

# TOPSIDE

Training Opportunities for Peer Supporters  
with Intellectual Disabilities in Europe



## Material for Peers: Portfolios



Inclusion Europe



[www.peer-training.eu](http://www.peer-training.eu)

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## Introduction

We decided it was important for people to be recognised for, and reminded of, all the skills they had learnt. Also we wanted them to be able to show other people all that they had achieved. We did this in many different ways. Here we want to give you examples to inspire you. You can find a way of creating a portfolio that suits opportunities in your country and the people you work with. In the portfolio you can also include any posters you used, stories of other people who served as examples, anything that will help the person in their role as peer supporter later on. You can find description and pictures of our portfolios in the following pages.

## EXAMPLE 1

In Finland we used a course-diary as the material for peer-supporters in training. A course-diary is something the trainees can bring back home to remember and show and tell others what was done that day. It works as a skills file for the trainees where the trainer can give them feedback for their progress. Diary makes it possible also for the trainees to evaluate each day and

different exercises used in the training. All the materials made during the training were collected in the file.

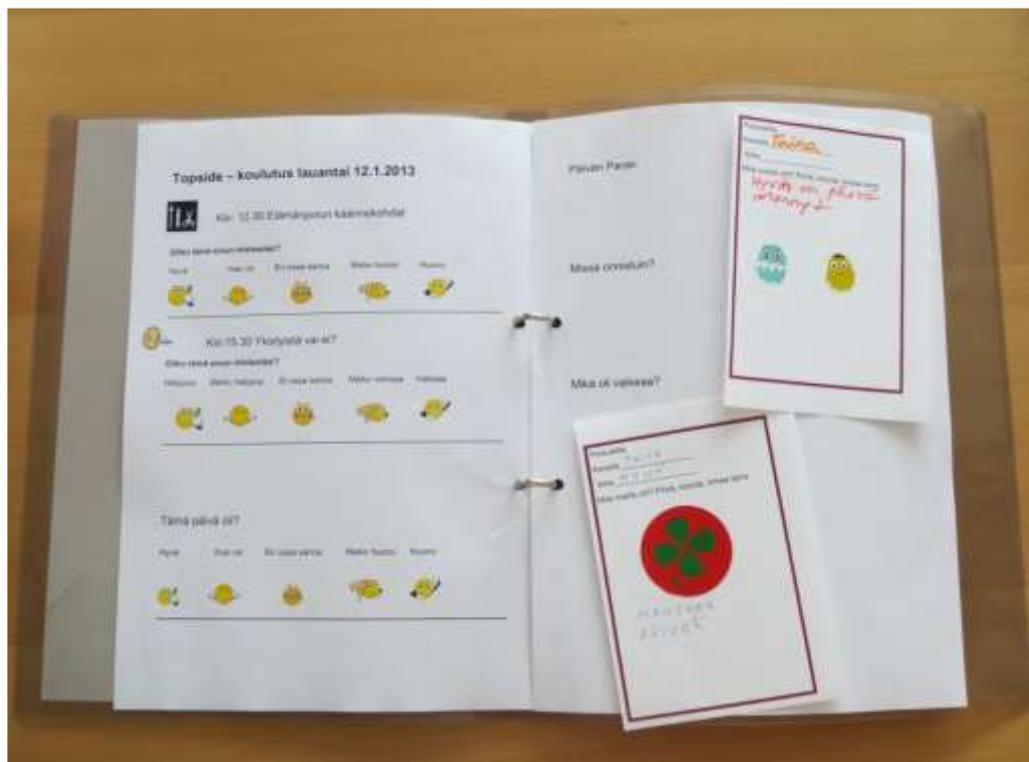


The course-diary included a program for each day and a ready-made grid with pictures to evaluate each part of the day. The participants were also asked to give a grade for each day, choose the topic they liked most that day, where they felt they had succeeded and what had been most difficult.

The feedback for the trainee on different skills was written by

trainer on color-coded sheets in the diary after each day. One sheet of paper had feedback on one skill

practiced that day in different exercises. The trainees also gave feedback to each other. This feedback was written on notes and glued on these pages.



