

Myotonic Dystrophy Foundation Support Group Facilitator Training



Project Staff Team



Support



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Welcome

**Introducing Give an Hour and
our unique approach to
Trauma Informed Peer Support!**

www.giveanhour.org

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Mental Health. For Life.

Founded in 2005, Give an Hour® is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming mental health by building **strong** and **healthy**, and **resilient** individuals and communities.

We provide **no-cost counseling** through a network of volunteer mental health professionals and empower community through collaborative programs, **peer support** **customized training**, and **mental health tools** that benefit both clients and providers.

OUR MISSION

Develop **resilient individuals and** their **communities** and grow our social impact through responsive, scalable and individualized **mental health programs** aimed at closing access and delivery gaps.



#1 IN MENTAL HEALTH

By Dec 2026, be the #1 Mental Health Social Impact organization.



IMPACT 8 MILLION

Impact 8 MILLION Americans affected by human-made trauma to receive stigma-free, no cost, anytime, anywhere mental health services and support (20% of our TAM)



50,000 VOLUNTEERS

We will be the premier platform for 50k mental health professionals, wellness ambassadors, and peer supporters (10% providers market share)



Give an Hour's Approach



Everything we do is informed through the knowledge gained from ***lived experiences***.

We ***listen*** to what individuals want and need, educate mental health providers to ***understand*** the community on a deeper level, and ***customize our services*** and supports to be responsive toward long term health and wellness.

Rare Community

Give an Hour® provides support and closes gaps across the continuum of mental health care.

The Rare Disease Care Partner Program is designed to address the unmet and/or disconnected mental health and emotional well-being needs of those in the *rare community at any point of their journey*. Give an Hour entered the space in 2021, in which we learned three distinct participant-driven themes regarding unmet needs.

1

Connection: judgment-free human connection to similar experiences to give and get support

2

Community: option to opt into a community of support v. pressure of a one-on-one relationship

3

Continuity: durable, long-term support that is both stabilizing and reliable throughout the journey

Peer Support

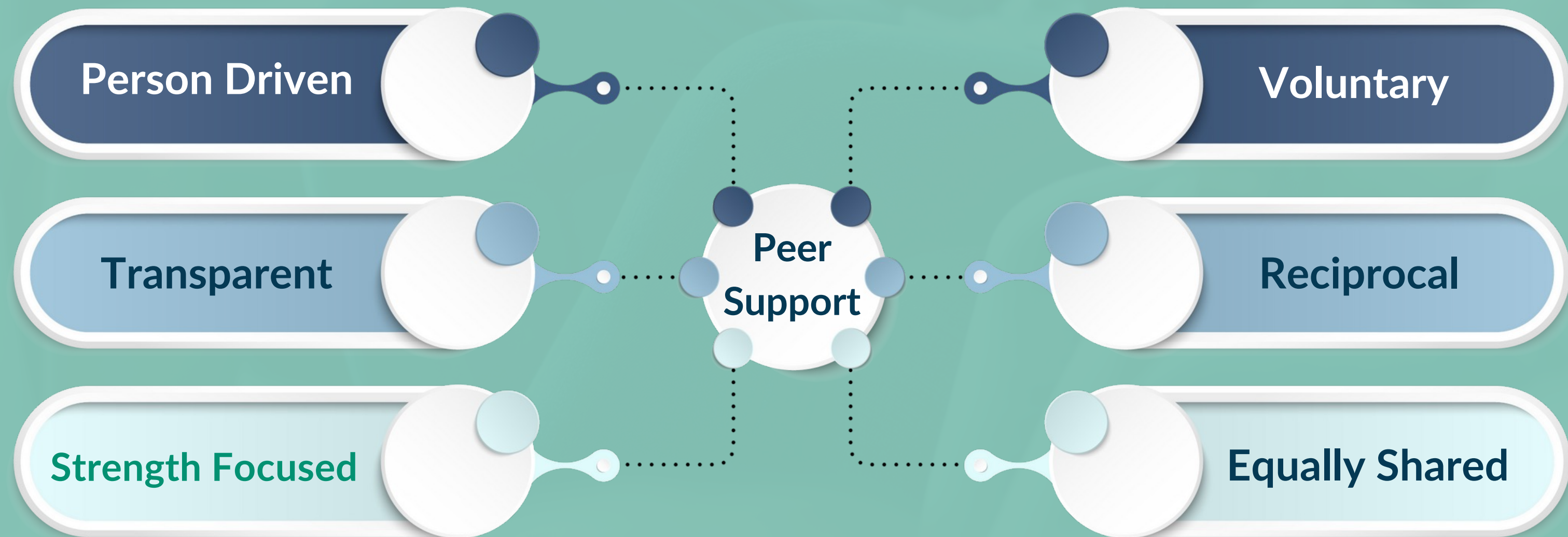
Our evidence based peer support model, which we call TIPS, short for *Trauma Informed Peer Support*, is designed to offer knowledge for individuals with a goal to connect and support others during their healing journeys. This model can be customized to meet the needs of specific peer populations.



