Session 45: From Participant to Peer: What Changes, What Does Not

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 2 — Mentoring & Leadership

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

Handout for this session: the Session 45 handout (Peer Bright Lines) — in the Handouts Packet.

What we're learning

Session 35 built mentoring and accountability arrangements for after graduation; this block trains the role itself. A peer is a witness and a companion: living proof, a listening ear, a person who knows the way to the coffee and to the counselor's door. A peer is not a counselor, not staff, and never a secret-keeper from the care team. The role's strength comes precisely from its limits.

- Your story is your credential A peer's authority is experiential: 'Here is what happened to me; here is what helped.' The moment a peer starts diagnosing, prescribing, or directing treatment, they have left the credential they actually hold.
- Confidentiality has the same edges What a newer person tells you carries the same limits as the group agreements (Session 1): danger to self or others, abuse or neglect, and anything the program must know goes to staff — and the peer says so before the disclosure, not after.
- Report up; never cover A peer who learns of use, a plan to leave, or a safety issue and sits on it has not protected a friend; they have endangered one. Warm handoff, same day, every time. Warm handoff means: stay with the person, tell staff yourself the same day, and do not leave them alone with it.

Goals for this session

☐ I can state what changes when a participant begins helping newer people — and what does not change

☐ I can list the limits of a peer role: no counseling, no medication advice, no discipline, no secrets kept from staff

☐ I can name the staff member I report to when a peer conversation exceeds the role

Check-in

Who steadied you in your first weeks here — not staff, a peer? What exactly did they do that helped?

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Which part of the peer role fits you naturally — and which limit will chafe you most?

2. A newcomer says: 'Don't tell staff.' What do you say in the moment, word for word?

3. Why do the limits of the role protect the helper's own recovery, not just the helped?

4. Write the peer role's bright lines in your own words: what you do, what you never do, and who you report to.

Session 45 — Skill Practice

Bright-line drill (in pairs, rapid rounds): the facilitator reads situations — a peer asks your opinion of their medication dose; a participant confides a plan to use tonight; someone asks you to keep a secret from staff; a participant asks you to lead tonight's group because staff are running late. The partner answers: inside the role, outside the role, or escalate now — and says the sentence they would use. Switch roles halfway through. Take-home list: a newcomer asks you to settle a house dispute; a peer asks you to hold their paycheck. Answer each the same way: inside the role, outside the role, or escalate now — and say the sentence you would use.

The peer role's bright lines, in my own words — what I do, what I never do, who I report to:

The situation I would find hardest to hand to staff, and the sentence I would use:

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Write the peer role's bright lines in your workbook in your own words: what I do, what I never do, who I report to. Bring it to the next session for a partner check.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.