SHARE! PeerKit

These tools are brought to you by SHARE! the Self-Help And Recovery Exchange

Learning Objectives

- Identify tools used to build healthy relationships with those we serve

- Establish effective ways to enhance community and nurture relationships through use of the tools

- Understand how these tools help foster personal growth and change

- Gain a deeper understanding of self-help support groups and other evidence-based best practices

- Apply these tools in your everyday practice of Peer Services

The SHARE! PeerKit

Tool 1: Triple A: Attention, Affection, Approval

Tool 2: Join the Person

Tool 3: Socialize

Tool 4: Own the Problem

Tool 5: Minimize Authority
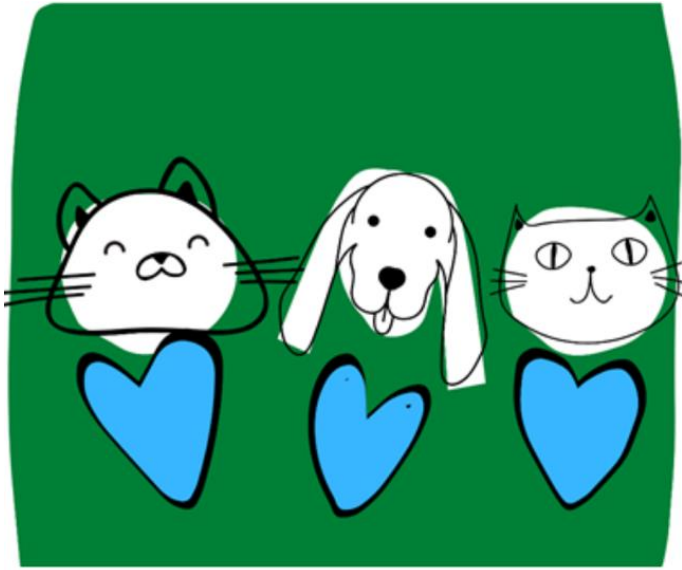
Tool 6: Same Message, Different Ways

Tool 7: Change Plan

Tool 8: Normalize

Tool 9: Get Ahead of the Crisis

Tool 10: Gratitude List

Tool 11: Corner Sweep
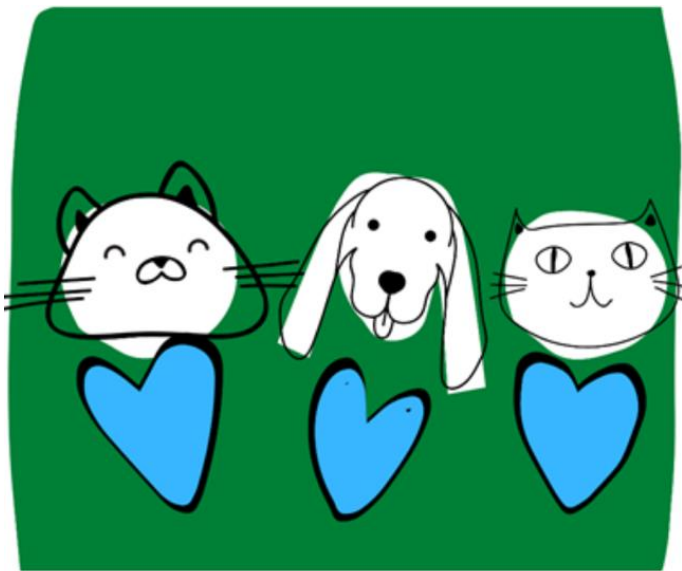
Tool 12: Change the Channel
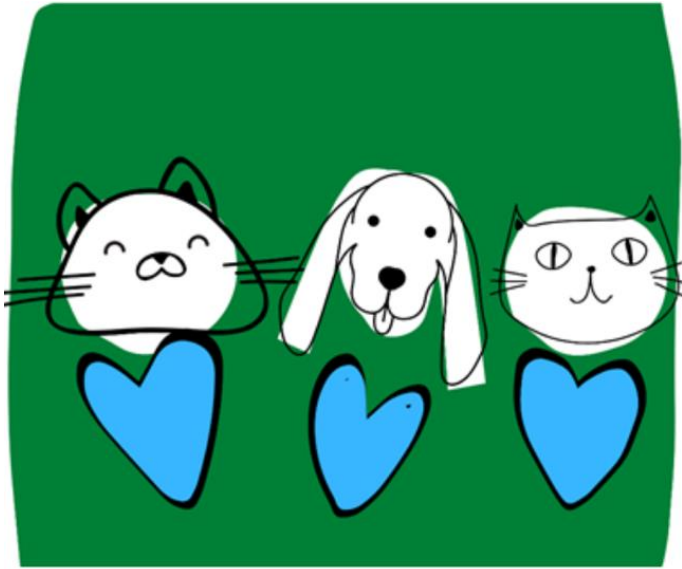
Tool #1:
Triple A
Attention, Affection & Approval

Attention means recognizing people's presence, participation and contribution, spending time with someone as well as personal things about them. For example, asking, "How was your job interview?"

Tool #1:
Triple A
Attention, Affection
& Approval

Affection means listening to someone, smiling, showing empathy, remembering things that are important to them such as their birthday, reflecting positive things about them, etc.

Tool #1:
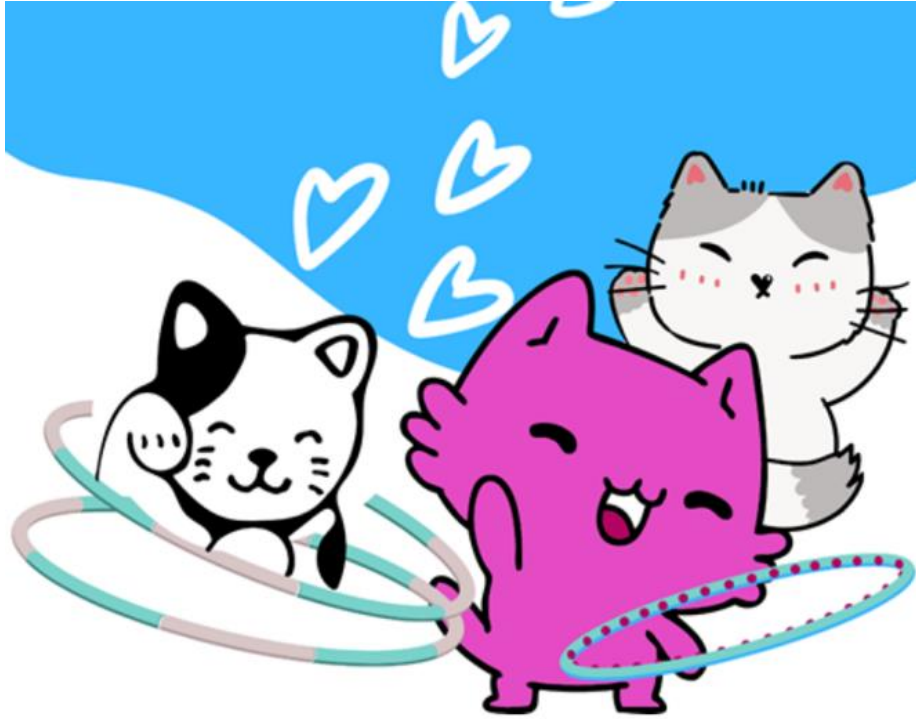**Triple A**
Attention, Affection & Approval

Approval is praise and acceptance for who people are and what they have accomplished. It is being there when, despite their best efforts, something went wrong and supporting them as they try again.
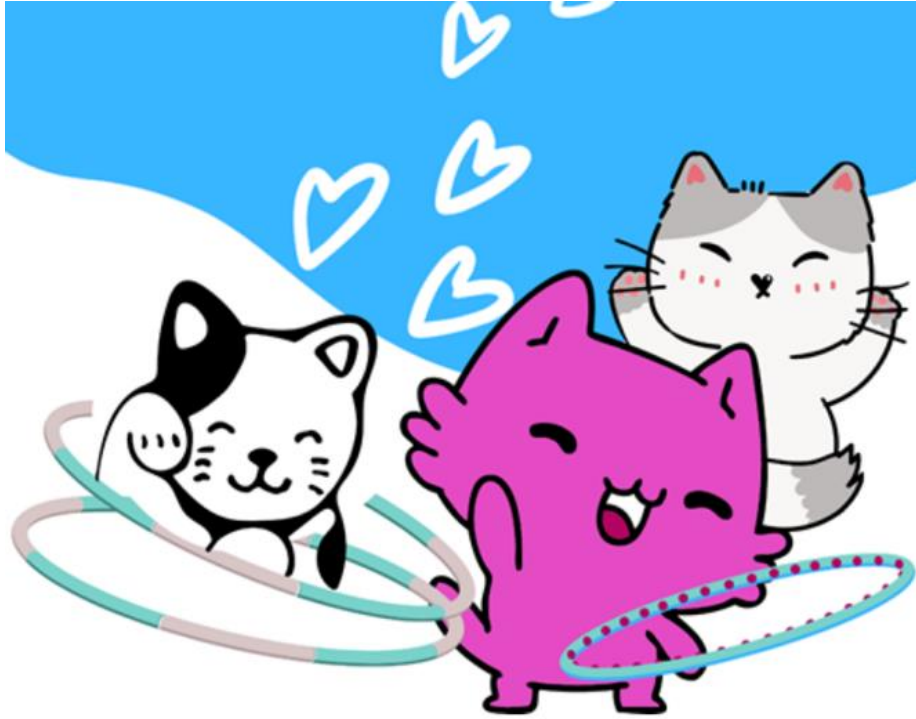
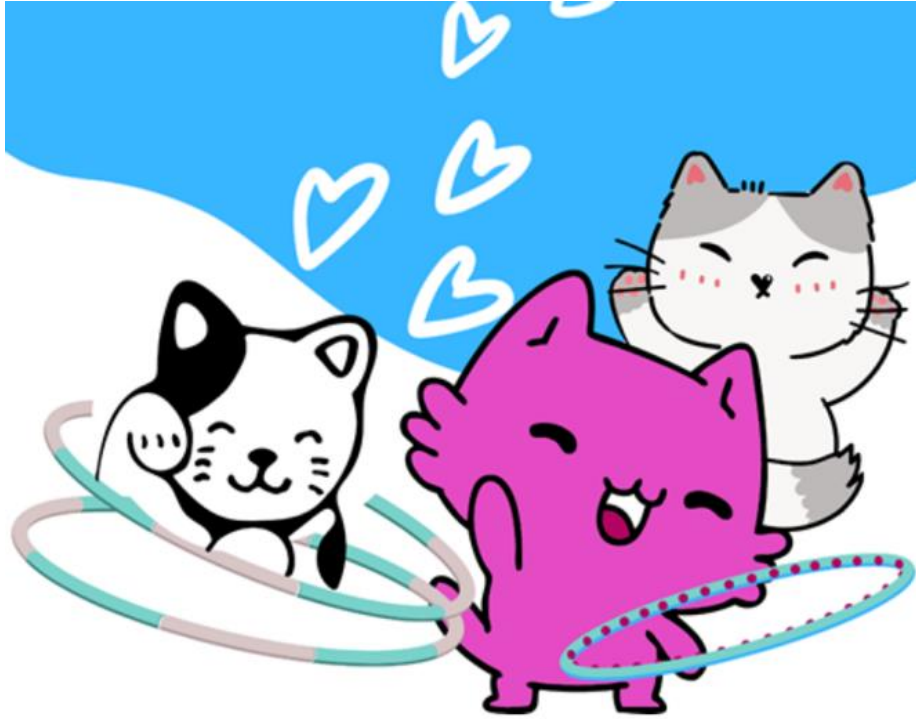**Tool #2:**