GAH worked with **Cherie Castellano, MA, CSW, LPC, AAETS-ICISF** who is a national expert in the field of peer support after 25 years of experience as the creator of the “Reciprocal Peer Support Model” which is recognized as a national best practice by the American Psychiatric Association (2019) and Department of Defense Center of Excellence (2011.)

Peer Support is:

A process through which people who share common experiences or face similar challenges come together as equals to give and receive help based on the knowledge that comes through shared experience.



WHAT IS
IT?

HOW CAN I USE IT IN PEER
SUPPORT?

It **does not** mean to “treat” the trauma (we are not clinicians)

It **does mean** to:

- Recognize high level of trauma exposure among adults
- Promote self care and self-compassion for yourself and those you serve
- Look at the whole person, not just the behavior or words they use
- Understand that behaviors serve a purpose

Peer Support is Reciprocal Support

- ***Giving and receiving*** encouragement and assistance to achieve long-term resilience and recovery.
- ***Providing emotional support***, sharing collective knowledge, teaching skills, offering practical assistance, and building communities of support including resources and opportunities.



Peer Support Through Give an Hour

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PEER-LED TIPS SUPPORT GROUPS

Give an Hour holds peer support groups for each of the populations we serve. We currently have monthly groups for military veterans and active duty soldiers, their loved ones, survivors of mass violence and financial fraud, victims of interpersonal violence and rare disease care partners. We also train other organizations on how to set up their own peer support groups.

TIPS TRAINING

Give an Hour's peer support curriculum, "TIPS," stands for Trauma Informed Peer Support and is offered to any individual who is interested in learning how to use their own experiences to support others. It is a 4 hour live, virtual, interactive training, with a comprehensive Guidebook and customized resources. It also includes QPR certification. Once trained, individuals are also eligible for GAH's TIPS Facilitator Training.

TIPS FACILITATOR TRAINING

TIPS Group Facilitator Training is offered to individuals that have completed TIPS Training and are interested in facilitating Peer-Led Support Groups. It is a 2 hour live, virtual, interactive training, with a comprehensive Guidebook and customized resource. Facilitators also receive monthly meetings with mental health, participate in quarterly meetings with other facilitators and complete quarterly assessments.

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. The hand on the left is wearing a light green long-sleeved shirt and has teal nail polish and a silver ring. The hand on the right is wearing a patterned sleeve. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a hospital bed or a similar setting.

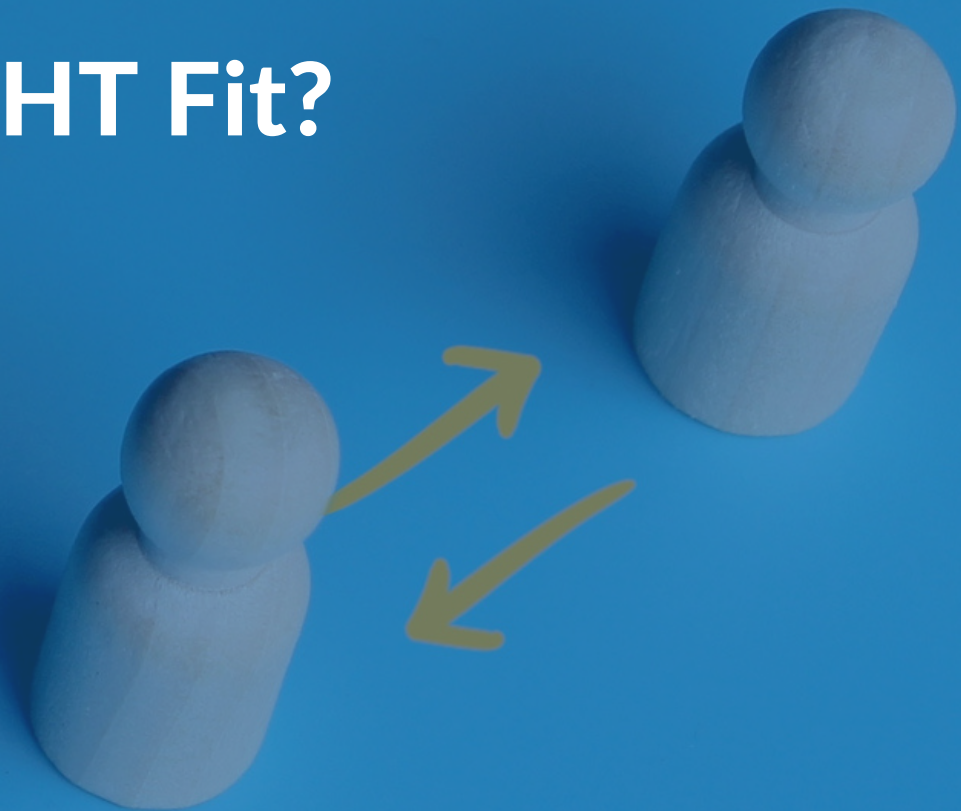
Effective Peer Support Models:

Peer support works best when the people who attend are the RIGHT fit to receive this type of support in a group setting.

