



Trauma-Informed Peer Support Role Play Ideas

The Hinda Institute

Here are five sample role plays for your students to practice trauma-informed peer support skills. Each role play includes the roles of two individuals and a brief description of the scenario. Remember, the focus is on the skills mentioned: promoting safety and care, modeling empowerment, providing psycho-education, promoting coping skills and emotional regulation, strengthening resilience, advising on avoiding and managing triggers, self-care awareness, and understanding re-traumatization and secondary trauma.

Role Play 1: Safety and Care

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter talking to a friend, Role B, who has recently experienced a traumatic event. Your main goal is to create a safe and supportive environment for them to express their feelings and concerns. Use active listening and empathy to ensure they feel heard and understood.

Role B: Trauma Survivor

You have experienced a recent traumatic event and are struggling to cope with your emotions. You're seeking support from your friend, Role A. Share your feelings and concerns, and pay attention to how Role A promotes safety and care throughout the conversation.

Role Play 2: Empowerment and Coping Skills

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter providing guidance to your friend, Role B, who is feeling overwhelmed by their trauma-related experiences. Your objective is to empower them by helping them recognize their strengths and abilities to cope. Share your own experiences of overcoming challenges to inspire them.

Role B: Trauma Survivor

You've been feeling helpless and disempowered due to your trauma. In this role play, you're seeking guidance from your friend, Role A. Express your struggles and listen carefully as Role A models empowerment and offers coping strategies.

Role Play 3: Psycho-Education and Triggers

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter educating your friend, Role B, about trauma and its effects. Provide them with information about common reactions to trauma and triggers. Help them understand that their reactions are normal and offer strategies to manage triggers effectively.

Role B: Trauma Survivor

You are interested in learning more about trauma and how it impacts people. You're engaging in a conversation with your friend, Role A, who has knowledge about trauma-related topics. Listen actively and ask questions to gain a better understanding of trauma and triggers.



Role Play 4: Resilience and Self-Care

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter discussing resilience and self-care with your friend, Role B, who has been struggling to bounce back after their trauma. Share stories of how people have built resilience and managed to lead fulfilling lives despite their traumatic experiences. Emphasize the importance of self-care.

Role B: Trauma Survivor

You've been feeling like you can't overcome the challenges posed by your trauma. In this role play, you're having a conversation with your friend, Role A, about building resilience and practicing self-care. Listen to Role A's stories and advice, and engage in a discussion about your own journey toward resilience.

Role Play 5: Secondary Trauma and Self-Care Awareness

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter discussing the concept of secondary trauma with your friend, Role B, who works in a helping profession and has been experiencing its effects. Offer insights into recognizing and managing secondary trauma. Highlight the importance of self-care and setting boundaries.

Role B: Helper in a Helping Profession

You work in a helping profession and have been feeling emotionally drained due to the nature of your work. You're having a conversation with your friend, Role A, about the challenges of secondary trauma. Share your experiences and listen as Role A provides guidance on self-care and boundary-setting.

These role plays should provide your students with opportunities to practice the key skills you've outlined. Encourage them to immerse themselves in their roles and scenarios, focusing on active listening, empathy, and effective communication techniques.

Role Play 6: Establishing Safety and Trust

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter engaging with your friend, Role B, who has recently been released from incarceration. Your goal is to create a safe and trusting space for them to share their concerns and challenges related to reentry. Focus on active listening, empathy, and validating their feelings.

Role B: Reentering Individual



Having just left prison, you're struggling with mixed emotions and uncertainties about reentry. You're discussing your feelings and apprehensions with your friend, Role A. Observe how Role A promotes safety, trust, and an understanding environment.

Role Play 7: Empowerment and Building Skills

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter guiding your friend, Role B, who is facing difficulties adjusting to life after incarceration. Your aim is to empower them by highlighting their strengths and helping them identify skills they can develop to reintegrate successfully into society.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're feeling overwhelmed by the challenges of finding employment and stable housing post-incarceration. Role A is offering support and guidance on empowerment and skill-building. Pay attention to how Role A motivates and empowers you to take charge of your reentry process.