Join the Person

Joining the Person is foundational to peer relationships. It means supporting someone in their recovery by validating their thoughts, feelings and experiences and being on their side.

Tool #2:
Join the Person

Recovery happens when people can talk and express their feelings freely and be heard. Intentionally nurture the expression of feelings, including anger, sadness and fear so they can get them out. Listening and Disclosing are powerful ways.

Tool #2:

Join the Person

Find ways to support people rather than oppose them. There is always a way to validate someone even if only by saying, "I have felt that way before." Look for ways to Presume Innocence and Save the Person's Face.

Authenticity

Practice healthy disclosure about their own experience focused on providing hope and direction toward recovery and/or resiliency.*

*Medi-Cal Code of Ethics for Peer Support Specialists in California

Disclosing

Disclosing is using "I-statements" to share personal experiences that connect to the needs and expressed interest of another. It creates a peer-to-peer environment; the more comfortable someone feels, the more they will disclose and the more growth becomes possible.
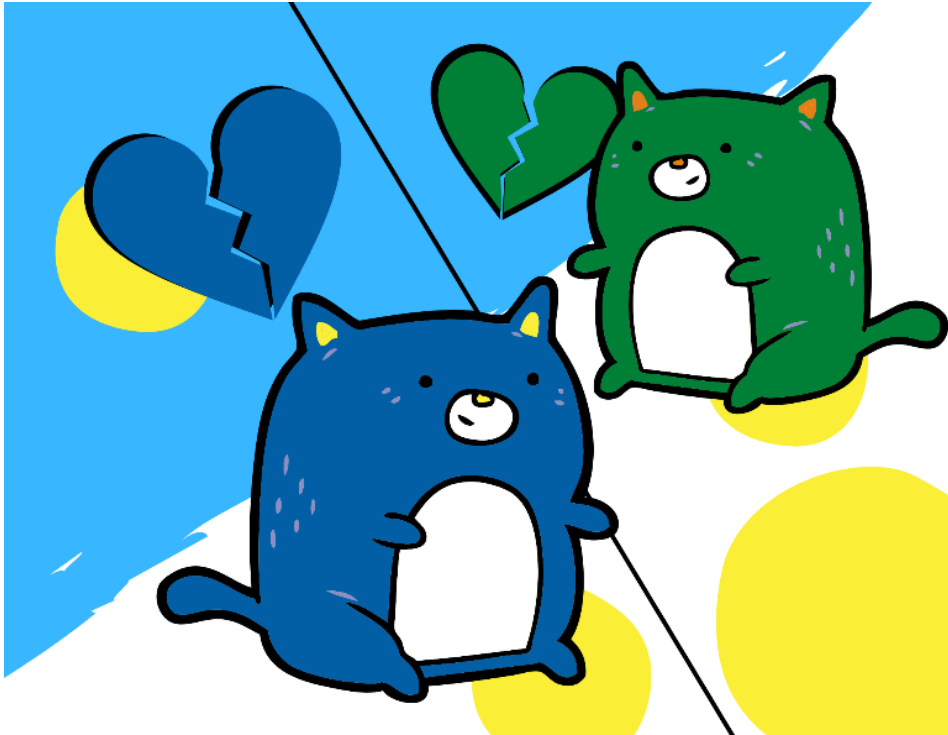
Listening and disclosing can lead to:

- No judgment/breaking shame
- Building trust, hope, courage to change, willingness, inspiration, motivation
- Greater honesty, openness, truth, vulnerability
- The Peer Specialist and the other person learn about each other
- The person being served identifying and working toward their goals
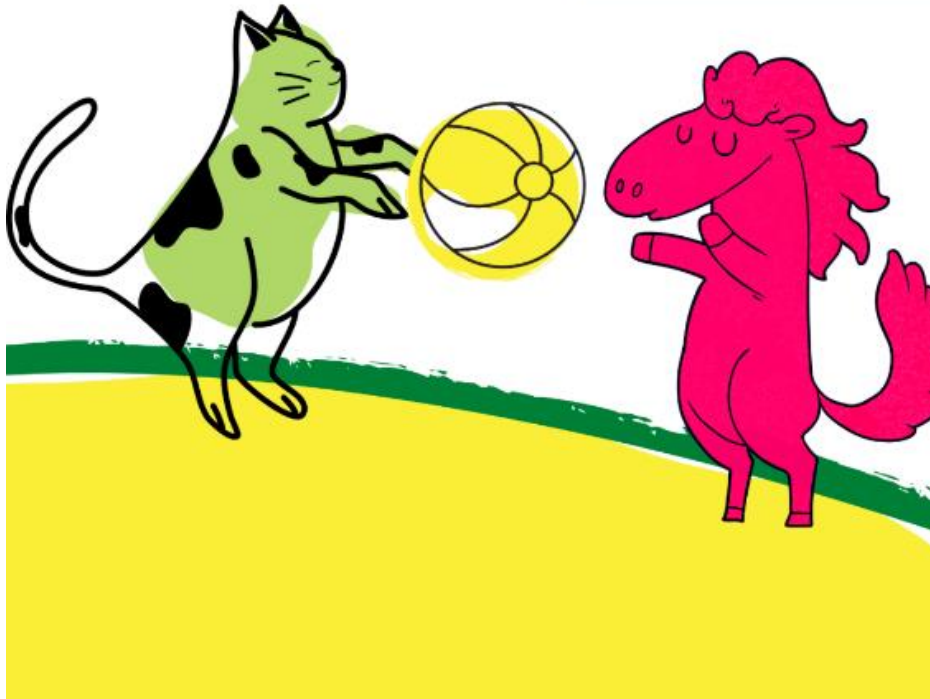- The person finding their own solutions

Discussion

What are some of the benefits and challenges with Disclosing that you have experienced?

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Joining:
Capital in the Bank

- Capital in the bank builds a relationship. In time, the relationship itself will be an incentive for the person to pursue growth and change.
- Ways to get capital in the bank include listening, remembering someone's name, greeting people, (handmade) cards for birthdays, milestones or thank-yous, letting them help, sharing food together, reciprocating a kind gesture, appreciating them, laughing with them, including them.

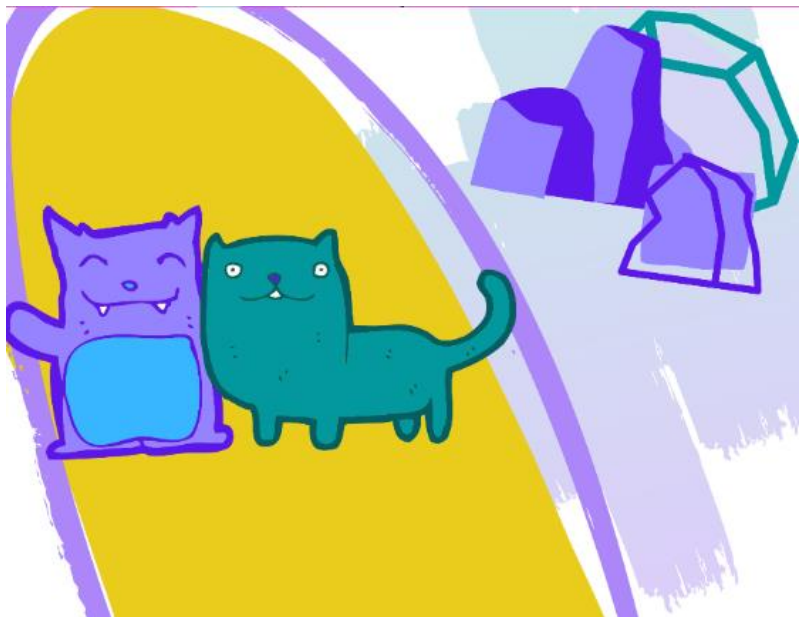# The Boundary is Over There

When people are having difficulty with the rules that need to be followed, we position ourselves on the same side as the person and observe the boundary together. The boundary applies to all.

The Boundary is Over There

By expressing our own frustration with the situation, people are more likely to feel heard and validated. We join the person while maintaining the boundary.

