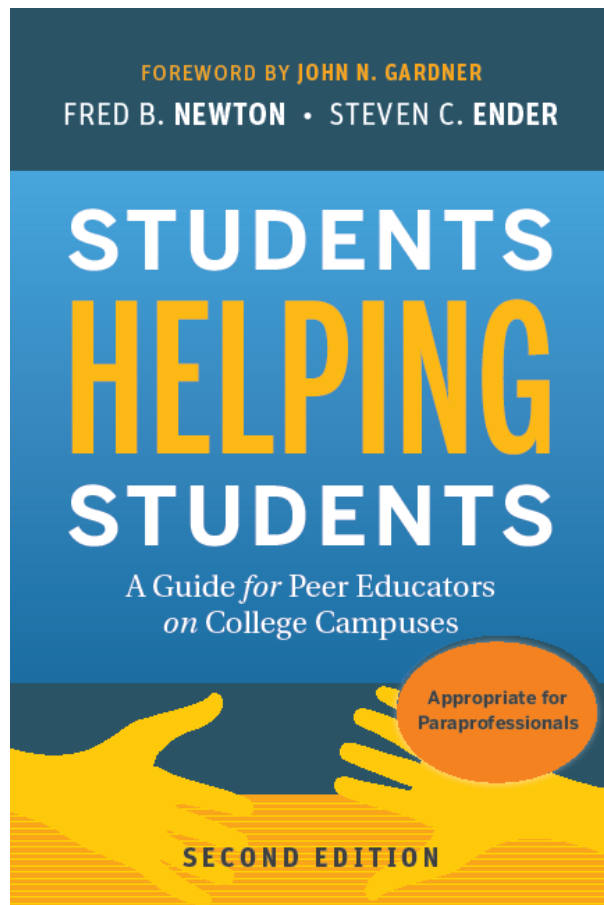


# PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING AS FACILITATORS TOWARD SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Students in Transition Conference, Houston, Texas 11/14/10



*Power to the Peers!*

*I believe the most important generic strategy that colleges and universities can adopt to increase student success is one that greatly increases intentional efforts for “students helping students”.*

*John Gardner*

# Joe Freshmen



- *Joe Freshman arrives on campus the summer before his enrollment and an ambassador gives him a tour of the facilities and a general overview of what it is like as a student. Joe also stops by the Financial Aid office to find out about his application for funding and talks with a financial advisor who answers his questions.....*

*Peer educators are ubiquitous to college life!!*

# What makes a peer educator effective?

- Connection
- Openness
- Tolerance
- Experience
- Mentor
- Model
- Knowledge
- Support



# Why should we utilize peer educators?

## Top Five Reasons

1. They are effective.
2. They themselves develop by experience.
3. They are economical.
4. They can relate to the situations experience by their fellow students.
5. They are knowledgeable about campus.

# What we know about peers

- The single greatest influence in college is the peer.
- “I like being able to relate to someone who is slightly ahead of me, has been through similar experiences, and won’t judge me by thinking my need is insignificant”
- Influence can be positive or negative
- Knowing effective helping can be impacted by training



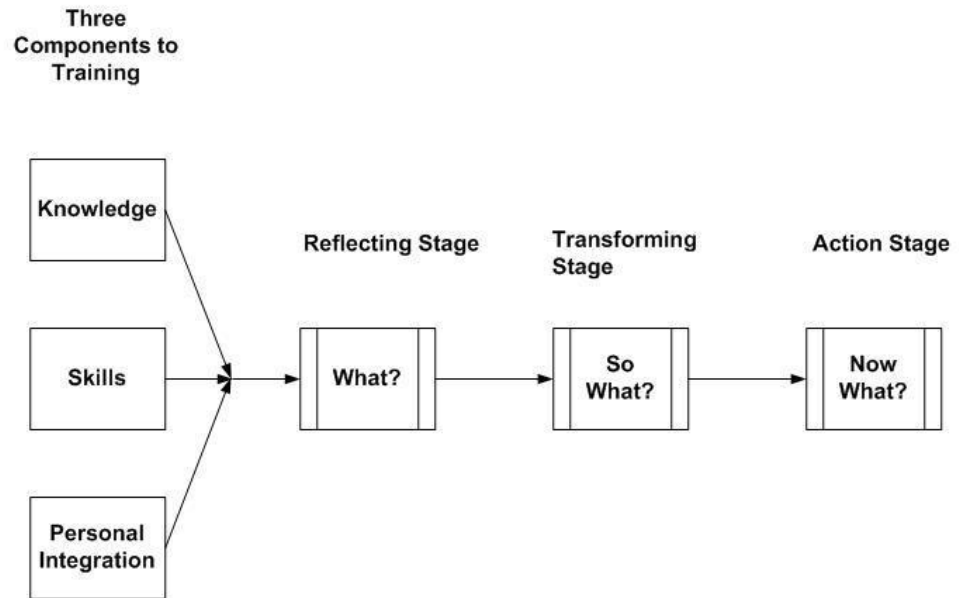
# Preparation of the Peer Educator--- Key Ingredients



