MY SKILLS as a Peer Leader & Facilitator

EMPOWER

EDUCATE

ENABLE

ENHANCE

ENGAGE

EFFECTIVE

ENLIGHTEN

ENRICH

I AM
YOU ARE
WE ARE
SASHAKTH

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Introduction

UNICEF has partnered with NSS to empower and engage with the youth volunteers under NSS, NYK and NCC on issues related to adolescent boys and girls and mobilize them as **change agents** for themselves and their communities. These volunteers in turn promote the rights and entitlements of adolescents through peer education, social mobilization and networking with service providers.

Knowing about their Rights, Schemes and Entitlements helps one to understand that every child has the facility to fight for his or her survival and grow up into an informed citizen. This is where the Role of NSS volunteers arise. **The young generations of India, who are studying in colleges, who are fast learners, and who have Service motto, are the ones, who can fight for and bring the necessary changes in the society.** Hence the engagement with UNICEF is one big tool to make one knowledgeable and cascade the same to the peers and the community.

If this is the role of the volunteers, then how should you work with your friends around you and the society in turn?

PEER EDUCATION

Definition of Peer Education

Peer education is a popular concept that refers to an approach, a communication channel, a methodology, a philosophy, and a strategy.

Peer Education and Youth

In most societies, young people often find it difficult to obtain clear and correct information on issues that concern them such as sex, sexuality, substance use, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STIs. This happens for many reasons such as socio-cultural norms and taboos, economic deprivation or lack of access to information. Most of the time, information needed for one to grow independently, is given in a strict, judgmental or non-adapted way to the young people's values, view points and lifestyle.

One effective way of dealing with these issues is **peer education**, because it is a dialogue between equals. It involves members of a particular group educating others of the same group. For example, young people share information with each other while some act as facilitators of discussions. It usually takes the form of an informal gathering of people who, with the help of the peer educator, (someone of a similar age or social group), discuss and learn about a particular topic together. Peer education works well because it is participatory and involves the young people in discussion and activities. People learn more by doing than just getting information.

Peer education is, therefore, a very appropriate way to communicate. It empowers young people to take action.

Examples of participatory activities used in peer education are games, art competitions and role-plays. All of these can help people see things from a new perspective without "being told" what to think or do.
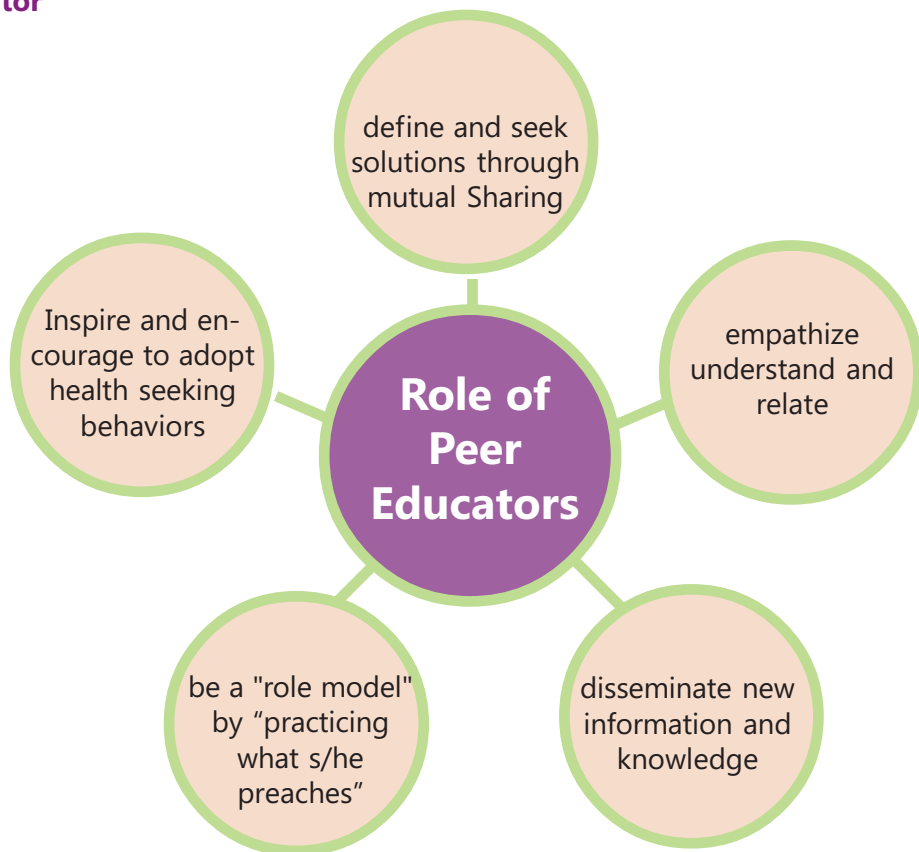
Role of Peer Educator:

▸ The main role of the peer educator is to help the group members define their concerns and seek solutions through the mutual sharing of information and experiences.

- S/he is the best person to circulate new information and knowledge to the group members and can become a role model to others by "practicing what s/he preaches".

- Since s/he is from the same group, s/he can empathize and understand the emotions, thoughts, feelings, language of the participants, and, therefore, relate better.

- S/he demonstrates behavior that can influence the community rules in order to reduce risk taking nature of youngsters within their own networks.

- They are able to inspire and encourage their peers to adopt healthy, positive behaviors because they are able to share common weaknesses, strengths and experiences.

The following picture is a diagrammatic representation of the Role of the Peer Educator

define and seek solutions through mutual Sharing

Inspire and encourage to adopt health seeking behaviors

Role of Peer Educators

empathize understand and relate

be a "role model" by "practicing what s/he preaches"

disseminate new information and knowledge

How to work with the Peers?

Peer Education is a process whereby well trained and motivated adolescent Peer Leaders carry out informal or organized educational, health related, social activities with their peers. This is carried out for a period of time through small group interactions or personally with some individual who seeks help to resolve his/her issue.

‣ Identify adolescent girls and boys in the community or in a given area

‣ Establish contact with adolescents and their families. Introduce yourself to them and the purpose of work

‣ Reach out to adolescents who are out of the school or those from marginalized communities. Include all irrespective of Religion, caste, class, gender and marital status. Be respectful to them and gather their personal details like name, age, education and livelihood if any.

‣ Ask for their contact details, address and contact details to maintain records.

‣ Always form a small group of not more then 15-10 members in each. Once the group is ready, the session can be initiated in some of the following ways.

Group Discussions

Drama, Street play & Role plays

Quiz and Competitons

▶ Fix a date and timing for the group sessions for each of the groups. With the consensus of the group select a volunteer to assist the peer leader.

▶ Select a place which is easily accessible to the group members and that is safe and acceptable to the community too, in order not to face any resistance from parents in visiting the place.

Organizing a Peer Education Programme

Organizing Peer Education requires material for reading, preparation of handouts and facilitation of the session. The following needs attention in a Peer Education programme

▶ Ways friends help each other

▶ Sharing information or knowledge.

▶ Motivating each other to do certain things

▶ Giving encouragement and emotional support.

▶ Being attentive and making one feel important.

▶ Giving material things.

▶ Being a role model (someone you want to behave like).

▶ Teaching social skills.

▶ Helping to do things at home or at work.

▶ Introducing new people and friends.

▶ Helping convince parents when one wants to tell or do something.

▶ Introducing one to a new behavior.

▶ Warning one against doing something wrong.

▶ Praising ones good qualities.

▶ Looking after one in time

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

Community Mobilization is seen as being the foundation of the community development process and seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to bring change in their own communities.

Steps in Community Mobilization

Step 1: Identify the problem/issue

Step 2: Select a strategy to solve the problem

Step 3: Community Mobilization

Step 4: Implementation through people's participation

Step 5: Assess the results and improve

Identify the Issue

Identifying certain core areas of community development is a pre requisite for community mobilization.

For example, issues like personal hygiene, child protection, child marriages, etc

Selecting a strategy

Some problems require sensitization on the issue

Some require individual interactions with particular family memebers of the community

Involve people from the community

Community heads, educators, influential people like Sarpanch, NGO heads, politicains are to be involved and their support is needed.

Assess and Improve

Implementation includes constant monitoring, assessing the results

Revising the strategy wherever necessary and scale up.

Skills needed for Mobilization

Knowledge - related to the principles of community mobilization, knowledge of related issues, causes and effects and understanding the ethical issues related to community mobilization.

