



Teen Talk


Peer Support Manual


teen talk

For more info on sexual health,
mental health, substance use and
healthy relationships, check us out at
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“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

Manual revised 2010

B.B. King



Who are we?

Teen Talk is a Youth Health Education Program, part of Klinik Community Health Centre. We provide services for youth from a harm reduction, prevention education perspective. We focus on sexuality, reproductive health, body image, substance use awareness, mental health, issues of diversity and anti-violence issues. We think that providing youth with accurate, non-judgmental information can help people make healthier decisions and choices for themselves!

What do we do? Teen Talk has 2 program areas that provide direct services to youth:

Peer Support:

Peer Support is an exciting volunteer opportunity for youth ages 14 to 19. We provide a 32 hour training program to educate youth about healthy relationships, birth control, sexuality, substance use awareness, mental health, pregnancy, diversity, suicide awareness and body image. After training is complete, peer supporters can initiate activities in their schools and communities such as skit presentations, information tables and educational events. Youth are then prepared to act as a link to community resources for their friends and peers. Training takes place throughout the year and across the province.

Workshops for youth:

Our skilled Youth Health Educators develop and deliver interactive workshops to youth aged 14-19 in schools, as well as alternative programs and schools. The Workshops for Youth Program also acts as a community link by distributing resources to youth on all related topic areas such as reproductive and sexual health, mental health, dating violence, body image, communication skills, substance use awareness, and diversity. All workshops are available throughout Manitoba.

Website – teentalk.ca:

Our website is a great resource! The 'hot topics' section includes information about anything from sexual health to mental health, body image, anti-oppression and healthy relationships. Check out our FAQ's for answers to commonly asked questions on all of our training topics. We also have an art space where youth can share their artwork (including music, writing, paintings, drawings, etc)! The Peer Support Training Manual is also available on the website.

Teen Talk North:

Teen Talk North Program provides services for Adult Service Providers (educators, community workers, nurses) in the North through offering trainings as well as post-training support. The goal is to strengthen capacity of Northern Service Providers to effectively work with youth in a strength-based way as well as increase knowledge around sexual/mental health and healthy relationships.

Teen Talk History

Teen Talk is a health promotion program that empowers youth to make healthy lifestyle choices for themselves. This program works with schools and community groups to share information and community resource referrals with youth that they are unable to access elsewhere. This project fills a void in the education system because there is no mandatory sexual and reproductive health curriculum after grade ten. Statistics confirm that many teens start to become sexually involved at this time and so, are at a greater risk for unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.

Teen Talk – The Beginning

Teen Talk began as a Youth Services Canada Project at Planned Parenthood Manitoba (now Sexuality Education Resource Centre) in 1995. Three of the original youth participants, Kristine Barr, Trina Larsen and Pamela Zorn were committed to helping *Teen Talk* grow into a larger program that could reach more youth around Manitoba.

In 1996, they decided to partner with Klinik. Klinik Community Health Centre, in Winnipeg's inner city, provides health promotion, education and preventative services through its primary health, community health, counselling, community development and community education programs.

Both groups recognize the needs of youth concerning sexuality, reproductive health, anti-violence and mental health issues.

Workshops for Youth

Teen Talk's focus is on youth aged 14-19, with the main focus on at-risk youth. *Teen Talk* is the only group in Manitoba speaking to youth on all of these important topics. Our youth-oriented approach brings positive outcomes and behavioural change by educating in a more accessible, youth friendly way.

Peer Support

The Peer Support Training program began in 1998 and offers another important resource to Manitoba youth. This program educates youth on issues specific to reducing teen pregnancy in Manitoba and provides volunteer opportunities within *Teen Talk*. Peer-to-peer support training allows youth to help their friends and fellow students by sharing information, and helping them deal with difficult times in their lives.



Teen Talk Peer Support Principles

Youth Directed

This means that youth (you) tell us what you want and give us guidance on what you want to learn about and how best to deliver this information to you. We always listen to the feedback we get from youth and we use it to make sure you get what you want and need from us.