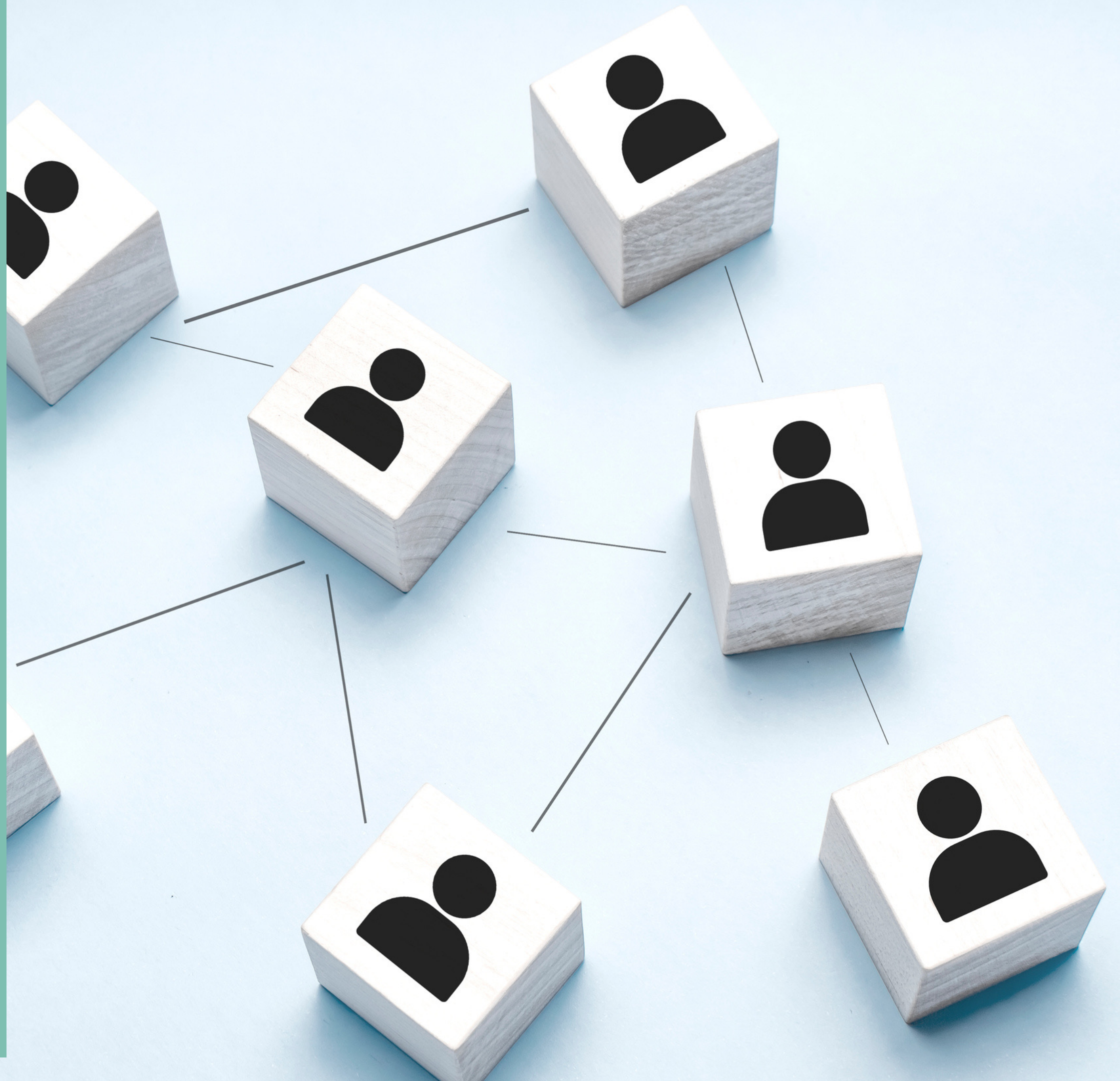
And you have the RIGHT facilitator with the RIGHT training, skills and support.

Assessing the Participant

Is Peer Support The RIGHT Fit?



HOW DO PARTICIPANTS JOIN YOUR GROUP?





Who is Peer Support For



Connect to Others

Anyone who wants to connect with other people with a similar lived experience, in a group setting.



Give and Receive Support

Anyone who wants to share, and learn through non-clinical support.



Not Meant for Treatment

Peer support groups are not for someone looking for “treatment”, which takes the forms of:

- Receiving a diagnosis
- Needing an evaluation for medication
- Engaging in modalities of healing which require specialized training (EMDR, CBT)
- 1:1 focus on the individual seeking help



Is Peer Support the Right Fit?



Nature of the Issue: Assess the nature and severity of the individual's challenges.

Safety and Risk: Consider whether the person is in a safe environment and whether their well-being is at risk.