Attitudes -include willingness to examine and challenge their own assumptions, opinions and beliefs.

▶ A genuine respect for all community members and a non- judgmental and accepting approach.

▶ An understanding that different people have different views and perspectives.

Skills -include good communication skills, especially listening, good facilitation skills to enable communities to conduct their own analysis of their lives and situations.

Peer groups could identify the burning social issues in the society and using any of the communication techniques mentioned above or by following their own methods should create awareness in the society and draw an action plan to combat them.

Picture cards,Flash Cards and Photographs

Puppetry

Electronic and Social Networking

Drama and Movies

Audio and Video tools

Street Plays and Flash mobs

FACILITATION SKILLS FOR THE PEERS

Facilitation Skills for the PEERS

Introduction to Facilitation Skills

To be an effective Peer leader or trainer understanding Facilitation skills is essential.

The objective of learning facilitation skills is to groom and develop volunteers in to a vibrant force that will create the necessary awareness, about the problems faced by the Adolescent children and the ways of overcoming such problems.

What is Facilitation?

Facilitation is the process where a facilitator guides the group members to share ideas, opinions, experiences and expertise in order to achieve a common goal and agreeable action plan.

It is a method that can be used in many settings. Although it is usually used with groups of people, individuals can be facilitated too. The following are some of the examples of where facilitation occurs:

> ‣ **to make decisions**
> ‣ **to share information**
> ‣ **to plan work**
> ‣ **to learn from one another**
> ‣ **to solve problems**

Need for Facilitation Skills

Facilitation encourages greater participation and responsibility for decisions. Through facilitation, group members get to value and develop their own expertise and skills. Facilitation involves many facets of interaction between individuals, such as clarification, conflict management and planning. It can be learned and developed through practice and supervision. Openness to constant learning and development is necessary for anyone seeking to improve his/her facilitation skills.

In group terms this means recognizing the value of each person's contribution, encouraging the active participation of each group member in identifying and utilizing her/his skills, experience, creativity and analysis. This understanding and sharing of skills enables individuals and groups to plan for development and change.

Important facilitation principles are equality, inclusion, participation and affirmation.

Styles of Facilitation

Facilitators use a wide range of styles with groups, depending on the task/activity, people involved, time available and needs of group members. The various styles enable specific issues to be addressed most effectively and facilitators should be able to modify their style to meet the group's needs.

Facilitator's approach can be a combination of one or more of the methods mentioned below:

Directive

giving people information, instructing them how to do something, such as: 'This is how to develop a work plan.'

Exploratory

asking questions, encouraging people to voice their experience and ideas, such as: 'What did you find useful in the last community group you were part of?'

Delegating

assigning tasks, roles and functions to individuals. For example, in planning a facilitation training session with a group, some organizational tasks may need to be shared.

Participative

taking part in discussion, sharing personal experiences and encouraging others to do likewise, such as: 'The first time I ever did a skills-sharing workshop like this was . . .'

The Group and Facilitation

A facilitator needs a wide range of skills to participate effectively and encourage positive development of the group. Being aware of the needs of individual group members, or being able to judge what those needs might be, makes for better facilitation.

People in groups have, according to Adair (Adair, 1986), three inter-linking areas of need. These are the need to:

▸ Achieve the task focusing on
   Process ▸▸ *Relationship* ▸▸ *Results*

▸ Develop and be supported as an individual. This involves:

Making everyone feel comfortable and valued

- Get to know them
- Have small talks
- Use appropriate body language
- Link expectations and objectives
- Making everyone feel comfortable and valued