The Boundary is Over There

Don't hog the bathroom!	It's frustrating for everyone when there's a line, because the bathroom is shared by everyone.
Why did you just go up to her and give her a hug?	One of the truths we live by around here is that it is kind to ask before hugging or touching someone, especially since some people are uncomfortable with being touched.
You can't smoke here!	We can't do that here--This place could get shut down.

Save the Person's Face
--Saving the Person's Face normalizes mistakes as part of life, learning and growth – even as a courageous act.
--It keeps people from falling into shame, which damages mental health.

Presume Innocence

❖ We orient our own thinking so that we are not judging someone based on our assumption or perspective about what may have happened in the past.

❖ Avoid scapegoating.

❖ Acknowledge our feelings of judgment and blame, so that we don't project them onto someone else.

❖ Connect with our own experience of being wrongly accused.

❖ See the whole person, beyond the accusations of a particular situation.

Partners in Crime

❖ When someone engages in criminal behavior (such as drug use) or disobeys basic rules (gambling on the premises), it is important not to shame the person or make them feel as if they are "bad."

❖ Understand that the person has a "good" reason for engaging in that behavior. Understanding comes from experience, and finding the common ground to relate to that behavior. Keep the focus on the other person, rather than disclosing at length.

Assume they're working an honest program

--Catch people doing things right rather than engaging in undesirable behavior.
--Accept their reality as valid for them, and that people are engaged in a process of discovery, growth and change.
--Honesty is not all-or-nothing. People become more honest as they grow in recovery.

Tool #3:
Socialize

Intentionally nurture people, relationships and the environment such that people connect and experience social support. "Together we are better."

Tool #3:
Socialize

Support people to make and maintain friends outside of the system.

An unpaid friend is better than a paid friend.

Exercise

Change your Zoom name to reflect a person that others lean on for support

Healthy interdependence on others

1. Self-help support groups
2. The Helper Therapy Principle

Self-help support groups improve coping while expanding social networks

Benefits of self-help support groups for sobriety

--expand people's social networks (particularly people who don't use/drink)

--increase skills to prevent relapse

--recovery motivation

--reduce impulsivity

--no insurance/cost barrier

(Kelly 2009, Kelly 2017)

What is a self-help support group?
--Purpose to pursue personal growth and change
--Everyone is a peer
--Sharing/interaction among members
--Decisions about the group made by the group
--Leadership roles available to all members
--Group not dependent on a particular person
--Due process
--No financial barriers

The Helper Therapy Principle

Frank Riessman coined the term "The Helper Therapy Principle" in 1965

An activist and researcher, he founded the National Self-Help Clearinghouse in 1976 to increase awareness of value of self-help groups:
--encourage members to rely on themselves and their experiences rather than on external help
--members benefit most by helping others
--help democratize the way services are provided

The Helper Therapy Principle

--When people help others, or even *perceive* they are helping others, they feel good about themselves in ways that improve their mental health, health and functioning.
--Helping others heals the Helper more than the person being helped

Tool #4:
Own the Problem

Acknowledge discomfort and accept responsibility for my own feelings by "owning the problem." Recognize that my uncomfortable feelings do not belong to the person who I'm working with. If they had a problem with their behavior, they wouldn't be doing it.