Previous Support: Evaluate the individual's previous experiences with peer support and professional help.

Accessibility and Availability: Consider the availability and accessibility of peer support resources and professional help.

Acceptance and Comfort Level: Assess the individual's comfort level and openness to seeking support from peers or professionals.

Functional Impairment: Evaluate whether the person's daily functioning is significantly impaired by the issue.

Assessment by a Professional: If you're unsure about the best course of action, it's helpful to involve a professional, such as a therapist, counselor, or a mental health provider.

Combination of Support: In some cases, a combination of peer support and professional help may be beneficial.

What Peer Support Cannot Do

If you have a mental health condition that may benefit from medication:

Consult a mental health doctor, such as a psychiatrist or mental health nurse practitioner who has experience treating your condition.

MD, DO, PMHNP, APN

If you're seeking targeted, individualized help with emotions, behaviors, and recurring patterns:

Consult with a therapist, counselor, or psychologist. Like medical doctors, these professionals have specialties, so find one who knows about your specific issue.

LCSW, CLPC, MFT, LSW, PhD



Are You The RIGHT Facilitator For The Group?

Evaluating your beliefs and capabilities

Do I need to be a mental health professional to recognize....?

EMOTIONAL SIGNS:

- **Anxiety/ Irritability**
- **Anger/ Frustration**
- **Cynicism**
- **Sadness/ Depression**
- **Pessimism**
- **Fear**
- **Panic**
- **Numbness/ Apathy**
- **Survivor's Guilt**
- **Helplessness**
- **Dread**
- **Confusion**
- **Hopelessness**
- **Emptiness**
- **Feeling a loss of control**

Do I need to be a mental health professional to recognize....?

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS:

- **Impatience**
- **Withdrawal/Isolation**
- **Moodiness**
- **Hypervigilance**
- **Angry outbursts**
- **Misplaced blame**
- **Nightmares**
- **Increased sick visits**
- **Absenteeism**
- **Over-protectiveness**
- **Lowered Intimacy**

Do I need to be a mental health professional to recognize....?

PHYSICAL SIGNS:

- **Headaches, nausea, muscle tension**
- **Decreased appetite, insomnia, fatigue**
- **Increased heart rate, panic attacks, hypertension**
- **Gastrointestinal complaints, weight loss/gain**
- **Numbness/tingling in extremities**
- **Increases in cold and flu-like symptoms**

SPIRITUAL SIGNS:

- **Loss of purpose**
- **Lack of satisfaction**
- **Questioning meaning of life or beliefs**
- **Increased skepticism**
- **Loss of faith in God/U.S./Mission**
- **Loss of faith in humanity**

Self Assessment: *see your handout*



Rate each quality on a scale of 1 to 4 (1=Rarely, 2=Sometimes, 3=Frequently, 4=Consistently)

Peer Support Qualities	How I Rate Myself			
	1 RARELY	2 SOMETIMES	3 FREQUENTLY	4 CONSISTENTLY
	I am like this less than 50% of the time	I am like this 50%-75% of the time	I am like this 75% to 90% of the time	I am like this at least 90% of the time
PRESENT				
OPEN MINDED				
OBJECTIVE				
SENSITIVE				
COMMITTED TO WELLNESS				
SELF CARE				
SELF AWARE				

Focus on solutions:



Empower individuals to devise their own solutions for a more effective healing process.



Encourage self-awareness by asking individuals to reflect on behavioral changes and the potential benefits of services.



Support by crafting and following a personalized wellness plan.



Utilize a resource guide for informed support options.



Maintain resources with an available list of services and tools to quickly intervene and prevent mental health crises.



Peer Support Success Depends on:



**CREATING
CONNECTION**



**CONFIDENCE IN
YOUR KNOWLEDGE**



**CARING FOR
YOURSELF**



Rarely, can a response
make ***something better.***

What makes something better is

Connection

Brené Brown on Empathy

Pay Attention to:

STOP before you...

- Give Unsolicited Advice
- Judge
- Take Sides
- Make it About You
- Make Promises You Can't Keep



Key Tasks to Building Connection



Use Strength-
Based Approach



Find Common
Understanding &
Orient to One Another



Have Positive
Attitudes



Use Good
Boundaries &
Role Clarification

Skill Building Connection



O.A.R.S

- Open-Ended Questions
- Affirmations
- Reflections
- Summarize



How Do I Ask an Open-ended Question?

- Avoid simple answers
- Start with "How" or "What"
- Use hypothetical questions
- Make sure the answer can't be "yes" or "no"




"What are things you want to improve on?"

"How do you feel about this recent change in your life?"

"Can you tell me more about..."