Encouraging participation

- Divide into small groups
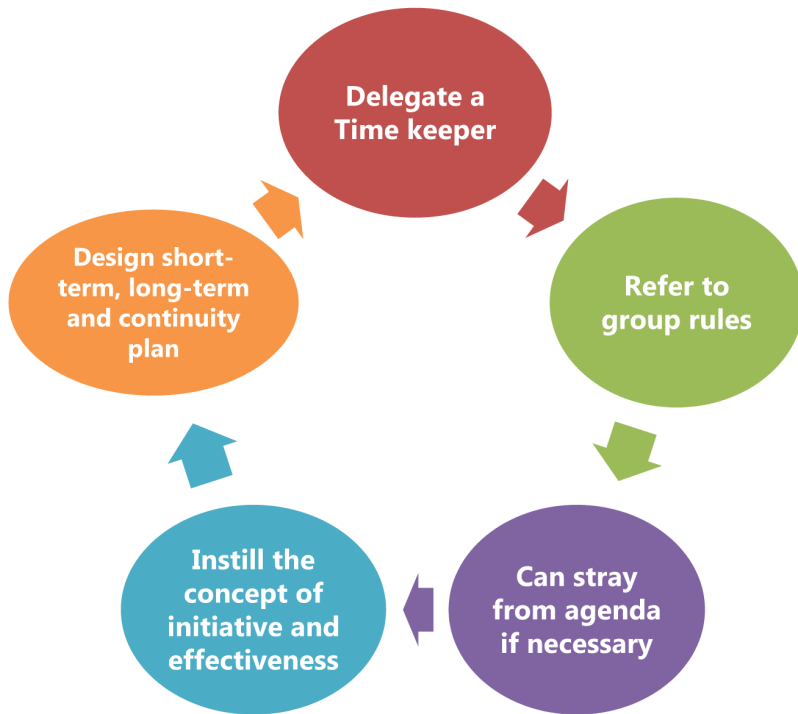- Consult the group
- Use open-ended questions
- Encourage passive members to participate
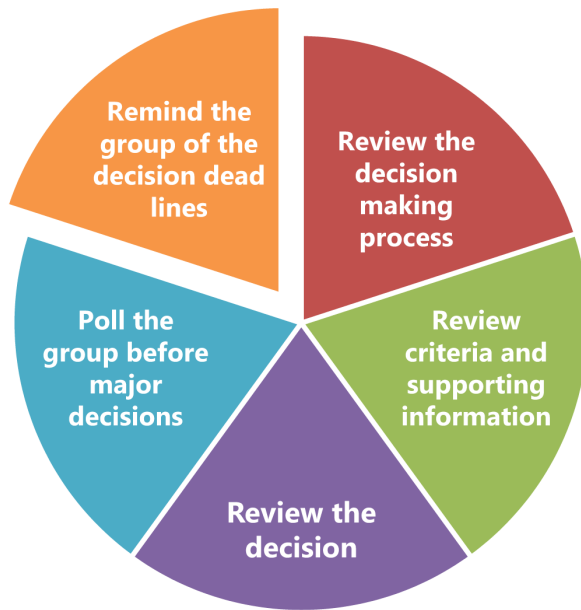- Use appropriate Audio-visual Aids

Listening and Observing

- Listen Actively with your Eyes
- Do not make assumptions
- Check for Understanding
- Rephrase their Responses
- Summarize
- Write it Down

Guiding the group

Delegate a Time keeper

Refer to group rules

Design short-term, long-term and continuity plan

Can stray from agenda if necessary

Instill the concept of initiative and effectiveness

Ensuring Quality decisions

Remind the group of the decision dead lines

Review the decision making process

Review criteria and supporting information

Review the decision

Poll the group before major decisions

Summarizing the key points

Identify the
next steps

Adjourn on a
positive note

Evaluate the
meeting

Positive participation:

Healthy participation is when all members of a group have particular tasks, functions, work or roles within the group. This builds a sense of power in the participants.

Common ground rules for healthy participation are:

▸   One person speaks at a time

▸   Raise your hand if you have something to say

▸   Listen to what other people are saying

▸   No mocking or attacking other people's ideas

▸   Be on time coming back from breaks (if it's a long meeting)

▸   Respect each other

Barriers for Participation:

There are external barriers to positive participation and there are barriers within the group which may cause poor participation.

External Barriers
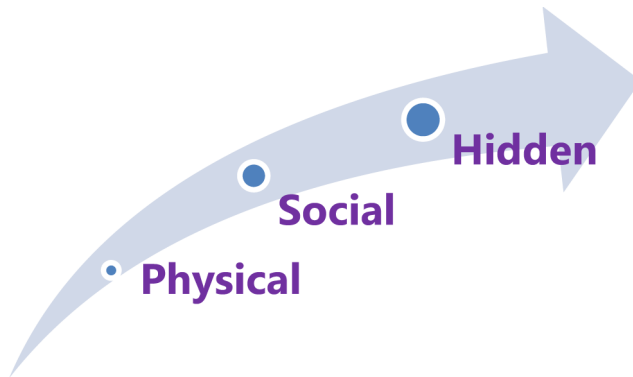
Physical Barriers:

▸ Access to the Venue

▸ Basic Infrastructure at the venue.

