Peer Advising Content Annotated Bibliography

Note: This bibliography was developed for the CREATES Toolkit for Peer Advising. For more information and additional educational tools, visit: http://europe-creates.eu

Byrom, N. and Guliver, E. (2014). "Peer Support For Student Mental Health". Student Minds. Oxford, UK.

This report of UK's student mental health charity "Student Minds" provides a brief overview of peer support within a mental health setting and how it can be used safely and effectively within university settings. As university creates challenges that can increase stress, especially during the first year, there are **a large number of students who are experiencing clinical levels of distress** but are not accessing professional support from the university. After explaining what peer support in this context means and reviewing a brief history of it, the article outlines the benefits of peer support, considering the benefits to those receiving support, to those providing support and benefits for society and the mental health system as a whole. This is achieved by drawing on the extensive literature surrounding peer support as well as from case studies taken from existing projects and groups.

The authors introduce **three types of peer support**: informal and naturally occurring peer support, peer-run programmes, and the employment of service users as providers of support within traditional services, considering strengths and weaknesses. Peer-run programmes are further divided on dimensions of the individual/group programmes; structured/unstructured programmes and face-to-face/remote programmes (support that is received through other mediums of communication e.g. online helpline or chatroom).

According to the report, it is essential that peer support is delivered **safely** and that the supporters are **well-trained**. Therefore, the authors suggest establishing and clarifying boundaries for peer-supporters, a confidentiality policy and some ground rules for conversations beforehand. It should be ensured that peer-supporters receive a high level of ongoing support and supervision. Furthermore, an awareness of local services and even integration with them set the basis for effective signposting. The case studies at the end of the report introduce a range of programmes running on university

campuses and give useful insights to e.g. the content of training sessions for peer supporters.

Including mental health issues into peer advising programs could help to reduce stigma.

Colvin, J. W., & Ashman, M. (2010). Roles, risks and benefits of peer mentoring relationships in higher education. Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 18, 121-134. https://www.essr.net/~jafundo/mestrado_material_itgjkhnld/IV/Mentoring%20and%20tutoring.pdf

This study demonstrates that students, instructors, and mentors all have different perspectives about a mentor's role and how that role should be enacted. Connecting link, peer leader, learning coach, student advocate, and trusted friend were identified as predominant roles enacted by mentors. In the context of CREATES, clarification for all parties could help establish **the adviser's role** more clearly and alleviate confusion. The definition of peer mentors/tutors made in the article may vary a little from the peer advising as it is understood in CREATES, as it also includes e.g. tutoring in the classroom.

Unlike other studies, this article emphasizes potential risks and benefits for being or having a peer mentor. **Risks** were identified concerning time and other commitments (trying to do too much), favoritism, students being too dependent on the mentor or, conversely, not accepting the mentor. Additionally, the nature of the relationship, mentor and mentee, reflects hierarchical ordering. Thus help, power, and resources tend to flow in one direction, creating the possibility for misunderstanding or misuse of such power and resources and leading to challenges and resistance. However, almost all participants indicated some sort of **benefit to both sides of a peer mentor relationship**, for example individual attention, new friendships, retention benefits or a better connection to the campus.

- Clarification of the mentor's role beforehand alleviates confusion.
- Besides enormous benefits, Peer Advising might also bear some risks.
- "Interestingly, when comments about benefits are broken down by gender, the majority of women's comments (38 of 51) focused on relationships, and the majority of men's (20 of 26) noted improved grades and overall academic performance, not just for the students they worked with but also for themselves." (p. 128)

Cuseo, J. B. (2010). Peer power: Empirical evidence for the positive impact of peer interaction, support, and leadership. E-Source for College Transitions, 7(4), 4-6. https://sc.edu/nrc/system/pub_files/ES_7-4_Mar10.pdf

This article synthesizes empirical evidence describing the power of peer leadership and support programs, with respect to student outcomes concerning retention, learning and academic achievement, social and emotional development, and leadership development. Overall peer leadership is considered to be effective, cost-effective and

beneficial for mentor and mentee at the same time. The article does not go too much into detail. That's why it provides a useful **overview over scientifically proven benefits of peer advising**. As it is short and refers to peer leadership in general, including e.g. tutoring, it is not perfectly made for CREATES and requires further reading.

Diambra, J. F., & Cole-Zakrzewski, K. G. (2002). Peer advising: Evaluating effectiveness. *NACADA Journal*, *22*(1), 56–64.