Active Listening

- ✓ Be attentive
- ✓ Body language/Eye contact
- ✓ Asking “good” questions
- ✓ Articulating partner’s feelings
- ✓ Listening doesn’t imply agreement
- ✓ Mirroring



In general, we humans tend to like to **TALK way more than we LISTEN**. When attempting to relate to others or to establish trust, **using our ears is way more powerful than using our mouth**

Reflective Listening

- Builds trusting relationships
- Helps with engagement
- Fosters motivation to change
- Closes gaps in communication
- Shows interest in the conversation
- Use verbal cues such as "uh-huh" and "that makes sense"

"I understand why you would be upset about that outcome"

”

EMPATHY

When you're sympathetic, you might feel pity for the other person's situation, but there's still a distance between you and their experience.

But when you're empathetic, you don't just know how someone else feels; **you understand how they feel, and you feel it with them.** Or, simply put, empathy "implies feeling with a person, rather than feeling sorry for a person."



I don't know what to say,
but ***I am glad you shared
with me.*** I am here to
listen and help.
We will get through this.

EMPATHETIC STATEMENTS

- It sounds like you did everything you could.
- I can see how difficult this has been.
- The whole thing sounds so discouraging.
- I can totally see why you would be upset.
- This is so hard.
- I can't believe how well you're holding up, considering how much stress you're under.



An empathetic person
listens first and only speaks
after they've carefully heard.
We call this active listening.



Affirmations



- Recognizes strengths
- Builds confidence
- Feels Genuine
- Promotes positive change



"I appreciate you speaking with me today."

"You are very resourceful when seeking help."

"You handled that situation very well."

Summarize

- **Helpful at transition points or ending a conversation**
- **Helps ensure clear communication**
- **Reinforces information being shared**
- **Allows for the person to hear what they are saying**

"Let me see if I understand..."

"Here is what I heard..."



Listening Blocks Exercise

listen...

Which Three Do **YOU**
Struggle With Most?



Rehearsing

Looking at
my Phone

Comparing

Mind Reading

Filtering

Placating

Interrupting
Derailing

Advising

Identifying

Judging

SHARING YOUR STORY

Considerations...

Preparing For Storytelling?

Is It The Right
Time?

Is There
Enough Time?

Private
Space?

Are
They
Ready?

Are YOU
Ready?

Can You
Be Present?

What Happens
Afterwards?

Do You And
They Have
Support
Afterwards?

The background features a blue-tinted image of several hands cupped together, holding a large, simple smiley face icon. The hands are positioned around the smiley face, suggesting support and care. The overall color scheme is a solid blue.

Focusing on Emotional Health and Wellness

Introducing tools to help you
support others

Emotional Health and Wellbeing:



Emotional Health is the ability to cope with negative and positive emotions.

Wellbeing incorporates the presence of positive moods and emotions and lacks negative emotions, fulfillment, life satisfaction, and positive functioning.

National Institutes of Health defines Emotional Wellness as
“...the ability to successfully handle life’s stresses and adapt to change and difficult times.”

Emotional Suffering VS Mental Illness

WE ALL HAVE *Mental* HEALTH



EMOTIONAL SUFFERING



MENTAL ILLNESS



Personality Changed?



Feeling Agitated?



Feeling Withdrawn?



Poor Self-Care?



Feeling Hopeless?



Trauma

Trauma



- **Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event** (car accident, sexual assault, natural disaster, an unexpected, life altering diagnosis).
- It is an event that is outside one's normal experience that can cause deeply distressing and disturbing feelings that **can exceed our ability to cope.**
- Can have **long lasting effects** to a person's development.

Post-Traumatic Stress Causes

- ✓ Learning a new diagnosis
- ✓ Diagnosis of friends and family
- ✓ Medical trauma
- ✓ Unknowns



Face the Five

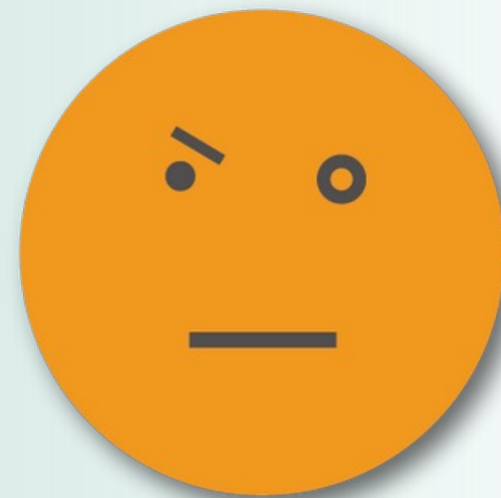
One of the essential steps toward promoting emotional wellbeing involves **recognizing signs of emotional distress**. Utilizing the "5 Signs of Emotional Suffering" developed by Give an Hour, we can pinpoint when an individual may be grappling with emotional challenges.



Know the Five Signs



Personality Changed?



