

## An Overview of Peer Helping

### ***Have you done anything for a person that the person could have done for themselves?***

25% of human problems require clinical skills of a trained professional

That leaves 75%, you see it quite often with individuals enlisting friends and family. In any case the most important aspect of this is that the individual recognizes there is a problem. In these cases simply being there with empathy, shared experience, and simple listening will begin a successful change process..

#### **The Helping Process**

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Helpee	Searching Exploring	Postulating Evaluating Deciding Planning	Acting Cooperating Risking
Helper	Attending Respecting	Modeling Disclosure Confronting Structuring	Encouraging Supporting Advising
	Clarification	Problem- Solving	Action

#### **The Role of Self Worth**

Low	Self Worth	High
Denial		Recognition
Blame		Responsibility
Rationalization		Resolve
Projection		Realization

**MATCHING THE APPROPRIATE "CHEAT SHEET" WITH THE STAGES OF CHANGE**

<b>Stage of Change</b>	<b>Strategy &amp; Recommended Cheat Sheet</b>
<b>Pre-Contemplative:</b> "What problem? Don't bug me". Just visiting the meeting. Often a court or EAP program coerced presence.	<b>Strategy:</b> Elicit an open discussion and perceptions of the whole situation. <b>Cheat Sheet(s) to Use:</b> ABC #2 (for Emotional Upsets – on another person's problem)
<b>Contemplative:</b> "I want to change, but then I don't." Ambivalent (rather than unmotivated or in "denial").	<b>Strategy:</b> Help clarify the situation via motivational interviewing. <b>Cheat Sheet(s) to Use:</b> Cost/Benefit Analysis Brainstorming ABC #2 for Emotional Upsets
<b>Determination &amp; Preparation:</b> "I know I need to, but how?"	<b>Strategy:</b> Help the individual determine the best course of action or plan. Offer a menu, advice if/when requested, recommended readings, and a date to start. <b>Cheat Sheet(s) to Use:</b> Cost/Benefit Analysis Role Playing ABC #2 for Emotional Upsets
<b>Action:</b> "Now I'm working on it."	<b>Strategy:</b> Help with practical methods, encouragement and sources of social support. <b>Cheat Sheet(s) to Use:</b> ABC #1 and ABC #2 DISARM Brainstorming Role Playing Review Cost/Benefit Analysis
<b>Maintenance:</b> "Need to stay with it."	<b>Strategy:</b> Help identify and use relapse prevention strategies. Anticipate "abstinence violation effect" in case of a "lapse". Work on other problems or life-style changes to find a balanced and rewarding life. <b>Relapse:</b> "Better try again and learn" vs. "might as well give up". Help to cycle back into appropriate stage without becoming stuck or demoralized. Reframe set backs as grist for the mill and a mistake. <b>Cheat Sheet(s) to Use:</b> ABC #1 and ABC #2 DISARM Brainstorming Role Playing Review Cost/Benefit Analysis
<b>Permanent Exit or "Graduation":</b> "Moving on to other things".	<b>Strategy:</b> Support self-efficacy and closure, while allowing for return.

# The Helping Steps

Attending	<p>The ability to be both "physically" and psychologically "with" the person. Listening and looking for verbal and non-verbal messages.</p> <p>Listening with acceptance, empathy, and understanding is often all the person "needs"</p>
Exploration/ Clarification	<p>Help to person to focus on his/her attempts to find out what is wrong.</p> <p>Accurate Empathy – the ability to "see" the problem from the other persons point of view undistorted by your own personal values, opinions, biases.</p> <p>Then make "Concrete" the problem and strategies. Explore and define the thoughts, feelings, and situation in terms that are understandable.</p>
Deciding/Problem Solving	<p>Lend your own experience as a framework for find solutions. Model your own successes to allow the person to assess their own strategies.</p> <p>Bring into play non-directive listening, clarification, paraphrasing, limited advising, and planning.</p> <p>Guard against "Inventing" or "putting words in their mouths"</p> <p>Instill genuine trust through confidentiality, acceptance, and understanding.</p>

# Watch for the Trap of the "Rescuer-Persecutor-Victim" Triangle

In some marriages, RESCUERS actually marry victims and the two of them seek a PERSECUTOR to complete the triangle. Often the spouse of an individual with an addictive behaviour is a natural born rescuer.

Rescuers tend to be people who have learned early in life that the way to survive is to become more skilled at looking after somebody else than oneself. This is sometimes seen to be a highly manipulative way to control other people, It often reflects a low self esteem position.

**Individuals with an addictive behaviour often need to see themselves as Victims. When the Helper enters the triangle, s/he can easily be made the Persecutor as well!**

The policeman called in to rescue a wife in a domestic dispute soon finds himself the victim of two angry people because of his intrusion, and in need of rescue himself! The manager who attempts to mediate a dispute between a supervisor and a manager may have a similar experience.

**So, it is important not to get sucked into making a rescue. This is accomplished by refusing to see people as victims, even when they see themselves that way.**

Rescuers appropriate for themselves the problems of their victims. Helpers know that the problem belongs to the person receiving the help, and leaves ownership for that problem with the person. Rescuers try to find solutions for their victims' problems.

Rescuers give advice, point out faults, offer solutions. Helpers seek to work with the person in exploring his problem and identifying possible solutions he might wish to pursue.

**The great pitfall for helpers** is their temptation to become rescuers. A rescuer, by nature, requires a victim to rescue. Victims can't exist without a Persecutor. So there is a symbiosis between the three. The Rescuer works on the Victim who has been done in by the Persecutor.

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**So, in helping, it is important not to get trapped into making a rescue. This is accomplished by refusing to see people as victims, even when they may see themselves that way.**

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**Helpers know that the problem belongs to the person receiving help, and leaves ownership for that problem with the person. Rescuers try to find solutions for their victims' problems. Rescuers give advice, point out faults, offer the right thing to do. Helpers work with the person they are helping as that person explores the problem and its possible solutions.**