Liability Issues
- Communication Skills
- Problem Solving/Decision Making Strategies
- Appropriate Additional Issues and Topics
- Appropriately Represents Nature and Goals of a Particular Program

C. Service Delivery
- Appropriate structured, meaningful, productive helping roles are provided within the program setting
- Peer Helping Services are consistent with program goals
- Services enable peer helpers to apply skills learned
- Services enhance personal growth of peer helpers and helpees
- On-going training is provided to peer helpers
- Safeguards are established to protect peer helpers

D. Supervision
- Manage the logistics of regular ongoing supervision and training
- Enable staff to monitor program activities
- Enhance effectiveness and personal growth of peer helpers
- Encourage peer helpers to support each other in their helping role

III. PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

A. Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Impact/Perception Evaluation
- Outcomes/Results Evaluation
- Cost Benefit Evaluation

B. Public Relations
- Key populations are kept well informed and supportive of program
- Techniques for strengthening public relations are implemented

C. Long-Range Planning
- Staffing
- Funding
- Peer ownership
PROGRAMMATIC STANDARDS
National Association of Peer Program Professionals

The National Association of Peer Program Professionals believes the following standards are essential for any quality peer program:

I. PROGRAM START-UP

A. PLANNING
Prior to program implementation, careful planning should be conducted to address such issues as the followings:

1. Rationale: There is a clear and compelling rationale for the development of the program; frequently, this is accomplished through conducting a formal or informal needs assessment in the setting in which the program is to be implemented.

2. Purpose: The purpose of the program derives logically from its rationale, and is typically summarized in a formal mission statement.

3. Goals and Objectives: Programmatic goals and objectives are (a) reflective of the rationale and purpose of the program; and (b) clear, realistic, and achievable.

4. Procedures: The procedures and activities through which programmatic goals are to be accomplished are laid out in clear and systematic fashion.

5. Compliance: The program is planned and implemented in a manner consistent with local, state, and national guidelines for programmatic standards and ethics (see NAPPP Code of Ethics for Peer Helpers and Peer Helping Professionals).

B. COMMITMENT
The program should enjoy not simply the permission, but the active commitment and involvement of those to solicit and maintain its services. Such commitment is reflected particularly in the following areas:

1. Tangible evidence of a high level of administrative, staff, and community support; in many cases, this includes the formation of a program advisory committee. Committee members may or may not be directly involved in program implementation, but they provide valuable input to program staff, and help to maximize a sense of program ownership.

2. Sufficient financial and logistical support for effective program implementation; such support includes the provision of necessary curricular and training resources.

C. STAFFING
Program staff should possess appropriate background, training, and characteristics to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in an effective manner. Among professional staff who works directly with peer helpers, the following skills are essential:
1. Strong positive rapport with the population from which the peer helpers are selected.

2. Educational and practical experience that is relevant to the nature of goals of the program.

3. Understanding of, and commitment to, fundamental principles of peer helping; this includes a readiness to maximize the level of programmatic ownership and involvement on the part of the peer helpers themselves.

4. Close familiarity with the setting in which the program is to be implemented.

5. Clear grasp of program needs and goals and ability to articulate effectively the nature and purpose of the program to peer helpers, other staff, the sponsoring agency, and the broader community.

6. Recognition of the importance of serving as a positive role model, both personally and professionally.

7. Familiarity with different learning styles and teaching strategies, including both experiential and didactic approaches.

8. Ability to work effectively with groups.

9. Mastery of concepts and skills necessary for effective training and supervision of peer helpers.

10. Time management skills in order to be able to carry out programmatic responsibilities.

D. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
The program should be organized and structured in a logical and consistent manner that provides clear lines of authority, responsibility, and communication; and is reflective of the nature and purpose of the program.
II. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A. SCREENING AND SELECTION

The program should employ a clear, systematic, and careful procedure for the screening and selection of peer helpers. Typically, this procedure includes the following:

1. Establishing appropriate criteria as to the characteristics being sought among prospective peer helpers. Among those characteristics are helpfulness, trustworthiness, concern for others, ability to listen, and potential to serve as a positive role model.

2. Conducting a formal or informal survey in the program setting, in order to determine which individuals are felt to possess the desired characteristics.

3. Making application to the program, soliciting recommendations from others in the program setting, and structuring an interview with program staff.

Programs may differ as to whether final selection of peer helpers should occur prior to or after peer helping training. But in either case, the selection process should be guided by the following criteria:

a. Demonstration of appropriate helping characteristics and skills.
b. Evidence of emotional security.
c. Understanding of the type(s) of services to be provided.
d. Commitment to and availability for the provision of those services.
e. Ability to be reflective of and sensitive to the characteristics of the population to be served.
f. Manageability of the size of the group selected, in order to ensure quality training and supervision.