▸ Refreshments

▸ Safety and Security at the venue

▸ **Disturbances**: Noises and distractions around the venue pose another issue for the process, along with other logistics like lack of or interrupted power and water supply.

Social Barriers:

▸ **Discrimination**: Including or excluding certain people, either on the basis of older/younger age, caste, religion. Deliberately excluding groups of people is generally illegal.

▸ **Language and Dialects**: Knowing and not knowing the language of the presenter and different languages that may be used also can be another barrier.

Hidden Barriers:

▸ Unsuitable Meeting Time

▸ Hidden costs for travel and refreshments may put off the participants

Internal Barriers

Attitude

Previous experience or lack of it

Emotions and Fears

▸ **Emotions and Fears**: Anger and jealousy within the group, fear, hesitation and negativity are some of the internal issues in an individual.

▸ **Inexperience and/or Previous experience:** Variation of experience can be a bonus for some groups. For others, it can create difficulties in assigning tasks and responsibilities. This is especially true where some members have little or no experience of working in groups. This can lead to unrealistic expectations, needs and confusion around the level of participation.

▸ **Attitude**: Being neglected or over-looked in the group. Group members' fear about their ability to participate, gossip, and the existence of cliques/sub-groups may contribute to a general uneasiness in the group, thereby inhibiting their own and other's participation.

▸ **Lack of confidence and Trust**: Lack of confidence may restrict more reserved or shy individuals from coming forward with ideas and suggestions.

How to Prevent Disruption:

▸ Agree on the agenda of the meeting and set ground rules before the meeting/discussion

▸ **Listen carefully and closely** to understand a point someone is making. Check back by asking the person if you understood his/her idea correctly.

▸ **Show respect for experience and e**ncourage participants to share strategies, stories from the field, and lessons they have learned. Value the experience and wisdom they bring in.

DEALING WITH DISRUPTERS

Along with these tips on facilitation, there are some things to prevent disruption before it occurs and stop it when it's happening in the meeting. The most common kind of disrupters are people who try to dominate, keep going off the agenda, have side conversations with the person sitting next to them, or folks who think they are right and ridicule and attack other's ideas.

▸ **Find out the group's expectations.** Write them down and agree to deal with them at the end of the meeting, or have the group agree on a follow-up meeting to cover unfinished issues.

▸ **Don't be defensive.** If you are criticized, take a "mental step" backwards before responding. Once you become defensive, you risk losing the group's respect and trust, and might cause participants to feel they can't be honest with you.

How to handle someone who is disturbing the discussion/session

▸ *Let the group decide*: If someone is dominating the meeting, refuses to stick to the agenda, keeps bringing up the same point again and again, or challenges how you are handling the meeting:

o First try to remind them about the agreed-on agenda. If that doesn't work, throw it back to the group and ask them how they feel about that person's participation. Let the group support you.

- *Use the agenda and ground rules*: If someone keeps going off the agenda, has side conversations throughout the meeting, verbally attacks others:

   o   Go back to the agenda and the ground rules and remind folks of the agreements made at the beginning of the meeting.

- *Be honest:* If someone is trying to scare you, if you feel upset or challenged, if you need to pull the group behind you:

   o   It's better to say what's going on than try to cover it up. Everyone will be aware of the dynamics in the room. The group will get behind you if you are honest and up -front about the situation.

- *Use humor:* Try a humorous comment or a joke. Humor almost always lightens the mood. It's one of the best tension-relievers we have.

- *Use body language:* If side conversations keep occurring, if quiet people need to participate, if attention needs to be re-focused: Move closer to conversers, or to the quiet ones. Make eye contact with them to get their attention and covey your intent.

- *Take a break:* In case you've tried all of the above suggestions and nothing has worked, it's time to take a break, invite the disruptive person outside the room and politely but firmly state your feelings about how disruptive their behavior is to the group. Make it clear that the disruption needs to end. But also try to find out what's going on, and see if there are other ways to address that person's concerns.

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Improving the Lives of Adolescents