Tool #5:
Minimize Authority

Choose words, interactions and structure of the environment to minimize authority and maximize peer relationships and build community. Minimizing authority empowers people by making their opinions, views, judgements and experiences important and legitimate.
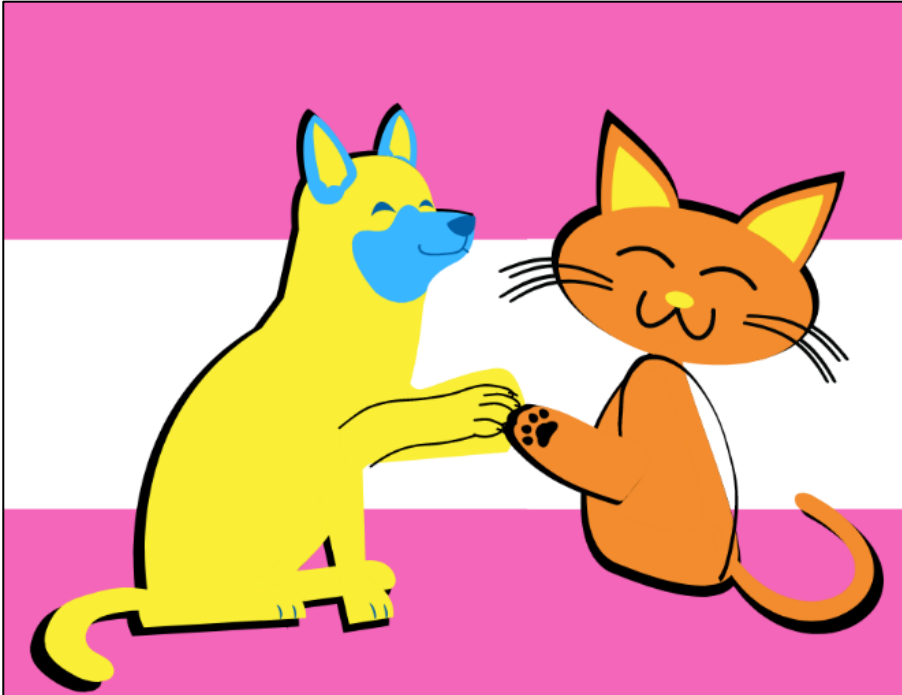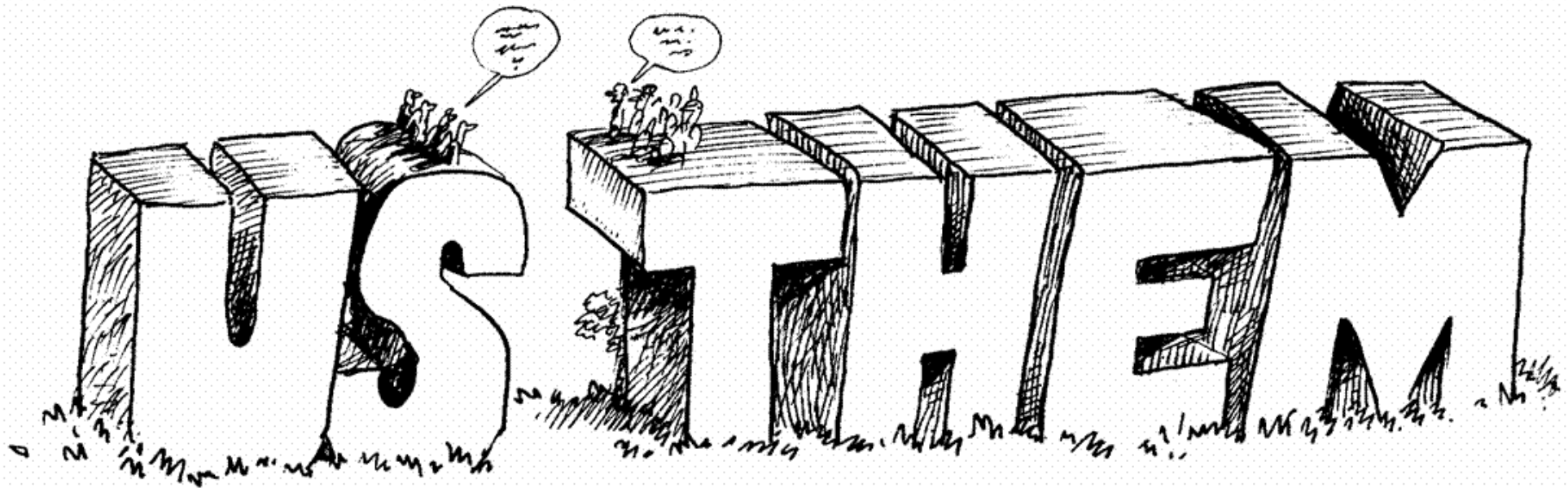
Tool #5:
Minimize Authority

The relationship shifts from that of a professional and a client to that of a mutually supportive learning relationship.

"I'm an expert at not being an expert, and that takes a lot of expertise."

Choosing words to minimize authority
--Disclose lived experience
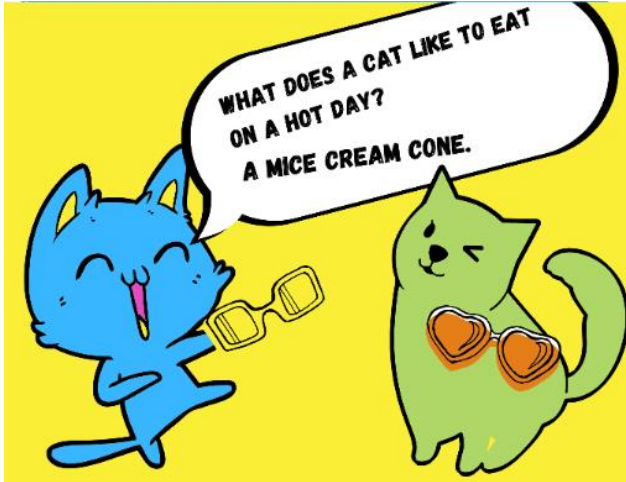--Describe the peer role
--Avoid "us-and-them" dynamic

Minimize Authority: No Buts

- Use the word "and" instead of "but". But negates what comes before it. "And" builds on what comes before it. ("I really want to help you, but…" vs. "I really want to help you, and…")
- "But" = isolation and alone
- "And" = working together and joining, rather than confronting or getting into a power struggle.
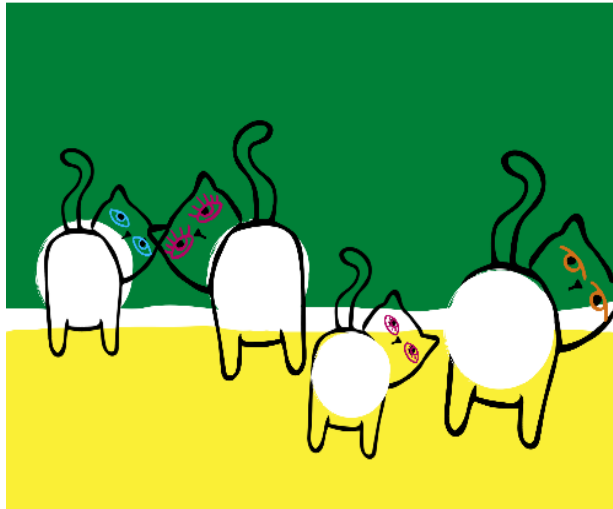
Minimize Authority: Humor

