

Wisconsin Healthy & Ready to Work:
A Series of Materials Supporting Youth with Special Health Care Needs

The Power of Peer Mentoring



Waisman Center
University of Wisconsin–Madison
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



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The Waisman Center is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about human development, developmental disabilities and neurodegenerative diseases. It is one of 9 national centers that encompass both a Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Research Center designated by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) designated by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

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The Council works toward inclusion and self-determination for people with disabilities in Wisconsin. The Council supports the inclusion and self-determination of youth in transition through the Peer Power model, which incorporates learning, building skills, and mentoring.”

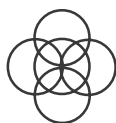


The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. (CILWW) is a non-profit organization committed to advocating for the full participation in society of all persons with disabilities. It is one of 8 Independent Living Centers in Wisconsin that strives to empower consumers in making choices that maintain or increase their independence.

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Developed by Debra Gillman
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Preface

When I was a teenager, walking through the backyard to our neighbor's house after supper was part of my regular routine. On my arrival, I would clear the dishes from their kitchen table, load the dishwasher, clean up any residual messes and help prepare their two young boys for bedtime.

The boys' mother, Fran, was a smart, vibrant and interesting woman who was unable to do these things on her own. Fran had multiple sclerosis. She was no longer able to walk and had almost no weight bearing ability. A housekeeper provided assistance during the day, but left after preparing the evening meal. Sometimes I also helped Fran get ready for an evening out with her husband. If business commitments took him away for the evening, I might stay on for some conversation and then help her get ready to retire.

Even when I assisted with her personal care, she directed my actions with such ease and had such a dignified air about her that it never occurred to me to feel sorry for her. She was a mother and a wife, as were the other women in the neighborhood. It never occurred to me that she belonged anywhere else but with her family and in our neighborhood. If she needed some help to accomplish some of the ordinary day-to-day chores, well, that's where my sisters and I came in.

My older sister had been the first to fill this role. It then passed to me and subsequently to my two younger sisters. Given the spacing of years between us, we were available over a considerable span of time. My mother had initiated this protocol and

none of us ever questioned it - it's just what we did. There was nothing remarkable or unusual about it.

There was something unusual about Fran, though. In an era when most women got married right after high school and started their families, she had gone to college and had become a speech pathologist. Her M.S. had developed sometime after that. Even though Fran was the only person I knew then who used a wheelchair, and while I was aware of some of the practical limitations her present circumstance involved, I always saw her as a competent individual with a full life.

Only recently have I appreciated how this experience in my youth had helped expand my world view to include individuals with disabilities and their families. Later, when my first child was born with multiple disabilities, I had a context for that experience and for recognizing her potential in the world. My perception of people with disabilities, my belief that every person has something to contribute and a vital role to play in their family, their community and in the world began with that experience. Although Fran has since passed away, she lives on through her own family, but also through mine.

When I was a teenager, she was my mentor. I didn't know it then, but I know it now.

– *Debra Gillman*

Mentoring: Mechanisms and Possibilities

Formalized mentoring has moved into the mainstream of American life. For that reason alone, it belongs in the lives of young people with disabilities. Mentoring incorporates core values important to most of us. It demonstrates a belief in the value of the individual and that each person matters to society as a whole. It expresses a commitment to ongoing development, capacity building and the expectation of contributing to one's own life and the lives of others. Mentoring is about recognizing potential, enhancing growth and encouraging discovery.

Yet, Carrie Sword reports in *Creating Mentoring Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities: Issues and Suggested Strategies* (2003), that "Despite the increasing prevalence and importance of mentoring programs for youth in general, few of these programs, to date, intentionally include youth with disabilities."

It is time for that to change.

The question is: How can this change best be facilitated?

The purpose of this booklet is to engage the reader in exploring this question — encouraging first an internal dialogue, then moving toward community-based conversation and culminating in a call for action. Let's begin this process by thinking about the nature of the mentoring relationship.

Recognizing the Power of Partnerships

We live in a society that celebrates individuality and independence. But we are really interdependent. None of us can get along completely on our own. We need each other and what each of us contributes. None of us can know it all or do it all. Life is just too big! Not only do our relationships with others help all of us do more, they make what we do more enjoyable. Helping young people recognize the value and power of relationships can be a way to help them see that involvement with others is all about potential, not deficits.

Definition of Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a process through which a more experienced individual encourages and assists a less experienced individual develop his or her potential within a shared area of interest. The resulting relationship is a reciprocal one in that both individuals in the partnership have an opportunity for growth and development.

Peers are individuals who share some common characteristics, attributes or circumstances. These may relate to age, ability, interests, etc. Peer mentors are individuals who have more experience within that common area along with additional training in how to assist another in acquiring skills, knowledge and attitudes to be more successful.

When Sir Edmund Hillary stood on the top of the world as the first person to reach the summit of Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain, he did not stand there alone. Beside him was a Sherpa climbing guide named Tenzing Norgay. In fact, we will never know which one of them actually took that historic first step. History, at least western history, has assigned the honor to Hillary, but he has always maintained that this achievement was something the two men accomplished together. Hillary also insisted that this feat was something he could not have done without Norgay.

Hillary knew mountain climbing, but he did not know this particular mountain the way the Sherpas did. The Sherpas were native to the area and had lived at the foot of the Himalayas for generations at an altitude that foreigners had to spend weeks adjusting to. The outsiders needed companions who knew how to read the rugged terrain, the brutal climate and the subtle shifts in conditions that could make the difference between a triumphant summit and a deadly disaster.

Even today, with advancements in climbing equipment, established routes and improved communication links between the climbers, the practice of utilizing the expertise of the Sherpa guides continues. Many climbers have now reached the top of Everest, but it remains the most sought-after achievement in the career of most serious mountain climbers. And the Sherpas, who still live and work in the high altitude, remain the vital link between the climbers and the top of the mountain.

In some ways, today's youth with disabilities are like the mountain climbers who now crowd the base camps every spring. They are not the first to reach for what life in the community can offer. But the

path is still relatively new and the terrain is definitely perilous. Modern life is more complicated and competitive than ever before for all young people. This is especially true for young people with disabilities.

They need the guidance of those who have traveled the road of experience. They need to learn from those who know the terrain, who can help them avoid some of the pitfalls and assist them in identifying and reaching their goals. They need the confidence that only comes from someone who has tried and sometimes failed, but then has come back to try again. Sir Edmund Hillary did not reach the top of Mt. Everest on his first attempt. But he and Tenzing Norgay together became the first ever to make it to the top. After them, many others also followed in their footsteps and also succeeded.

Jeff Pagels is another mountain climber who believes in the power and "the logic of partnerships." He has scaled some formidable heights. And he has done it in a very interesting way.

In 1984, Jeff's spinal cord was completely severed in a logging accident, and he lost the ability to walk. But he didn't lose the ability to dream. Jeff lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and recently retired after working for the Department of Natural Resources for 31 years. He had always loved the outdoors and athletics. Since his accident, Jeff has become a world-class skier and mountain climber. He says he can ski sitting down faster than he ever could standing up. He has won numerous medals and became the fastest sit-skier in the world. He climbs mountains as a member of a team called The Rainbow Expedition. Their motto is: "Putting People with Disabilities on Top of the World."

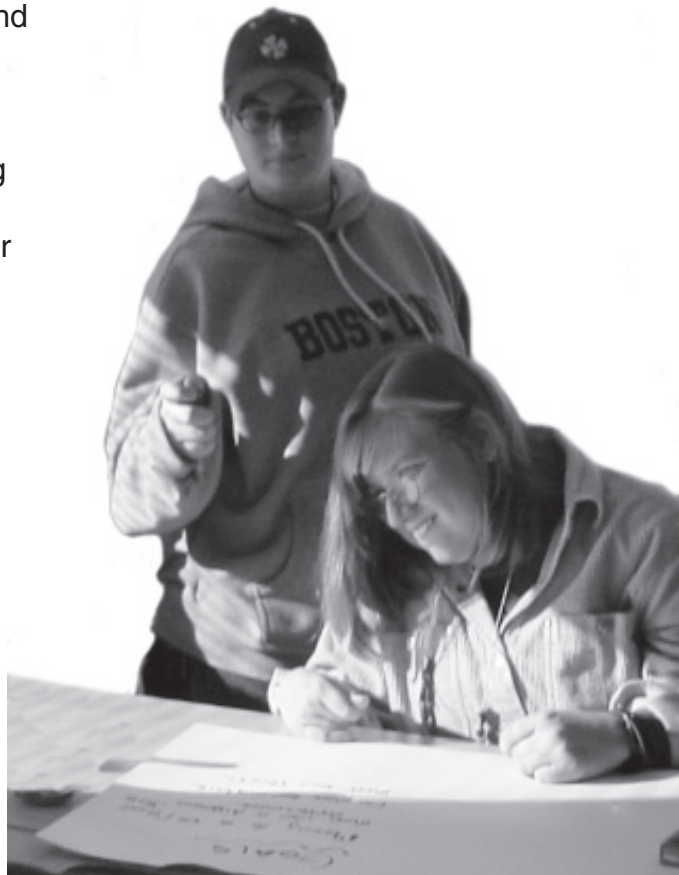
In 2000, The Rainbow Expedition summited Mount Galdhopiggen in Norway. Jeff and another climber became the first wheelchair users to reach the top. They decided to share the honor and made the final pull to the top together. In 2003, the team tackled Mount Kilimanjaro. Illness, equipment problems and unexpected difficulties with the terrain meant that Jeff did not summit. However, he counted it a success and found the experience of being in Africa such an enriching one that he describes “precious moments every day” as what he remembers most. The Rainbow Expedition has amended its original motto to include the encouragement to “Always Climb Higher.”

