Module 6:
Becoming a PEER Ambassador (Part 2)

6.1 Developing Meaningful Relationships

As a parent leader, one of your main responsibilities is to support parents by identifying their needs and helping them address those needs. Examples of needs parents might share with you include: needing advice on how to have difficult conversations with their children, how to find help when their children are struggling, or how to find resources on parenting in the community.

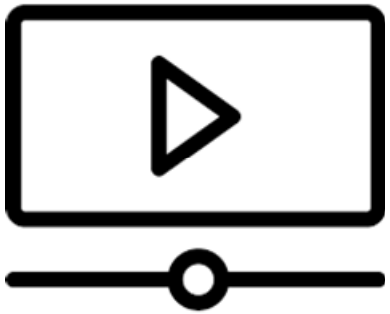
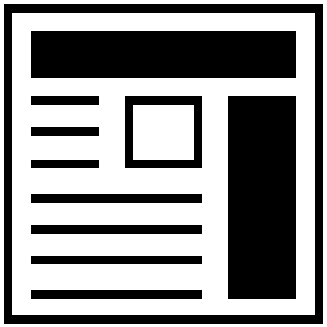
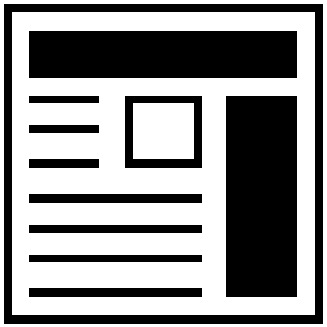
Other sections of this training, as well as the accompanying Resource Toolkit provide you with information and resources you can use to support parents. This section, though, focuses on how to make sure you are able to identify parents' needs so that you can best match their needs with the right resources. In some cases, parents will be very forthcoming and will know exactly what they are struggling with and what they need. In other cases, you will need to kindly and respectfully ask probing questions to learn more about how you can best support a parent.

Developing Meaningful Relationships

Remember: You might not always be able to provide the right solution, sometimes simply listening is the most important thing you can do.

On the next slide, there are two articles and one video that will help you better understand the type of needs parents may have and how you can best support them. Read/watch all three and jot down the lessons that will help you better identify parents' needs. In addition, complete the exercise below after reading the last article on the list, "The Different Types of Support."

Developing Meaningful Relationships

Brené Brown on Empathy	**Seeking help for a mental health problem**	**VeryWellMind: The Different Types of Social Support**
		

Note: The article in the second column, ***Seeking Help for a Mental Health Problem***, is geared towards people in the United Kingdom, including offering their 999 emergency number. In the US, the number to dial in an emergency is 911

EXCERSISE: Identifying and Addressing Needs

The article, “The Different Types of Social Support” identifies these four types of support: informational, esteem, tangible, and emotional.

For this exercise, imagine yourself talking to a parent. For each type of support in the table in the next two slides, write down the types of needs they may have that can be addressed by the type of support, and in the third column write down specific examples of support you can provide based on the type of support. An example for each is provided below.

Remember: You can use the ***Resource Toolkit*** to find more information about resources and types of supports you can offer parents.

EXCERSISE: Identifying and Addressing Needs

Type of Supports	Example of Need	Example of Support
Informational	"I think my child has a disability and may need special education services. How can I find out more about special education services?"	Refer them to A Parent's Guide to Special Education.
Esteem	"I just don't feel like I am a good parent."	Provide words of encouragement: "Even though children have a hard time saying it, I am sure they appreciate all you do for them."

EXCERSISE: Identifying and Addressing Needs

Type of Supports	Example of Need	Example of Support
Tangible	"Since I've lost my job, I haven't been able to afford to even buy groceries to feed my children."	Refer them to their local food bank by searching The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.
Emotional	"My marriage is going through a difficult patch, I think we are heading to divorce."	Provide an empathetic ear.

