

STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS: IMPROVING WELLBEING THROUGH PEER SUPPORT

Using the knowledge and ideas that you've gathered from the course, you will create an **action plan** in four chapters:

- **Background**, where you provide some basic information about yourself and your school.
- **Challenges and Objectives**, where you list potential challenges that could be solved with a peer support program.
- **Implementation**, where you describe how you are going to plan and implement a peer support program.
- **Evaluation**, where you explain how you are going to assess the peer support programme.

*Don't forget to check the evaluation criteria by which your plan will be assessed.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

Introduce yourself. Simple as that!

My name:	Maja Kralj
My country:	Croatia
My role:	School's psychologist, Peer Support program instructor
My school:	<i>Prirodoslovna škola Split</i>
My class/lesson:	<i>School's psychologist</i>

CHAPTER 2: CHALLENGES/OBJECTIVES

List here some of the **challenges** you think your student are facing and could benefit from a peer support program.



CHALLENGES

Social isolation among students
Low motivation for school chores and activities
Lack of a supportive and fun atmosphere in certain student groups
Lack of stress-relieving activities that promote group cohesion
Low motivation for interaction between groups of different age
Increase in anxiety and self-esteem related issues among students

State your **goals** regarding peer support in your school: What development would you like to see in your own school in regard to peer support? What are you trying to achieve?

OBJECTIVES

Establish a more frequent social interaction among students of all ages
Develop students' communication and emotional skills
Improve students' wellbeing through raising self-esteem and self-worth
Decrease stress related to school through clear guidance
Create a more supportive and relaxed peer environment

CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION

List the steps you need to consider for the implementation considering **selection** and **training of peer support students** as well as **organising peer-to-peer activities** and **evaluating the programme**.

1. Write the **title and/or summary** of your step in the first row
2. Outline the **process you need to follow** to carry it out
3. Note down **how long** you think it will take
4. Mention the relevant **tools and resources** you will need per step

Selecting Peer Support Students

Step	Describe the process	Identify the timeline	Identify relevant tools & resources and how they can support this step
Informing others about the program	Holding a presentation about the support program during teachers' council meeting. Printing leaflets with the important details and giving them away during Open Door Day. Designing posters about the program and getting students and teachers interested.	1 day in June and 1 week in September	Digital programs such as Canva, financial resources for printing and creating leaflets and posters
Collecting applications	Creating an application form in Google Forms that collects basic info about the candidates, as well as their motivation for joining the support program. Creating a poster that promotes the start of the program and the application process with a QR code linked to the Forms.	1 week in September	Google Forms, financial costs of creating and printing the poster
Interviews with students	Getting to know support candidates, their motivation for joining and facing them with a hypothetical problem situation related to student support. If a large number of candidates apply, possibly testing their stress reaction or identity traits through a scale or inventory.	2 weeks in September/start of October	No financial resources needed Identity inventory
Headteacher counsellors and parent feedback	Consulting with headteachers about student support candidates, their motivation for school in general and specific	5 days in October	No additional financial costs Parental agreement documents Previous student files

	group activities. Finding out their strengths and possible challenges they might face. Consulting the school's counsellors about those students and their experiences so far. Consulting parents about their thoughts on their child entering the program, getting parental consent.		Students' grades and activity in classes
Announcing peer support students	Giving feedback to selected peer support students and announcing the next steps in the implementation process. Informing headteachers about the selected mentors and mentees. Making a spreadsheet with paired students and announcing it to other teachers.	2 days in October	Spreadsheet in Excel

Training Peer Support Students

Step	Describe the process	Identify the timeline	Identify relevant tools & resources and how they can support this step
Initial consultation	Having a conversation with selected student mentors about their obligations, autonomy, possible challenges and the general plan of the support program. Answering any possible questions or doubts regarding the program. Explaining the role of the peer support instructors as well as other teachers participating in the program	5 at the end of October/ start of November	Developing a system of feedback from mentors to support instructors to enable monitoring
Creating psychological safety among students	Holding regular hang-out sessions with the	Throughout the year, especially at the start of	Different resources and literature about group