Role Play 8: Coping with Triggers and Emotions

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter discussing triggers and emotional regulation with your friend, Role B, who is struggling with unexpected triggers related to their time in prison. Your role is to provide coping strategies and promote emotional awareness.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're experiencing intense emotions and triggers linked to your time in prison. In this role play, you're seeking advice from your friend, Role A, on managing these triggers. Notice how Role A assists you in understanding and coping with these challenging feelings.

Role Play 9: Resilience and Redefining Identity

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter exploring resilience and identity with your friend, Role B, who is grappling with a sense of loss and uncertainty about their identity after incarceration. Your focus is on discussing resilience-building and assisting them in finding a positive self-identity.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're feeling like you've lost a part of your identity due to your incarceration experience. You're engaging in a conversation with your friend, Role A, about resilience and self-identity. Pay attention to how Role A guides you in rediscovering your strengths and potential.

Role Play 10: Secondary Trauma and Self-Care for Advocates

Role A: Peer Supporter



You are a peer supporter discussing secondary trauma and self-care with your friend, Role B, who is working as an advocate for individuals reentering society after incarceration. Your role involves providing guidance on recognizing signs of secondary trauma and practicing effective self-care.

Role B: Reentry Advocate

As an advocate, you've been emotionally impacted by the stories of those you're supporting. You're having a conversation with your friend, Role A, about secondary trauma and self-care strategies. Observe how Role A helps you navigate the challenges of your role while prioritizing your well-being.

These role plays should help your students practice trauma-informed peer support skills specifically tailored to post-incarceration reentry settings. Encourage them to immerse themselves in the scenarios and apply the skills they've learned to create a supportive and empathetic environment for their peers.

Role Play 11: Addressing Triggers and Coping Strategies

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter engaging with your friend, Role B, who is encountering triggers from their past during the reentry process. Your role is to provide a safe space for them to share their triggers and offer practical coping strategies to navigate these challenging situations.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You've been facing triggers related to your time in prison, and they're affecting your ability to reintegrate successfully. In this role play, you're discussing your triggers with your friend, Role A. Pay attention to how Role A assists you in understanding and managing these triggers.

Role Play 12: Empowerment and Skill Development

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter guiding your friend, Role B, who is struggling with a lack of confidence in their skills after leaving incarceration. Your goal is to empower them by helping them recognize their abilities and offering guidance on acquiring new skills for reentry success.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're feeling uncertain about your skills and abilities after being released from prison. You're seeking advice from your friend, Role A, on how to regain confidence and develop new skills. Observe how Role A encourages you to take proactive steps towards empowerment.

Role Play 13: Navigating Family and Community Dynamics

Role A: Peer Supporter



You are a peer supporter discussing family and community dynamics with your friend, Role B, who is finding it challenging to reconnect with loved ones after incarceration. Your role is to offer insights into effective communication and boundary-setting within these relationships.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're struggling to rebuild connections with your family and community members post-incarceration. In this role play, you're having a conversation with your friend, Role A, about navigating these relationships. Notice how Role A provides guidance on effective communication and fostering understanding.

Role Play 14: Building a Support Network

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter assisting your friend, Role B, in building a support network after reentry. Your objective is to help them identify individuals and resources that can contribute to their successful reintegration into society.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You're eager to establish a support network to aid your reentry journey. In this role play, you're discussing your aspirations with your friend, Role A, who is guiding you in identifying potential sources of support. Pay attention to how Role A helps you recognize available resources.

Role Play 15: Advocating for Self-Care and Wellness

Role A: Peer Supporter

You are a peer supporter discussing the importance of self-care and wellness with your friend, Role B, who is neglecting their well-being amidst the challenges of reentry. Your role is to emphasize the significance of self-care practices and offer practical suggestions.

Role B: Reentering Individual

You've been prioritizing your reentry tasks but neglecting your own well-being. You're having a conversation with your friend, Role A, about self-care and wellness. Observe how Role A encourages you to make self-care a fundamental aspect of your journey.

These role plays should allow your students to engage in meaningful practice of trauma-informed peer support skills in the context of post-incarceration reentry. Encourage them to delve into their roles, focusing on empathy, active listening, and effective communication as they navigate these complex scenarios.



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