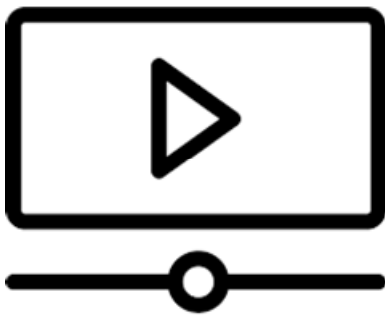
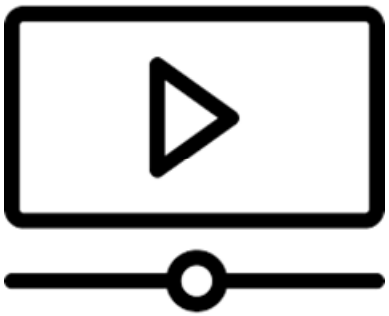
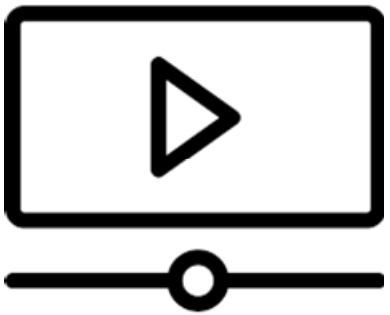
6.2 Improving Cultural Awareness

In the role of parent leaders, we are going to interact with other parents who come from different cultural backgrounds—from different racial, ethnic, religious, political, and other types of groups than our own.

Even when we have the best intentions to help, at times we might say something that might offend someone else, or simply not fit with their worldview. While we don't always have to agree with others, it is important to be aware of how our cultural values differ from others, and then to find ways to bridge those differences.

Implicit Bias

The key thing about becoming more culturally aware is to recognize our own cultural bias. To learn more about implicit bias, watch any of the three following TED Talks about the topic:

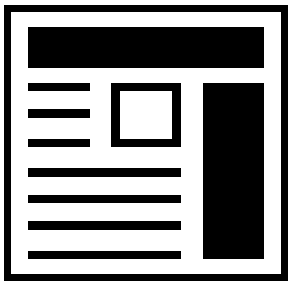
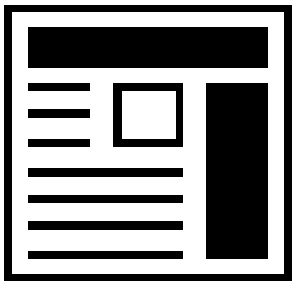
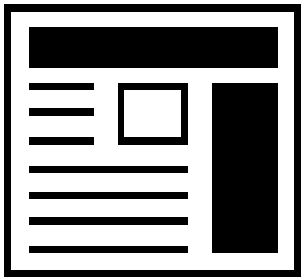
Finding and Removing the Bias Within Us	**We all have implicit biases. So what can we do about it?**	**Are you biased? I am**
		

EXERCISE 1: Implicit Bias

Once you watch at least one of the videos on implicit bias, write down your reflections below. Did the video help you reflect on any type of implicit bias you hold? Are there ways you can think of to reduce your implicit bias?

Cultural Awareness

Now that you have thought about implicit bias, we invite you to read about specific tips you can follow to become more culturally aware. Read at least two of the three articles below and jot down any tips that resonate with you.

Mental Health First Aid: Five Ways to be More Culturally Aware	**Gender & Identity, Life: 5 steps anyone can take to become more culturally sensitive**	**National PTA: Guide to Cultural Awareness for State and Local PTAs**
		

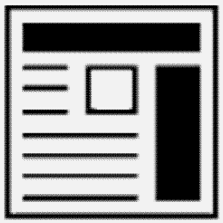
EXERCISE 2: Becoming more culturally aware

The table below will help you keep track of specific tips you can use to increase your cultural awareness. Look back at your notes from reading the five articles above, and choose five tips or ideas from the articles that resonated with you the most. For each tip or idea, write down what specifically you can do to act upon it.

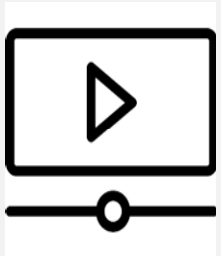
Tips or Ideas that resonated with you:	What will you to act upon this tip or idea
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

6.3 Avoiding Stigma

To ensure you have productive conversations with fellow parents, it is also important to avoid stigmatizing language. Some language used to describe other people or their behaviors can be offensive, disrespectful, and/or demoralizing. This is true whether the stigmatizing language refers directly to the person you are speaking with or about someone else they may care about.