- **Selection** – Making the right choices
- **Self-Selection** – By pre-service training
- **Basic Skills** – Identifying the core competencies?
- **Inductive** – How life experience can be useful
- **Systematic** – The process proceeds from simple to more complex.
- **Supervision** – On-going feedback & learning

# The Training Model

- Reflection
- Theory
- Activities
- Simulations
- Practice
- Feedback
- Tool kits



# Basic Skills Training



- Self awareness
- Developmental knowledge
- Effective communication (personal & cultural)
- Problem solving
- Group facilitation
- Referral and resource
- Specific context knowledge



# Training Strategies

## *Awareness*

Reflection Points,  
Journals, & provocative  
questions



## *Application*

Case studies,  
simulations, group  
activities

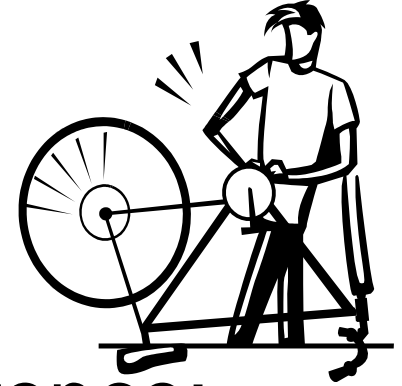
## *Action*

Tips for action, structure tools  
for application

## *Assessment*

Weekly supervision &  
situational problem solving

# Awareness Example



- Brief moments that made a difference:

Identify a recent encounter you may have had with a friend, family, acquaintance, or stranger you met along the way.

Identify the circumstances of that encounter--what happened? What did the individual do or say? Why was it meaningful?

What can you take from this meaningful moment of encounter that can describe a characteristic or principle of helping?