	students which aim is to get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. Doing several activities in pairs and small groups.	the program (November)	activities, ice-breaker activities
Workshops	Holding workshops on communication and emotional skills, active listening, valuing differences, resisting peer pressure, team building etc.	When needed, especially at the start of the program, as well as in the middle (February, March)	Powerpoint presentations, materials for the workshops
Weekly consultations	Having regular conversations with mentors and mentees about their progress during the course of the program	Throughout the entire year	No additional resources needed
Counselling sessions	Having regular counselling sessions with mentors/mentees regarding their own specific problem and working it out in depth. Counselling on problems arising within the mentor-mentee relationship.	Throughout the entire year	No additional resources needed
Teachers' council consultations	Holding workshops for teachers on how to early identify bullying, social isolation and mental health problems and how to feed any peer support related information back to the instructor. Creating a plan for the roles of headteachers in monitoring peer support activities.	At the start of the program (November/December), and when needed	Powerpoint presentations, literature on signs of bullying, protocol for reacting in instances of violence

Organising peer-to-peer activities

Step	Describe the process	Identify the timeline	Identify relevant tools & resources and how they can support this step
Open Door Day	A day filled with various activities, art displays, workshops	June of the previous school year (for the first year of the support	Financial costs of printing leaflets, welcome cards

	and lectures presenting the school to future students. During the Open Door Day student mentors can introduce themselves to future mentees and give away welcome cards with important info about the support program as well as leaflets with details about the school.	program, getting to know supporters will happen during the “Blind Date Night”)	
“Blind Date Night” with the peer supporters	Activity focused on getting to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere. Every student mentee is introduced to every student mentor in a fun way and holds a quick chat with them. Conversations can be enhanced with previously made cards with questions. The activity will be previously promoted through school social media accounts	End of October (1 day)	Social media posts Financial costs of arranging materials for the “Date night” such as food, beverages
Mental Health Support Week	Workshops on mental health subjects, social isolation, communicational and social skills, valuing differences, exam anxiety etc.	1 week at the start of November	Financial costs of creating posters to announce the week, materials for the workshops
Creating a peer support logo and shirt designs	During their headteacher’s class that’s intended for group activities, peer support students will brainstorm ideas and create logos to represent the peer support program visually. Best logo will be announced as an official program logo through social media posts and posters.	The rest of November and start of December	Arts and crafts materials, Graphic design programs, financial costs of shirts and printing
Pub quizzes, game nights	Student mentors can arrange pub quizzes, game nights, book club session to engage in a fun activity with their mentees.	Throughout the year	Costs of materials for pub quizzes, game nights Costs of prizes for those activities

Hanging out with mentees	Mentors hang out with their mentees in their free time and have autonomy on how to arrange those sessions	Throughout the year, especially during class breaks and free time	No additional resources needed
International Brain Week	Student mentors with the help of the school's psychologist will hold workshops which aim is to promote group cohesion and help students engage actively in the educational process. Students will be educated about learning strategies and organizational skills.	2 weeks in February/ March	Materials for creating posters about the week, social media posts, materials needed for the workshops
Peer Support Celebration Day	Peer Support Program will be celebrated with a celebration day dedicated to every program participant (mentor, teacher, mentee). The day will be filled with fun activities and games with prizes. Peer support students could be rewarded with a school trip to a nearby city of choice.	End of May (1 day)	Financial costs of arranging the activities, prizes, costs of arranging the trip

CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION

Explain how you are going to assess the peer support programme.

At the very end of the school year, the peer support instructor will hold an open debate on the advantages, as well as some challenges that have arisen from the peer support program. The instructor will then, in collaboration with the peer support student, brainstorm ideas on how to improve the peer support program for the years ahead. The ideas will include new selection criteria and ideas for solving specific challenges. Throughout regular individual counselling sessions and consultations with the headteachers, the instructor will evaluate the students' increase in motivation for school activities and discuss any possible changes in general student wellbeing. The peer support instructor will additionally attend classes that are picked randomly and assess the social atmosphere in the class. Finally, the peer instructor will send out a Google Forms evaluation form that students will fill in and assess all of the before mentioned aspects in a quantitative way. Results of the forms analysis will play an additional role in raising the quality of the program for the years ahead.

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