Centre of Academic Teaching
Zentrum zur Förderung der Hochschullehre

Peer consulting in the Heilsbronn model
10 Steps

Peer-to-peer consulting in the Heilsbronn model is a low-threshold, solution-oriented method for personnel and quality development for professionals in education, social work and healthcare, as well as in companies.

The counselling process aims to find solutions for a presented case in a small group of equal colleagues.

The structure of the process is agreed with the group members, who interact in assigned roles as:
Case Presenter, Facilitator and Consultants.

The facilitation process does not require an external consulting expert. Instead, the peer consulting groups work independently after a one-off introduction.

Regular meetings, each lasting 90 minutes, ensure the quality of the consultation and are always subject to confidentiality.

Universität Siegen

Step 1: **(5 - 10 minutes)**
Introduction and Role Clarification

At the beginning, everyone introduces themselves briefly so that the group gets to know one another.
The Facilitator explains the roles and rules and asks for everyone‘s agreement to abide by these rules, roles and procedures.

» The Facilitator guides the process by deciding whose case is to be worked on (who is the Case Presenter), determining start and end of the individual steps, structuring the time schedule, creating transitions and also participating as a consultant.

» The Case Presenter is the person seeking advice and presenting a personal situation, problem or case.

» The others take on the roles of the Consultants who actively contribute their expertise and perspectives.

RULE: The facilitator changes after each case has been fully discussed.

Step 2: **(10 minutes)**
Presentation of the Case

» The Facilitator invites the Case Presenter to present the case.

» The Case Presenter outlines their situation, describing the context and specific challenges they face.

» The Case Presenter articulates what they hope to achieve from the consultation (e.g., solutions, insights or alternative perspectives).

» This step focuses on providing enough detail for the group to understand the case without diving into discussions.

RULE: In this step, only the Case Presenter is allowed to speak or write.

Step 3: **(5 minutes)**
Follow-up questions

Now is the Consultants’ turn to ask the Case Presenter questions. These questions aim to uncover relevant details without offering solutions at this stage. The Facilitator ensures that the questions remain open-ended and exploratory.
Not everyone has to ask information or comprehension questions.

» Let the group know if you do not have any questions.

» Do not discuss anything here.

» Only ask questions that help you to better understand the case and do not share your own assumptions and/or information at this point.

The Facilitator asks the Case Presenter for an answer and then moves on to the fourth step.

RULE: Only information and comprehension questions are allowed. No discussion, no assumptions, speculation, etc.!

Step 4: **(10 minutes)**
Sharing ideas and initial thoughts

The Consultants share associations, ideas and fantasies that the situation has triggered in them. It is helpful to give your own ideas space, e.g.:

» Who do I identify with the most and why?

» Does a piece of information trigger fear or joy in me?

» Was I bored or did I digress when I read/listened to the case?

» Did something stimulate my imagination?

» Do I have associations that seem to have nothing to do with the case? etc.

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You should tell the Case Presenter all of this now, as it could be important for them.
However, please avoid saying anything that sounds like: 'I've already experienced that.'
You can comment on this in step 9! Stick to the point!
The Facilitator moves on to the next step once the Consultants have spoken. The Facilitator should briefly ask the Consultants whether they have finished.

RULE: During this phase, the Case Presenter holds back completely, even if it is difficult not to be able to 'put things right' immediately. The Case Presenter should focus on what the Consultants think about the case and only respond to their comments in the next step.

Step 5: (5 minutes)
Feedback from the Case Presenter
The Case Presenter tells the Consultants which of the associations have become important to them (e.g. new perspectives, etc.) and then informs the Facilitator when their feedback is complete. The Facilitator asks the Consultants to take the next step.

RULE: Only the Case Presented is allowed to speak! The Consultants note the important information and consider it with a view to the next step, in which their ideas are required again.

Step 6: (10 minutes)
Collecting suggested solutions
Now the Consultants collect suggestions for solutions, which they communicate to the Case Presenter. The Case Presenter should concentrate on making a note of everything that the Consultants can think of regarding their situation, but the Case Presenter only ad dresses the points in the next step.

The Facilitator moves on to the next step when the Consultants have completed their contributions. Before doing so, the Facilitator should ask the Consultants briefly whether they have said everything.

RULE: Only the Consultants are allowed to speak! The Case Presenter pays attention to the proposed solutions to which they should respond to in the next step.

Step 7: (5 minutes)
Feedback from the Case Presenter II
The Case Presenter tells the Consultants which of the suggested solutions have become important to them and which ones they have decided to use. Once the feedback has been completed, the Case Presenter informs the Facilitator. The Facilitator asks all group members to take the next step.

RULE: Only the Case Presenter is allowed to speak!

Step 8: (10 minutes)
In-depth discussion
In this step there is a joint discussion between all group members and exchange of views on things that have remained unclear. It may be possible to discuss additional and more in-depth solutions here. It may also be possible to plan initial steps to change the problem situation. However, this depends to a large extent on the needs and wishes of the Case Presenter.
The Facilitator determines the end of this step (e.g. once everyone has spoken) and leads on to the next step.

Step 9: (5 - 10 minutes)
Final Round - Exchange
Only now do the Consultants (including the Facilitator) share their own experiences of the case. They can all briefly report where they have already had experience with a similar problem. This makes it clear to the Case Presenters that they are not alone with the case and it enables the Consultants to concentrate on the case presented in the previous counselling steps.
This round relieves the pressure and connects the group.
The Facilitator ends this round (e.g. once everyone has spoken) and leads on to the final step.

Step 10: (10 minutes)
Mutual Feedback
This is an opportunity for the Case Presenter to thank the Consultants and/or give feedback to the Facilitator for the management.
Everyone can say whether they would like to work on another case in this group. They can say the following to the group: Please indicate your interest if you would like to bring in a case yourself and open a new room for it or if you would prefer to take over the facilitation of another case.
If you would like to continue working in the same group, the Facilitator has the following task:
Agree with all group members who will present a new case.

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