By acting as a mentor to others, Jeff has worked with individuals and groups to reach farther. He has assisted outdoor equipment and adventure businesses in making opportunities more accessible and available to people with disabilities. May 2005 found Jeff working as a technical advisor to a film crew shooting a documentary for the Public Broadcasting Service about eight individuals with different disabilities traveling on a raft over 226 miles through the Grand Canyon.

The mentoring relationship is a dynamic one. Each of the individuals involved contributes and each one benefits. For a mentoring relationship to exist, each partner needs the other. In this way, the mentoring relationship is automatically empowering. And even though the mentor is seen as one who has life experience to share, the protégé is not merely a vessel into which this bounty is poured. Making mentoring opportunities more available to youth with disabilities may be the next step and a new frontier in generating more mechanisms for inclusion and self-determination.

Mentoring has a proven track record of success, especially for young people considered to be at-risk. Mentoring has helped at-risk youth improve outcomes related to:

- Job skills
- Motivation and self-esteem
- Friendship
- Communication and assertiveness skills
- Problem solving and decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Resiliency



Youth with Disabilities Benefit from Mentoring

Despite tremendous gains in education and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities, there are still some alarming statistics about outcomes.

According to a 2004 Lou Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities:

- Only 29% of individuals with disabilities were employed full- or part-time, compared with 79% of those without disabilities.
- 75% of those with disabilities who were not working wanted to work.

The E-Mentoring Project based out of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition at the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration reported in October 2004:

- 36% of students with disabilities drop out of high school.
- 50% of all adjudicated youth are young people with learning and behavioral disorders.

In 1999, Rick Blumberg and Philip Ferguson from the University of Oregon published a review of national studies and surveys from 1985 to 1998 for the National Institute for Urban School Improvement and found:

- Three to five years out of high school, only 37% of youth with disabilities had ever attended any kind of post-secondary education.
- 68% of high school graduates without disabilities had gone on to some post high school education.

- Students with disabilities achieved lower levels of independent living within five years after leaving high school and experience significantly more social isolation. As youth, they socialized less often than their peers. This only worsened in adulthood.

Barbara Coloroso reports in her 2003 book, *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander*:

- Children with physical and/or mental disabilities are two to three times more likely to be bullied than other children.
- These children are typically not as well integrated into classes and therefore have fewer friends to come to their defense.
- These children may also lack the verbal and/or physical skills to defend themselves against aggression.
- Lack of friendship skills can put children at even greater risk. Friendship skills are considered a protective factor against bullying.

In numerous studies of youth at risk, disabilities are identified as a risk factor. Myriad studies also point to mentoring as one of the most effective strategies for working with youth at risk. The Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association specifically names mentoring as a positive intervention for students with nonverbal learning disabilities.

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"Mentoring is more than a fad. It is a well researched helping relationship."

-The Elements of Mentoring, W. Brad Johnson and Charles Ridley (2004)

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Experience of Peer Mentoring Pilot Project

Since learning through example is itself at the core of the mentoring process, let's begin by doing just that. A pilot project undertaken by the Center for Independent Living of Western Wisconsin (CILWW) in Menomonie, Wisconsin, serves as a ready model. This venture was supported in part by financial assistance from the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Waisman Center's Healthy and Ready to Work Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. CILWW was chosen as a project site because of its 25-year history providing peer support as one of its core services.

The Western Wisconsin Center for Independent Living's philosophy is expressed in the following formula:

**Opportunity +
Responsibility +
Empowerment =
Independence**

The CILWW pilot project held as its core belief that students with disabilities can benefit from the experiences of other young adults with disabilities who have transitioned from high school, are now pursuing their goals, and are actively involved in their communities. The pilot project ran from June 2003 through August 2004, using a peer-mentoring model. It matched students in the midst of transition planning with individuals with disabilities who were three to five years out of high school. All of the individuals selected to serve as mentors had been involved in the Center's Peer Support Program in some way.

IDEA Speaks To Transition

Opportunity is knocking at the door in the re-authorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, which states that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students age 16 and older needs to include appropriate measurable post secondary goals for:

- Education
- Training
- Employment
- Independent living
- Needed transition services, including courses of study needed to reach the student's goals (NWCWD/Youth Intersection Dec 2004).

Given all of these considerations, a strong rationale exists for advocating mentoring as a strategy for improving outcomes for youth with disabilities.

The most pertinent question remaining appears to be: How do we begin?



Peer Mentoring Pilot Project Objectives:

- To explore whether “mentoring” is an effective tool for successful transition.
- To provide students with the opportunity to explore their options in independent living in areas such as housing, education, advocacy and recreation.
- To expose students to new social opportunities and expand their social support networks.

Project Components Included:

A project coordinator. This person has extensive education and experience in peer support. The coordinator created the framework for recruitment, training, participant involvement and monitoring progress and was responsible for ongoing oversight and facilitation of relationship development.

A stipend for each participant. Each participants received \$100 in an effort to ensure that participation was not limited by financial circumstances.

Thoughtful matching. The unique skills and experiences of each of the mentors was a consideration in being selected

to participate in the project. Matches were based on personality and background characteristics, interests and abilities, achievement levels and geographic location.

An initial kick-off event. Group events provided the participants and the youths’ parents with information about the project and an opportunity to meet one another in a comfortable, yet structured, group setting. Participants were able to discuss plans for future activities, both as a group and in their paired relationships. Three additional group events were designed to provide structured activities and to allow participants to socialize and support one another. These events also served as touchstones for tracking progress, as well as providing an outlet for acknowledging challenges.

Attention to family concerns. Care was taken to allow parents to acknowledge their concerns about this next phase in their son or daughter’s life, to support one another, and respect the stress parents can experience at this stage. The events provided an opportunity for parents to observe young adults with track records of success in transitioning to more independent lifestyles. The group events also encouraged parents to develop a foundation of trust so they could step back and allow the paired relationship to evolve with as little of their own direct involvement as possible.



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 “Mentoring is possibility thinking.”
 - Rick Brooks

A photo history of the project. A scrapbook was compiled documenting project activities, and mentors made a commitment to maintaining a regular schedule of contacts, as well as keeping a project journal that was submitted to the project coordinator on a monthly basis. The journal described the activities undertaken, new challenges or problems, along with comments, reactions or insights over the course of each week.

A formal wrap-up to the pilot. The project concluded with a wrap-up session during which participants were able to recap the year through a slide presentation featuring each of the individuals involved, reviewing the group events, discussing the experiences of the participants as their relationships developed, and sharing the lessons learned as a result of the project. Framed photograph collages were also displayed and served not only to stimulate reflection and discussion but also to recognize the accomplishments of the individuals within the project as well as the group as a whole. The photographs were presented as a memento given to each person in appreciation of their participation.



Reflections from the Pilot Mentoring Project

Designing a mentoring program for youth with disabilities incorporates all of the challenges inherent in creating any youth mentoring program. There are, however, additional considerations specific to the special health care needs or accommodation requirements of program participants. Best practices for any youth mentoring project proved to hold true for working with this population, along with some additional caveats.

All successful mentoring programs require:

- intensive coordination;
- mechanisms for recruitment;
- criteria to be used in matching partners;
- strategies for providing support during relationship development;
- documentation of progress and challenges; and
- evaluation of results.

This is also true in programs involving youth with disabilities, especially when the program utilizes a peer mentoring model. Some very practical considerations may need to be addressed. Most noteworthy among these are:

- Transportation for both individuals with disabilities may be an issue. Accessible, affordable, and available transportation frequently is a challenge. This may be especially true on evenings or weekends in most communities and almost all the time in more rural areas.
- Special health care considerations such as latex allergy, personal care needs, equipment, or assistive technology may require accommodations.

- Environmental or physical/health challenges may limit the duration, proximity and frequency of interaction between the mentor and the youth.
- Peer mentors may have had life experiences in their own transitions to adult life that may be very pertinent and valuable to youth, but may not have experience being a guide or a role model. Mentors may need coaching on how to respond to certain situations when they arise. The project coordinator may need to provide additional “mentoring to the mentor.”
- Parent and/or attendant staff involvement may limit or intrude on the mentor/youth relationship and may become a barrier to promoting maximum independence for the youth.
- Parents may be struggling with their own issues related both to the uncertainty surrounding this next phase of their son or daughter’s life and to their own midlife transition.

The success of the peer mentoring pilot involved attention to several key components, including:

- A clear role for the coordinator.
- Specific recruitment strategies and linkages with organizations that work with youth who have disabilities.
- Strategies to match partners so that relationships are maximized.
- Support available to facilitate the relationships.
- Reflection on what some of the most successful aspects of the project were.

Role of the Coordinator

Early in the project, it became clear that the coordinator was key to the success of the venture. Skills and attributes of an effective coordinator include:

- Passion for and commitment to the core concept of peer mentoring.
- Prior experience in some sort of peer support initiative.
- Intensive involvement at the start-up phase.
- Ongoing availability and vigilance in monitoring and supporting relationships.
- Ability to seek feedback and listen to concerns or problems as they arise.
- Ability to problem-solve with participants and serve as a resource for ideas and information.
- Recognition of new mentors' needs for development and ability to support mentors in this new role.
- Willingness to provide ideas on communication techniques, time management, priority setting, stress reduction, problem solving.
- Clearly articulated expectations, but flexibility in how things might be accomplished.
- Ability to provide structure and guidance at each stage in the process.
- A thoughtful approach to closure at the end of the project.