Strength based

We believe that with support and accurate information, people have the strength and ability to solve their own problems, and choose what they think is best for their own lives.

Anti-oppression

We are committed to recognizing and addressing all forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and the effects of colonization.

Voluntarism

Volunteers like you are extremely important at Klinik. We will always try to offer you high quality training programs, personal and professional support, and express how much we value the work that our volunteers provide.

Non-judgmental

Everyone deserves respect. We will not judge you on who you are, how you look, where you come from, what you do or choices you make.

Harm Reduction

We give up-to-date and useful info so that people can make safer, less risky choices.

Confidentiality

Klinik is a safe place to talk about anything going on in your life. Confidentiality is your right. If there is a legal reason for us to talk to someone else about what you share, we will tell you about it first, so you will always know what is going on.

Pro-choice


We give up-to-date and accurate information so that people can make informed choices about their bodies and lives. We believe that access to all pregnancy options is a human right. We support a woman's right to choose what is best for her.

Feminist

We believe in equality and social justice for people of all genders. Talking about gender inequalities, reproductive rights, gender-based violence, and privilege and power dynamics are ways we can work to end sexism.

Queer Positive

Klinik supports everyone's right to express affection, love and sexuality freely. We believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit and queer people have the right to respect and safe spaces free of homophobic and transphobic violence, harassment and bullying.



Wanted

Peer Supporters

Must Have Some of the Following Attributes:

Good listener ☞ Sympathetic ☞ Positive attitude ☞ Empathic ☞
Responsible ☞ Compassionate ☞ Fun ☞ Willing to help others ☞
Energetic ☞ Creative ☞

Peer supporters are young people who provide services to other young people by listening, supporting, referring and giving info about health and safety.

Peer Supporters are volunteers who reach out in their world to provide accurate information, resources and also links to services in their communities to peers. They are the bridge in connecting their peers to getting what they need.



“This is the true joy in life: being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.”

George Bernard Shaw



What is the Peer Support Training?

This training strives to educate and equip you with skills to be a support to your peers. You will learn about healthy sexuality, relationships, body image, diversity and discrimination, substance use awareness, mental health and suicide awareness, as well as information on effective communication and supporting people.

Our 'ground norms' (which we create together on the first night of training) are about creating a safer space in which people feel they can participate in the way that feels best to them. The training is very interactive and we encourage participation. We recognize that participation can mean lots of different things for different people. Some people learn more through listening, others learn more through discussion and bouncing their ideas off of others, while some need both or a variety of things. You will have many opportunities to also be teachers to us. Only you can tell us what is real and relevant to you, your peers and your community. This information is valuable and important to us. Please ask questions or give us feedback in a way that feels comfortable to you. Your input helps shape the program for future trainees. You also have the opportunity at the end of the training to present on a topic of your choice related to the material we've covered.


After the training, volunteers have the opportunity to get involved in our in-house theatre education program called 'Skitz', attend monthly meet-ups, work on special projects, or create/plan your own events, projects in your schools or communities. (See Action Planning chapter for more info.)

Why Peer Support?

What inspired you to join the peer support training?

What are you most interested in getting out of this training? What are you most interested in learning about? Why?

What do you think are important qualities for providing support & Information to friends or peers?



What Peer Support has done for me...

"Peer Support gave me something to look forward to every single week; excuses to relax, unwind, and de-stress from everything that would take control of my mood. I loved it." -Lauren Checkley, J.H. Bruns Collegiate

"Peer support gave me understanding of how I can be a better person to other people. It completely changed my perspective. And it's really rewarding to have people asking me questions and trusting me with them". -Cheryl Friesen, Oak Park High School

"Peer support changed me as a person, it made me realize what was important in life and how easily a small mistake could change your life. I met some great people and learnt things that i'll never forget." – Kandice, Sisler High School

"Peer support taught me how to see situations in new ways, and they managed to teach me so much without it being boring! Peer support helped me to understand more effective ways to help others." -Emily Hamonic, Fort Richmond Collegiate

"Peer Support taught me how to talk to my peers about things that used to make me feel uncomfortable (until I took the course, that is.) I'm definitely more mature about all that stuff now and I feel good knowing I have the knowledge to share with anyone who needs it." - Keira Janzen, The Comp in Selkirk

"Peer Support/Teen Talk is a great program. It makes learning about intimacy, drugs and other 'awkward' or touchy subjects, comfortable and fun! I learned a lot of new stuff, even though I've been there previously. Teen Talk is a brilliant program, and I hope it continues to stay that way!" - Marlena, Ecole Selkirk Junior High.