B. TRAINING

Once peer helpers have been selected, they should be provided with quality training in the knowledge and skills they will need to be effective in the peer-helping role. The training program that is implemented should be reflective of the nature and goals of the program; should take into account the age, needs and characteristics of the population to be served; should utilize appropriate curricular resources and training strategies; and should be consistent with local, state, and national guidelines on ethics and standards. Trainees should commit to participate in all aspects of training, and to maximize opportunities for both skill development and personal growth. Finally, training should be viewed as an ongoing process, one which is never truly completed.

While specific features of training may vary somewhat from program to program, the following elements are characteristic of effective peer helping training models:
1. Role of the Peer Helper
Training in the peer helping role includes, but may not be limited to, the following:

   a. Program orientation.
   b. Characteristics of the helper (caring, acceptance, genuineness, understanding, trustworthiness).
   c. Self-awareness.
   d. Positive role modeling; maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
   e. Avoidance of temptation to offer advice, propose solutions, or impose values.
   f. Positive listening skills.
   g. Recognition of limitations.
   h. Developing of individual and group trust.
   i. Creation of a support system of peer helpers for each other, as well as for helpees.
   j. Development of code of ethics and standards of behavior.
   k. Coaching

2. Confidentiality/Liability Issues
While communications between peer helpers and helpees are typically confidential, there are two important exceptions to this general rule:

   a. Potential threats to the personal safety or well-being of the peer helper, helpee, or others;
   b. Situations or problems beyond the personal experience level or expertise of the peer helper.

It is an essential component of any peer helping training program that peer helpers know how to recognize such situations, are aware of their limitations and responsibilities, and have ready access to professional staff and appropriate referral resources

3. Communication Skills

   a. Basic principles of verbal and nonverbal communication.
   b. Active listening skills (attending, empathizing, etc.)
   c. Facilitative responding (questioning, clarifying, summarizing, etc.).

4. Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Strategies
Steps in principled decision-making (identifying the problem; brainstorming alternatives; predicting consequences; carrying out action plan; evaluating results).

5. Additional Issues and Topics
Depending upon the nature and goals of particular programs, additional specialized training may be provided in areas such as the following:
a. Basic concepts of human behavior. While not expected to function as amateur therapists, peer helpers should have some degree of familiarity with concepts such as the following:
   • The role of motivational and reinforcement factors in behavior.
   • Sociocultural influences and differences.
   • Individual and group dynamics
b. Group facilitation techniques.
c. Peer tutoring strategies.
d. Crisis management.
e. Conflict resolution.
f. Special needs populations.
g. Telephone "hotline" management.
h. Specific problem areas (substance abuse, dropouts, depression and suicide, teen pregnancy, child abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, gangs and cults, family relations, etc.)
i. Knowledge of referral resources, services, and programs.

C. SERVICE DELIVERY
Subsequent to training, peer helpers should be provided with structured opportunities to engage in a variety of meaningful, productive helping roles within the program setting. The peer helping services which are provided should:

1. Be consistent with and reflective of program goals.
2. Enable peer helpers to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired during training.
3. Enhance the personal growth and positive development of peer helpers and helpees alike.
4. Recognize and accommodate the need for ongoing opportunities for continued learning and training.
5. Establish safeguards to protect peer helpers from burnout, role confusion, inappropriate assignments, or manipulation.

D. SUPERVISION
Once peer helpers have begun to provide services, it is imperative that they receive regular, ongoing supervision from program staff. In addition to regularly scheduled sessions, staff should be available to provide supplemental supervision and support as needed. Major goals of supervision include the following:

1. Enable program staff to monitor program-related activities and services.
2. Enhance the effectiveness and personal growth of peer helpers.
3. Encourage peer helpers to share with, learn from, and support each other in the performance of their helping roles.
III. PROGRAM MAINTENANCE
Once the program has been established, program staff should take steps to ensure its continued survival, improvement, and success. These steps include the following:

A. EVALUATION
Evaluation is conducted to document program-related activities and services. It is done to assess the process, impact, outcome, and cost benefits of the program with reference to its mission, goals, and objectives. The program should develop and implement a formal evaluation plan. Evaluation data should be utilized to examine program effectiveness and to determine whether and how the program needs to be revised. The evaluation plan may include four components:

1. Process Evaluation
Process evaluation provides a picture of what happened in connection with the program and its consistency with NAPPP Programmatic Standards. It determines the degree to which the program has been successful in achieving its goals and objectives aligned with the mission. Process evaluation data includes information in such areas as the number of peer helpers and helpees involved; program staffing and organization; selection procedures; nature and extent of training; amount and types of services provided; and other program-related activities.