- Find the lighter side of pain--Laughter makes fear go away.
- Laugh *with* the person not at the person.
- Humor can help create an open, welcoming environment in which people feel support to share their own experiences.
- Teasing of ANY kind is never OK. Staff need to nurture the environment to make sure that everyone is safe.

Minimize Authority: Hit the Deck

- One way to respond when someone is displaying anger or other big feelings is to "hit the deck." Get low and small, and sit on the ground. The person no longer has to act out to feel bigger and more powerful. This makes a way for everyone to feel safe.

- Be aware of the space around you—could the person get away if they want to? If they can, they will feel safer.

Hitting the Deck is nonverbal

Research has shown that we tend to consider both words and non-verbal cues, like the way someone stands or their facial expression, when we interpret what people mean. If you can't see or hear non-verbal communication, it is easier to misunderstand the words. Also, when we are unsure about what the words mean, we pay more attention to the non-verbal communications.

(Mehrabian 1967)

Tool #6:

Same Message, Different Ways

Send the same message different ways, without being critical, blaming, nagging or punishing. People may be pushing boundaries to find out about the structure, roles and expectations of the community.
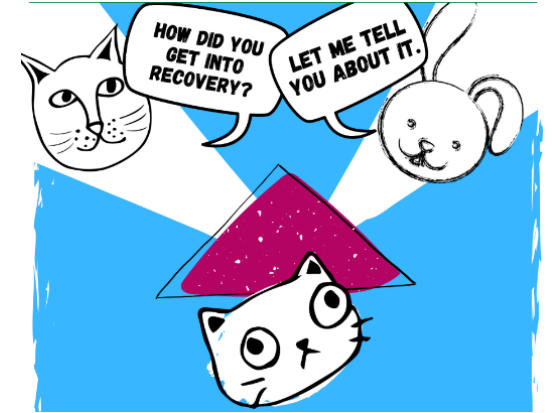
Tool #6: Same Message, Different Ways

It should be the consistent communication of the shared expectation of the community – what works for everybody. Repetition is key, but it shouldn't be identical.

Same Message, Different Ways: Pythagoras*

(Pronounced Pi-THAG-er-uhs)

Give people information in a way that allows people to feel that they discovered it themselves. Usually this is a triangle where two people share stories of change and growth with each other while the third person (the intended audience) overhears. Explore choices and options and allow the person to experience self-empowerment.

Tool 7: Change plan

Tool 7: Change plan

--Use when there's a pattern of behavior that is consistently producing undesirable results. Change plans are dynamic, and, if they stop working, can be modified

--Involve the person who needs to change in looking at where things need to be to produce desirable results, particularly for their goals. Ask the person for advice for what to do, what would make it easier, when this comes up.

Tool 7: Change plan

--There may be environmental or community changes that will support the change plan. To facilitate this, we bring people together to brainstorm all possible solutions, review all input and solutions, discuss pros and cons of each possible solution and get consensus on best solution and implement the new change plan. Support people in adapting and modifying behavior as things change. What worked two weeks ago might not work today.

Tool 8: Normalize

--Maintain the environment as it is intended to be. Example, when there is writing on a bathroom wall, remove it immediately.

--Interact with people and situations without escalating power struggles or crisis. (For example, when a person is upset to the point that they throw all the literature all over the lobby, greet them normally rather than heaping attention on the negative behavior. Get the literature picked up quickly.)

Tool 8: Normalize

--Part of the goal of **Normalize** is to avoid giving people negative attention—this makes it less attractive to disrupt the environment. It is a good idea to have some materials available for people to express their feelings which are relatively easier to normalize. In addition to normalizing, find ways to give the person some positive attention.

Tool 9: Get Ahead of the Crisis

--Because crises are preceded by predictable behavior and/or events, look for the triggers, take action and support people before things develop into a crisis.

--A crisis is when someone feels ruptured from the community. Someone acting strange is not a crisis. When we broadly define normal behavior as crises, people feel controlled. Hypervigilance emphasizes authority and turns peers into police.

Storm Chat Exercise
-Make a Gratitude List in the chat
-List as many or just a few things that you're grateful for

Tool 10. Gratitude List

--Gratitude List is a list of everything that is going right, everything to be grateful for. Research shows that people who end each day with gratitude live longer.

--When people experience frustration and/or setbacks, focus on the positive.

--Shine the light on the recovery rather than the disease; the solution rather than the problem.

