

# 12

**SESSION**

**Peer support  
networks**

## 12.1 Introduction

To be homeless, in most cases, means to have multiple needs that require multiple answers to be coordinated and that can hardly be met by a single agency: housing, legal issues, employment, health needs.

Furthermore, the way most of the homeless persons ask for help is not usually direct and explicit: very often the necessities emerge because the person “breaks” the fragile balance between the social context and its exigencies.

Through this unit we will discuss what a network is, its importance and the different ways it can be used when working as a peer supporter. How can we become part of one or create one ourselves?

## 12.2 Learning outcomes

- Understand and discuss what a network is
- Discuss different types of peer support networks
- Discuss advocacy networking

## 12.3 Training session plan

### DURATION

2,5 h

### MATERIALS

- ATL Trainer Curriculum
- JCS Manual (it includes worksheets, case scenarios and self-assessment exercises)
- Worksheets and case scenario
- Stationery (paper in different sizes, cardboard, pens, pencils, markers, sticky notes, etc.)
- Pieces of paper with names of machines written
- Flipchart/whiteboard
- Power Point presentations of the contents (optional)
- Computer (optional)

- Projector/TV (optional)

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome the participants and introduce them to the topic of today's session.

<b>ACTIVITY 1</b>	How was I informed about this training?
<b>DURATION</b>	20 min
<b>WORKSHEET REFERENCE</b>	N/A
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	Participants are asked to write down on post its the ways in which they were informed or motivated to attend the training. The trainer divides the papers in different categories and initiates a discussion around the different ways in which people may get connected. Then they try to elaborate a common definition in a group discussion, defining what a network is.
<b>ALTERNATIVES/TIPS</b>	Question for reflection: We came as individuals but now- at the end of the course- we are a network, are we?

<b>ACTIVITY 2</b>	Case scenario analysis
<b>DURATION</b>	70 min
<b>WORKSHEET REFERENCE</b>	Story of Anwar

<p><b>PROCEDURE</b></p>	<p>The participants are divided in four groups. In 10 minutes of group work they have to write down the organizations and persons they have received assistance from, during their recovery journey. Each group covers one of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Legal support</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Social support e.g., food, clothing, support by social workers, approaching new people, individual approach and support tailored to their personal needs</li> </ul> <p>Each group will present its findings to participants, while their contribution on additional information is welcome. Each group needs to explain and discuss why it listed specific organizations or persons, referring to the kind of assistance provided. At the same time, it will list the problems the group members faced during their recovery process, identifying what has helped to overcome the obstacles on the way and what missed. The facilitator may propose and add examples if helpful, while s/ he summarizes. Both facilitator and participants create a list that, at some point, will be very relevant to the situations the peer supporters will have to face (including potential problems as well as organizations they need to work with). Allow 10 minutes for each presentation.</p> <p>In the end, the facilitator asks the group to read Anwar's case scenario. Together with the group they identify and discuss his networking, asking the participants what they think about his recovery. Can they identify a network in Anwar's case? Was he successfully assisted by it during his recovery process? In what way?</p>
<p><b>ALTERNATIVES/TIPS</b></p>	<p>If it is too intense have a break in between.</p> <p>Example of a successful network: <a href="#">Homeless Network</a></p>

<b>ACTIVITY 3</b>	Meaning of Advocacy
<b>DURATION</b>	20 min
<b>WORKSHEET REFERENCE</b>	The Canadian Observatory of Homelessness, <a href="#"><i>Homeless Charter of Rights</i></a> FEANTSA, <a href="#"><i>ntroduction to FEANTSA</i></a>
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	Presentation of different advocacy groups at European level. Analyze their message, identify national focal points if exist. Discuss ways to approach and enforce the voice of peer supporters, why to do so, what could be the main message.
<b>ALTERNATIVES/TIPS</b>	Possibility to do this exercise on a national level. Regarding Greece, use of the FEANTSA Bill of Rights (also translated in several languages), as well as identifying the existence of national/local networks

<b>ACTIVITY 4</b>	Let's create a network
<b>DURATION</b>	30 min
<b>WORKSHEET REFERENCE</b>	Unidad 12. Hoja de actividad 2: "Creamos una red (Análisis FODA)"
<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<p>The participants discuss on the possibility to create their own network. The facilitator shall lead the participants through a reflection upon the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do they want to create the network and how?</li> <li>• What do they know about networks so far?</li> <li>• What shall they consider? Existing networks?</li> <li>• What form is it going to take, Institutional or non-formal?</li> </ul> <p>The trainer assists them to run a SWOT analysis on a peer supporters' network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how the network could help</li> <li>• How they could search for the proper scheme</li> <li>• How they can identify what they need</li> <li>• Necessary steps</li> </ul>

### ALTERNATIVES/TIPS

In case a network is not considered as appropriate, useful or feasible, how do they believe the group could keep in touch, communicate or exchange their experience after the training ends?

### CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

During the last 5-10 minutes, invite the participants to reflect upon what they got from this session. Invite them to share what they liked most and what could improve. Let them choose if they wish to do it anonymously.

## 12.4 Bibliography / Webliography

- European networking for People living in conditions of Extreme Poverty and with severe Mental Health problems
- National Peer Support Collaborative Learning Network
- European Network of People who Use Drugs
- European Harm Reduction Network

# 12

## SESSION

**worksheets and case scenario**



Accommodating a travelling **life**





## Worksheet 2 – Problems I had to deal with

### Step 2

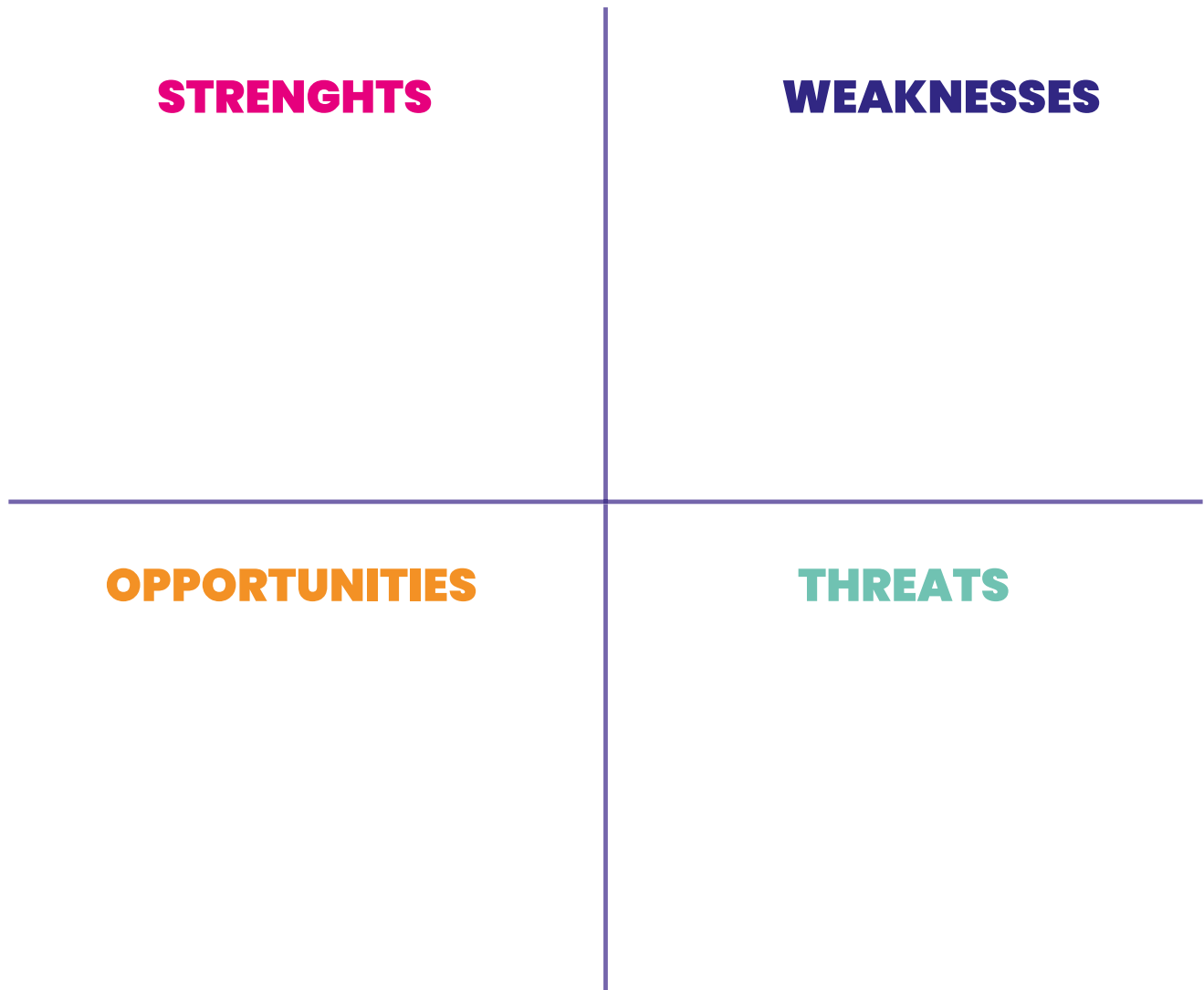
List (in orderly manner) the problems you faced during your recovery process, identifying what has helped to overcome the obstacles on the way and what missed

PROBLEM	WHAT I DID

## Let's create a Network

### Step 1

Run a SWOT analysis on your peer supporters' network.



