

TIPS FOR ORGANIZING PEER MATCHES

The rationale behind peer matches is straightforward: the people best able to provide hands-on help are often the “doers” themselves—people...who have successfully addressed a challenge or created a strategy that has made a difference. These are individuals who have an acute sense of what has and hasn’t worked. They’ve developed good tools and strategies they can share and are eager to help others because of a strong sense of shared mission.

—Center for the Study of Social Policy

This brief factsheet provides some ideas for arranging meetings among peers (e.g., professional to professional or family to family) who are coming together for support or problem solving. These apply to one-to-one or small group matches.

Preparation

- Define the problem or issue the peer-to-peer activity will address.
- Identify what participants hope to gain from the interaction.
- Select participants who are on an equal footing. Power differentials can stifle relationship development (supervisors are not typically involved).
- If the match is directional in nature (i.e., one party is the recipient and the other is the provider), make sure the expertise of the provider is a good match for the needs of the recipient (e.g., educational background, licensure or certification, work experience, proven success in similar situations).

Meeting Formats

- Training sessions where participants learn from experts (who may be group members) about specific topics
- Case study formats where participants bring a specific problem on which to get feedback from the group
- Group problem solving where solutions are generated regarding a problem common to all participants

Reference

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (n.d.). *Help on the way: A powerful approach to technical assistance*. Retrieved from <http://www.cssp.org/publications/neighborhood-investment/help-on-the-way-communities-getting-the-results-they-want-from-peer-matches.pdf>

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