--Help them identify their progress and celebrate those accomplishments.

Tool 11. Corner Sweep

--Before a potential conflict arises, take action to separate people so that they don't feel that they are backed into a corner and react through fight or flight. --Sweep the person out of the "corner". People lash out when they feel trapped. --Address the person who feels most righteous and is actively accusing the other person by assertively stating "I GOT THIS". This will make them feel like they are right and make them less likely to continue.

Corner Sweep

--Support the other person by stating, "You, come with me," and escorting them away from the "righteous" person. When out of earshot, avoid saying anything that validates or endorses what the "righteous" person was saying. Stay out of judging who is right and who is wrong in the situation.

--With enough space the person who comes with staff can feel validated and focus on something other than the conflict and staff can re-direct them to activities that don't escalate the conflict.

--Reconnect with the person who feels righteous and let them know that the situation has been handled. In the future, if they can let staff know, staff can handle it.
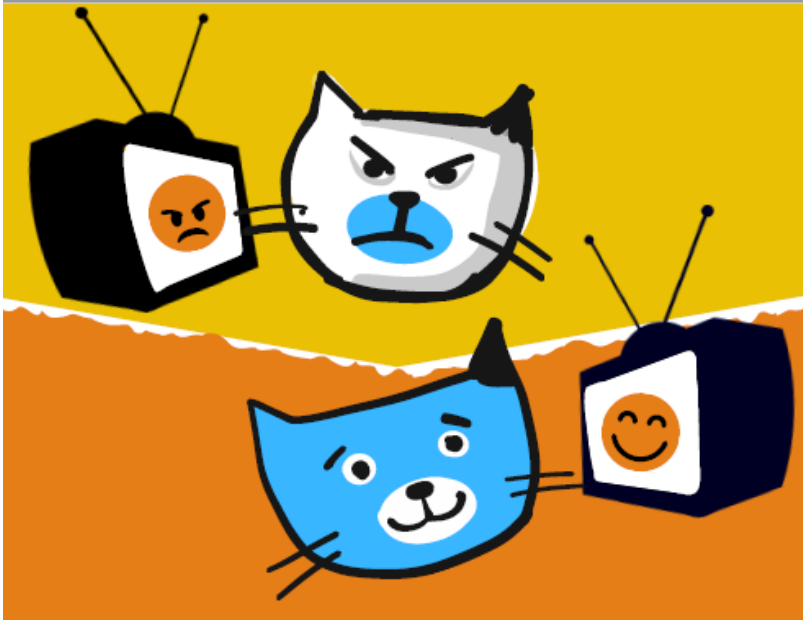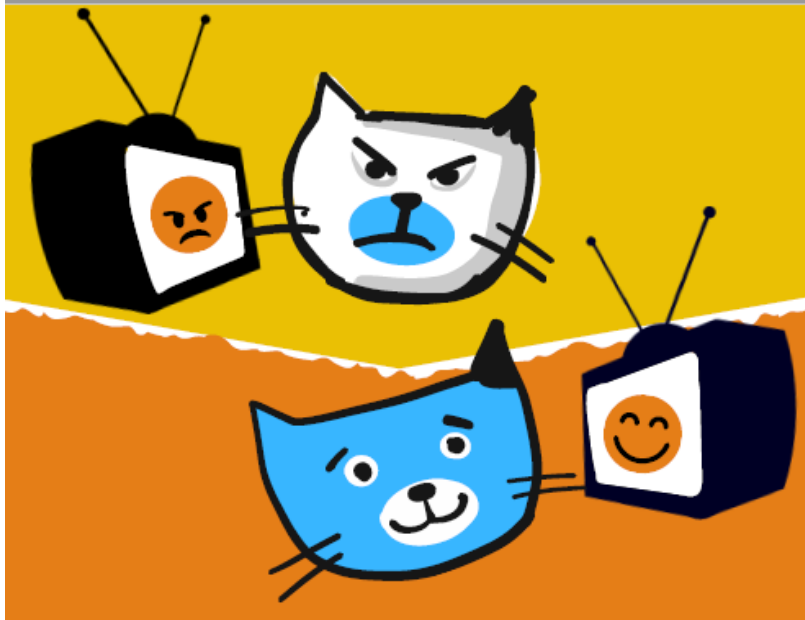
Tool 12. Change the Channel

--When people are stuck in a rut, or in a negative place, sometimes they don't know how to get out of it. They may be working themselves up more and more. Change the Channel by doing something surprising or different that can shift the energy to a different place.

Tool 12. Change the Channel

--Ask for help: "Can you help me with this urgent project?"
--Change the topic based on something they said or are interested in.
--Interrupt with a completely different topic, activity or snack as if you had no idea what was going on.

SHARE! Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Training

- If you're interested in a much deeper understanding of these tools, register for the SHARE! Peer Training for free at www.shareselfhelp.org

- For questions, you may call (310) 305-8878 and request to speak to Billy Douglas, Libby Hartigan, or Jessica Miller

- Or reach out by email at:
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  - jessica@shareselfhelp.org