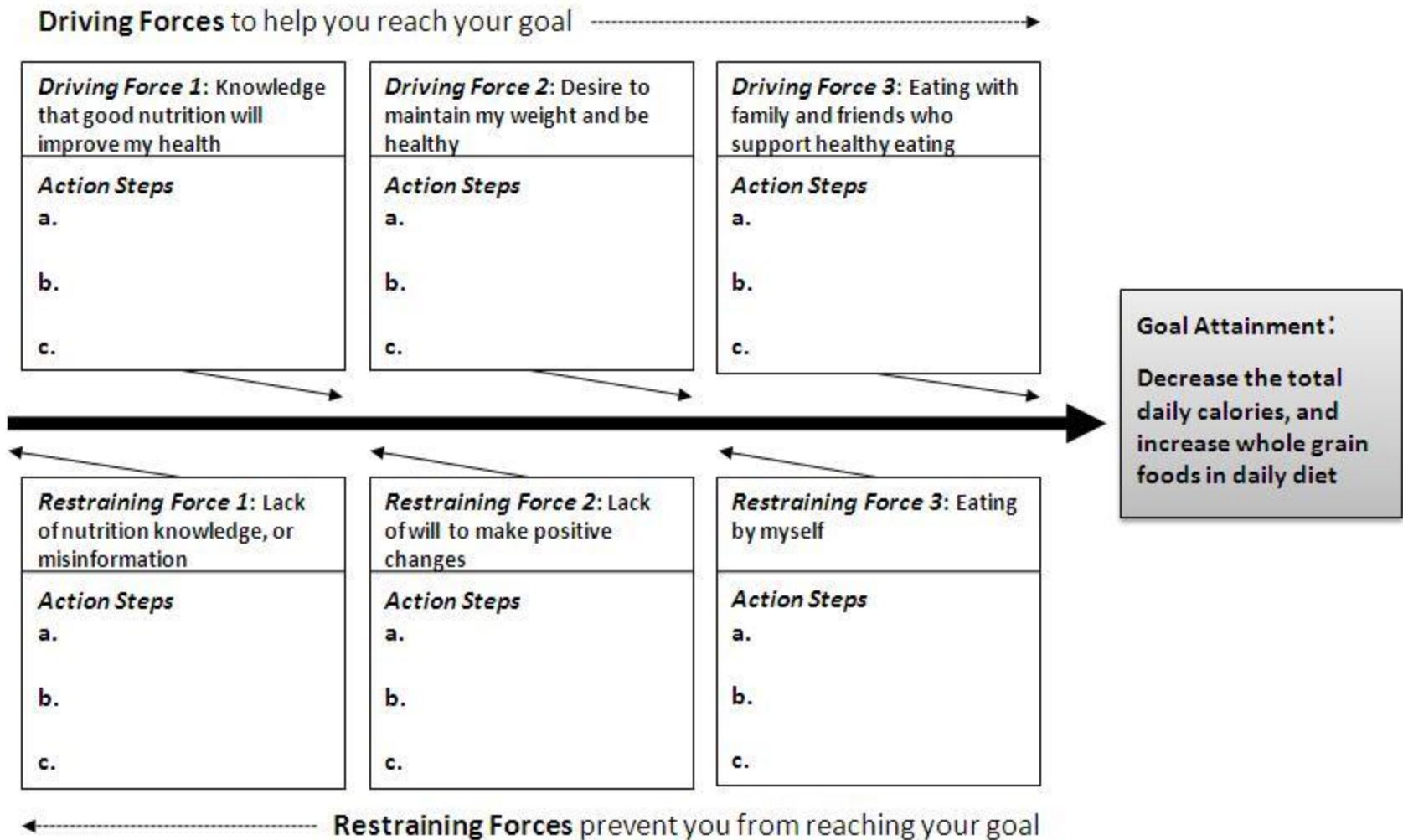


# Application Example

## **Sneakers and Shocker – A cultural awareness simulation**

- \*Trainees are divided into two groups and given the following instructions in separate rooms and told to practice their behavior using a specific discussion topic.
- \*Shockers are given personal instructions to make eye contact, talk loudly and gesture passionately, and stand within 24 inches of their discussion partner.
- \*Sneakers are told to never make eye contact, to talk quietly, and stand at least 4 feet away from their discussion partner.
- \*The two groups return to the room and 3 representatives from each group are told to come to the center of the room and describe the topics that were discussed in their respective groups (staying within their character norms)
- \*After 5 more minutes they then go back to their culture groups and are asked to provide their impressions of the other group with a set of process questions concerning reactions, feelings, impressions...and then to relate this experience to their knowledge of every day interactions around campus.

# Action Example – Tool for Problem Solving



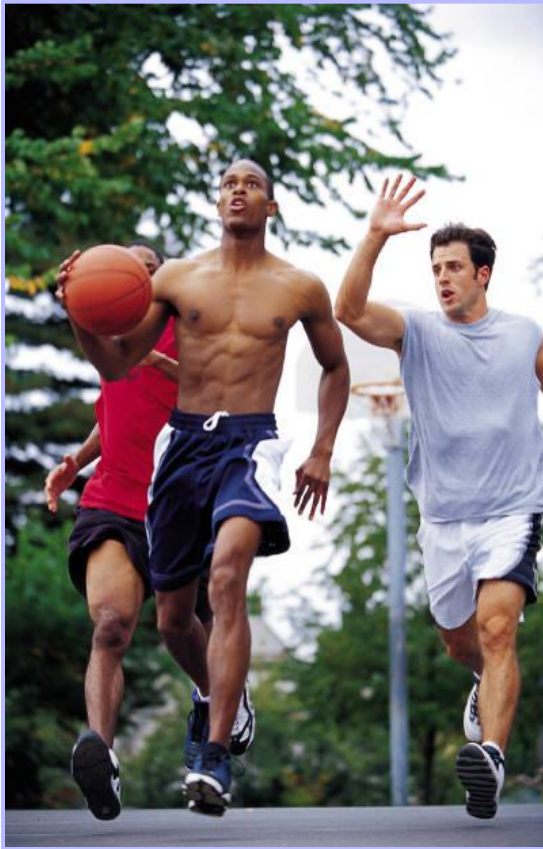
# Example: Healthy PAC-CATS Approach

## Objectives for Freshmen

Gain Awareness of Health Behaviors

- Have Knowledge of Health Guidelines
- Become Motivated to Change
- Set Personal Goals
- Learn Processes to Self Regulate