Recruitment Strategies

The most effective recruitment strategies used in this project included:

- Direct contact by coordinator, asking young people she already knew to participate.

- Promotion of the project within the sponsoring organization.
- Development and distribution of direct mail pieces (brochures, letters, etc.).
- Contacting teachers and service providers at community agencies to explain the project and seek referrals.
- Giving presentations to student or community groups.
- Contacting individuals with prior interest in peer support projects.

Partner Matches

Matches were most successful when the unique attributes of each of the participants were given careful consideration before matching partners. Matches were not pre-determined before getting to know each participant individually. Characteristics of effective mentors included:

- Being willing to “go the extra mile” if needed and extend themselves to build a solid relationship.
- Empathy.
- Remembering the other person's needs as the focus of the relationship.
- The confidence and maturity to take challenges in stride.
- Maintaining consistent contact.
- Determination to stay with the relationship even when it seemed little progress was being made.
- Knowing when to direct concerns or questions to the project coordinator and ask for help.

Facilitating Relationships

On-going support to the emerging relationships was essential. The project coordinator used these strategies:

- A group kick-off event that included parents. This get-together provided specific information, opportunity for discussion and encouraged parents to provide “just enough, but not too much” support to the matches.
- Project coordinator presence at the first individual meeting of each of the pairs to help break the ice.
- Regular social events throughout the year for the entire group that included project coordinator facilitation.

Reflection on Other Important Project Components

The project coordinator used a continuous evaluation process to determine what was working and what should be changed. Things she found to be successful were:

- Having the mentors keep a written journal so they could reflect on and express their feelings, not simply keep track of the specific activities.
- Understanding the importance of involving youth who were personally open to receiving peer support. It is not sufficient to have others decide the proposed participant could benefit from a mentor. If the proposed youth is not receptive, the relationship will be harder to develop, leaving both parties frustrated.
- An ability to make adjustments when a given relationship did not work. In the context of a grant project where time is limited, recruiting additional mentors was impractical. Instead, one of the more

experienced mentors was willing to work with an additional young person. Another option was to have two mentors share the responsibility of working with an additional youth. It is unrealistic to expect that every match will work, so it is important to have contingency plans where adjustments can be made.

- Using geographic proximity, as well as proximity in age, to determine the matches. Participants were able to get together more frequently when they lived near one another. They also seemed able to relate better and were more comfortable asking questions when they were closer in age.
- Appreciating each individual for their own uniqueness. Even though two people may share the same diagnosis or set of circumstances, they may have very different needs, abilities, interests and personalities.
- Offering group meetings with structured activities helped participants feel connected with one another beyond the individual pairings and provided opportunities for planning and generating additional ideas for activities to do outside of the group setting.

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 “The value of Peer Mentoring can be seen in the beauty of a smile, felt in the dreams of the heart and is unmistakably recognized by the freedom that results from providing a peer a voice so they can finally be heard!”

-*Jessica Kleist, M.S. Ed., Project Coordinator*
CIL WW Peer Mentoring Pilot Project

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Benefits to Mentors

As a result of this mentoring pilot project, each of the mentors increased their leadership skills and developed a better understanding of the importance of making a commitment and seeing it through. Mentors also improved their ability to problem solve with their partners and work through challenges. Overall, this served to strengthen the relationship while improving self-confidence and self-esteem for both the participants.

Mentors valued their own contributions and took pride in personal achievements as they shared their experiences with others. Each had the opportunity to impact the life of another individual in a unique way, providing their partners with the benefit of experience otherwise not available. Each of the youth involved learned more about themselves, about relationships and future possibilities.

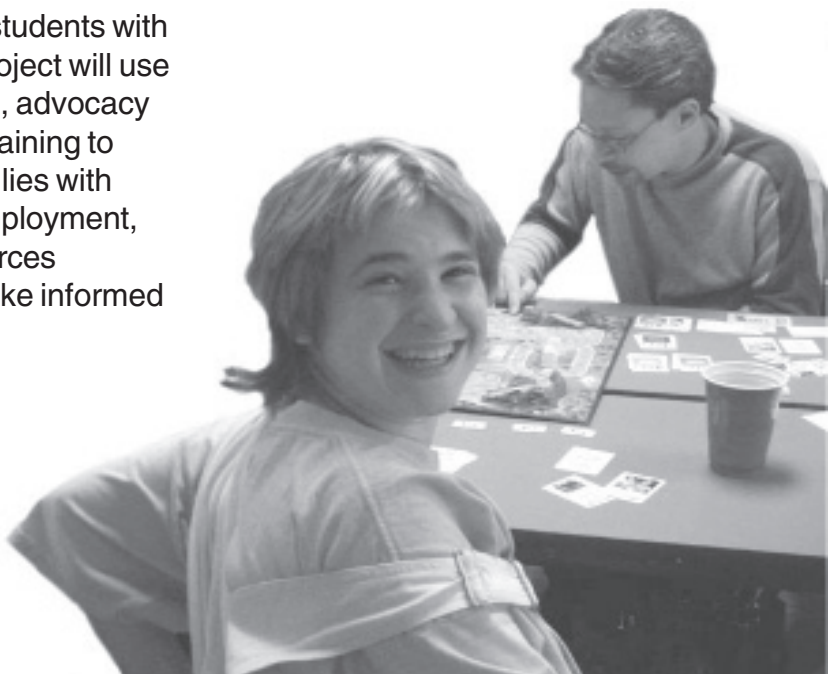
As a result of this pilot project, collaboration was established with community partners to develop a regional Peer Power Project to increase self-determination within the school setting and beyond for students with and without disabilities. The project will use proven peer support strategies, advocacy and leadership development training to provide students and their families with opportunities to learn about employment, housing, and community resources empowering them to better make informed choices.

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“The more mentors and protégés consider themselves to be similar, the greater the perceived benefits of the relationship.”

-Johnson and Ridley 2004

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Who Can be an Effective Mentor?

- An individual who, by virtue of his or her own life experience, has skills, knowledge and attitudes to share with another individual through a helping relationship aimed at supporting the other to pursue interests and goals.
- Someone willing to serve as a guide, a role model, a motivator.
- One who knows his or her own strengths and limitations.
- Someone who makes a commitment to provide opportunities and encouragement but does not seek to dominate or control another.
- Someone who is a good listener.

The mentoring program described in this booklet represents a model that can be duplicated or adapted. Mentoring opportunities can be created by designing new programs, working to make existing programs more inviting and inclusive for youth with disabilities and also by helping youth (and perhaps their parents) develop the skills to actively seek out mentors based on pursuit of specific goals or interests.



Potential Mentoring Settings

- **Community** - Community settings in this context refer to programs offered through community agencies or organizations. These agencies may offer mentoring as a component of their programming. It may be their single core service. Agencies may be disability oriented, such as an independent living center or an advocacy organization. Programs offered by groups such as the YMCA or Big Brothers/Big Sisters may already include youth with disabilities in the population served or may be encouraged to do so with some assistance in making the necessary accommodations. Service organizations represent another opportunity, as well as civic or professional organizations. These are a natural “next step” for youth as they think about moving into adult roles in their communities. There are also clubs based on hobbies or special interests such as gardening, astronomy, knitting, bird watching or building model airplanes where people gather to encourage one another. Adult education classes are becoming a popular option. Some of these educational offerings even include guided travel opportunities.
- **School** - School-based mentoring programs may be affiliated with community groups or may be initiated by school personnel and may involve adults with students in the classroom setting or out in the community. Sometimes, school-based programs involve other students to assist in providing academic or social supports. Some of these may involve students in sports or other extracurricular activities. The caveat for involving students with disabilities in these efforts is to make sure the reason a student mentor is in that role is **because they have something to offer beyond that fact that they do not have a disability**. It would also be important to encourage some students with disabilities to also serve as mentors - to other students with or without disabilities.
- **Businesses** - Companies are now seeing mentoring as an opportunity to help young people prepare for the workforce. Businesses may work with school- or community-based programs to provide mentors. The mentoring focus is on job skills and will frequently include some involvement in the workplace. This can sometimes lead to employment opportunities for the young person within that organization or can serve as a vehicle for developing a resume or references that can be used in future applications for job or post-secondary education opportunities.



- **Faith Based** - Many churches, synagogues, mosques and other religious organizations offer some form of mentoring to youth. Some of these programs are service or mission-oriented and involve the youth in some sort of volunteer activity. Some are more socially oriented. Some programs are specifically for youth within a congregational membership, while others have open participation.
- **E-mentoring** - Advancements in technology and the growth of the internet have created the availability of electronic, or e-mentoring. As with other forms of mentoring programs, this one also offers multiple approaches. Once again there is the potential for school-based linkages. Mentors can offer guidance to entire classrooms or workgroups on projects. One-to-one matches are another possibility.
- **Other Mentoring Related Activities** - Most mentoring opportunities are not just about the skills, knowledge or life experience the mentor has to offer. Of equal or even more importance are the relationships that develop. Many programs request a one-year commitment from the participants for this very reason. But there are some options that may still be of value or may lead to development of a longer-term involvement. This can include one-day career exploration events or job shadowing approaches. These may include events such as “Take your Son or Daughter to Work Day” or National Disability Mentoring Day.
- **Informal Mentoring Opportunities** - Sometimes life presents us with opportunities in every day life through relationships with family members, friends, neighbors and other community members. If we are able to embrace each day as a learning opportunity and life as our classroom, we can find some incredible mentors. Helping young people reach out, explore the world and appreciate getting to know others as they are still getting to know themselves is also a mentoring opportunity. The benefits from this type of experience may be immediate or may not be revealed until years later, but the potential will always be there.



Stories

Olivia and Matt

Olivia is willing to go to great lengths to share the power of communication. She had been living independently for the past two years and taking courses at UW-Stout in pursuit of her goal of becoming a public speaker when she decided to get involved in the peer mentoring pilot project. Olivia is a friendly young woman who has cerebral palsy and uses a power wheelchair that she operates with her head. By being matched with Matt, a young man who is on a ventilator and is unable to communicate verbally, Olivia was able to encourage his use of assistive technology and demonstrate how it has increased her own independence. Matt has very limited body movement but is able to use a communication device that he activates with his tongue. Olivia uses her C-Care to operate her phone and has written letters and e-mails to Matt by dictating them to her

computer. She and Matt have gone out into the community. Olivia also invited Matt to visit her apartment and has gone to see him at his school. Matt requires considerable support for his personal care and patience with regard to his communication skills and working through some of his concerns about attempting more independence. Olivia says she feels she is just the right person to work with Matt because she has learned how to be patient through her own life experiences. As part of her involvement in the peer mentor pilot project, Olivia was able to give two presentations at the statewide Circles of Life Conference.



Anthony and Tom

Tom had already been accepted into a university when he became involved with the mentoring program. He is a graduate of Menomonie High School and plans to study applied math and computer science at UW-Stout. Although he had a very close relationship with his brother, he was shy around other people. Tom and his brother both have Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and an even stronger bond than many siblings. Tom was open to learning how to expand his horizons but wasn't quite sure how. He has limited use of his extremities and will be living in the dorms with supports. Anthony was a terrific match as Tom's mentor. He was already a university student living in the dorms with personal care assistance mornings and evenings. Anthony has cerebral palsy and, like Tom, uses a power wheelchair for mobility. He is fun-loving, outgoing and is effective in helping Tom get a feel for college life. They were able to meet at Anthony's dorm and talk about things to do on campus. Even

though they have many different interests, they found they enjoyed playing video games together. By the end of the pilot project, not only had they developed a friendship, but Tom expressed an interest in being a mentor himself.

.....

"Mentored individuals are also more likely to mentor others."

-Johnson and Ridley, 2004

.....



Corbett, Ryan and Lindsey

Leading by example is important to Corbett. As a student at UW-Stout, she developed a reputation for being outspoken, easy going and open. She is also someone who gets things done. She has a bachelor's degree in vocational rehabilitation and is pursuing a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. Corbett has cerebral palsy and uses a power wheelchair quite effectively to get around. As a mentor, she says it is important to be an example, but not only in doing things well. "People with disabilities are kind of held to a higher standard. Making mistakes is not acceptable. But it's ok to fail sometimes; everybody does," she said in reflecting on her experience in the peer mentoring pilot project.

In fact, demonstrating her ability to adapt to change and challenges, Corbett not only mentored Ryan, a high school student with cerebral palsy, but also co-mentored another student, Lindsey,

when Lindsey's original match did not work out. As a CILWW board member, she knows the challenges and the opportunities for individuals with disabilities living in the community. She also knows the importance of social skills and reading social cues. This is an awareness she was able to incorporate into her role as a mentor to younger students not as experienced or outgoing as she has become. Helping to build their confidence through a variety of experiences was a focus for her. Together they participated in the group events but also went on individual excursions shopping at the mall and going out to eat. One of the young people Corbett mentored had been uncertain about going on to college. But by the end of the project, the same young person was accepted into a college program to begin in the fall after high school graduation. Corbett's other match is preparing to take on-line courses through a local technical college.



Tricia and Ashley

Tricia knows first hand the challenges of juggling life in the community. She lives independently with supports and works with the help of supportive employment. But somehow she found time in her busy schedule to be a mentor to Ashley. Tricia and Ashley are both warm and friendly individuals. Ashley has a visual impairment and osteoporosis, but this doesn't stop her from enjoying the outdoors. She adapts well to new situations and is willing to try new experiences. Tricia has been very willing to share her own experiences with Ashley. Tricia has a severe form of cerebral palsy and needs to have a variety of supports, including assistive technology, in order to live in the community. She has found that a supportive employment environment works best for her at this time. Tricia understands how challenging it can be to work and do all of the things necessary to live independently. She has been helpful to Ashley in thinking about her future and how Ashley can share her artistic talents. They

have been able to maintain contact through phone conversations in addition to seeing one another in person. Ashley also had a great time exploring the freedom of unrestricted movement during one of the group social events that included a trip to Courage Center, a nationally-recognized resource center in Minneapolis for people with disabilities, and a chance to enjoy the swimming pool. Ashley's mom has shared that she has noticed Ashley asking more independent living questions since her involvement with Tricia.

.....
 "All change is systems change."
 - Beth Swedeen, Waisman Center
 community outreach facilitator



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Appendix A

Peer Mentoring Training Manual



Peer Mentoring Pilot
Developed in cooperation with the Center for Independent
Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc.

Introduction

The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. was given the opportunity to pilot a mentoring project for youth with disabilities. The young adults who had graduated within the last 5 years from high school used their life experiences and training to assist other students transitioning from high school who were seeking peer support and/or assistance with problem solving as they moved toward high school graduation.

The following manual was developed as a guide to provide the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) with the information they need to assist others as they develop related programs in order to enable youth to exercise choices to maintain or increase their independence.

Philosophy of Independent Living

Independent living is defined by each person based on individual circumstances, needs, desire and values. Independent living does mean that each person has the right to the greatest level of self-determination and participation in society. To achieve this, there must be a range of choices available to the person so that the individual can minimize emotional and physical dependence on others. An environment which is attitudinally and physically accessible, contains support services and allows the person to develop skills and abilities, is essential to reaching the goals of independent living.

The philosophy of independent living replaced the medical model of providing professional services to sick and impaired individuals with a consumer controlled model advocating self-direction, self-help, and consumer-directed services. The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. advocates for the full participation in society of all person with disabilities. The CILWW goal is empowering individuals to exercise choices to maintain or increase their independence. CILWW strategy is to provide consumer-driven services at no cost to persons with disabilities in Western Wisconsin.

Peer Mentoring Project

Responsibilities of Participants:

1. Mentors and youth are expected to have weekly contact either by phone, e-mail or face to face. There must be actual contact. Leaving a message does not count as a contact. If you are unable to reach the mentor or youth participant, make certain to contact the Project Coordinator.
2. On a monthly basis, mentors are expected to meet with their youth participants. Mentors are expected to inform the Project Coordinator of the planned activity (going to a movie, hanging out at someone's home, etc.) at least a week in advance to ensure that parents are fully informed about where their son or daughter will be so that assistance can be arranged as needed.
3. Mentors and youth participants are expected to attend all scheduled social events. If you have activities planned that you know will interfere with the dates of scheduled Social Events, please contact the Project Coordinator as soon as possible to see if arrangements can be made.
4. Each mentor and youth participant is expected to keep a journal of his or her successes and challenges related to the Peer Mentoring Project throughout the length of the project.
5. Each mentor and youth participant is expected utilize the support of the Project Coordinator on a monthly basis to answer questions, offer suggestions and support.
6. Parents are encouraged to provide support to the mentoring relationship and feedback to the Project Coordinator as needed.
7. Inform the Project Coordinator at least a week in advance if transportation is needed for a face-to-face visit with a mentor/youth participant or to attend a social event.

Expectations of Participants:

1. Each participant is expected to be respectful of one another’s ideas, feelings and beliefs.
2. Any use of alcohol or other substance in an illegal manner while in the presence of minors is strictly prohibited during all social events and/or individual contacts as a condition to participating in this grant. Failure to comply will result in termination from the project.
3. If mentors are providing transportation to other mentors or youth participants, they are required to provide the Project Coordinator with a copy of their valid drivers license.
4. Mentors are considered part of the Peer Support Program at the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. and are expected to behave in a professional manner in accordance with the policies outlined in the Peer Support Training Manual.

I have read and understand the above responsibilities and expectations of participants:

Signature of Participant

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Overview of Peer Mentoring Project

What is Peer Mentoring?

Peer Mentoring evolved with the belief that young adults with disabilities who are living independently, working and/or actively involved in their communities can act as excellent role models for youth with disabilities who seek support, practical advice, and/or assistance with problem solving in living independently within their own communities. A Peer Mentor acts not only as a role model, but also as a sounding board for frustrations related to disability and offers emotional support during the adjustment to independent living.

A Peer Mentor is **discouraged** from offering personal advice. When discussing a problem situation, a Peer Mentor should help the youth to look at the options available to them and possible consequences of each action.

How does a Peer Mentor assist youth with disabilities?

Some of the many areas in which a Peer Mentor may assist include:

- Learning ways to utilize one's leisure time more fully and opportunities for social interaction.
- Coping and adjusting to a disability.
- Employment issues and educational opportunities.
- Transportation issues.

Procedures in Providing Peer Mentoring

The Peer Coordinator will usually make the arrangements for the first initial contact and is present to introduce the Peer Mentor to the youth. Peer Mentoring can take place in just about any setting. However, if transportation is a barrier, peer mentoring may take place over the phone or by e-mail.

During the initial contacts, the Peer Mentor spends time getting to know the person and establishing a good rapport and trusting relationship. The Peer Mentor usually initiates a relationship by being honest, sincere and open.

Some areas that a Peer Mentor may want to explore during the initial contact could be:

1. When has the person acquired their disability? How did it happen? What are their feelings towards their disability? How has the family been involved?
2. What leisure activities are they doing? What did they enjoy doing in the past?
3. How often do they get out of their living environment and when they do, what are some things that they do (i.e., shopping, going to church, visiting friends, going for a walk, etc.)?
4. What social contacts do they have?

The Peer Mentor should encourage the youth to initiate the contact if they need to talk to the Peer Mentor about a specific problem. During the initial contact, the Peer Mentor may also want to share some of his or her experiences related to disability, family background, living situation, or other interest areas.

Additional Peer Contacts

The Peer Mentor is asked to initiate the contacts while rapport is being established. After the Peer Mentor feels that rapport has been established (can vary but typically after 2 to 3 contacts) the youth is encouraged to also make contact with the Peer Mentor. This is to ensure that the youth is receiving support when he or she needs it.

During later contacts, the Peer Mentor will use the information they received during the initial contact to explore ways of problem solving and goal setting. It is important that the Peer Mentor uses effective problem solving and goal setting skills to assist the person in identifying what the actual problem may be and explore possible solutions to the problem. It is suggested that only one goal at a time be worked on. If too many goals are being worked on at the same time, it may result in the person being overwhelmed and frustrated and none of the goals being accomplished.

The frequency and length of a peer support contact depends on the needs of the youth and the distance the Peer Mentor is from the youth. The frequency of contacts can range from daily, to once a week, every other week or once a month. The number of contacts depends on each individual person. The length of each contact will also vary, however, the usual length is one to two hours. The length of the relationship can also vary.

Journaling Peer Contacts

After each peer support contact, the Peer Mentor is requested to fill out and return a monthly contact sheet.

This form includes:

1. The date of the contact, type of contact either by phone, e-mail, writing or in person, the length of contact and location.
2. A brief summary of the activities for each week.
3. Questions or concerns that the Project Coordinator can assist with.
4. Areas that the Peer Mentor or youth need further assistance with.

The Peer Contact Sheets are a very important part of the Peer Mentoring Project. The sheets help to facilitate a better communication between the Peer Mentor and the Project Coordinator on how well the youth is progressing in their independent living goals, if they need any additional support and information on future goals that the youth may need to work on. (See Project Journal Monthly Contact Sheet on p.57)

Guidelines for Journaling:

Note: Contact Sheets can be either mailed or e-mailed.

1. Write as if the reader knows nothing about the youth.
2. Document services; name, date, etc.
3. Keep the report neat and concise, brief and to the point.
4. Check the grammar and spelling.
5. Stay on topic. Don't wander into other unrelated areas/subjects.
6. Write objectively. Avoid making judgments and conclusions. Document youth's feelings, statements with quotes. ("Jane Doe stated that she felt very angry at her husband.")
7. Uses quotes from the youth whenever possible. Make sure they are accurate.
8. Supply sources of information you use. If you don't have a source, then you are probably guessing or speculating.
9. Include the objectives for the next session or overall objectives for long-term work.
10. Maintain confidentiality in writing case notes, keeping files, and verbally.

Make an effort to note positive aspects as much as possible and progress in the youth's identified goals.

*Case notes are not used exclusively for things about the youth.

The Peer Mentor should also be aware of signs that might indicate an unwanted peer support relationship such as, "You are the only one I can talk to," "I really love you," or "I don't know what I'd do without you." Other signs may be the youth perceiving an outing as a date or wanting to meet with you more often than you feel is appropriate. If the Peer Mentor sees these signs or hears these comments, he or she should contact the Project Coordinator.

Peer Mentoring Communication Skills

Empathy

Empathy is a communication skill, which shows caring and understanding. It lets the other person know that you have really listened, recognized their feelings and you are willing to continue to listen. Empathy is also the basis for trusting and caring.

It is important to identify what the person is actually saying and respond in a way that shows your understanding of how they really feel. There are two steps in providing an empathetic response.

1. Identify:

Accurately identify the feelings, be as specific as possible.

2. Respond:

Respond to those feelings in a way that shows the person you really understand how they feel. Here are some examples of empathetic responses:

- a. "I get so mad at the caretaker when he refuses to shovel the walks or sprinkle salt on the ice. I constantly have to ask him."

Response: "It sounds like you get very frustrated when the caretaker won't do his job."

- b. "I just don't know what to do. I don't know whether to go to school or to go out and find a job. I just don't know what I should do."

Response: "It sounds like you have a decision to make and you are not sure which to make."

- c. "Now that I have moved I haven't heard from anyone, not my friends or my family in three weeks. I just sit in my apartment with nothing to do."

Response: "It sounds like you are really lonesome right now."

1. Listen:

In providing empathetic responses it is important that you listen to the person very carefully. Also make sure to use good eye contact and that your body language shows that you are really listening. It is important to get the full message of what one is saying.

Values Clarification

Values Clarification is similar to empathy. However, instead of reflecting back what the person's feelings are, you are reflecting back what their values may be. However, you make no judgment of these values and you show the individual that you accept him or her as a person. In values clarification, you help the person to explore what her or she is actually thinking about a particular problem. There are two steps in values clarification.

1. Questioning:

There are closed ended questions and open-ended questions.

Closed ended questions end in yes or no or one word answers.

These types of questions may be: Do you like your job? Did you go shopping today? These types of questions usually end or stop the conversation.

Open-ended questions are different. They allow the person to explore what he or she is thinking or feeling. Open-ended questions sometimes start with What or How. These questions keep the person talking. Some of these questions may include:

- a. What happened when?
- b. How do you feel about what that person said?
- c. What were you thinking?
- d. What would you have liked to tell that person?
- e. What did you want him or her to do?
- f. What were you thinking about the other person at that time?

2. Reflective Values Statements:

After you allow the person to explore how they are thinking or feeling about a particular problem, you can reflect these thoughts in a reflective value statement.

These statements may include:

- a. "It is very important to you that _____."
- b. "You seem to _____ when you think _____."
- c. "You don't seem to like it when _____."

3. Examples:

- a. "People are always telling me what I should do. I wish that they would get off my back."

Response: "It really bothers you when people try to make decisions for you and they think that you can't make the decisions yourself."

- b. "Ever since I have been disabled I haven't been able to attend a church service. None of the churches in town that I would attend are accessible and if I want to go to church I have to find people to carry me and my wheelchair up the stairs. It is just such a hassle. I wish there was another way."

Response: “Church is very important to you and you wish that they could do something to the church to make it more accessible for people with disabilities.”

- c. “It really bothers me when people start talking very loud and very slow to me.”

Response: “You don’t like it when people think that those who are physically disabled are also cognitively disabled.”

Problem Solving and Goal Setting

Now that the person has explored what he or she has been feeling and thinking, you can move on to problem solving. To find solutions to problems there are several steps one can take.

1. Select One Problem:

There may be several problems that the person may be expressing, however, it is important to take one problem at a time. In selecting a problem to assist the person in developing a solution, look for the biggest problem or a problem that might affect other problems. Sometimes you can kill two birds with one stone.

2. Define the Problem:

After you have selected a problem, define what the problem really is. When does it happen? How often does it happen? How does it happen? Be as specific as possible.

3. Develop Objectives:

What are the final goals? Are these goals realistic? What are the benefits of these goals?

4. The Price You Pay for Not Solving the Problem:

What will he or she be losing, such as feelings, self-concept, relationships with others, physical pain, etc.?

5. Rewards for Not Solving the Problem:

Look at the good feelings that the person gets such as sympathy from others, caring, attention or thinking of good things in trying to avoid working on your own problems.

6. Look at Alternative Solutions:

Assist the person in coming up with his/her own alternative solutions. Try not to give suggestions, however, if the person forgets a possible alternative, assist him/her in thinking harder or point out a possible alternative.

7. Clarify These Alternatives:

Which ones are realistic and which ones are not; explore how the person would feel about trying this alternative; look at the best and the worst possible outcomes of this alternative.

8. Choose an Alternative to Try:

After clarifying each alternative, select which one to try. Be sure the individual with the problem made the decision and not you.

9. Develop a Plan of Action:

Determine each step, time limits, rewards for each step, and support. Take one step at a time, and allow for setbacks and disappointments. Discuss solutions to possible setbacks and/or disappointments.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is based on one's individual right to privacy, both expressed and implied. Confidentiality means that any information that the youth tells you or implies will not be given or disclosed to others except under certain circumstances (these circumstances will be discussed later).

There are certain circumstances that may arise which allow you to, or make it your obligation to, inform an appropriate source about the information that you receive. These circumstances would include:

1. If you, as the Peer Mentor, believe that this person may cause injury to himself/herself or another person. Even though this information was given in confidence, it is your obligation to protect this person and this may mean revealing it to an appropriate source.
2. If the youth informs you, as a Peer Mentor, that he/she is intending to commit an unlawful act which you believe is possible and you are unable to otherwise prevent him/her from carrying out, it is our obligation to disclose this information to the police.

If either of these situations does arise, you should immediately follow the following procedures:

1. Contact the Project Coordinator.
2. If you cannot reach the Coordinator, contact the CILWW Resource Counselor who is assigned to the client/consumer.
3. If you cannot reach the CILWW Resource Counselor, contact the CILWW Director.
4. If these contact people cannot be reached, you may call a help line in your community or the local police department.

Reimbursement of Peer Mentoring Expenses

All Peer Mentors will be reimbursed for mileage and long distance phone calls made in providing peer support. The maximum amount for reimbursement will be determined on an individual basis. In determining the reimbursement amount, the number of miles round trip for each contact is taken into consideration and the Peer Support Advocate is paid a set rate per mile.

Before a Peer Mentor can receive any reimbursement for expenses, he or she must return completed contact forms or make contact with the Coordinator regarding consumer/advisee contact, and then follow the “Procedures for Reimbursement.”



Mentor Application

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Address _____ County _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Cell) _____

DOB ____/____/____ Age _____

Marital Status _____ Sex _____ M
_____ F

What form of transportation do you use? _____

Disability(s) _____

How long have you been disabled? _____

Are you currently employed? _____ What is your job title? _____

Living arrangement

_____ Family _____ Independently
_____ Friend(s) _____ Other

Is your home wheelchair accessible? _____ Yes _____ No

Student Preference - Check the ones you prefer

_____ Male _____ Physical Disability _____ Deaf/Hard of Hearing
_____ Female _____ Learning Disability _____ Blind/Visual Impairment
_____ Age _____ Cognitive Disability _____ Mental Health
_____ Close Location _____ Disability Type Doesn't Matter

List specific types of disabilities that you have had experience with.

Preferres type of contact _____ **Face to Face**

_____ **Phone Contact**

_____ **Email**

Email Address _____

Which of the following areas do you feel most comfortable offering assistance with?

_____ **Independent living skills**

_____ **Employment issues**

_____ **Social skills and opportunities**

_____ **Transportation issues**

_____ **Advocacy**

_____ **Educational opportunities**

_____ **IEP Process and Rights**

_____ **Community Awareness**

_____ **Coping and adjusting to disability**

List hobbies or things that you enjoy doing during your leisure time.

Have you been involved in any volunteer work before? _____

Please describe your experience. _____

Why would you like to be a Peer Mentor? _____

What characteristics do you have that would make you a good Peer Mentor?

What is the best time for you to attend trainings? (Circle convenient time)

Morning Afternoon Late Afternoon Evening

What is the best day for you to attend trainings?

(Circle the two most convenient days)

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

When is the best time of year for you to attend training?

Month(s) _____

Education Completed:

High School _____

Technical College _____

University _____ **Major or Course of Study** _____

Name of Last School Attended: _____

Please list two references other than relatives:

1. Name _____ **Phone No.** _____

Address _____

_____ **Zip Code** _____

Relationship (i.e., friend, neighbor, coworker, professional)

2. Name _____ **Phone No.** _____

Address _____

_____ **Zip Code** _____

Relationship (i.e., friend, neighbor, coworker, professional)

For Information Contact:

Executive Director

Jessica Kleist, M.S.Ed.

Peer Power Project Coordinator

2920 Schneider Avenue East

Menomonie, WI 54751

(715)-233-1070 voice/tdd or 1-800-228-3287 voice/tdd

(715)-233-1083 fax



Student Application

Name _____ Date ____/____/____

Address _____

_____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Cell) _____

DOB ____/____/____ Age _____

Sex _____ M

_____ F

What form of transportation do you use? _____

Disability(s) _____

How long have you been disabled? _____

Are you currently employed? _____ What is your job title? _____

Living Arrangement

_____ Family _____ Independently

_____ Friend(s) _____ Other

Is your home wheelchair accessible? _____ Yes _____ No

Student Preference

_____ Male _____ Similar Disability

_____ Female _____ Same Disability

_____ Disability Type
Doesn't Matter

Preferres type of contact _____ **Face to Face**
_____ **Phone Contact**
_____ **Email**
Email Address _____

Special Considerations for this match _____

List hobbies or things that you enjoy doing during your leisure time.



Responsibilities of Participants

1. Mentors and youth are expected to have weekly contact either by phone, e-mail or face to face. There must be actual contact. Leaving a message does not count as a contact. If you are unable to reach the mentor or youth, make certain to contact the Project Coordinator.
2. On a monthly basis, mentors are expected to meet with their matches. Mentors are expected to inform the Project Coordinator of planned activity (going to a movie, hanging out at someone's home, etc.) at least a week in advance to ensure that parents are fully informed about where their son or daughter will be so that assistance can be arranged as needed.
3. Mentors and youth are expected to attend all scheduled social events. If you have activities planned that you know will interfere with the dates of scheduled events, please contact the Project Coordinator as soon as possible to see if arrangements can be made.
4. Each mentor and mentee is expected to keep a journal of his or her successes and challenges related to the Peer Mentoring Project throughout the length of the project.
5. Each mentor and mentee is expected to utilize the support of the Project Coordinator on a monthly basis to answer questions, offer suggestions and support.
6. Parents are encouraged to provide support to the mentoring relationship and feedback to the Project Coordinator as needed.
7. Inform the Project Coordinator at least a week in advance if transportation is needed for a face-to-face visit with a mentor/mentee or to attend a social event.

Expectations of Participants:

1. Each participant is expected to be respectful of one another's ideas, feelings and beliefs.
2. Any use of alcohol or other substance in an illegal manner while in the presence of minor is strictly prohibited during all social events and/or individual contacts as a condition to participating in this grant. Failure to comply will result in termination from the project.
3. If mentors are providing transportation to other mentors or mentees they are required to provide the Project Coordinator with a copy of their valid drivers license.
4. Mentors are considered part of the Peer Support Program at the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. and are expected to behave in a professional manner in accordance with the policies outlined in the Peer Support Training Manual.

I have read and understand the above responsibilities and expectations of participants:

Signature of Participant

Date: ____/____/____

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date: ____/____/____



Medical, Special Needs or Accommodations

The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. (CILWW) wants to help make your experiences as part of the **Peer Mentoring Project** enjoyable. If you have any medical and or special needs that you feel are necessary for CILWW Staff on site to be aware of (example: uncontrolled seizures, allergies, sun sensitivity, diabetic, etc.) please provide the information below. The information you provide will be strictly confidential and used only for purposes of your teen's health and well-being.

Disability: _____

Accommodations: _____

Special Needs: _____

Other: _____

Emergency Contact Information:

Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____

Home Phone: _____

Work/Cell Phone: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

Legal Guardian: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

**MUST BE SIGNED BY PARTICIPANT AND /OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
IF UNDER THE AGE OF 18**



Release of Liability

The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. (CILWW) goes to great lengths to ensure the safety and well being of all participants involved in the Peer Power Project. In consideration of the acceptance of my entry into the Peer Mentoring Project running from _____ through _____, I release CILWW and all respective agents and employees connected with this event from any liability or claims for an injury to body or property or illness that I sustain during my participation in any events connected with this project. I understand that this release applies to myself, my personal attendants, heirs and assigns. I represent that I am capable of participating in this event; I recognize that risk of injury may accompany such participation and acknowledge that the above persons in permitting me to participate are relying upon this release.

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Legal Guardian: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

**MUST BE SIGNED BY PARTICIPANT AND /OR LEGAL GUARDIAN
IF UNDER THE AGE OF 18**



Peer Mentoring Project Monthly Mileage/Phone Reimbursement Form

Peer Mentor: _____ Phone No: _____

Address: _____

Youth Participant: _____ Phone No: _____

Address: _____

Trip From: _____ To: _____

Date of Contact: ____/____/____ Activity: _____

Time Departed: _____ Time Returned: _____

Total number of miles round trip: _____

Phone Bill:

(Please attach the original or a copy of your phone bill. Underline or highlight specific phone calls to the consumer/advisee.)

Date of Contact(s): _____

Total of reimbursement: _____

Signature of Project Coordinator: _____

Return forms by the 23rd of each month to:

Project Coordinator
Center for Independent Living for Western WI, Inc.
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715)-233-1070 voice/tdd or 1-800-228-3287 voice/tdd
(715)-233-1083 fax
jziegler@cilww.com

Procedures for Reimbursement:

1. After each Peer Support contact, the Peer Mentor must:
 - a. Fill out the Peer Support Contact Log and send it to the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin (CILWW).
 - b. Fill out the Peer Mentoring Monthly Mileage/Phone Reimbursement Form to indicate the total mileage per contact. However, this form will not be sent to CILWW until the 23rd of each month.
2. On the 23rd of each month, the Peer Mentor must send CILWW the Peer Support Monthly Mileage/Phone Reimbursement Form to indicate the total mileage for the month.
3. For reimbursement of long distance telephone calls, the Peer Mentor must send CILWW the long distance charges from their telephone bill (original or copy) with the peer support calls circled or highlighted.

Note: The only long distance telephone calls that will be reimbursed are that of the consumer's place of residence telephone number.

For any additional information or questions, please contact the at:

**Center for Independent Living for Western WI, Inc.
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715)-233-1070 voice/tdd or 1-800-228-3287 voice/tdd
(715)-233-1083 fax
jziegler@cilww.com**



Project Journal Monthly Contact Sheet

To be completed by all Mentors and turned in to
Project Coordinator on a monthly basis.
Use additional paper as necessary.

Name: _____ Month: _____

Dates of Contacts: _____

Day: _____ Time Spent with each other: _____

Types of Activity: _____

Summary of Activities:

What did you do? Where did you go? Where did you meet?

Describe new challenges or problems faced for each week
(Please be specific):

Comments/Reactions/Insights about your experiences for each week
(Please be specific):

.....

Day: _____ **Time Spent with each other:** _____

Types of Activity: _____

Summary of Activities:

Describe new challenges or problems faced for each week (Please be specific):

**Comments/Reactions/Insights about your experiences for each week
(Please be specific):**

.....

Day: _____ **Time Spent with each other:** _____

Types of Activity: _____

Summary of Activities:

Describe new challenges or problems faced for each week (Please be specific):

**Comments/Reactions/Insights about your experiences for each week
(Please be specific):**



Tentative Schedule of Events

Date	Activity	Time
9-18-03	Kickoff Event	4-7 p.m.
Week of 9-21-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 9-28-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 10-5-03	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 10-12-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 10-19-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 10-26-03	SOCIAL EVENT #1	
Week of 11-2-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 11-9-03	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 16-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 11-23-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Week of 11-30-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 12-7-03	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 12-14-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 12-21-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Week of 12-28-03	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 1-4-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 1-11-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 1-18-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 1-25-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 2-1-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 2-8-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 2-15-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 2-22-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 2-29-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 3-7-04	SOCIAL EVENT #2	
Week of 3-14-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 3-21-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 3-28-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 4-4-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 4-11-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 4-18-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 4-25-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 5-2-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 5-9-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 5-16-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 5-23-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 5-30-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 6-6-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 6-13-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 6-20-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 6-27-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 7-4-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	HAPPY 4 TH OF JULY
Week of 7-11-04	SOCIAL EVENT #3	
Week of 7-18-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 7-25-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 8-1-04	Face to Face Visit	
Week of 8-8-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 8-15-04	Phone, E-mail or face to face	
Week of 8-22-04	SOCIAL EVENT #4	



Group Activity Flyer

Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. Peer Mentoring Project

What: Peer Mentoring Project Social Event #3

When: Sunday, July 18 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Where: Riverside Park

What to Bring: Bug spray, suntan lotion, sunglasses (Lunch provided)

Pavilion rented for picnic lunch. Activities to do and trails to explore!

Plan for the Day:

11:00 a.m.	Activity
12:00 p.m.	Have lunch
1:00 p.m.	Activity or explore the trails
2:00 p.m.	Depart or stay and have more fun!

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone! If you have any questions or need help with transportation, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-228-3287 Ext. 27.

See you there,

Jessica Ziegler (Kleist), M.S. Ed.
Project Coordinator

Directions to Riverside Park

Go towards Menomonie

Coming in on 29 East

Just before Hwy 25 take a park entrance on your right just before the bridge

From Hwy. 94 take Menomonie/Barron Exit

Go South on Hwy 25 (Broadway)

Take a Right onto Hwy 29 West

Park entrance will be on your left hand side just after the bridge

Riverside Park

1412 6th Street

Menomonie, WI 54751

PHONE 715-232-1664



Permission to Produce and Use Audiovisual Materials

From time to time the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. (CILWW) may wish to write, photograph, videotape, audiotape, etc., CILWW consumers, representatives, and other associates as a means of promoting the Center's programs. These articles, photos, videos, etc. may appear in our publications, newsletter, brochures, web site, local news, and print media.

As part of our records, we ask that you read and complete the following form and return it to our office in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Thank you.

I, _____, consent to the use of my name, photographs, and other means mentioned above for publicity and promotional purposes by the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. and the programs supported by the Center.

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

If the person signing this document is **UNDER THE AGE OF 18** this must have an accompanying signature of legal guardian.

Signature: _____ **Date:** ____/____/____

I hereby give my consent to be included in video or audio tapes, photographs, still or motion pictures, television or other audiovisual materials which are produced by the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (201 W. Washington Ave., Suite 110, Madison, WI 53703) or by a project funded by the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I authorize the use of these materials for general educational purposes for a term of two years beyond the date signed below. My name, likeness, and biography may be used for publicity and promotion of these materials.

I hereby release the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities, showing or distributing the above-named materials or portions thereof, from any claim by me for damage to my person, property, reputation, or for invasion of privacy.

I further affirm that the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities is the owner of all rights in and to said materials and that no monetary consideration is due and owing myself.

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

If Applicable, Guardian Information:

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Address: _____



Certificate of Non-Conviction

Persons who volunteer, or who are employed to deliver services to consumers assume a serious responsibility. Knowing that, the undersigned certifies the following:

1. I have not been convicted as an adult of any crime in the areas of:
 - Juvenile prostituting
 - Child Pornography
 - Child Exploitation
 - Physical abuse, Assault, or Battery
 - Sexual Assault

2. I have not been disciplined or discharged from employment for committing, or attempting to commit, crimes related to the above areas.

3. I have not been convicted of any crime related to the above (#1) in any other state, or outside the United States that would have been punishable if committed in this state.

4. I understand that I have an ongoing obligation as a volunteer or employee of the agency to promptly report any future convictions in the areas listed above (#1).

I, the Undersigned, certify that I have read and understand the above policy. I agree to follow its terms and conditions, and am fully aware that non-adherence may result in my immediate discharge.

Signed: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____



Peer Power Feedback Form

Month _____ Topic _____ Group _____

1. (Please circle correct number)

I am 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 years old.

2. Some things I learned today are:

3. What activities would you like to do and what would you like to learn more about?
Please list below:

4. My mentor helped me the most this month by:

5. Some things my mentor and I do together are: (Please Circle)

talk on the phone listen to music go shopping go out to eat

do homework see plays/movies go for walks read books

e-mail each other play sports

Other _____

Please List

6. Some things I like about having a mentor are:

Please turn in to Jessica before you leave.



Recruitment Flyer

Center For Independent Living

For Western Wisconsin, Inc.

The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. offers a new opportunity during the 2004-2005 school year for young adults age 18 to 25 willing to share practical advice, support and guidance to middle and high school students with disabilities as they move toward high school graduation.

Does the following describe you?

- Are you between the ages of 18 and 25 and interested in sharing your life experiences and providing support to youth as they prepare to leave high school?
- Do you have personal experience with disability or have a relationship with someone with a disability?
- Are you dependable, self-directed, motivated, with a demonstrated ability to handle challenges?

Mentoring provides leadership development by allowing young adults the opportunity to assist students with problem solving and exploration of future options or alternatives.

Students also have a chance to interact with others, which can promote a feeling of value and belonging. Further, mentoring can result in a feeling of pride in achievements as mentors share their experiences with others and work together as a team to achieve a common goal.

By joining the Peer Power Student Advisory Group and/or becoming a mentor, you will have the opportunity to assist a student with:

- Exploration of future hopes and dreams.
- Learning ways to utilize one's leisure time more fully and provide opportunities for social interaction.
- Concepts of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process.
- Coping and adjusting to a disability.
- Community Exploration.
- Transportation Options.
- Independent Living.
- Post-Secondary Education Options.
- Career Exploration.

For any additional information or questions regarding the Peer Power Project, please contact Jessica Kleist, Peer Power Project Coordinator at:

**Jessica Kleist, M.S. Ed.
Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc.
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751
715-233-1070 or 1-800-228-3287 v/tty**



Release of Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

I give my permission to the Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc., to exchange information (written and verbal) with the agency/individual indicated below which will assist in me achieving my independent living goals. This permission is valid until two years after the date indicated unless otherwise stated or I revoke it or my file with CILWW is closed.

Name of Agency: _____

Name of Individual: _____

Date: ____/____/____

I understand that this permission for release of information may be revoked by me at any time.

_____ **Date** ____/____/____

**Signature of Consumer
or Legal Guardian/Parent**

CILWW Confidentiality Policy

No one other than CILWW personnel, (including students under direct staff supervision) may read, review, or remove consumer file contents without the written consent of the consumer. Consumer records shall remain confidential and the property of the Center and shall not be released unless dictated by the consumer or by legal action. A photocopy or facsimile of this authorization shall be considered valid as original.



Consumer Grievance Policy & Procedure

The Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc. (CILWW) in an effort to assure quality of services and concern for consumers, provides for the following Consumer Grievance Policy and Procedure:

- A. Filing a Grievance:** All consumers will be informed during their initial meeting of CILWW and Client Assistance Program (CAP) grievance policies. Any consumer who feels he/she has been treated unfairly by CILWW staff may file a grievance by contacting the Center Director in writing.

- B. Arrangement of Meeting With the Consumer:** The Director will in writing contact the consumer within ten (10) working days and make arrangements with the client for a meeting to discuss the grievance. The Director will inform the consumer that CAP can assist with the appeals process and that the ultimate decision of the Center Board will be final.

- C. Appeal to Center Board:** If, as a result of the meeting with the Director, a grievance remains unresolved, the client may file a written request for a grievance hearing with the CILWW Board of Directors. The Board or its designate will respond to the written request for a grievance hearing within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request. The Board or its designate shall issue a decision on the grievance within thirty (30) days of the grievance hearing. The decision of the Board or its designate shall be final. The CAP address is:
2811 Agriculture Drive
PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911
PHONE 1-800-362-1290

- D. Inquires or Initiation of Grievance With the Agency:** Any questions or concerns regarding CILWW's provision of services should be directed to:

**Executive Director
Center for Independent Living for Western WI, Inc.
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715)-233-1070 voice/tdd or 1-800-228-3287 voice/tdd
(715)-233-1083 fax**



Wisconsin Client Assistance Program

CAP 1-800-362-1290

CAP was established by Congress to provide information about services for people with disabilities and to provide assistance when a person is having difficulty receiving services that are funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

WHO DOES CAP SERVE?

People who are seeking services from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Projects, and/or Independent Living Centers in Wisconsin.

CAP SERVICES...

