Module 7:
Planning Your Outreach

Introduction

Now that you have moved through the first three modules of this training, there is only one more thing left before you begin your journey as a PEER Ambassador—developing your outreach plan. While all PEER Ambassadors will be guided by Host Site Supervisors and team coordinators, it is helpful for you to spend sometime thinking about the types of parents you want to reach out to, and how you want to do so. This module will help you identify which parents you want to reach, how, where, and when. This module includes the following sections:

- Identifying parents
- Developing your message
- Choosing your strategy(ies)
- Mapping out your approach

Note: Your Host Site Supervisor and team coordinator will help you with your outreach efforts. As you work though this module, you may want to consult with them for advice and guidance.

7.1 Identifying Parents

As a PEER Ambassador you are going to be called upon to support all types of parents—including those you don't know. However, it is also helpful for you to reflect on the type of parents you want to support. For example you may want to focus on parents in your social circles—parents who are your friends, who your children are friends with, who live in your neighborhood, etc. Alternatively, you may decide to focus on parents you don't know but you feel comfortable supporting because of common experiences.

For example, if you have a child with special needs, you may want to reach out to parents who also have children with special needs. To develop a strong outreach plan, it is recommended that you spend some time thinking about the type of parent you want to focus on, as this will help you to better craft your message and your plan.

EXERCISE 1: Reflecting on Your Choices of Parents

Below are sentences to help you reflect on the types of parents you may want to reach to as a PEER Ambassador. Complete each sentence:

The people I feel most comfortable talking to are…
The parenting issues I am most passionate about are…
The people I most want to help succeed are…
Talking to people I know well (e.g., neighbors) about difficult issues makes me feel…
Talking to people I know somewhat well (parents of children from my child's school) about difficult issues makes me feel…
Talking to people I have never met before about difficult issues makes me feel…

EXERCISE 2: Reflecting on Your Choices of Parents

Did filling in these sentences help you decide what type of parents you want to reach? Consider these other characteristics of people you may want to reach:

- Their age
- Their children's age
- People who share your ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, or religious background
- People who have undergone similar experiences to yours
- Parents in your community who may need assistance, but are afraid to identify themselves

Write below a description of your target audience:
Ex: I am most interested to speak to other parents who have children my children's age (e.g., 5-9 years of age), as well as parents who are Hispanic like me. I am also interested in talking to single mothers in particular because I am a single mother and can relate to their experiences.

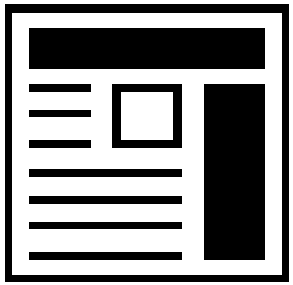
7.2 Developing Your Message

Once you know the type of parent you want to reach, the next step is to develop your message. What will you tell parents when you reach out to them? How will you describe your role as a PEER Ambassador? What will you ask them? This section provides some things to think about in developing your message, but ultimately your message should be your message—in your own words and one that you are comfortable with.

One way to think about your message is as an “elevator speech”. Elevator speeches are short statements people prepare beforehand to share an idea or a message in a few seconds. Read the article in the next slide about developing your elevator speech, and jot down notes. Keep in mind that this article is not designed specifically for PEER Ambassadors, however, the ideas in them can be applicable to the role of PEER Ambassador.

Developing Your Elevator Speech

How to Nail Your Nonprofit's Elevator Pitch



EXERCISE: Developing Your Elevator Speech

Pretend you are at a fair in your child's school. Your goal is to engage at least three other parents in your child's grade in a conversation—offering resources and tools described in module 2. Prepare a thirty-second speech that you will use to introduce yourself and your role as PEER Ambassador. Use the information from the articles above.

7.3 Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Once you know ***who*** you want to reach and ***what*** you will say, the next step is to plan ***how*** you will reach them. While there isn't necessarily going to be a right or wrong approach, you want to choose a strategy or set of strategies that will help you reach parents as effectively and efficiently as possible. Below are some examples of such strategies:

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Social Media: Social media has become an ubiquitous part of our lives. Parents, in particular, use social media to give and receive advice and support related to parenting. To learn more about how parents use social media read, ***Parents and Social Media*** from the Pew Research Center.

You can use social media to post information about upcoming events or resources for parents (e.g., a health fair in your community), or you can use it to reach out to specific parents. To maintain confidentiality, we recommend that you use private channels offered by social media platforms (e.g., private or direct messages on Facebook or Instagram) when you are reaching to *specific, individual* parents.

Your Team Coordinator, Host Site Supervisor, and other PEER Ambassadors will be sharing resources for sharing on social media!