# Example Peer Program: Promoting health Behavior with Freshmen Students



- Be more energized
- Maintain healthy weight/lean body mass
- Feel good about the way they look
- Feel physically stronger and mentally sharp
- Have positive social interactions
- Do better in school and work
- Better able to cope with stressors

# Elements of PAC-CATS Program

## 1. Health Behaviors Assessment

Individual assessment and personalized feedback on:

- ✓ Eating behavior
- ✓ Physical activity
- ✓ Stress management

Pre & Post-Tests: Participants take the assessment at the beginning and at the end of the program

## 2. Behavior Change Process

- Establish goals for increasing healthy behaviors, based on health assessment feedback:
  - I want to jog or use the aerobics machines at the Rec Center 3 times a week for 30 minutes a session.
  
- Establish Action Steps to reach goals:
  - Block off 1 hour for exercise on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays of each week in weekly planner.
  - Arrange to meet a friend at the Rec every Monday at a certain time.
  
- Design system to monitor behaviors and progress toward goals - which includes designing ways to reinforce your progress.



### 3. Peer Mentors

- Participants have their own personal mentor who are students with knowledge in the areas of physical activity, nutrition, and stress management.
- Mentors help students set goals, design action steps, and monitor progress, and provide motivation.
- Mentors provide support (Students Helping Students)

# Summary

## Health Assessment Results

- 70% Meeting physical activity standard
- 40% Meeting fruit & vegetable standard
- 32% BMI = overweight or obese
- 6% Females underweight
- 19% High consumption alcohol
- 41% Deficient sleep
- 32% Feel stress impact

# Relationship of Health Behaviors to Students Success Variables

## ➤ GPA:

- ✓ Alcohol Consumption
- ✓ Readiness of Stress Management
- ✓ Use of Creative Problem Solving Skill
- ✓ Stress Impact
- ✓ Sleep

