



Training and workshop on peer-to-peer support

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Trainig objectives



- Develop your collaboration skills
- Strengthen communication and problem-solving abilities
- Build a supportive research community



Peer-to-Peer Support – What Is It?



Peer-to-peer support refers to various forms of collaboration and mutual assistance among candidates. This support can cover both academic and emotional aspects related to research work and academic life.





Key features of peer-to-peer support

- **Shared experiences** - people supporting each other have often experienced similar situations, which facilitates understanding and empathy.
- **No hierarchy** - participants are equal to each other, which distinguishes this model from traditional help offered by experts (e.g. therapists or doctors).
- **Reciprocity** - everyone can give and receive support.
- **Authenticity of support** - conversations and support are based on personal experience rather than formal knowledge.
- **Empowerment** - peer-to-peer support can build self-esteem and a sense of control.

Real life application examples



- Mental health support - groups for people with depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc.
- Chronic illness - communities for people with diabetes, cancer or autoimmune diseases.
- Addictions - support groups such as AA (Alcoholics Anonymous).
- Education and work - student mentoring, support for young entrepreneurs.
- Online communities - internet forums, Facebook or Discord groups.

HumanIC application examples



Support in research and academic work

- Discussing research problems together, e.g. difficulties in data analysis, methodology or interpretation of results.
- Sharing literature, articles and other resources.
- Reviewing colleagues' work (feedback on articles, chapters of a doctoral thesis, presentations).



HumanIC application examples



Mutual mentoring and exchange of experience

- Sharing tips on how to write publications effectively, apply for grants or prepare presentations for conferences.
- Tips on work organisation and time management.



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Development of soft and professional skills

- Job interview simulations, preparation for a career in and outside of academia.
- Support in establishing academic contacts and networking.



HumanIC application examples



Intercultural and international cooperation

- Support each other in adapting to new academic and cultural environments.
- Help each other understand the differences in academic systems and ways of working in different countries.



HumanIC application examples



Emotional and motivational support

- Discussions about academic burnout, publication pressure and difficulties in balancing work and private life.
- Creating support groups where doctoral candidates can freely share their concerns and problems.



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Workshop: Analysis of academic scenarios and solutions through peer support



Case study 1. Methodological problems in research

Description of the situation:

DC-A is working on a qualitative data analysis but is having difficulty choosing the right method of content analysis. She/He is reviewing the literature but feels lost in the maze of available techniques.

Application of peer-to-peer support:

- Talk/Communicate to his/her peers
- Share his/her knowledge of the techniques or find someone who knows
- Reach out to peers for guidance regarding techniques or instruments
- Weekly meetings within the group where one can ask for help regarding techniques or method
- Start from the basic knowledge/skills already familiar then move to new
- P2P support through discussion and sharing knowledge of methods and tech
- Discuss with peers with different subject specialist
- Regular brainstorming event sharing experiences might be helpful
- Create some shared space on TEAMS where one can share tutorials or documents of methods, techniques.

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Case study 2. Difficulty in publishing research results

Description of the situation:

DC-B wrote a scientific article but received negative reviews from the journal. She does not know how to improve the text and is afraid of further setbacks.

Application of peer-to-peer support:

- Communicate with peers with different backgrounds might help
- Share drafts of papers or reports might help with improving responses to reviewers
- Use of Gen-AI constructively or ask peers to improve the style of writing
- Sharing good templates

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Case study 3. Stress and academic burnout

Description of the situation:

DC-C feels overwhelmed by the number of responsibilities. He has the impression that he is not making any progress and is starting to lose motivation to continue his doctorate.

Application of peer-to-peer support:

- Priorities tasks in terms of importance or time-criticality
- Work plan with timeline and break down objectives into small manageable tasks
- Communicate with peers and supervisors/line managers
- Regular informal meetings with coffee helps to solving the issues
- Talking to someone (peer) who is not part of the project gives a different viewpoint

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Case study 4. Interdisciplinary cooperation in a research project

Description of the situation:

DC-D is conducting research at the intersection of humanities and new technologies, but is having difficulty integrating knowledge from both fields.

Application of peer-to-peer support:

- Addressing gaps in knowledge (like PIV, infection risk, interviews etc) due to different academic backgrounds and experience
- Regular communication/meetings to share experience
- Get training from experts who are not engineers (e.g: medical, environmental scientists)
- Use of peer Social media, LinkedIn to broaden the network to get a broader perspective on his/her research
- Cooperate with Policy and legal expertise

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Case study 5. Preparation for the defence of a doctoral thesis

Description of the situation:

DC-E is nearing the end of his doctoral programme and is about to defend his/her thesis. She/He is stressed and does not know how to effectively present his research.

Application of peer-to-peer support:

- Mock viva with peers
- Present your work so that it is easy to follow. Clear presentation of aims and objectives
- Use peers as audience
- Know your audience and pitch/present accordingly

Workshop: Active Listening and Constructive Feedback



Case study 1. Difficult cooperation in a research team

Description of the situation:

DC-A works on a joint article with other researchers. Conflicts arise during team meetings – everyone wants to impose their own vision, and the conversations often end in misunderstandings.

Tasks:

1. *Role-play a simulated academic discussion where different team members have conflicting opinions. (infection risk vs health care staff)*
2. *Practice active listening by summarizing key points from the speaker, asking clarifying questions, and avoiding interruptions.*

What techniques can be applied in real-life situations?

- Identify the overall aim of the paper
- Pros and cons of the argument from each side
- Combine both sides

Workshop: Active Listening and Constructive Feedback



Case study 2. Difficult questions during the doctoral defence

Description of the situation:

DC-C is preparing for the defence and is afraid of questions that could undermine his research. He does not know how to react to the committee's criticism.

Tasks:

- Simulate a thesis defense – 3 DCs, AK and AB take on the role of the committee, asking challenging questions, while one DC responds. The rest of the group observes the interaction and later provides constructive feedback on what went well and what could be improved.

What techniques can be applied in real-life situations?

- Identify in P2P the shortcomings of your work and prepare to justify them.
- Open up the possibility of continuing the topic in the future.

Summary



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