

PEER COURSE FACILITATOR (PCF)

Recognizing the many benefits of peer education, we leverage Peer Course Facilitators (PCFs) as a key part of our course delivery team at the U of MN. Partners can easily implement this model with our comprehensive, specialized training materials, which we provide at no additional cost to instructors implementing our health and wellness courses.

PCF ROLE & BENEFITS

Students seek advice from their peers and are greatly influenced by their peers' behaviors, attitudes, and expectations¹ and research indicates that peers are as effective or more effective than adults at delivering health information to fellow students.²

PCFs serve as a point of contact, provide personalized feedback on written reflection assignments, and offer referrals to campus and community resources as appropriate. Students say this enriches their course experience. Learning from peers makes the curriculum more relatable, encourages honest reflection and disclosure, and reduces potential resistance to feedback and behavior change.

"Instead of being preached at...I was getting feedback from someone who was still going through the college experience. This peer-oriented approach to health education made everything more real for me." Alcohol & College Life student

"...really appreciate [the PCF's] feedback on all assignments. It was clear she read through all of our posts with thought and was making a sincere response to them...Her comments always gave closure to what I had to say and often sparked a new thought process." Success Over Stress student

Additionally, PCFs help instructors accommodate higher course enrollment, reaching and influencing more students and ultimately creating the potential for broader campus impact—cost—effectively.

Training materials

PCFs complete training and assessment to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill their important role. The materials we provide allow for online training, accessed through your school's LMS, and engaging in-person sessions. Going well beyond the basics, the online lesson content addresses effective course facilitation as well as creating a safe, non-judgmental learning environment to promote honest student reflection. Some topics include:

- Best practices in peer education
- Behavior change theory application
- Effective communication and listening
- Motivational Interviewing
- Responding and referral skills
- Ethical decision-making
- Bystander intervention

The in-person facilitation materials supplement the online training and allow for group discussion, skills practice, and team-building.

"The training made me feel so prepared and invested in. ...I still refer back to some of the helpful materials that I received during training." University of Minnesota PCF

"The most satisfying part of this job is being able to read how students change over the course of the semester and apply the lessons." University of Minnesota PCF

SUPPORT FOR SUPERVISORS

Our PCF Supervisor Guide contains information on implementing a successful training and supervising PCFs to help make adopting the peer facilitator model easy:

- Tips for recruiting and hiring
- Sample job description, handbook, and employment policies
- Training itinerary
- Icebreakers and discussion prompts
- Assignment instructions and quiz question keys

Another plus is that the online training materials help alleviate some common training–related challenges—for example, by greatly reducing the number of in–person training hours that need to be scheduled and coordinated.

Rothenberger Institute received a 2015 Effective Practice Award from the Online Learning Consortium for the development and implementation of its Peer Course Facilitator Training.

Note that, at the University of Minnesota, our PCFs are paid student employees (undergraduate teaching assistants). Each PCF works an average of 10-15 hours per week to facilitate a section of up to 100 students. This includes sending students reminder emails before upcoming assessment deadlines, grading and providing feedback on written assignments, and responding to student emails and discussion postings (or forwarding them to the instructor when necessary). The course instructor supervises these tasks.

If you're interested in the PCF delivery model but don't have the capacity to hire, train, and supervise your own PCFs, the Rothenberger Institute team can assist! Additional fees apply. Contact us to learn more.

¹ Lindsey, B.J. (1997) Peer education: a view point and critique. *Journal of the American College of Health*, 45, 187–189.

² Mellanby AR, Rees JB, Tripp JH. Peer-led and adult-led school health education: a critical review of available comparative research. *Health Education Research* 2000;15: 533–45.

DIRECTOR

Jerri Kjolhaug
Email: jerrick@umn.edu
Phone: 612-625-2167

GENERAL CONTACT INFO

Web: ri.umn.edu
Email: riinfo@umn.edu



SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA