



Peer Support for People Experiencing Intensity and Distress in Life's Most Difficult Moments

SUMMARY: Growing Through is a specialized, recovery-based, skills training for supporting others at intensely difficult moments, such as those that are often, but not always, called “crisis”. It is designed as an advanced skills training for certified Peer Specialists or others who have both: 1) personal lived experience with mental ill-health and suicide, and 2) grounding in the fundamentals of the coaching, recovery and related support services, such as active listening/coaching skills, orientation to the roles of stigma and empowerment, trauma-informed care, and 3) relevant experience providing support services to people experiencing distress.

Complete Growing Through training takes place in a 5 day in person format. Special GT component workshops are also available on a select basis. In addition, the expanding Growing Through community provides social, job and technical support to enhance Ally success.

Why Growing Through?

Growing Through is a strengths-based approach to supporting others through challenging points in their life. It is based in peer support models for mental health and addiction recovery, best practices for coaching and suicide prevention, and humanistic psychology.

Growing Through is founded on the philosophy that every individual's life journey is unique and valuable. Along this life course all of us experience suffering. For some people, in fact, the most significant moments of that journey include intense difficulty, distress and/or pain, including despair and thoughts of death. Sometimes these moments are called crisis.

Although the journey through these crucial experiences is one's own, we are not alone in the experiences and challenges that accompany tough times. People who have been there are especially well-equipped to share and support others, to reflect the dignity of struggle and the vision of a positive future. Being able to witness and provide support another in their times of intensity is a journey of discovery and a gift in itself.

Growing Through is a training that gives people the skills and confidence to be effective “Peer Allies” for others in these times. Growing Through is deeply informed by the recovery model, and the lived experience of people who have been through times of intensity and transformation themselves.



The Five Growing Through Practices

Growing Through is first and foremost an experiential skill-acquisition and enhancement training, based in best practices of peer counseling, self-help, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention, as well as techniques derived from Mindfulness Meditation, Dialectical Behavior Therapy and related practices. The purpose of the Growing Through training is to help Peer Allies acquire and develop comfort with these practices even in times of intensity and urgency.

1. Presence. Being fully present and supportive with one's peer through skilled Use of Self.
2. Gleaning. goal of Gleaning is to move beyond superficial names for things to understand what another is feeling and thinking, and how these relate to actions, people and events in their world. Using Compassionate Curiosity, positive inhibition and Compassionate Curiosity.
3. Visioning. Witnessing, fostering and, if desired, co-creating the vision of a positively transformed future. Building the vision of a better future, even if it seems distant, is a key strategy for managing tough times, where people may feel stuck, trapped or hopeless.
4. Weaving. Bringing together resources, including self-care techniques and other people, to create a supportive fabric unique to the individual. Helping to identify, develop and integrate personal coping strategies, self-soothing skills etc. to diminish the impact and intensity of tough times.
5. Offering. Sharing lived experience, hope and resources can make a difference for others that are growing through times of intensity. When the time and situation are right, offering experience from one's own journey can be truly helpful to another. Knowing how and when to offer is crucial as well.

GROWING THROUGH 5-day Training Journey

Day 1 Grounding in Growth

Day 2 Being there

Day 3 Finding Safety

Day 4 The Heart of Suicide

Day 5 Connecting to Hope

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE TRAININGS
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