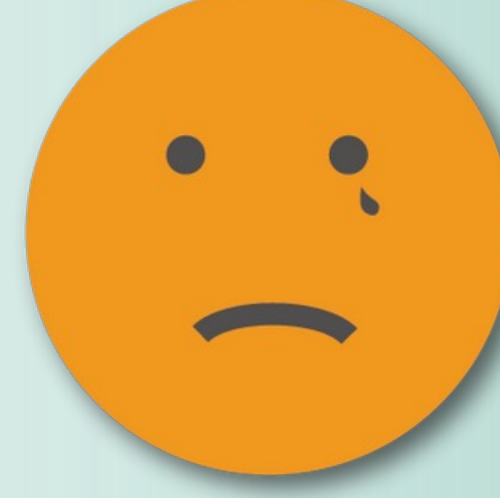
Feeling Agitated?



Feeling Withdrawn?








Poor Self-Care?



Feeling Hopeless?

Assessing Through Conversation

-  Who is one person you can count on when you're struggling?
-  What do you do when you are struggling?
-  Where do you go when you are seeking relief from uncomfortable feelings?
-  Have you struggled like this before? If so, what did you do that helped?
-  What else?



Self-Care Tools

THE HEALTHY HABITS OF EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

TAKE
CARE



CHECK IN



CONNECT



RELA
X



KNOW THE FIVE
SIGNS

HOW TO COPE...WHEN THERE'S NO IMMEDIATE FIX

Establish healthy coping mechanisms

Develop a "letting go" routine. It can feel demoralizing to think there's nothing you can do. When we look at the big picture, things that go right often outnumber the things that go wrong. Celebrate all the small wins to continue to reinforce HOPEFULNESS



Feel your feelings. You don't need to "Stay Strong" for others.

Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to "protect" your family, friends, or colleagues by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you to manage and process your feelings. Their perspective may offer you an objective response to help ground you in the here and now.

Ignoring the pain won't make it go away

Ignoring your pain or keeping it from surfacing won't make it go away, it will only make it worse. Encourage managing grief and pain by acknowledging it and making strategies to actively deal with it.



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

The human mind is incredibly averse to uncertainty and ambiguity.

We respond to uncertainty or lack of clarity by spontaneously generating plausible explanations. Sometimes these expectations need to be managed as they're not based in reality.



ACCEPT THE NOW

Relinquish your search for reasons, and what-ifs. Trying to force answers can lead to more frustration and confusion than when you started. We don't own events or their reasons. We own what we do with them.

SURRENDER EXPECTATIONS

Let go of the expectations of others and of the pressures that you put on yourself- these are not an accurate representation of you.

LISTEN TO YOUR VOICE

Expectations can be contradictory. It is statistically impossible to please everyone. Don't allow the voices of others drown out your own.

AFFIRM YOURSELF

It's Okay to not be Okay right now.

Wellness Planning and *Goal Setting*

Wellness Plan



You don't need to fill in every box—this plan is a reminder that these are critical areas for peer support.

WELLNESS AREAS	DURING THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I WILL
SLEEP HEALTH	
STRESS MANAGEMENT	
EXERCISE	
RELAXATION	
SOCIAL WELLNESS	
EMOTIONAL WELLNESS	
INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS	
SPIRITUAL WELLNESS	