Pros and cons of the course-diary

Pros

One upside of using a course-diary is that it works as a good exercise at the end of each day to remember what happened that day, what was good and what was difficult. The program with pictures and the trainees own evaluation of the day also works at home when they want to tell someone what they did in the training.

Diary also worked as an excellent way to get feedback from the trainees. It captures their feelings and evaluations fresh after each day. It also shows which part of the day the trainees liked the most and what they remember.

Also the chance to give and get feedback from other trainees was a really good thing.

### **Cons**

Downside of the diary-model is that it works poorly as portfolio that measures the progress of each skill. Although the trainees liked getting the feedback this way, this model was not the easiest to follow for the trainee or for anyone else looking at the diary. The progress that one trainee made was not obvious in this model because the feedback was written on different sheets after each day in the diary.

### **Ideas for improvement**

It would be easier to follow the trainees progress on different skills if the material for peer-supporters had own sections for each skills. This way the feedback on one skill for the entire training would be in one place and the progress on that skill could be easily followed. The diary as a way to remember and evaluate each day of training could still be a part of the material.

## EXAMPLE 2

In Spain, for the evaluation of the participants of the course we have used a **portfolio or assessment method** using folders and sought to collect the students' learning throughout the course with the intention that this material would remain in the hands of the student after the course. Each student has also had a portfolio, which hanged as a class mural.

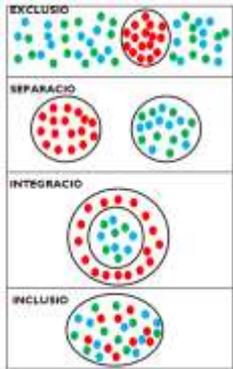


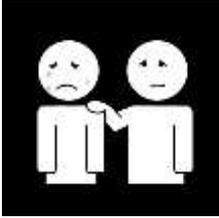
*For the class mural*

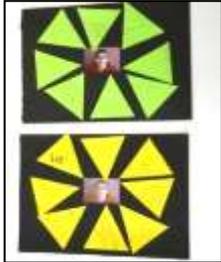


*Example of a Portfolio of a student*

In the portfolio and on the class mural as well, we have included (and attached drawings and / or photographs) throughout the entire course, the features that a good partner support should have. These features have been different conclusions and / or reflections to which the class group has come after a particular activity:

Conclusions/reflexions written down in the portfolio	Images for the portfolio
<p><i>Knowing the difference between free time and leisure time.</i></p>	
<p><i>To have some experience in the topic.</i></p>	
<p><i>Having a good social network (friends, family and acquaintances).</i></p>	
<p><i>Respecting diversity.</i></p>	
<p><i>Open attitude. Inclusive attitude.</i></p>	

<p><i>Person of trust, confidentiality.</i></p>	
<p><i>Listening to the others.</i></p>	
<p><i>Have empathy: put yourself in the other's shoes.</i></p>	
<p><i>To know how to communicate.</i></p>	
<p><i>The decisions have to be taken by the person, not by the peer support.</i></p>	

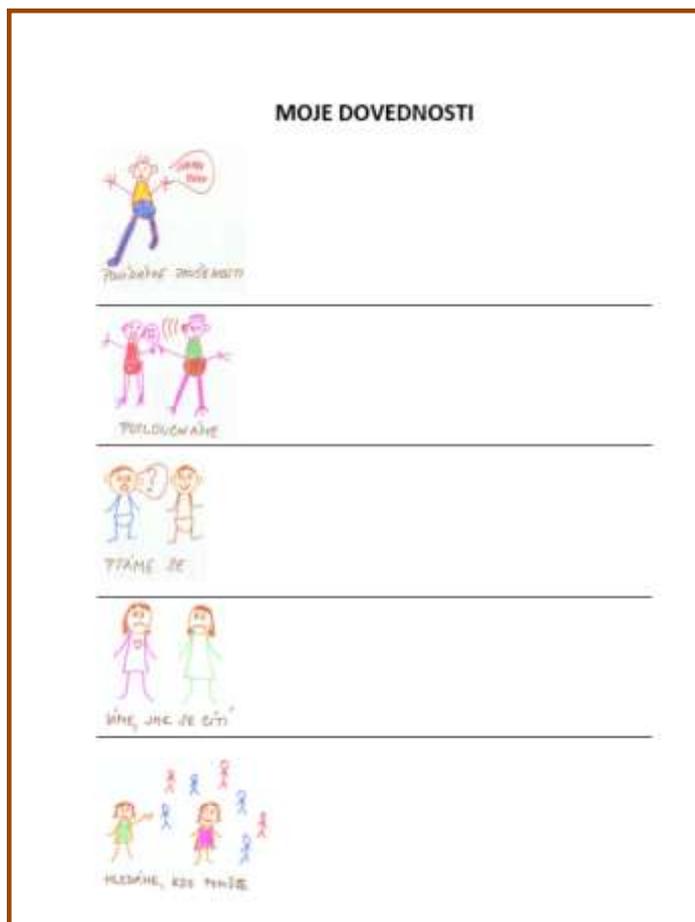
<p><i>To respect what the person has chosen or want to choose.</i></p>	
<p><i>Use positive thinking to encourage.</i></p>	
<p><i>Being mates, not saviours.</i></p>	