2. Impact/Perception Evaluation
Impact evaluation typically assesses the program’s effect upon both peer helpers and those who have received program services within a set period of time. Such assessment can be qualitative (open-ended questionnaires, opinion surveys, etc.) and/or can employ quantitative indices of program impact. In a school-based program, for example, impact evaluation might assess effectiveness in such areas as student knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and skills or behaviors (e.g., grade point average, absenteeism and dropout rates, or incidence of disciplinary referrals).

3. Outcome/Results Evaluation
Outcome evaluation assesses long-term changes to the peer helper, those they serve, and the community. Examples of societal benefits are fewer alcohol-related crashes and deaths, employment, improved leadership skills, and lower health risk parameters.

4. Cost Benefit Evaluation
Costs benefits are the monetary savings related to the effectiveness of the program (e.g., the cost of the program in providing services to at-risk students, thus reducing dropout rates which will increase A.D.A. funds to the school.)

B. PUBLIC RELATIONS
Program staff should make a concerted, ongoing effort to keep those in the program setting, as well as interested individuals and organizations in the broader community, well-informed about the program, and supportive of its goals. Techniques for strengthening programmatic public relations might include production of a program or newsletter; maintenance of media contacts; involvement of community representatives in training or program services; and community outreach projects.
C. **LONG-RANGE PLANNING**
Program staff should engage in long-range planning to ensure that in the future, the program does not die, but rather becomes stronger and more firmly integrated within the program setting as time goes by. Key factors to consider include the following:

1. **Staffing:** It is important that the success of the program not be dependent upon the particular person, or personality, who happens to be coordinating it at any given time. In this regard, a sense of program ownership should be maximized through such strategies as the formation of a program advisory committee, and there should always be at least one individual within the program setting who is prepared to assume coordination responsibilities in the event of staffing changes.

2. **Funding:** The program should (a) have a secure and consistent funding base, and/or (b) have contingency plans to provide for continued operation in the event of reduced or nonexistent funding.

3. **Peer Ownership:** The program should strive to maximize the level of ownership and involvement on the part of the peer helpers themselves; if peers feel directly responsible for the success and survival of the program, they are unlikely to allow it to perish.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEER PROGRAM PROFESSIONALS
CODE OF ETHICS
FOR PEER HELPING PROFESSIONALS

Professionals who are responsible for implementing peer helping programs shall be people of personal and professional integrity. As a minimum, the NAPPP believes the Code of Ethics for Peer Helping Professionals shall contain the following and be evidenced by commitment to and pursuit of:

1. A philosophy which upholds peer helping as an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.

2. The individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.

3. Excellence in program development and implementation through:
   • Strong positive rapport with peer helpers
   • Appropriate background, training, and skills
   • Personal commitment and energy
   • The use of professionals with expertise and experience in human relations training
   • The use of proven curriculum for training, supervising, and supporting peer helpers

4. The developing of a nurturing personality which:
   • Reflects a positive role model and healthy lifestyle
   • Rejects the pursuit of personal power or gain at the expense of others
   • Respects copyright and acknowledgment obligations as they pertain to peer helping resources and ideas
   • Adheres to the ethical and legal obligations of confidentiality
   • Strives to exemplify the peer helping philosophy in all life situations.

5. The promotion of a realistic understanding by both internal and external audiences of the benefits and limitations of a peer helping program.
Peer Helpers shall be people of personal integrity. As a minimum, the NAPPP believes the peer helpers Code of Ethics shall contain the following and be evidenced by a commitment to and pursuit of:

1. A philosophy which upholds peer helping as an effective way to address the needs and conditions of people.

2. The individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.

3. Supervision and support from professional staff while involved in the program.

4. The development of a nurturing personality which:
   • Reflects a positive role model and healthy lifestyle (i.e. development and observation of a set of norms, which guide behavior while in the program)
   • Rejects the pursuit of personal power, elitist status, or gain at the expense of others
   • Strives to exemplify the peer helping philosophy in all life situations

5. Maintenance of confidentiality of information imparted during the course of program-related activities. While confidentiality is the norm, certain exceptions shall be referred immediately to the professional staff. These exceptions include the following:
   • Situations involving real or potential dangers to the safety of well being of the peer helper, helpee, or others
   • Child abuse, sexual abuse, and other situations involving legal requirements of disclosures
   • Severe family dysfunction, psychotic behavior, extreme drug or alcohol abuse, and any other problems beyond the experience and expertise of the peer helper

6. Personal Safety
   Peer Helpers must recognize, report, and know techniques to deal with potential threats to their emotional or physical well being.

*A CODE OF ETHICS IS AN AGREEMENT AMONG THOSE WHO COMMIT TO THE PROGRAM AS TO THE NORMS WHICH SHALL GUIDE THEIR BEHAVIOR DURING THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROGRAM.*