SKILL BUILDING & GOAL SETTING



CREATE
SPECIFIC
GOAL-
SETTING
SESSIONS

CONSIDER
OPTIONS
USE
CREATIVE
PROBLEM
SOLVING

QUALITY
OF LIVE

PEER'S
DEFINITION

GO
THE
EXTRA
MILE

DIMENSION
S
OF
WELLNESS



PEER DRIVEN GOALS



SPECIFIC
MEASURABLE
ACHIEVABLE
REALISTIC
TIMELY

SMART Goals Are
T Well *Crafted*

Understanding Resilience

Resilience

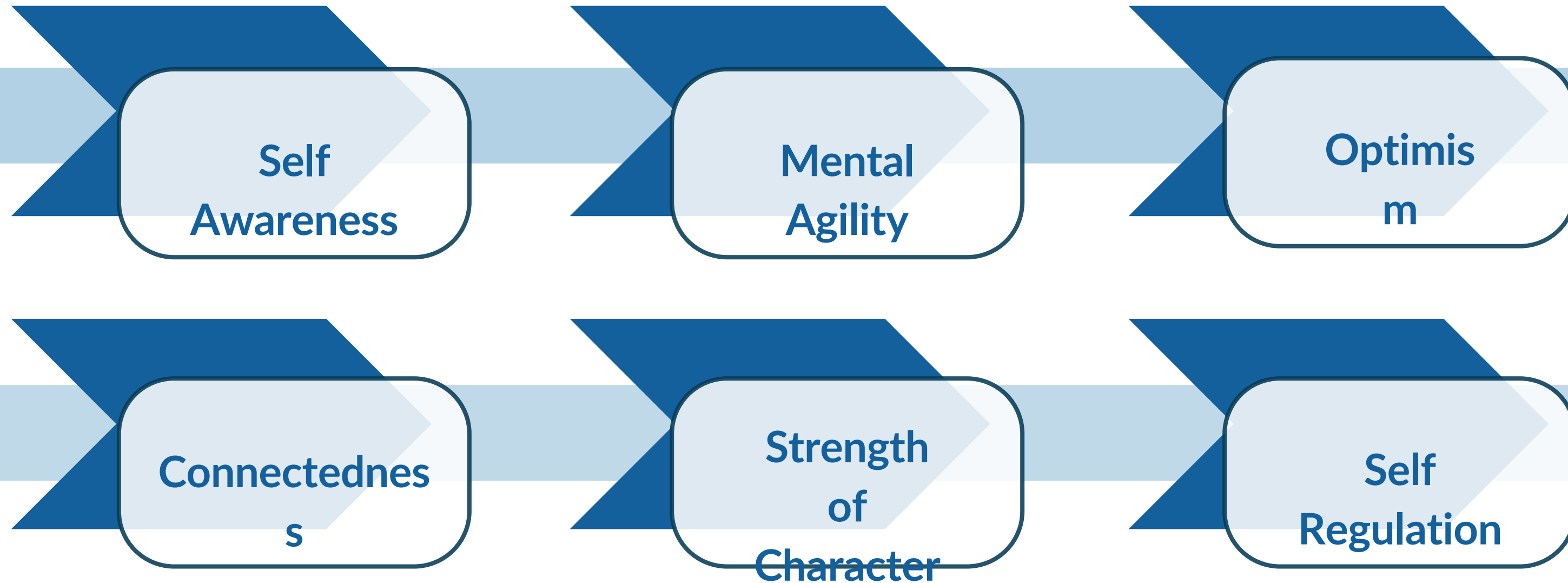
Resilience is the ability of a person to adapt, recover, or withstand challenges, stressors, or adverse circumstances, and to bounce back

Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to cope with stress, adversity, or trauma and maintain or regain their emotional, mental, or physical well-being.





What Does it Mean to be Resilient?



Caring For Yourself So You Can Care For Others

The Importance of Boundaries: What They Are & Why They Are Needed

The Value of Boundaries

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graph TD; A((The Value of Boundaries)) --- B((Boundaries keep our peers and ourselves safe.)); A --- C((Relationships can feel authentic- reduces feelings of resentment.)); A --- D((Clear boundaries allow trust to be established more effectively.)); A --- E((Modelling them helps others more easily set their own.));
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Boundaries keep our peers and ourselves safe.

Relationships can feel authentic- reduces feelings of resentment.

Clear boundaries allow trust to be established more effectively.

Modelling them helps others more easily set their own.

Steps to Maintain Healthy Boundaries

Share boundaries openly. Be specific about your role in the peer's life.

Create a safe environment with peers for sharing boundaries.

Be sensitive to boundaries that are flexible and those that are not.

Review boundaries periodically.

Discussion

1

How might you notice that you have overextended your boundaries with a peer?

2

How would you manage your holding boundaries with your peer?

3

What would you do if a peer's needs cannot be addressed?



Understanding Burnout & Compassion Fatigue



What Does BURNOUT Look Like?

Persistent Exhaustion:

- Constant fatigue
- **Irritability** and impatience
- **Withdrawing** from social interaction

Mental Fog:

- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty focusing and making decisions
- **Overwhelmed** and unable to start tasks

Despair:

- Feelings of **hopelessness** and worthlessness
- **Overwhelmed** by responsibilities
- Sense of losing control

Imbalance:

- Diminished joy in work/life
- Boredom and loss of perspective
- Feeling **unappreciated** and less productive
- **Difficulty in setting boundaries**

Sleep & Appetite Changes:

- **Disturbed sleep**, feeling unrested
- Altered appetite
- **Neglect** of daily duties and responsibilities

NAVIGATING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Disengagement can be a result of ***accumulated stress***.

A desire to avoid stress can lead to a loss of interest and detachment from the people that we support.



1

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Ignoring personal needs for others.
- Isolation and lack of self-support.
- Skipping meals and neglecting hydration.
- Avoiding necessary rest and time off.
- Overworking and feeling guilty for self-care.

2

EMPATHY VS. ABSORPTION

- Maintain empathy without taking on others' despair.
- Differentiate between empathy (with) and compassion (for).

3

MIRRORING EMOTIONS

- Avoid adopting ' emotions and lifestyles.
- Use mindfulness to manage emotional regulation and maintain professional boundaries.

The Importance of Self-Care: What Does That Mean for You?

Utilize Common Sense:

- Identify stress triggers and strategize to mitigate them.
- Refer when outside your expertise.
- Seek guidance from supervisors or consultants when needed.
- Remember, solutions exist for most problems.



What is self-care and why is it important?



Self-care is

- A daily practice and mindset
- Embodies mindfulness
- Requires self-compassion
- Includes being supported at work (systems, supervisor, organization)

It is important because it..

