

COMMUNITY HELPERS

Customized training

The Community Helpers Program aims to build a strong and supportive campus community by equipping participants with the tools to help others who are experiencing a mental health problem or concern. The intent of the program is to support “natural helpers” and build a bridge between the informal and formal support systems for young adults in the community and to provide awareness of existing supports and services. In addition to enhancing their skills, participants also increase their knowledge about a variety of issues those they are helping may face and learn about valuable resources both on and off campus.

Community Helpers Training can be customized for your group in terms of length of training and topics covered. Below are descriptions of topics that could be included in your training and examples of training formats. Customized training can be requested by students, staff, or faculty.



COMMUNITY HELPERS

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Typically, the full Community Helpers Training is delivered over 3 days and totals over 20 hours of material. Full training is offered on campus at various times throughout the year. The goals of training are to:

Equip participants with skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively help others

Bridge formal and informal support for young people

Focus on identification and early intervention for those who may be at risk

Reduce stigma by increasing community awareness

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING OVERVIEW

For groups that are interested in training but are unable to take the full 3 day program, customized training options are available. These options allow participants to still learn some essential skills of helping, but the training is shortened to fit the amount of time that groups have available and the focus is on topics most relevant to the group. Groups interested in customized training will work with our Community Training Coordinator to determine the most important topics to include and the best training format based on the group's needs.



TOPICS

Below are descriptions of topics covered in Community Helpers that could potentially be included in your customized training.

Who's a Community Helper?

This topic is generally included as part of a brief introduction to training. Participants will explore the qualities that make someone an effective helper and reflect on their own strengths and identity as a helper.

Ethics of Helping

Ethics are an important component that help us explore situations and issues and decide what action to take. They also help guide and set boundaries. Participants will explore how ethics come into play in helping situations, learn about legal requirements that must be maintained when helping young adults, and will develop their own code of ethics.

Labelling

As helpers, it is important to be aware of barriers that may get in the way of effectively helping someone. The labels we place on others and on ourselves can challenge our ability to effectively help others. Participants will identify labels that exist on campus and explore ways they can break through these barriers.

Trust & Teamwork

Trust and teamwork are essential elements to a helping relationship. Participants will explore what encourages a trusting relationship and how to build trust with others. They will also examine the importance of having a "Helping Team" of people and resources they can turn to for further help and support.

Knowing When People Need Help

Sometimes people may directly tell us that they are struggling with something, but not always. Other times they might not say it out loud, but may show signs of needing help. Participants will explore common concerns that exist in the campus community and will learn how to recognize warning signs that someone may need help.

Listening & Helpful Responses

When someone trusts us enough to talk to us about their problems the most important thing we can do is listen. Participants will learn about active listening, and will identify barriers to listening effectively and explore strategies to allow them to truly hear and understand those they are helping. They will also learn helpful responses and techniques that encourage communication and express support.

The Helping Skill

The Helping Skill is an important tool that can be used to help others who are experiencing a problem or are in distress. By using this skill, participants can help others further explore situations and issues they are experiencing and empower them to solve their own problems while also expressing support. Participants will learn and have a chance to practice *The Helping Skill*.

TOPICS

Limits & Strategies

As helpers, we may find ourselves faced with limits which prevent them from helping someone or helping them as much as we wish we could. Participants will explore limits they may encounter in helping situations and strategies to manage these. Participants will also examine the importance of setting and maintaining healthy boundaries in helping relationships.

The Self-Helping Skill

We are unable to fully and effectively help others unless we are taking care of ourselves first. Participants will learn to recognize when they themselves need help or support and will demonstrate the ability to use *The Self-Helping Skill*.

Mental Health Language & Stigma

Participants will increase their understanding of mental wellbeing and mental illnesses and will explore the impact of stigma. Participants will learn ways to work to reduce stigma of mental health problems and help seeking and will become familiar with mental health resources.

Suicide Awareness and Intervention

Participants will learn how to recognize signs of suicide and will explore the stigma surrounding suicide. Using *The Helping Skill*, participants will practice how to help someone who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide, including asking about suicide, expressing support and linking to resources.

Responding to Students in Distress

Participants will become familiar with the campus policies and procedures around recognizing and responding to students at risk. They will also become familiar with on-campus resources and how to assist in linking students with further support. Please note that this topic is specifically designed for staff and faculty.

Conflict Resolution

Participants will explore conflict situations, identify barriers to resolving conflict and brainstorm strategies to overcome these. They will learn and practice *The Conflict Resolution Skill* and discuss how to help others who may be experiencing conflict.

Substance Use

Participants will increase their understanding of substance use by learning about the spectrum of use, examining what an addiction is and exploring the effects of substance dependency. Participants will also become aware of different types of treatment options and resources.

Relationships

Participants will discuss the complexity of relationships, including the qualities they value in themselves and others and challenges to forming healthy relationships. They will also explore their role in helping others who are experiencing relationship problems.

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING OPTIONS

SINGLE TOPIC FORMAT

This option is for groups looking to be introduced to helping skills or who want to learn more about a particular topic. For instance, The Helping Skill has been presented in a 60 and 90 minute format. Please note that this option is not available for every topic listed.

CONDENSED TRAINING FORMAT

This option is for groups looking to learn and strengthen skills essential to helping. This format may also include specific topics that are most relevant to the group.

This 3-hour training was facilitated to a group of student-staff who were responsible for providing services to new students. They were looking to gain some helping skills necessary to support students in their transition to university.

3 Hour Training (1:30pm-3:30pm)

- Introduction
- Listening & Helpful Responses
- The Helping Skill
- Short Break
- Limits and Strategies
- The Self-Helping Skill

This one-day training was facilitated to a group of staff who were looking to increase their knowledge and skills in supporting students who were experiencing stress or mental health concerns.

1 Day Training (8:30am-4:30pm)

- Introduction
- Knowing When People Need Help
- Listening & Helpful Responses
- Lunch Break
- The Helping Skill
- The Self-Helping Skill
- Responding to Students in Distress
- Suicide Awareness & Intervention

NON-CONSECUTIVE TRAINING FORMAT

This option is for groups who are looking to gain helping skills and also learn about some specific topics, but who do not have a large block of time to cover the topics they are interested in at once. In this format, training is facilitated over a period of time, such as weeks or months.

This training format could be facilitated over a 4 week period. This would be ideal for a group looking to strengthen their helping skills while also learning about a variety of issues they feel those they are helping may face.

Week 1 (2 hours)	Week 2 (2 hours)	Week 3 (2 hours)	Week 4 (2 hours)
Introduction	The Helping Skill	The Self-Helping Skill	Conflict Resolution
Knowing When People Need Help	Limits & Strengths	Mental Health Language & Stigma	Relationships
Listening & Helping Responses			

Other Examples of Non-Consecutive Training:

- A half-day of training every month over a semester
- A 2-hour training session bi-weekly over the course of 2 months

To inquire about a customized Community Helpers training for your group, please contact **Mandy McCaughley**, Community Training Coordinator at mandy.little@ucalgary.ca or **403-220-5465**.