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

School Events: Events at the school are a great place to meet and engage with fellow parents. These events include open houses usually offered at the beginning of the year, music and theater productions at the school, and sporting events where parents come to watch their children compete. If you are not sure when events for parents take place at your child's school, contact the school's front office and they will refer you to the right person or place (e.g., website).

Be sure to check in with your Host Site Supervisor and Team Coordinator and also ask permission of the event organizer before planning your efforts, for example, if you plan on having a table with information at an event.

Your Team Coordinator can help you get set up with resources, games, and giveaways – and maybe help from another PEER Ambassador – for tabling at these events!

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Community Events: Community events include fairs, festivals, and farmers markets, among other types of events. They may take place in community centers, outdoor venues, houses of worship, and school grounds. These events can also be a great way to either network with other parents informally, or depending on the event, to have a table or stand where you can disseminate information.

To find information about these types of events check your town's website, or the website of the various community organizations based in your community. Be sure to check in with your Host Site Supervisor and Team Coordinator and also ask permission of the event organizer before planning your efforts.

Your Team Coordinator can help you get set up with resources, games, and giveaways – and maybe help from another PEER Ambassador – for tabling at these events!

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Social Gatherings: In addition to formal school- or community-based events, another strategy for reaching out to parents are informal social gatherings such as book clubs, dinner with friends, and holiday celebrations. In fact, you may consider organizing your own social gatherings as a way to build community with other parents. For example, consider hosting a book club (or a mom's group!)—invite friends, and friends of friends, to your house for an informal gathering to discuss a book that everyone reads beforehand. If you organize your own social gatherings, you can be very explicit with your guests about your role as a PEER Ambassador when you invite them.

Your Team Coordinator can help you get set up with resources, games, and giveaways – and maybe help from another PEER Ambassador – if this makes sense for these events!

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Individual Outreach: As you reflect on who you want to reach out to, you may identify people in your own social networks who you want to contact. While it can sometimes be tricky to engage in your role as a PEER Ambassador with people who you may have a pre-existing and ongoing relationship, your support of these parents can take a more informal form. You can use your PEER Ambassador training and resources in informal conversations, such as offering a friend a phone number or idea for a place where they can seek help when they are in need.

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

Impromptu Encounters: Sometimes the best time and place to engage with other parents are unplanned situations. You might be at the grocery store shopping for your family and run into a friend who may need help, or you may encounter another parent as you both drop of your children at school. While these types of organic encounters cannot be planned, you can prepare for them by having your elevator speech in your mind, and by keeping your eyes and mind open as you go about your daily life.

Choosing Your Strategy(ies)

These are just some ideas of venues and strategies for conducting your outreach efforts. To decide what approach(es) work best for you there are several important questions for you to answer:

- Where, when, and how am I most likely to encounter the type of parents I would like to reach out to?
- What type of approach do I feel most comfortable using?
- What type of approach will make other parents feel most comfortable interacting with me?

7.4 Mapping out your approach

You are now ready to put together your overall outreach plan, by combining the different pieces you have been building in the previous three sections.

Below is an action plan you can fill out by identifying your target population, your messaging, and your strategy. Once you completed your action plan, you can share it with your Host Site Supervisor or Team Coordinator for additional guidance and support.

Action Plan

Target Population	Messaging	Strategy	
		Venue/Medium	Strategy
Ex: Parents of children in my child's school	*Ex: My name is …, I am the parent of… I am also a PEER Ambassador for [your Host Site] I would love to talk with you about…*	*Ex: Back to school night*	*Ex: Set up table in lobby with permission from school officials Bring resources, games and giveaways*

Test Your Knowledge: Module 7

Now that you have completed Module 7 on Planning Your Outreach, 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?

A good elevator pitch should provide as many details as possible, no matter how long it ends up being.

Question 1

False

Elevator pitches should be short—about 30 seconds, and provide only the essential details to let the person know who you are and how you can help them.

Question 2

True or False?

As a PEER Ambassador, you should only reach out to fellow parents you already know.

Question 2

False

PEER Ambassadors will be called upon to connect with all type of parents, including people you may not already know.

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?

A strong elevator pitch requires having a clear understanding of your role as a PEER Ambassador and how you can help.

Question 4

True

Question 5

True or False?

Community-based organizations' website are a good source of information about when and where events are taking place in the community.

Question 5

True

Conclusion

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have now completed the PEER Ambassador training! You are ready to go out to your community and make a difference by supporting parents, like yourself, in raising healthy, happy children.

Feel free to come back to any module or section of this training any time to review information and/or to re-think your strategy.

Don’t forget that your Host Site Supervisor and your Team Coordinator are available to support you through the process. Good luck!

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