Read the following tool, "Words Matter: How Language Choice Can Reduce Stigma" to learn more about why and how to avoid using stigmatizing language with a focus on substance use disorders.



In addition, watch the TEDx Talk, "Breaking the Stigma and Shame and Mental Illness" to learn more about stigma related to mental health.

EXERCISE: Avoiding Stigma

Look at the list of stigmatizing words available in the three articles below. Are there any words that you tend to use, or you hear others use? In the table below, write down the words that you tend to use or hear others use more often. Then write down the non-stigmatizing terms you would like to use yourself and/or have others use.

- **ShatterProof: Stigma-reducing language**
- **Guide to Avoiding Stigmatizing Language**
- **Words Matter: Terms to Use and Avoid When Talking About Addiction**

Replace…	With…
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

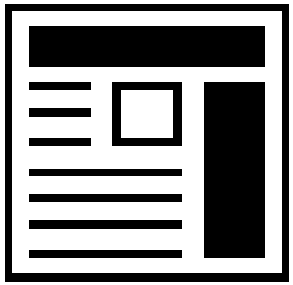
6.4 Recognizing Different Family Structures

6.4 Recognizing Different Family Structures

In order to support parents, it is important to keep in mind that there are a variety of different family structures, and we should try not to make assumptions based on our own experience or bias.

The following article describes different family structures. Read the article and jot down your thoughts.

Type of Family Structures



Recognizing Different Family Structures

Families are diverse in many ways, and deserve respect regardless of how unconventional they may be. Below is a list of different types of families you may encounter, with links to information about each. Select the type of family that you are least familiar with. Before you go to this link, jot down in the first box in the next slide any ideas or feelings you have towards these kind of families.

Then, read more about the type of family you selected by clicking on the link. Then, write down what new information you learned about the type of family you chose.

- **Families of Children with Special Needs**
- **Families experiencing Domestic Violence**
- **Families experiencing Substance Use Disorders**
- **Grandparents as Caregivers**
- **LGBTQ Families**

EXERCISE 1: Recognizing Different Family Structures

Select one of the family structures of the five listed in the previous slide (select one that you are not already familiar with). Read the related resources and then answer the following questions:

1. What is one thing that surprised you about the type of family you read about?
2. What type of advice would you provide to a parent or grandparent in that type of family?

EXERCISE 2: Recognizing Different Family Structures

Answer the two questions below:

1. **Think about the families that you know and have known: who makes up those families? Are there any you might consider "unconventional"? Describe them here.**
2. **Think about your own values and experiences, and now think about how you might react to a family with a very different structure than you are familiar with. Do you think you will treat them the same as other families that you know? If so, how?**

Test Your Knowledge: Modules 5 & 6

Now that you completed modules 5 & 6 on Becoming a PEER Ambassador, it is time to test your knowledge. This next section will be a series of True or False questions to check how well you know this information.

Question 1

True or False?

Self-confidence is something you are born with; if you are not a confident person now you can't become confident in the future.

Question 1

False

Section **3.1. Building Your Confidence** provides several articles/videos that offer tips and ideas for building confidence.

Question 2

True or False?

Active listening involves listening to the person you are speaking with carefully, watching their body language, and asking follow-up questions, if necessary to better understand the speaker.

Question 2

True

Question 3

True or False?

A critical step in becoming an effective PEER Ambassador is developing trust and rapport with other parents.

Question 3

True

Question 4

True or False?

Only people who are racist have implicit bias. Chances are that you don't have any implicit biases.

Question 4

False

Implicit bias refers to attitudes or stereotypes we have unconsciously. All of us have implicit biases, which we can address by trying to identify them through close reflection.

Question 5

True or False?

Using stigmatizing language, including using words like “junkie,” “alcoholic,” or “addict” can help make conversations with parents more productive.

Question 5

False

Using **stigmatizing language** will likely turn off people since those terms can be offensive.