- Assists in recognizing and responding to signs of stress
- Produces positive feelings, enhances self-esteem and confidence
- Sets boundaries for self and others
- Can prevent burnout and help maintain motivation and passion

Use Your Resources



Clinician on call



SGF meetings



Give an Hour



Peer Support Challenges

Challenges to Peer Support

- ✓ Role Confusion
 - ✓ Being held to a different
standard
 - ✓ Remote Connections
 - ✓ Systems-internal and external
- Becoming Activated



PEER SUPPORT DO'S & DON'TS

DO

- Connect
- Express Care
- Listen
- Share Experiences
- Verbal/Non-Verbal Cues



DON'T

- Give Advice
- Judge
- Take Sides
- Make it About You
- Make Promises You Can't Keep

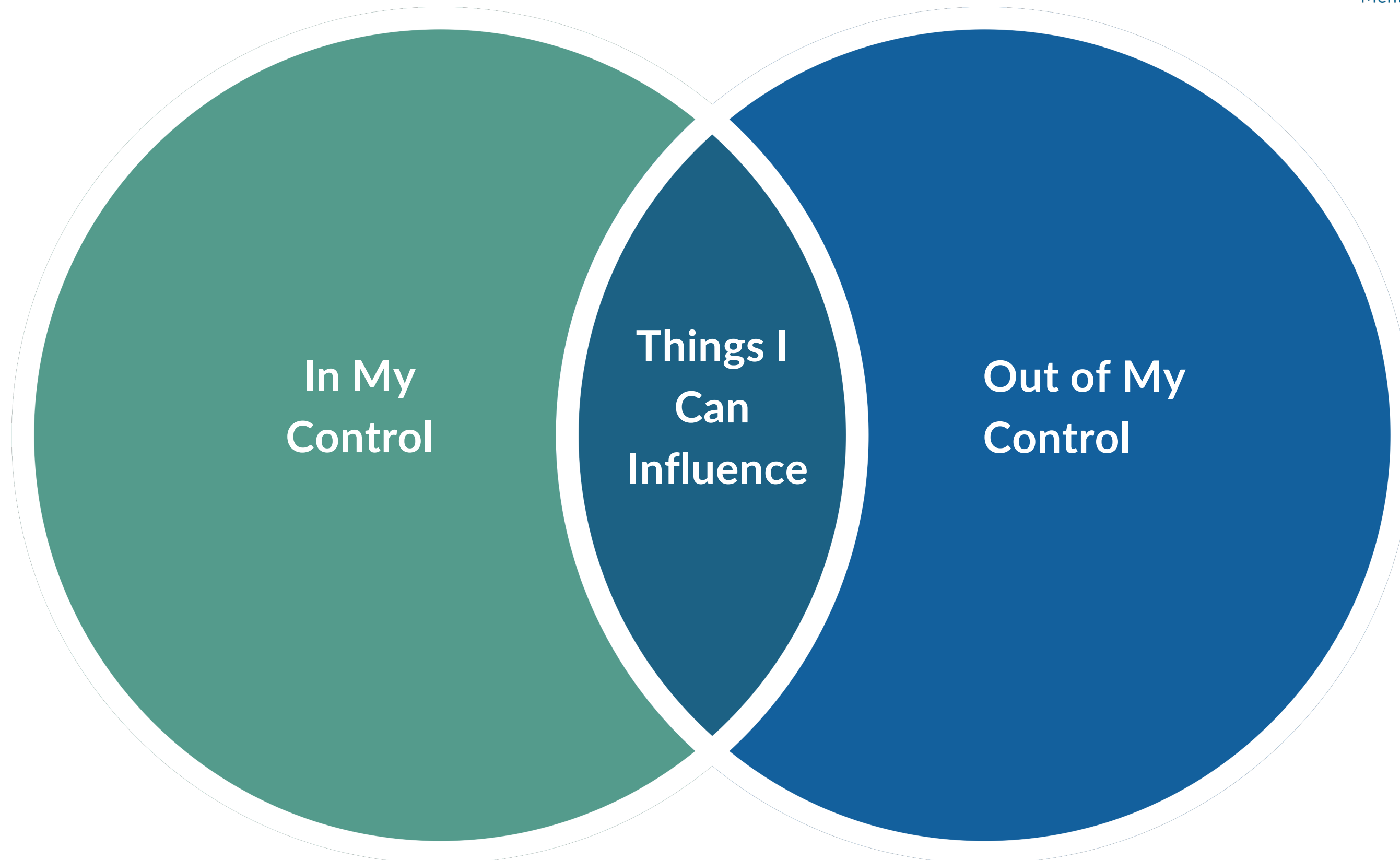




- Someone oversharing
- Someone taking up all the time
- Interrupting or offering unsolicited advice
- Projecting
- Disrupting the meeting (background noise, coming late, leaving early, etc.)
- Someone coming to the group in crisis and needs a referral
- Disagreements on politics or views about the topic
- Crying
- Silence

Group Members' Behaviors and Challenges

Practice



Contact Us



Thank you for attending! We look forward to continuing to offer support through GAH resources!

Please *contact Molly* with any questions or concerns you have.
mmaurer@giveanhour.org



www.giveanhour.org



mmaurer@giveanhour.org

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