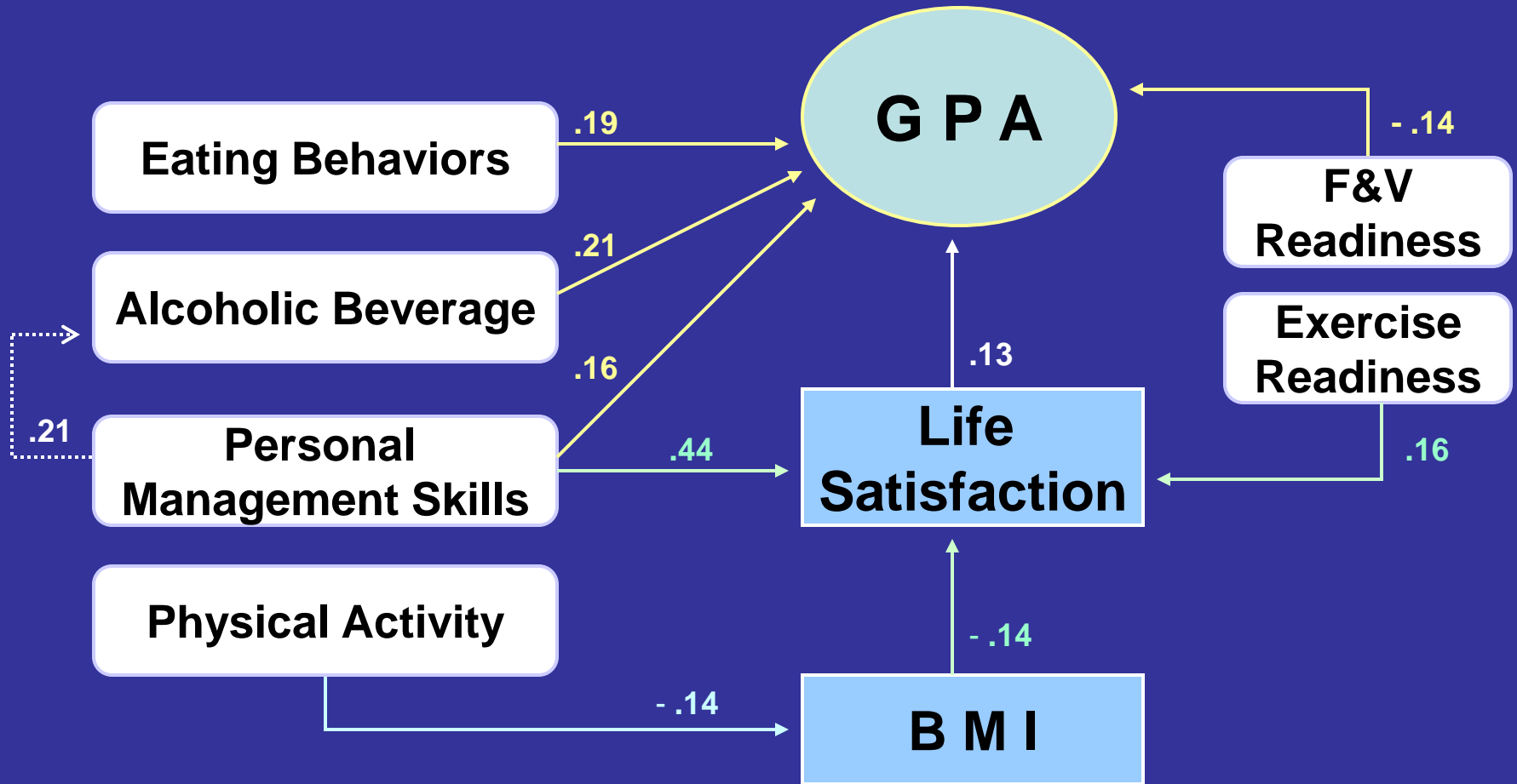
## ➤ Variables being assessed:

- ✓ First Year Retention Rate
- ✓ Social Support
- ✓ Involvement and Responsibility

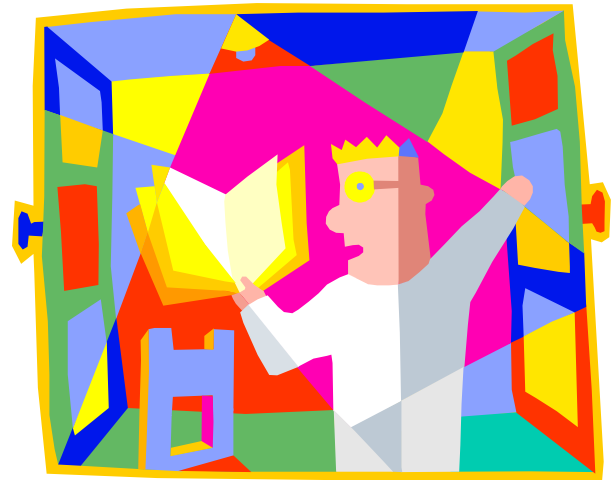
# Health Behavior Changes – 2 year data

	Profile Variables	Positive Change from Pre to Post		Group Difference
		Option 1 (N=128)	Option 2 (N=132)	
Physical Activities	General Physical Activity	**		**
	Stretching/Flexibility	**	**	**
	Strength Training	**	**	**
Eating Behaviors	Fruits & Vegetables	**	**	*
	Whole Grains	**	*	
	Low-fat or Fat-free Dairy	**		
	High-fat Foods	**	*	
	Caffeinated Beverages	**	**	
	Regular Pop/Soda	**	**	
	Sweetened Beverages	**	**	
	Alcoholic Beverages	*		*
Stress Management	Time Management			
	Relaxation Techniques	**	*	*
	Positive Thinking	**		**
	Creative Problem Solving	**		**
	Stress Impact	**		**
	Sleep			

# Relationship of Health Behavior with Student Success Outcome



# Information Sharing



- Examples of Peer Educator Functions on other campuses
- Interesting anecdotes, results, or new strategies for the use of peers
- Ideas for selection and training of peers
- I learned statements...
- Questions or comments
- Suggestions