The final function of this portfolio is that it serves to support future colleagues to remind them about what they have learned, and therefore the new role of peer supporters.

### EXAMPLE 3

In the Czech Republic, at the start of the pilot course participants spoke about what is a support and about skills that supporters need. They drew up pictures describing the process of support and main skills as pictures: we talk about our experiences, we listen, we ask others, we know, how the other person feel, we are looking for people who can help. These are the main skills we decided to concentrate on in the course.

The trainer put those pictures together and made a folder called MY SKILLS. All trainees had been given that skill folder.



As this skill folder describes the process of support, it can help trainees to come back to and be reminded about the basis of the course. We often came back to it during the course and supporters should keep the material also for using it after the end of the course.

At the same time we have used this material to measure the personal progress of trainees for each basic skill. During the process, whenever people showed improvement in using one skill, we mentioned it and the person could make a red dot next to the picture. It was a motivation for them and a strong inspiration for others. If somebody had no dots next to some skill, we gave him/her the opportunity in future exercises to train that particular skill. It was important to talk about acquired skills immediately after each discussion, each exercise.

We also continued to use the folder to measure the skills progress after the end of the course when supporters started their support activities within support groups. Most dots appeared during this phases because they were practicing a lot in a concrete and natural situation.

**Pros of this material:** it is its easiness. We have found it effective to concentrate only on a few pictures which are easy to remember and orient them on the main and the most important points. This way it is also easy to use this material quickly during the teaching process to remind the steps of the process of peer supporting.

**Cons of the material:** it is a quite objective tool which doesn't say concretely what are the specific talents and progresses made by the peer supporters. It is necessary to specify that additionally verbally.

## EXAMPLE 4

In the Netherlands we made quite a complicated portfolio. This portfolio had two aims.

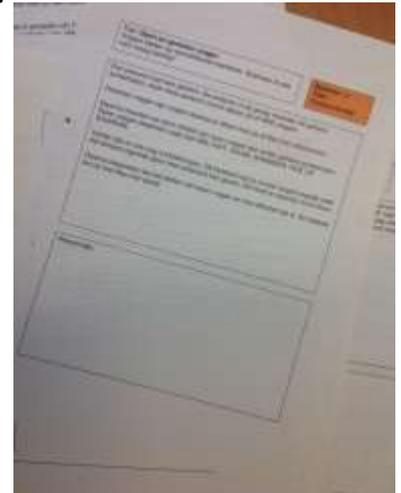
1. For the participants to look back at what they had achieved.
2. For people who had nothing to do with the training to know what the participant had done as an individual.

This way we hoped that the portfolio would help to get a Dutch certificate for 'Recognition of Acquired Competencies'. This is an official certificate that is good for people's CV.

The portfolio was divided into 12 'chapters', each marked by a colour. The first 10 chapters were about the skills peer supporters should strengthen or learn during the course.

For each exercise we made a sheet that fitted into the portfolio. On this sheet was the content of the exercise we did. This was quite wordy, but it could help outsiders to know what we did.

There was also space for a personal message to the participant regarding their skills. This was a lot of work, but it made people very happy to get personal and positive feedback.



The 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the portfolio was filled with all the information about the individuals we used as examples of inclusion, valued social roles and good support within our training sessions. These examples inspired the participants and it was good to give them something that would enable them to remember the exact examples, for themselves and also for other people.