“An idea can turn to dust or magic depending on the talent that rubs against it.”

Bill Bernbach

If you are going to help me...

Please be patient while I learn to trust you.

Let me tell my story in my own way.

Please accept that whatever I have done, whatever I may do, it's the best I have to offer and it's right for me.

I am not a person. I am this person, unique and special.

Don't judge me as right or wrong. Bad or good. I am me.

Don't assume that you know more about me than I do. You only know what I've told you. That's only part of me.

I may be still trying to figure things out but I am still the expert about me. Help me see what I already know.

Don't put me in a position of living up to your expectations. I can only live up to my own.

Don't save me, just be my friend.

Help me to help myself.

"I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives."

Tracey Chapman





Peer Support Traps

The Martyr: "I have to talk to you right now (2 a.m.)"

A friend must set limits on their helping time. Many beginners think they must be available to peers without limit no matter what time of the day or night, no matter how long, no matter how often. The peer supporter who falls into the martyr trap sometimes ends up ignoring his or her own needs, building resentments about being a helper, and can become unbalanced.

Power Trip: "You're so wonderful. You're the only one who understands."

It's a real ego boost to feel you can help someone. Pride in a job well done is healthy, too much pride is not. It's important to remember to always refer to school or community resources and not to give advice or believe that you are the only one who can support people or do this work. You are an important piece of the puzzle in supporting someone, but there are other important pieces, people and resources as well.

Hyper-empathy: Person seeking help has a very painful problem.

Peer supporters do not need to suffer for the person they are trying to help. Becoming miserable yourself doesn't help anyone. To be compassionate is desirable; to become paralysed with their pain is not. An effective helper is able to walk along with someone in pain and suffering without "burning out".

Self doubt: Your own lack of trust in your ability.

