



Games and Exercises to train Peer Advisors

Note:

These sample materials are included in the CREATES Toolkit Peer Advising as an example of ideas on how to make Peer Advisor training more interactive. For more information and additional educational tools, visit: <http://europe-creates.eu>

Advisor's suitcase

Each person must think of seven words that should represent the skills set of a peer advisor (3-5 min). Pairs form and have to reach an agreement on keeping only seven out of the 14 words they have together (5-7 min). This should be repeated in groups of fours, then groups of six, and so on, until finally the entire group discusses and decided together on the final seven words. The final seven words represent **The Advisor's Suitcase**. This game is helpful for future peer advisors as it:

- Encourages teamwork and negotiation
- Teaches students how to listen to, respect and consider diverse opinions
- Helps them to recognize important skills for the role of a peer advisor.

Action simulation

The group should decide on several difficulties that students almost regularly face at the beginning of their studies. Try limiting the difficulties to five, as everything above that number would make the game too long. Volunteers can then reenact the situation when the advisee comes to ask the advisor for help and advice for a certain difficulty. There should always be at least one person acting as a peer advisor and one as an advisee. The goal is to simulate advisor's intervention in helping the advisee with their difficulty. Those from the group who do not agree with the approach can step in instead of the "peer advisor" and show their approach. Each simulation shouldn't last more than 20 minutes.

The simulation is useful for future peer advisors as it:

- Makes them think back to their own experiences from the beginning of their studies
- Gives them the chance to try themselves out in the role of a peer advisor
- Lets them see whether their approach to peer advising might be problematic or inefficient.

Real-life scenarios

This exercise is meant to steer discussion among the future peer advisors and thereby show them the diversity of approaches to solving a certain situation.

Scenario 1: Your advisees are overwhelmed by the courses' workload, feeling that they might not be able to pass their courses. They are subtly implying that they have been considering dropping out of the program. What experiences can you share to reassure them of their abilities? What should you be careful about in your approach to tackling the issue?

Scenario 2: You are on a group meeting with your advisees. One of your advisees starts crying in the middle of the conversation, which leaves the whole group feeling quite confused and uncomfortable. How would you react? What do you say to the person that is crying and what to the rest of the group? Would you react differently if this happened during a 1-on-1 meeting?

Exercise: Labelling

Each member of the group is asked to self-identify using five labels (3 min). Upon deciding, each person should think about what makes them feel proud and what makes them feel uncomfortable about their own label. These feelings and impressions should be discussed with the group. In this exercise, the focus is on stereotyping, assumptions, judgments, prejudices and bigotry. Therefore, participants should think about their preconceived notions and ideas. How may these affect others and yourselves, both positively and negatively?