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter in the portfolio contained empty versions of each of the posters we used during the training. These posters were all based on Person Centred Thinking. The participants practiced using these posters with each other. They are now able to use the empty ones when providing peer support outside the training course.

This portfolio was complicated for the participants. However, it did give them something to show for. They were all very proud of what they had achieved, and the portfolio was their proof.



## EXAMPLE 5

Here comes a portfolio for TOPSIDE as created by ENABLE. This comes with Kerrys approval and endorsement.

HELLO, I'M KERRY McINNES!



AND I'M A PEER SUPPORTER!

I have a learning disability.

I have learned a lot about supporting other people with learning disabilities.

This is called peer support.

My peers are other people with learning disabilities.

This is a folder filled with all the things I have learned.

This folder will show you all the training I did.

This folder will tell you how I might be able to support you!

## ABOUT ME:

My name is Kerry McInnes.

I live in my own flat in Oban.

I get support from ENABLE, Scotland.

I am 36 years old.

I have trained to be a peer supporter.

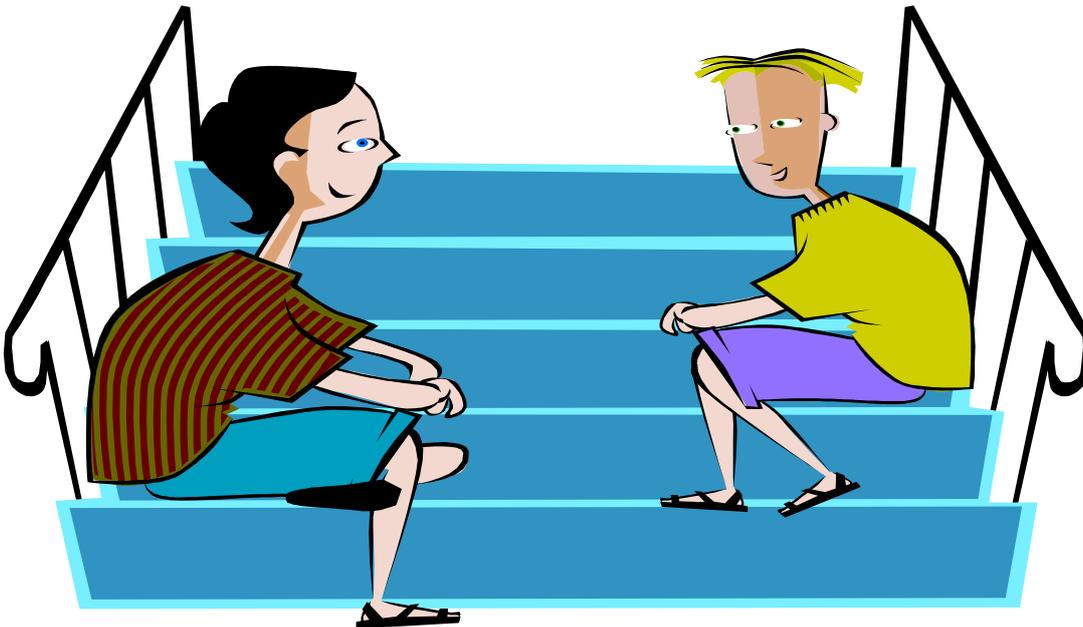
This is all the things I have learned.

Please tell me if I can help you with anything.



This is me training to become a peer supporter!

## TALKING AND LISTENING.



I learned to listen to people properly.

I learned not to talk when they are talking.

I learned to ask questions.

I asked questions to make sure that I understood what they were telling me.

Everyone agreed that I had shown that I could do all of

this.



Well done, Kerry!

Help, I need somebody!



This is what I learned here.

I learned that there are different kinds of support.

I learned what is good about being part of a group

I started to learn what peer support is. I learned that peer support is about helping people make their own decisions.

I learned that peer support is not about telling someone what they should do!

I learned that I can use my own life to help other people make decisions.

I learned that I can tell people about things that happened to me in my life.

This can help them make their own decisions.



Well done, Kerry!

# PEER SUPPORTERS- who can you trust?



This is what I learned here!