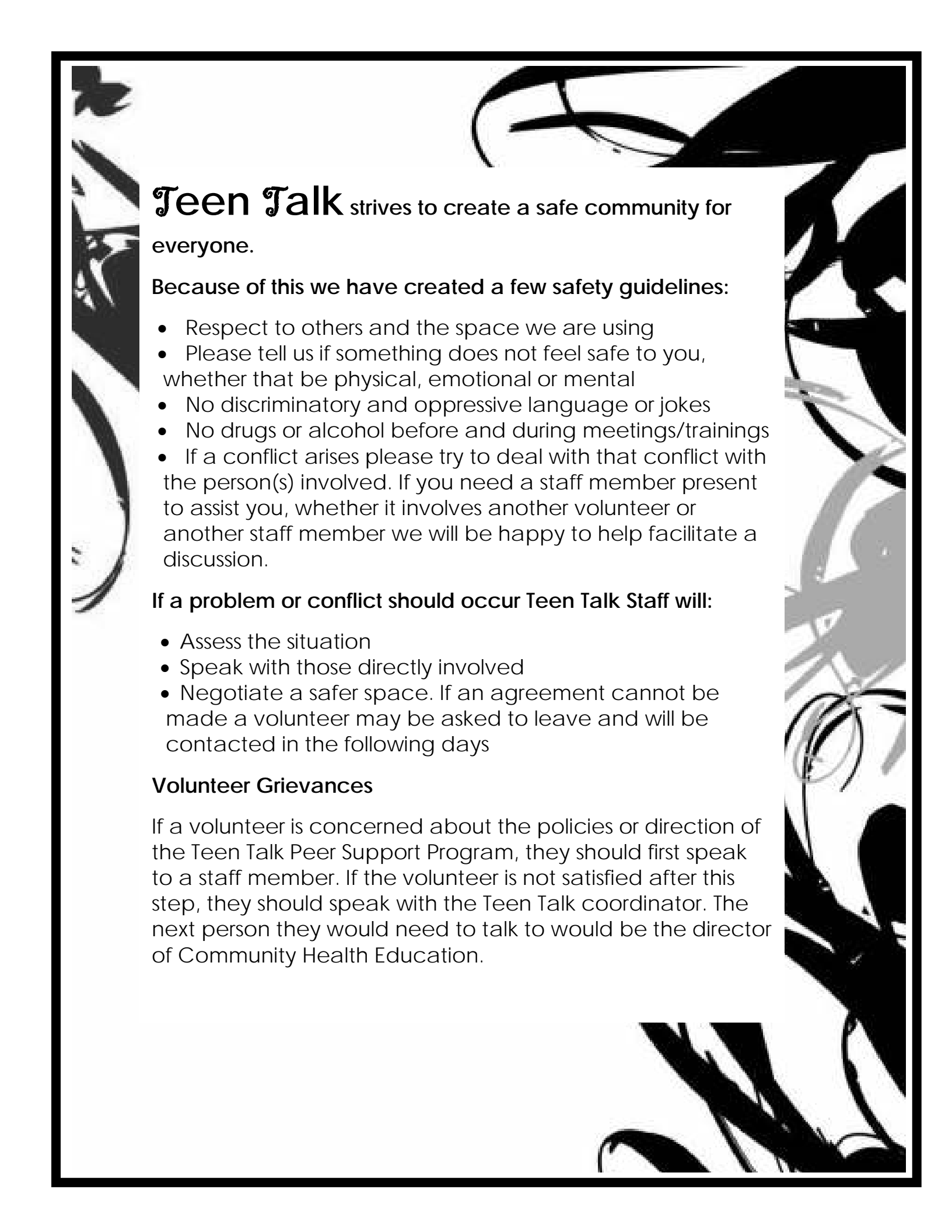
Peer helping can be scary. When someone is very upset, sad, or lonely, you may easily find yourself wondering "can I really do anything to help?" Your ability to be helpful to another is founded on your belief that you can be helpful and your ability to ask a trusted adult or resource for advice and help when needed. Believe in your ability and others will too.

"I know-exactly what-you're going through": Person seeking help is going through a situation similar to one you have experienced.

We all tend to see the world through the lens of our own experience. This is natural and healthy, but in peer support it can prevent you from clearly seeing what another person is experiencing. If, for example, your parents are divorced and you're helping someone whose parents are just going through one, you may "lock on" to your experience and assume that's exactly what the person seeking help is experiencing. Remember, people can and do respond very differently to similar situations. Your experience is not theirs.

Press-on-regardless: Your belief that you must stick with a person until they successfully resolve their problems.

Many problems will not be solved in one, two, or even three contacts with a peer helper. You need to know when to hang on and when to let go. There may be times when you realize and accept that you've done all you can. There is no shame in admitting to another person "I can't help you anymore, it's up to you now". In fact, that takes a lot of courage. If you haven't done so already, the next step may be to refer them to a counsellor, teacher or other resource.



Teen Talk strives to create a safe community for everyone.

Because of this we have created a few safety guidelines:

- Respect to others and the space we are using
- Please tell us if something does not feel safe to you, whether that be physical, emotional or mental
- No discriminatory and oppressive language or jokes
- No drugs or alcohol before and during meetings/trainings
- If a conflict arises please try to deal with that conflict with the person(s) involved. If you need a staff member present to assist you, whether it involves another volunteer or another staff member we will be happy to help facilitate a discussion.

If a problem or conflict should occur Teen Talk Staff will:

- Assess the situation
- Speak with those directly involved
- Negotiate a safer space. If an agreement cannot be made a volunteer may be asked to leave and will be contacted in the following days

Volunteer Grievances

If a volunteer is concerned about the policies or direction of the Teen Talk Peer Support Program, they should first speak to a staff member. If the volunteer is not satisfied after this step, they should speak with the Teen Talk coordinator. The next person they would need to talk to would be the director of Community Health Education.