This paper reports on the development of a peer advising program at the University of Tennessee. It describes the particularities of this program, mainly its structure, the selection process, training of the selected peer advisors, and ongoing improvement through evaluation and feedback. Advisors change every semester, while there is one faculty member to supervise them all, whose position is peer advising director. The program focuses on selecting the best possible candidates through an extensive process of selection and orientation, whereas the GPA, study progression, interview rank etc. are taken into account. Peer advisors are awarded credit points for their advisory work.

Besides the descriptive work, this paper also gives us an insight into the evaluation process done by the university. Evaluation was done through a survey with the peer advising director and the peer advisors, with the goal of identifying how effective and beneficial this peer advising program is. Based on the results of the evaluation, the authors have created a set of program recommendations in order to provide assistance to advising offices/services at different institutions of higher education. These recommendations have a general character and have the potential to be individually tailored to suit the needs of a specific institution. Moreover, they can be implemented individually, which offers even more flexibility to the institutions in question.

Jones, R., & Brown, D. (2011). The Mentoring Relationship as a Complex Adaptive System: Finding a Model for Our Experience. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership In Learning, 19*(4), 401-418. doi: 10.1080/13611267.2011.622077

Mentoring theory and practice has evolved significantly during the past 40 years. Early mentoring models were characterized by the top-down flow of information and benefits to the protégé. This framework was reconceptualized as a reciprocal model when scholars realized mentoring was a mutually beneficial process. Recently, in response to rapidly changing organizational and social environments, scholars have explored other models of mentoring such as developmental networks. However, as we, the authors, reflect on our own experience of an informal mentoring process in an academic context we find existing models inadequately describe our experience. The model that best fits our story is a complex adaptive systems (CAS) perspective of the mentoring relationship, and we offer this lens to reconfigure current models.

Rosenthal, K. I., & Shinebarger, S. H. (2010). Peer mentors: Helping bridge the advising gap. *About Campus*, *15*(1), 24–27. https://doi.org/10.1002/abc.20012

This article reports on the initial development and success of a peer mentoring program created for the needs of Union College (UC), New York. One can get an overview of how this program works through the description of the selection and training process at UC, as well as the subsequent evaluation and training. This particular program receives large funding for the further development of peer advising at UC, whereas the program keeps growing and enhancing the working conditions of peer mentors. It is meant to bridge the gap between academic advising and the advising that reaches out of the academic realm, by connecting students to peer mentors. Mentoring is individual (one-to-one), yet combined with a diverse set of workshops meant to bring students together and help them overcome issues such as time management, stress etc. Mentors go through extensive training beforehand, but their progress remains supervised and evaluated throughout their mentoring term. Moreover, the program itself is evaluated constantly through various means, such as weekly meetings, individual case reports, workshop attendance and evaluation etc. The program cooperates with experts in order to provide mentors with how-to knowledge related to specific mentoring situations. One-to-one mentoring is exclusively done by peers, however, the workshops are a result of peer mentors and faculty members working closely together.

Simpson, L. (2020). *University Peer Advisors Pursuing Careers in Educational Advising: A Phenomenological Study Examining The Influence of Lived-Experiences on Vocational Purpose* **(Ph.D). Liberty University.**

Many studies have considered the impact college peer advising programs have on advisees, however, formal literature examining the lived-experience peer advising placements have on student advisors is limited. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, this study seeks to examine the lived-experiences of former peer advisors in an advising center at a four year university in Massachusetts. The goal of the research is to determine whether there are common themes in the lived-experiences of participant peer advisors. Additionally, employing Chickering's psychosocial theory of student development, this researcher seeks to discover how those lived-experiences may have contributed to participants' development of vocational purpose. Was there an epiphanic moment(s) that contributed to their determining their vocational purpose? Participants for this study are former university graduates who served as peer advisors during their academic career and who are pursuing careers in educational advising.

Swisher, E. E. (2013). Practical Considerations in Developing Peer Advising Programs. *The Mentor - An Academic Advising Journal, 15.*
https://dus.psu.edu/mentor/2013/03/considerations-peer-advising-programs/

The article tries to present an all-encompassing image of peer advising programs, taking into account both its beneficial aspects, as well as the problematic ones. Author points out that peer advising does not replace the academic advising, but rather complements

it. As the advantageous aspects of peer advising, the author names a few: flexibility in delivery methods, peer-to-peer interaction, development of peer advisers, as well as financial benefits. The author also acknowledges that the peer advising as a concept brings certain concerns to the surface, such as: ethical and legal issues, time and energy required, and turnover of peer advisers.

In theoretical sense, the article provides a summarized and insightful overview of benefits and potential concerns resulting from peer advising programs.