

OVERVIEW OF PAYTON'S PEERS



Jenny Mischel
Doctoral Candidate
CEHD
George Mason University

Jessica Elliot
M.Ed. School Counseling K-12
Virginia Pupil Personnel pre-K- 12 license

OVERVIEW

Research has shown that most adolescents who experience bullying/cyberbullying behavior feel alone, to blame, and that telling an adult will not make a difference. Payton's Peers is a peer counseling group run by a trained facilitator, in which support is found from peers who are experiencing similar situations. In addition to developing a positive support system for those experiencing bullying/cyberbullying, the format provides useful strategies to help stop, overcome, and prevent bullying/cyberbullying experiences from causing negative outcomes.

The main focus of the group is to share previous experiences, or those currently happening, in the participant's daily lives to establish a support system with these peers. The format is comprised of interactive lessons (12 for community groups; 24 for school groups). Lessons can be implemented as outlined or adjusted to meet the needs of the groups.

We recommend training for mentors in order for peers to experience optimal benefits from the program. Additionally, it is highly recommended for each school group to find a counselor to serve as a resource or mentor. For those groups that meet outside of the school day, it is recommended to contact a local counseling center for a counselor to serve as the resource or mentor if one is not available.

12 LESSON FORMAT

***The 24 lesson format breaks down each lesson into two sessions**

LESSON 1: Introduction

Objective: The first meeting is an opportunity for participants to become comfortable with each other and learn a bit about what the program will be about.

LESSON 2: Questionnaire & Music Share

Objectives:

1. Students will fill out a questionnaire about themselves and share with the group. This will be an opening activity to share their bullying experiences.
2. Use the open forum session to share what's been happening and begin to establish a support network within the group. Share songs that make them feel better when they're feeling down.

LESSON 3: Resiliency

Objectives:

1. Understand what resiliency means and looks like.
2. To teach techniques which help build resiliency skills which include A) introducing a breathing technique to help the peers regain peace and B) the introduction of the 5 second rule and it can help motivate peers to act.

LESSON 4: The 4 Pillars

Objective:

1. Peers will be introduced to the 4 pillars that help them achieve resiliency.
2. Peers will learn about the importance of belonging and will discuss in what groups they feel they belong.
3. Peers will be introduced to the pillar storytelling, that will help them achieve resiliency.
4. Peers will be introduced to the pillar transcendence, that will help them achieve resiliency.
5. Peers will share what they have learned from their bullying/cyberbullying experiences. They will then try to understand what the meaning could possibly be for experiencing these situations. Finally, peers will discuss what they are good at and what they enjoy doing in order to help them start to understand their values.

LESSON 5: Vision Boards

Objective:

Participants will create vision boards from the pictures they brought. They can add phrases from cut-outs or write in their own phrases.

LESSON 6: Discovering Strengths

Objectives:

1. Peers will discover what their core strengths are using the worksheet provided. This helps them further begin to understand their core values.
2. Peers will discover which type of intelligence describes them best. In knowing their core strengths and type of intelligence defines them best, they will strengthen their understanding of their core values.

LESSON 7: Wandering Map (adapted from Dr. Katherine Brooks' book, "You Majored in What? Mapping your path from chaos to career) (see Appendix J)

Objective:

1. This activity helps them understand how their core strengths, intelligences, support systems, and activities are important to remember especially when facing difficult situations. In remembering that these items are personally meaningful, they will better be able to achieve resiliency.
2. Peers will learn that taking care of themselves is one of the best practices they can do to enhance their well-being.

LESSON 8: Perspective Taking and Self-regulation/ Self-talk(adapted from Building Resiliency in Young People Resource 2013.pdf, <http://au.professionals.reachout.com/optimism>. Retrieved on June 11, 2016)

Objectives:

1. Peers will be introduced to self-regulation of emotion in order to regain control when experiencing a stressful situation such as bullying.
2. Peers will learn the difference between positive self-talk and negative self-talk. They will find quotes that will help them concentrate on positive self-talk rather than negative.
3. Peers will discuss optimism and what types of thoughts are considered optimistic.

LESSON 9: Anchoring

Objective:

Peers will learn the concept of anchoring and how negative self-talk can create a stronger "anchor" in their beliefs about themselves and that this can be perpetuated even though it is a false belief. They will learn a technique to help them change the negative anchoring.

LESSON 10: Gratitude- Journaling

Objective:

1. Peers will learn the positive benefits from being grateful.
2. Peers will learn the positive benefits from journaling their emotions or negative experiences.

LESSON 11: Helping Others: Promoting Kindness

Objectives:

1. Peers will discuss the positive benefits of helping others and how this can encourage resiliency within themselves.
2. Peers will discuss ways to promote kindness at their schools. In doing so, not only do they help promote a positive school climate, but again this exercise helps encourage core value beliefs and resiliency skills within themselves.

LESSON 12: Closing

Objectives:

1. Peers will share comradery with their group members and talk about how the group has helped them move forward.
2. Peers will create a video to share with the next group. It can be very informal and filmed with a phone. They can say a few words about what the group did for them and give advice to peers joining the next group. This video should not be shared outside the context of the next group.