I learned that being a peer supporter is an important job!

I learned that it is important not to tell people what I think they should do.

I learned that it is my job to help them think of all the options.

Options are the different choices you have when you decide to do something!

I learned that what people tell you is private.



I learned that this means that you shouldn't tell anyone else what people tell you!

If you think you should tell someone else, you should ask the person if this is okay.

This shows respect for the person.

I learned that the only time it isn't private is when someone might be abusing or hurting the person you are helping.

I learned that if you hear this that you must tell someone who can help.

I learned that you must also tell the person that you have to do this.

I learned to give peer support by practicing giving peer support.

I learned to do this by listening to lots of stories about problems people had.

I learned to do this by talking to other people in the group about their problems too. We all gave each other peer support!

I had a lot of practice being a peer supporter!

I learned not to decide anything until I knew all the facts!

I learned that it is important to be calm.

I learned that it is important to help people calm down if they are upset or angry.



Well done, Kerry!

What you should do and what  
you should get!



This is what I learned here.

I learned that everyone has rights.

I learned that rights means that people must treat you like everyone else.

I learned all about different rights we should all have.

I learned that it is important to make sure that other people know about their rights.

I learned that a lot of people with learning disabilities don't always get treated like everyone else.

I learned how a peer supporter can help people if they are not being treated like everyone else.



Well done, Kerry!

SO MANY CHOICES!

Make good  
Choices!

I'M IN CHARGE!!



This is what I learned here.

I learned that there are different people who can give support.

I learned that people might want support from different people at different times.

I learned that the person getting support chooses who will support them.

I learned that the peer supporter can help the person decide who is the best person to support them.

I learned what all the right reasons are for being a peer supporter.



Well done, Kerry!



This is what I learned here.

I learned to look at different problems people might have.  
I learned to think about what support I would give them if I was their peer supporter.

I learned to always remember to listen carefully.

I learned to always remember to ask the person questions.

I learned that this would help me understand what they were really saying.

I learned again to help the person I'm supporting to think about all the possible choices they had.

I learned again to make sure I wasn't telling the person which choice to make.

I learned again that the person must be able to make their own decision.



Well done, Kerry!



This is what I learned here.

I learned that everybody should be a part of their community.

I learned that everyone should get support to be a part of their community.

I learned that workers should know how to help people become a part of their community.

I learned that workers should be helping get connected to other people in their community.

I learned that people should get support to meet new friends.

I learned that people should get support to be friends with anyone they want, not just other people with a learning disability.

I learned that people should get support to have the same rights as everybody else.

I learned that everyone thinks it would be better if people with learning disabilities got more support from friends or neighbours or people in their family.

I learned that it's the workers job to help people make new friends.

I learned that people with a learning disability can help other people in the community.

I learned that people with a learning disability have a lot to offer to other people.

I learned that people with a learning disability can make other peoples lives better as well as their own.



Well done, Kerry!



- DECISIONS, DECISIONS....!!

This is what I learned here.

I learned that people I help as a peer supporter must be able to make their own decisions.

I learned that everyone can make the wrong decision sometimes.

I learned that sometimes what looks like a wrong decision can actually work out okay!

I learned that people can learn a lot from the mistakes they make.

I learned to respect the decision that people make.

I learned that if I tell people about my mistakes in my life that it can help them decide the best thing to do.

LEARN FROM THE  
MISTAKES OF OTHERS.  
YOU CAN'T LIVE LONG  
ENOUGH TO MAKE  
THEM ALL YOURSELF.

I learned that peer support is all about people helping each other.

I learned that if I can tell people what I know it can help them decide what to do.

I learned that only people with learning disabilities know what it feels like to have a learning disability.

I learned that helping other people with a learning disability is what peer support is all about.



Well done, Kerry!



Well, not quite!

I learned that people can contact me if they would like some peer support.

I learned that I will get support from a coach or a mentor if I need it.

I learned that this coach will just help me think about how I should offer my support to my peer.

I learned that the coach won't tell me what to do.

I learned that the coach will just help me think about my choices.

I learned that this will help me make sure I don't tell my peer what to do. I learned that this will help me just support my peer to think about their choices!



Well done, Kerry!



Inclusion Europe



Lifelong  
Learning  
Programme



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