### Step 2

- Have a brief discussion about:
- How your network could help?
- How you could search for the proper scheme/structure?
- How you can identify what you need to build it?
- Necessary steps to create the network:

## CASE SCENARIO – Story of Anwar

Anwar is a young person in his thirties, coming from Bangladesh. This is the name and the age he gave to the police while arrested at the Greek border but it couldn't be verified since he didn't carry any official documents. He arrived in Chios island irregularly. He traveled through Iran and Turkey, with a fake passport, transported by smugglers. He left his parents, four sisters and a brother back in their small village in Bangladesh.

Upon his arrival, the police placed him in a local first reception center. After he was fingerprinted, the authorities decided to deport him on administrative grounds, for illegal entry. The camp was open, so he was able to leave and move forward to Athens, with the help of his smuggler. He estimates the total cost of his travel at around 12,000 Euros. His father lent him the biggest part, while he still owes some money to his smuggler, which he pays off in monthly instalments.

Through the Internet he learned about Omonia square (the central square in Athens) which he frequented every day since he arrived in the city. Whenever he recognized his language, he approached the person and tried to engage in a conversation and tell his story; however, he could not find a place to sleep. Finally, he contacted his smuggler again, who hosted him for a period, in exchange for some money.

Assisted by the smuggler, he was offered a job in a small sewing industry in the suburbs of Athens, thanks to his experience working as a tailor back in Bangladesh. During that period, he was a victim of labor trafficking. The initial deal was 150 Euros per month net; the smuggler was to get the rest for his accommodation and food plus the debt for the travel costs. He accepted, thinking that he might still have a chance to save some money and send it to his father to pay the debt. The behavior of his employer was also extremely offensive. After a long period, managing to collect some money and to strengthen his sewing skills, he decided to leave the company. He found a new job at a bigger sewing company belonging to a lady. Sometime after, he and the owner became a couple and started living together. However, in a random police control, his fingerprints were taken, he was arrested and sent back to Chios island, since the decision for his deportation had been officially issued. He was imprisoned for six months and he was to be deported, he decided to ask for asylum as it was his only chance to stay in Greece.

For that purpose, Anwar's claimed that he had been a victim of religious persecution back in Bangladesh; being a Christian, he started dating a Muslim woman, against the will of her family, which led to them burning his family house and accusing him of kidnapping, all of which forced him to leave his village for the good of his family. Later, he admitted that he was advised to make-up the story, considering it as an easy way to get refugee status. After the interview, he got the asylum seeker card and was asked not to leave the Chios island. However, with the help of his girlfriend, he moved back to Athens. Shortly after, their relationship came to an end; he left the job and moved out of her apartment.

After that, Anwar lived in different locations, sharing houses with up to 20 persons. He struggled to find and keep a job. Eventually, he started begging. On Sundays he used to go to a local Greek Orthodox church. This is where he met a social worker who referred him to a local NGO that runs a program providing temporary housing and work placements for homeless persons.

Anwar's asylum application was rejected and he had to appeal. Thanks to a huge effort by his social worker, he has become a beneficiary of a social program. Now, he gets a monthly housing allowance of 180 Euros, and is employed as an assistant cooker, with a salary of 558 Euros net.

After almost 5 years in Greece, he can understand the language quite well, while his ability to speak is worse. He had started attending a language course offered by volunteers which was suspended due to the pandemic. He claims that his biggest fear is to move back to his country. It is not clear if he's

really in danger or he fears that he'll not be able to fulfill the expectations of his family. His appeal for the status of refugee was also rejected; nowadays the NGO that supports him referred him to another NGO that provides legal support. He still has another chance to appeal against the decision, claiming additional reasons.

For the time being, he feels insecure, for the program supporting him is coming to an end. His employer promised him that he would keep the job, but he will need to manage the costs of the rent. He still sends money to his family and pays the debt to the smuggler. On the one hand, he isn't looking for another job and he doesn't feel the need to improve his craft. He often gives the impression that his future plans do not exceed a two-month period. On the other hand, he says he wants to study at the University; he also claims that he has a Greek girlfriend. His social worker considers him very capable but also a manipulative person, not always telling the whole truth. She believes he is capable of many things in order to achieve his goals. He often says that he has not really been assisted by anybody so far.

## Questions for reflection

- 1.** What kind of help has Anwar been offered to the date?
- 2.** What further kind of help does Anwar need in your opinion?
- 3.** Could you draft an intervention plan for Anwar?
- 4.** What could be your role as a peer support agent? How could peer support help?
- 5.** Can you identify any risk factors in the interventions you have proposed?



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*end of session*

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