

LESSONS LEARNED AS A PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST

by Brian Johnson



Using your experience.

3. Your experience makes you an expert in your field unlike many others in your field of work. You have a perspective that cannot be replicated due to your lived experience. If you feel like you are being used or exploited, feel free to decline those kinds of opportunities.

4. THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AN ADULT ALLY.

4. It's important to know which allies truly support you and your goals as a peer support specialist. You may be collaborating with other agencies, schools, or non-profits, and it's critical that you are aware of who can assist you if you're not sure on how to handle a situation.

Your story is your story.

1. You don't have to share anything about yourself that you don't want to share. There may be pressure to share your lived experience, but you don't have to share anything that makes you uncomfortable.

It's okay to politely decline opportunities.

2. If you feel like an opportunity isn't suited for you, do not hesitate to politely decline. You may be invited to multiple events which can cause schedule conflicts. It's okay to turn down events that don't align with your schedule.

5. BEING A PEER SUPPORT HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE

5. Working with other individuals who've gone through similar experiences and giving them that guidance can be inspiring and a long-term goal. Don't be afraid to pursue other opportunities and put yourself in a better position to assist youth just like you.