



Collaborating with IY Mentors to Select New Peer Coaches

As IY programs and training grow and become established in an area, the need for accredited peer coaches becomes more important. An accredited IY mentor can offer on-going support to a small number of new group leaders when sites are first starting to use an IY program, but as capacity builds, it will be difficult for a mentor to deliver the intensive on-going support, consultation and video reviews that group leaders need. The peer coaching role is meant to fill this need, and as IY takes hold in an area, mentor roles will gradually shift away from intensive supervision of new IY group leaders and instead will focus on support and supervision of IY peer coaches. This will assure that the coaches can adequately provide the front line support to the new group leaders in order to achieve fidelity program delivery.

Part of the mentor role in this capacity is to offer consultation, coaching, video review and supervision to peer coaches as they are working to become accredited as coaches. Afterwards mentors will continue to provide on-going support and fidelity monitoring for IY coaches in the same way that they would for accredited group leaders.

Mentors are also involved in the selection of most appropriate peer coaches. Often a group leader who is passionate about the program will self-identify that he or she is interested in becoming a peer coach, or an agency will indicate their wish that a particular group leader receive peer coach training. This is a good starting point, but we do not expect that all self- or agency-nominated peer coaches will be good candidates for peer coach training. In many cases we are relying on IY mentors to help us determine whether the peer coach candidate should be invited to participate in coach training.

In cases where the IY mentor has previously mentored the possible coach candidate, this likely will be an easy determination since the mentor will be very familiar with the candidate's work. In these cases, it is often the mentor who initiates the nomination with IY. In cases where the mentor has no prior knowledge of the peer coach nominee, there are several steps to determining whether the candidate should be recommended for coach training.

First, the coach nominee needs to be accredited as an IY group leader in the chosen IY program. The mentor reviews the group leader's paperwork or checks with IY Inc. to verify their accreditation. Next the mentor reviews the application statement of the potential coach to determine that the coaching candidate has had sufficient group leader experience (6-8 IY groups delivered), has the necessary educational background (ideally masters), and whether he or she seems to understand what is involved in the coaching role. The mentor would then have a conversation with the coaching candidate and with the candidate's

supervisors to further explore these issues. It's important that the candidate's agency understands and is supportive of the role that the peer coach will play in their agency as well as be willing to provide the time and expense that accompany this role. Finally, if the mentor has no direct experience with the coaching candidate's group work, then it is appropriate for the mentor to ask for a recent IY group video. The mentor should watch enough of the group video to determine that the coach is an exceptionally strong group leader. However, running a successful IY group does not necessarily mean the candidate will be a good coach. Coaching skills require that the coach is collaborative, listens well, helps group leaders define their goals, and is interpersonally supportive. Some coaches will eventually progress to mentor status, so in selecting peer coaches, it is good to look out for potential future mentors. However, becoming a coach does not necessarily mean the candidate is suitable for going on to become a mentor, which requires an even higher level of experience, education and leadership skill.

IY relies heavily on mentor recommendations for selecting peer coaching candidates. As the number of peer coaches grows, it is difficult for IY to have the same strong relationship with each peer coach as we do with each mentor. Therefore, mentors are in the best position to bridge this relationship. IY very much appreciates the important role that mentors can play in selecting and supporting peer coaches.