1. CAP staff can provide information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Independent Living Services in Wisconsin.
2. CAP staff can tell you about the types of services you can expect from a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Rehabilitation Teacher or other Vocational service Providers.
3. CAP staff can assist you in determining if you are receiving appropriate services.
4. CAP staff can assist you in resolving differences with your VR Counselor, Rehabilitation Teacher, or Independent Living Center staff person.
5. If differences cannot be resolved, CAP staff can assist a person with an appeal or other legal remedy when appropriate services have been denied.

YOU SHOULD KNOW...

There is no cost to you for CAP services.

CAP provides assistance to individuals with all types of disabilities.

CAP will cover the cost of interpreters or translators for meetings with CAP staff. CAP will provide information in Braille, large print, or other alternative format upon request.

We assist individuals anywhere in Wisconsin. If a meeting is needed, CAP staff will travel to your community.

The information you tell us is confidential and will not be shared without your permission.

CAP staff will not advocate for anything that is against your wishes. If we feel your complaint does not have merit under the law, we will explain why and advise you that we cannot help you.

Recognizing the Power of Partnerships *WHAT IS PEER POWER*

Each year, over 5,000 students with disabilities graduate from Wisconsin high schools. Some of them will make smooth transitions to adult lives, but many will not. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that students with disabilities be invited to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings from age 14 through completion of high school so that they are involved in the process of making decisions about their future. Unfortunately, many students are not prepared to take an active role in this process.

Peer Power is a statewide initiative promoted in the Fox Valley, Milwaukee and the Chippewa Valley with a satellite in LaCrosse and is made possible by Wisconsin Senator Herb Kohl. Peer Power is designed for youth in the transition phase of their education. The project involves youth who are making decisions about their lives after high school.

Peer Power emphasizes the development of knowledge, skills and confidence in the students themselves. CIL/WV together with community partners, are working during the 2004-2005 school year to prepare students with disabilities for the transition to life beyond school through peer support, advocacy training, person-centered planning, leadership experience, information on the IEP process and the individual's rights, and opportunities to learn about jobs, housing and community resources in order to make informed decisions.

REFERRALS REQUESTED:

We're seeking to provide transition support for students age 14-21 in the Chippewa Valley. We're also seeking to promote leadership to young adult's ages 18-25 years of age. Youth and mentors are encouraged to join the Student Advisory Group and to meet with their peers on a monthly basis to talk about how things are going and learn some valuable life skills. Time Commitment Required: Attend group meetings once a month, location and time to be determined. Have weekly contact to work on independent living goals established by student.

**ATTENTION UW-EC STUDENTS:
EARN SERVICE LEARNING HOURS!**
Check on line at: www.uwec.edu/SL

ATTENTION SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PARENTS

Join Peer Power's Steering Committee to ensure project objectives are being met. Time Commitment Required: Attend Quarterly group meetings.

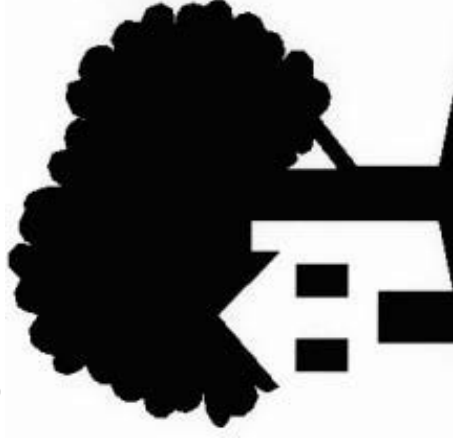
For more information or to make a referral:

Jessica Kleist, M.S. Ed.
Peer Power Project Coordinator
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonee WI 54751
(715) 233-1070 v/tty
(800) 228-3287 v/tty
(715) 233-1083 FAX
jziegler@cilwww.com

New Opportunities in the Chippewa Valley Peer Power

2004-2006

Empowering students with a disability through person-centered planning to increase independence and improve high-school transition outcomes.



**The Center for Independent Living for
Western Wisconsin, Inc.**

This brochure is available upon request in various formats including Braille, Large Print, E-mail (text version), Computer Disk, and Audiotape.



Peer Power 2005-2006 Mentoring Project Referral Form

Please check all that apply:

- I am a youth interested in participating in the Student Advisory Group.
- I am a service provider interested in participating in the Steering Committee.
- I would like to make a student referral.
- I would like to make a mentor referral.
- I would like additional information about _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Agency: _____

Best time to call: _____

Comments: _____

PEER POWER SERVICE AREA:

Dunn, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Through individual, small group and large group trainings, Peer Power seeks to increase the numbers of students who understand the following:

1. The IEP Process and their rights.
2. Person-centered planning and self-advocacy.
3. Peer mentoring.
4. How to develop relationships with others.
5. How to overcome barriers.
6. Their options of community resources and services.

THE VALUE OF PEER POWER:

Using peers is a new approach to address the challenges of high-school transition for students with disabilities. Learning is encouraged through supporting one another in order to give voice to goals and dreams and then facilitating achievement of those goals.

During this process, parents will also be encouraged to learn new ways of being involved in their son/daughter's life that can compliment their new independence. This may occur through seminars and informal peer relationships with other parents who are also in a similar situation.

WHAT IS THE COST?

Participation in this project is free of charge and transportation and/or mileage reimbursement is available to qualified individuals living in the Chippewa Valley to scheduled events.

STUDENT CURRICULA:

Exploration of future hopes and dreams through individualized PATH process; social skill development; concepts of IEP process; career exploration; community exploration and transportation; independent living and housing; and post-secondary education options.

PARENT SEMINARS:

Legal rights and responsibilities; Guardianship; The transition Individualized Education Plans; Promoting youth independence at home, school and in the community; assisting teens in learning future needs and encouraging self-advocacy skills.

A good candidate for a mentor is someone between the ages of 18-25 with personal experience dealing with disability issues. Must be dependable, self-directed, motivated and flexible. Must be willing to give up to 2 hours a week (depending on needs of the student) to make a positive difference in the life of a student with a disability.

MENTOR TRAININGS:

Building awareness of Community Resources; Communication Techniques; Disability Etiquette and Awareness; Coping and Adjustment; Goal Setting and Problem Solving Techniques; IL History and Philosophy; IEP Process and Rights and Self-Advocacy.

Appendix B

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www.ncset.org

Wisconsin Youth Mentoring Program Directory 2002-2003 (Updated April 5, 2004)
available on the internet

Useful Websites

Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin

www.cilww.com

CILWW advocates for the full participation in society of all persons with disabilities. Their goal is empowering individuals to exercise choices to maintain or increase independence. CILWW provides consumer-driven services at no cost to persons with disabilities in Western Wisconsin.

Courage Center

www.courage.org

The mission of Courage Center is to empower people with physical disabilities to reach for their full potential in every aspect of life. Located in various Minnesota communities, Courage Center offers community and home rehab, sports and leisure opportunities, therapies, assistive technology, independent living and camping opportunities and more.

Family Village

www.familyvillage.wisc.edu

Family Village is a global community that integrates information, resources, and communication opportunities on the Internet for persons with cognitive and other disabilities, for their families, and for those that provide them services and support. Informational resources are available on specific diagnoses, communication connections, adaptive products and technology, adaptive recreational activities, education, worship, health issues, disability-related media and literature, and much more.

Institute for Community Inclusion

www.communityinclusion.org

The Institute for Community Inclusion supports the rights of children and adults with disabilities to participate in all aspects of the community. This organization of practitioners, researchers, and teachers forms partnerships with individuals, families, and communities. Together, they advocate for personal choice, self-determination, and social and economic justice.

Mentoring.org

www.mentoring.org

This website includes articles and ideas on how to start and maintain meaningful mentorship programs. It includes non-traditional mentoring options as well, such as e-mentoring.

Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association

www.nlda.org

The Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association (NLDA) is an international non-profit corporation committed to facilitating education, research and advocacy for children and adults who manifest disabilities associated with the syndrome of nonverbal learning disorders.

Social Security Administration: Youth with Disabilities and Work

www.ssa.gov/work/Youth/youth.html

This section of SSA's Work Site is dedicated to youth with disabilities. Information in this section is helpful to youth with disabilities, their parents and families, teachers, and counselors.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Background Check Sample Form

dhfs.wisconsin.gov/forms/HFS/hfs0064.pdf

Acknowledgement

As the Coordinator of this project, I would like to give special thanks to each of the mentors, parents and service providers who helped us make this pilot such a success. As the result of your dedication and commitment, CILWW was given the opportunity to expand this pilot and work with additional youth with disabilities. Peer Power began in July 2004 and will conclude in June 2006. Within this time, we seek to increase the numbers of high school students with disabilities who understand the following:

- (1) The IEP Process and their rights
- (2) Person-centered planning and self-advocacy
- (3) Peer mentoring
- (4) How to develop relationships with others
- (5) How to overcome barriers
- (6) Their options of community resources and services

For further information contact:

Jessica Kleist, M.S. Ed.
Youth Mentoring Coordinator at Ext. 27
Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin, Inc
2920 Schneider Avenue East
Menomonie, WI 54751
715-233-1070 or 1-800-228-3287 v/tty

Quotes from Mentors

“The student I am working with has improved so much from the beginning of the program. She is taking a more active role in her life and expecting more from herself and those around her. I have learned so much from mentoring and will take my lessons with me.” - Mentor

“Everyone needs someone to turn to and deserves the chance to be what they dream of being.” - Mentor.

“The student I am working with has made great strides in achieving her goals of becoming more independent...She has been a great inspiration in my life! I have nothing but deep admiration and a lot of respect for her!” - Mentor



Waisman Center
University of Wisconsin–Madison
University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities