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# The Impact of Peer-Helper Program on Peer Helpers: Some Preliminary Findings

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## **The impact of Peer-helper Program on Peer Helpers: Some preliminary findings**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Singapore Management University (SMU) initiated a peer helping program in January 2004 for the purpose of having the helpers act as a “bridge” between the University counseling service and the student community. Over the years, the peer helping program has broadened to include wellness education in addition to providing peer counseling, mentoring and mediation services for the student community. Although most of the students who volunteered for the program have demonstrated strong intrinsic desires to assist and to help others, the writers of this paper are of the opinion that the benefits of peer helping extends to both the client and the helper as well.

This paper reports our findings on the impact of the peer helping program on our peer helpers. A questionnaire designed to measure the perceived benefits of being involved the peer helping program was administered to all the peer helpers. We use the retrospective pretest method to track changes in the measures (Nimon & Allen, 2006). Our study shows that the peer helpers have grown and developed as the result of their involvement in the peer helping program. Specifically, our peer helpers reported improvement in (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional awareness of others, and, (c) organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). In addition, peer helpers benefited from learning specific counseling skills like reflecting feelings and asking probing questions and acquiring practical life skills like inter-personal effectiveness and emotion management. The success of the peer helper program at SMU can be gauged by the overwhelming support by the peer helpers. 93.3% of them indicate that they would recommend the program to their friends.

## **The impact of Peer-helper Program on Peer Helpers: Some preliminary findings**

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Peer Helping is widely used in colleges and Universities in the West. Klein, Sondag & Drolet (1994) reported that 78% these institutions actively employ para-professionals or college students as part of their peer helping program to educate students on various life issues. Despite the popularity of peer-led programs in the Western countries, there is little consensus on the scope of activities that should be included in these programs. For instance, many scholars and practitioners associate peer-helping with peer helper-counseling programs (eg., de Rosenroll & Dey, 1990; Corn & Moore, 1992). Others associate it with peer education. This is commonly found in the health promotion literature (eg., Backett-Milburn & Wilson, 2000; Green, 2001). Peer education refers to the form of peer helping which involves the teaching and sharing of information, values and behaviors amongst peers. Peer mentoring is another popular form of peer helping in higher education (Tang, 1993; Goodlad, 1995). Peer mentoring has also been used in other contexts like nursing education (Glass & Walter, 2000), violence prevention (Sheehan, DiCara, LeBailly, & Christoffel, 1999) and even sales management (Pullins & Fine, 2002).

The benefits of peer helping on peer helpers have been well documented in studies done in the Western context. Research by Badura et al. (2000) suggested that students who undergo peer education training improved in terms of their leadership skills, peer education relevant knowledge and personal health behaviors. Yamauchi (1986) established that students involved in peer led activities like counseling or health education will be affected in positive ways which enhances self worth and interpersonal skill development.

In this paper, we evaluate the impact of the peer helping program on our peer helpers. We examine the extent to which our peer helpers have grown and developed as the result of their involvement in the peer helping program. Specifically, we use the questionnaire method to obtain data on the peer helpers self-reported improvement in the following variables: (a) self-awareness, (b) emotional awareness of others, (c) organizational-based and self-esteem (OBSE). We also track the peer helpers' skills acquisition since they join the program.

In view of the relatively little research done in this region on peer helping, our paper will add to the existing literature on the topic. Since the existing research are predominantly done in the Western context, it will be interesting to investigate if there are any differences in the reported impact of peer helping on peer helpers in the Asian context.

### **Peer Helping At SMU**

In Jan 2004, the Singapore Management University (SMU) initiated the peer helping program in the campus. Initially, we wanted the peer helpers to act as a "bridge" between the counseling service and the student community. Students selected to the peer helping program would act as the "eyes and ears" of the counseling service as they would have had more contact with their fellow students on a day to day basis compared to the professional staff.

During the initial startup period of six months, the peer program underwent changes in its approaches. There were no prior experiences that the program director could draw from since peer helping is a relatively a new concept among the institutions of higher learning in Singapore. Without full knowledge and sufficient information, learning was by trial-and-error. Hence, pragmatism was the preferred approach which allowed the program to evolve whilst making necessary refinements along the way. The program director and the peer helpers met regularly to fine-tune the peer helping program.

After many revisions, we decided to broaden the goal of the peer helping program to promote "total wellness" among the students at SMU. The six dimensions of "total wellness" are: (1)

spiritual wellness, (2) intellectual wellness, (3) social wellness, (4) emotional wellness, (5) occupational wellness, and (6) physical wellness. Presently, the scope of peer helping activities includes, peer counseling, peer coaching and peer mentoring. All these activities and programs are directed at achieving these six dimensions of total wellness.

In order for the university community to accept the message of personal wellness, the program director and the student peer helpers realized that they needed to be properly trained in the basics of proper communication & counseling as well as a deeper understanding of their roles. It was from this need that a half credit course was introduced to the student community by the program director and supported by a full time faculty from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business. This course became the cornerstone of the peer helping program. It gave the necessary academic qualifications for the practicing Peer Helpers and boosted the credibility of the peer helpers program (i.e. all students wanting to join the program needed to complete the course as a pre-requisite).

The 13 week course essentially teaches the basics in counseling skills and allows students to have the right foundations in micro-counseling skills as well as the theoretical foundations needed in any academic course of study. Once students complete this course, they are invited to apply for a position in the peer helping team. Once selected, they will continue to undergo another term of intermediate training conducted by the counselors from the Centre for Counseling & Guidance. During this term of on-going training, the peer helper trainee or apprentice is grounded in counseling theory and are trained to understand human motivations as well as being exposed to current trends in counseling practice. Once these students complete this term of training, they are then promoted to become full-fledged Peer Helpers.

Full Fledged Peer Helpers continue to receive training on a weekly basis. At this level, they begin to discuss deeper and more complicated scenarios where role playing becomes the foundation of the training process. In addition to counseling scenarios, peer helpers are also trained in basic Mediation skills. The thinking behind these training is to equip the Peer Helpers with a wide range of helping skills in order to boost their productivity as well effectiveness within the student community that they serve in.

Students in the peer helping team have varied duties. Their primary function is to be on a constant look-out for their friends and peers who may be displaying signs of distress or changes in normal behaviors. When a peer helper observes a friend in their project group displaying such behavioral changes, they will find an opportune moment to approach these friends and casually converse with the intention of pointing out their observations and confirming if they were indeed going through a difficult moment in their lives. A simple act such as a peer helper looking out for their friends and offering their listening ear during a time of crisis would be very beneficial in facilitating a turn around for that friend (Cox., J.R., 2004).

Using the micro-skills of listening and reflection learnt from their trainings, the peer helper would then engage their friends by using Egan's 3-stage framework of communication in order to help their friends work on the issues they were facing (Egan, G., 2006). At the end of the conversation, the peer helper would then determine if her friend requires further assistance. If so, the friend is then referred to the Centre for Counseling & Guidance for follow-up counseling sessions with a professional counselor.

Event planning and implementation of wellness programs would be the secondary role of the Peer Helping team. Over the course of an academic year, the peer helping team would have organized at least 2 major wellness events specifically targeted to benefit the student community. Several service providers and vendors would collaborate with the peer helping team during the wellness week program. Activities like Free Health checks and screenings for students (collaboration with the National Kidney Foundation) and "Happy Balloon Day" where balloons with smiley faces and blank cards were given out to students. Recipients of the balloons were asked

to write notes of encouragement and friendship on the blank cards and tied to a matching balloon and set to float within the Concourse area of the University.

The other major event organized by the Peer Helping Team was the distribution of “de-stress” bags filled with candies and other paraphernalia. These bags were given out 2 weeks before the final examination period where students would be facing the greatest stress levels as term papers, projects and preparation for the examinations would be at the peak.

In addition to organizing events, peer helpers also staff the Wellness Centre. The Centre is a nicely furnished 750 sq ft room within the University which allows students to take a rest on automated massage chairs with piped in soothing music, creating an ambience with the intention of helping students to relax and recover from the stresses of school and in between classes. Board games and magazines are also provided for students to use when they are resting.

### **Methodology**

**Sample & Data Collection.** The questionnaire method was used in this study. A questionnaire was designed to measure the perceived benefits of peer helping. All the 48 peer-helpers were surveyed and we obtain 44 completed questionnaires. This represents a response rate of about 92%.The demographics characteristics of the final sample were summarized in Table 1.

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Insert Table 1  
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**Measures.** The variables captured in the questionnaire include: (a) self-awareness; (b) emotional awareness of others; and (c) Organizational-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE). We also ask respondents on the various skills that they have acquired since joining the peer-helping program. In addition, we include a few open-ended questions to obtain qualitative information on the impact of the peer helping program on the peer-helpers.

Whetten and Cameron's (2005) self-awareness assessment instrument was used for this study. It consists of eleven items. Respondents were asked to rate on each item using a five point Likert scale from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree. The mean score of the self-awareness instrument was obtained by summing up all the individual score of the eleven items divided by eleven. Emotional Awareness of Others was obtained from one of the sub-scale of Cooper and Sawaf's (1996) EQ Map™ Questionnaire. The sub-scale on emotional awareness of others has twelve items. We ask respondents to use a five-point Likert scale from (1) Not at all to (5) Very well for their rating on each item. The mean score of the emotional awareness of others was obtained by summing up all the individual score of the twelve items divided by twelve and making the necessary adjustment for one reversed score item. The OBSE scale was modified from Janis Feld's self-esteem instrument (Brockner, 1988). This seventeen item instrument measure how respondent feels about himself or herself as a member of SMU. A five-point Likert scale from (1) Never to (5) Very Often was used. The mean score of OBSE was obtained by summing up all the individual score of the seventeen items divided by seventeen and making the necessary adjustment for items that were reversed scored.

**Analytical Method.** We use the retrospective pretest method to track changes in the measures (Nimon & Allen, 2006). This method involves asking respondents to report post-intervention behavior as well as recall pre-intervention behavior. This method has gained acceptance as a practical method for measuring self-reporting changes (Klatt & Taylor-Powell, 2005; Lamb & Tschillard, 2005).

### **Findings & Analysis**

**Self-Awareness.** As presented in Table 2, the mean score of the before and after measures of self-awareness are 3.26 and 4.10 respectively. This represents an increase of 0.84 in the difference scores of the self-awareness. Indeed, the peer-helpers reported a marked increase in the self-awareness after becoming a peer helper. In addition, all the 11 items in the self-awareness scale recorded significant differences in the before and after measurement.

The two self-awareness items that reported the greatest increase are (1) understanding of one's own negative emotions (see item #1 "When I feel angry, depressed, or anxious, I understand why") and (2) self-disclosure (see item #2 "In order to improve, I am willing to be self-disclosing to others (to share my beliefs and feelings)"). The difference scores of these two items are 1.18 and 1.07. The reliability of the self-awareness scale is at the marginally acceptable level. The Cronbach's Alpha values for before and after measures of self-awareness were 0.689 and 0.708 respectively.

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Insert Table 2  
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**Emotional Awareness of Others.** In Table 3, it can be seen that the mean score for the before measure of emotional awareness of others is 3.22, and 3.92 for the after measure. This represents an average increase of 0.70 in the difference score of the emotional awareness of others scale. All 12 items of this scale recorded a 1% significance difference in the before and after measurement. The two items which displayed the greatest increase are (1) listening skills ("No matter with whom I am speaking, I am always a good listener.") and (2) sensitivity to others' feelings ("I can sense someone's feelings even if it is unspoken."). The difference scores of these two items are 1.18 and 1.07 respectively. The reliability of the emotional awareness of others scale is high as indicated by the high Cronbach Alpha values. The "before" and "after" Cronbach alphas were 0.837 and 0.820 respectively.

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Insert Table 3  
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**Organizational-Based Self-Esteem.** From Table 4, it can be seen that the before and after mean scores are 3.26 and 3.76. The difference scores of OBSE is 0.50. Compared to the difference score of self-awareness ( $d=0.84$ ) and emotional awareness of others ( $d=0.70$ ), the difference score of OBSE is markedly less. 16 out of the 17 items of this OBSE scale reported significant differences at 1% significance in the difference scores of before and after measures. The two items which displayed the greatest increase are (1) item "How often are you comfortable when starting a conversation with people at SMU you do not know?" ( $difference = 1.08$ ) and (2) "How often do you feel confident that someday people will look up to you and respect you at SMU?" ( $d = 0.67$ ). The Cronbach Alpha values for the "before" and "after" OBSE measures are 0.827 and 0.878 respectively. This shows that the OBSE scale is highly reliable.

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Insert Table 4  
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**Skills Acquisition.** Table 5 summarizes the results on the most useful counseling skills learnt as a peer helper. The most useful counseling skill acquired was deemed to be "Reflecting feelings". 60% of the respondents selected it as 1 of their 3 most useful counseling skills learnt. "Asking probing questions" and "Use of empathy" were the second and third most popular choices, drawing response rates of 40.0% and 35.6% respectively. "Attention giving", "Acceptance",

“Paraphrasing” were also popular choices. 31.1% of the peer helpers selected them as one of the three most useful counseling skills learnt as a peer helper.

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Insert Table 5  
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In addition to counseling skills, respondents were asked what other skills they had acquired as a peer helper. The results are shown in Table 6. “Inter-personal” was the skill which drew the highest number of responses, with 77.3% of the respondents selecting it. The next most widely acquired additional skill was “Emotional management” with a response rate of 65.9%, followed by “Teambuilding” with 54.5%. Other popularly selected skills are “Conflict management” and “Stress management” with 52.3% of the respondents choosing the former and 50.0%, the latter.

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Insert Table 6  
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**Self-Development & Growth** Table 7 displays the responses of the peer helpers to the open-ended question “Overall, how has being a peer helper helped you in your self-development & growth?”. The most common category of responses was “Improved Self-Awareness” - 31.1% of the respondents indicating that their self-awareness improved. This confirms the results of the self-awareness scale reported in Table 2. The difference score of self-awareness is higher than that of emotional awareness of others and OBSE. The second and third most popular categories of responses are “Understanding Others Better/Increased Sensitivity to Others” and “Improved Communication Skills”, with response rates of 26.7% and 24.4% respectively.

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Insert Table 7  
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**“What do you most like about being a peer helper?”** Further, Table 8 presents the respondents’ answers to the question “What do you most like about being a peer helper?” Nearly half (45.5%) of the respondents indicated that their “Fellow Peer Helpers” was what they most liked, making it the most common response by far. Both “Opportunity to Help/Contribute” and “Increased Competency to Help” were the next most frequent responses with a response rate of 18.2% each.

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Insert Table 8  
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**Reception of the Peer Helper Program.** As a surrogate measure of the reception of the peer helper program by peer helpers, we asked them if they would recommend it to their friends. The response was a resound “yes”. 93.3% of the respondents indicated that they would recommend the peer helper program to friends. The remaining 6.7% expressed that they *may* recommend the program to their friends. Notably, none of the respondents indicated that they would *not* recommend the program.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of our study indicate clearly the positive benefits of the peer helper program on peer helpers. Students who participated in the peer helper programs reported significant improve in self-awareness, emotional awareness of others and organization-based self-esteem. In terms of skill acquisition, they benefited from learning specific counseling skills like reflection of feeling and asking probing question. Peer helpers also develop relevant life skills like inter-personal



competencies and emotion management. In sum, the peer helpers found the peer helper program developmental and they would highly recommend it to their friends.

Based on our findings, we believe that the peer helper program is an effective way to help students develop relevant soft skills for workplace effectiveness. It offers students with experiential learning opportunities to reflect on their experiences in helping their peers. The process of helping others prompts the peer helpers to examine deeper into themselves and how they interact with others. As the result they learn more about themselves and become more aware of others' emotion. The helping process also offers opportunities to the peer helpers to practice the counseling and other soft skills. It helps to reinforce the lessons learnt in the peer helper training sessions.

There are some limitations in our study. First, the data of our study is very much based on self-report by the respondents. Future studies should incorporate other sources of data for example reports by the supervisors of the peer helpers. Second, the generalizability of our finding is very much limited by the small sample size (n=44). In future, when our peer helper program expands, we will be able to have more peer helper respondents for our study. Third, the retrospective pretest methodology is vulnerable to memory lapses and subject acquiescence. However, there are studies that support the robustness of this methodology (Pratt, McGuigan and Katzev, 2000).

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**Table 1: Demographics of Respondents**

<b>Gender:</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Male	33.3
2. Female	66.7
<b>Age:</b>	<b>%</b>
1. 20	9.5
2. 21	23.8
3. 22	26.2
4. 23	19.0
5. >23	21.5
<b>School</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Business	40.0
2. Accountancy	15.0
3. Information Systems	10.0
4. Economics and Social Science	35.0
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Singapore	78.6
2. Non-Singaporean	21.4

**Table 2: Self-Awareness**

No	Statement	Mean (Before)	Mean (After)	d
1	When I feel angry, depressed, or anxious, I understand why.**	3.00	4.18	1.18
2	In order to improve, I am willing to be self-disclosing to others (to share my beliefs and feelings).**	3.09	4.16	1.07
3	I am very aware of my own interpersonal needs when it comes to forming relationships with other people.**	3.18	4.20	1.02
4	I understand how I cope with ambiguous and uncertain situations.**	2.78	3.76	0.98
5	I am conscious of the areas in which conflict and friction most frequently arise in my interactions with others.**	3.18	4.16	0.98
6	When I receive negative feedback about myself from others, I do not get angry or defensive.**	3.02	3.93	0.91
7	I am aware of my preferred style of gathering information and making decisions.**	3.07	3.98	0.91
8	I seek information about my strengths and weaknesses from others as a basis for self-improvement.**	3.42	4.18	0.76
9	I feel in charge of what happens to me, good and bad.**	3.40	4.02	0.62
10	I have a well-developed set of personal standards and principles that guide my behavior.**	3.71	4.18	0.47
11	I have a close relationship with at least one other person with whom I can share personal information and personal feelings.**	4.02	4.40	0.38
<b>Mean (Self-Awareness)</b>		<b>3.26</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>0.84</b>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>		<i>0.689</i>	<i>0.708</i>	-

\*5% Significance

\*\*1% Significance

**Table 3: Emotional Awareness of Others**

No	Statement	Mean (Before)	Mean (After)	d
1	No matter with whom I am speaking, I am always a good listener.**	2.96	4.11	1.15
2	I can sense someone's feelings even if it is unspoken.**	3.07	3.98	0.91
3	I can recognize emotions in others by watching their eyes.**	2.91	3.80	0.89
4	I focus on people's positive qualities.**	3.24	4.07	0.83
5	I think about how others might feel before I give my opinion.**	3.42	4.24	0.82
6	I can get new people I meet to talk about themselves when someone is talking.**	2.91	3.62	0.71
7	I can tell when someone close to me is upset.**	3.87	4.51	0.64
8	I can sense the mood of a group when I walk into a room.**	3.44	4.07	0.63
9	I rarely have the urge to tell someone off.**	3.07	3.68	0.61
10	I can usually tell how others feel about me.**	3.00	3.56	0.56
11	I change my emotional expression depending upon the person I am with.**	3.38	3.89	0.51
12	I find it difficult to talk to people who do not share my views.** (R)	2.91	2.43	0.48
<b>Mean (Emotional Awareness of Others)</b>		<b>3.22</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.70</b>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>		<i>0.837</i>	<i>0.820</i>	-

\*5% Significance

\*\*1% Significance

(R) - Reverse Scale

**Table 4: Organizational-Based Self-Esteem**

No	Statement	Mean (Before)	Mean (After)	d
1	How often are you comfortable when starting a conversation with people at SMU you do not know?*	2.96	4.04	1.08
2	How often do you feel confident that someday people will look up to you and respect you at SMU?*	2.62	3.29	0.67
3	When you talk in front of a group of people at SMU, how often do you feel worried or afraid?* (R)	2.84	2.20	0.64
4	How often are you troubled by shyness at SMU?* (R)	2.73	2.09	0.64
5	How often do you feel that you have handled yourself well at a social gathering at SMU?*	2.89	3.51	0.62
6	How often do you have the feeling that there is nothing that you can do well at SMU?* (R)	2.53	1.96	0.57
7	How often do you worry about how well you get along with other people at SMU?* (R)	2.98	2.42	0.56
8	In general, how confident about your abilities at SMU?*	3.09	3.64	0.55
9	How often do you feel sure of yourself when among strangers at SMU?*	3.16	3.66	0.50
10	How often do you feel inferior to most students you know at SMU?* (R)	2.51	2.07	0.44
11	How often do you feel that you are a good student at SMU?*	3.04	3.47	0.43
12	How often do you have the feeling that you can do everything well at SMU?*	2.62	2.98	0.36
13	How often do you feel you are a worthless member of SMU?* (R)	1.53	1.22	0.31
14	How often do you feel that you dislike yourself as a SMU student?* (R)	1.64	1.33	0.31
15	How often do you feel discouraged with yourself as a SMU student that you wonder whether anything is worthwhile?* (R)	2.00	1.69	0.31
16	How often do you feel self-conscious at SMU?* (R)	3.27	3.04	0.23
17	How often do you feel confident that your success in studies is assured at SMU?	2.82	2.98	0.16
<b>Mean (OBSE)</b>		<b>3.26</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.50</b>
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>		<i>0.827</i>	<i>0.878</i>	-

\*5% Significance

\*\*1% Significance

(R) - Reverse Scale

**Table 5: Counseling Skills**

Q: What are three most useful counseling skills that you have acquired as a peer helper?  
Please tick 3.

<b>Counseling Skills</b>	<b>%</b>
Reflecting feelings	60.0
Asking probing questions	40.0
Use of empathy	35.6
Attention giving	31.1
Acceptance	31.1
Paraphrasing	31.1
Prompting	17.8
Summarizing	15.6
Problem solving	13.3
Genuineness	11.1
Others	11.1
Confronting	4.4
Goal Setting	4.4
Challenging	2.2

**Table 6: Additional Skills**

Q: In addition to counseling skills, what additional skills have you acquired as a peer helper? Please tick those that apply.

<b>Additional Skills</b>	<b>%</b>
Inter-personal	77.3
Emotion management	65.9
Teambuilding	54.5
Conflict management	52.3
Stress management	50.0
Time management	20.5
Leadership	18.2
Goal-setting	9.1



**Table 7: Self-Development & Growth**

Q: Overall, how has being a peer helper helped you in your self-development & growth?

No	Responses	%
1	<b>Improved Self-Awareness</b> (realize that there are certain emotional barriers I have and deal with this better, identify my own personality, more aware of myself, bring me closer to emotions within and outside myself)	31.1%
2	<b>Understanding Others Better/Increased Sensitivity To Others</b> (able to think in multiple dimensions, more able to relate to other's emotions, better manage others' emotions, understanding human emotions, more aware of my phrasing of words when listening to someone in need, how to really understand our peers who have problems, become alert with people's moods, understanding others, gain better insight to people's feelings, understand people better, more aware of people around me, to be more accepting of friends' feelings, more sensitive to surrounding and friends, developing my patience with others, helps me to be more aware of people's feelings, more aware in terms of communicating with my peers, more sympathy to others)	26.7%
3	<b>Improved Communication Skills</b> (better listener and communicator, more aware of phrasing of words, listening skills, conversational techniques)	24.4%
4	<b>Improved Interpersonal Skills</b> (how to talk to different people who have different feelings, more confident in conversations, improving interpersonal and networking skills, interact with others more effectively, better equipped in my interaction with other people)	17.8%
5	<b>Become More Open-Minded/Matured</b> (take larger view as a SMU student, help to become more mature, came to have more faith in human relations and the society, become more matured, become more insightful, understand that there is more to life than just studies and climbing the corporate ladder, I have matured, become less opinionated, there's more to university life than just trying to prove oneself)	17.8%
6	<b>Improved Self-Confidence/Increased Friendliness</b> (more confident about myself, grow to be a much more sociable person, become more amiable person, helped me to be a more amiable person, confident of myself and my abilities, more confident and assured of my role in SMU, feel self-worthiness, feel good about myself, greatly contributes to my self-esteem, find more worth in myself, derive yet another sense of purpose and self-worth)	15.6%
7	<b>Broaden Social Contacts</b> (broaden social contacts with nice people, build network of reliable friends, widen social circle, widened social network, grow my sense of belonging to a community)	13.3%
8	<b>Acquired Counseling Skills</b> (taught me to put other people's perspectives instead of my own when counseling them, understand how do we actually help peers who have problems, better carer, able to help a friend better, counseling skills)	11.1%
9	<b>Improved People Management Skills</b> (better manage others' emotions, people management skills, people's skills, able to understand human emotions and manage them, command skills to handle people more efficiently)	11.1%
10	<b>Learning to Manage Own Emotions</b> (know how to handle my feelings now, better manage my emotions, better manage my feelings and emotions, handle my feelings, helped to become a more stable person)	11.1%
11	<b>Improved Character</b> (building up of discipline and commitment, able to handle difficult situation more calmly, how to approach sticky situations, am more prepared to face depressive or adverse situation, I am a happier person, grown significantly in character and social graces)	11.1%
12	<b>Being Able to Develop Better Relationships with Friends</b> (develop better relationships with my friends, better able to interact with people, helps in bringing me closer to friends, make closer friendship ties with schoolmates)	6.7%
13	<b>Improved Stress Management Skills</b> (stress management, understand my own stress problem)	4.4%
14	<b>Opportunity to Help Others</b> (avenue to be able to show kindness and be helpful, enabled me to contribute to my school community, granted me a role where I am able to show kindness and be helpful)	4.4%
15	<b>Opportunity to Learn from Experience of Helping Others</b> (wealth of insights to deal with some of the challenges I've met, learning from clients' conflicts and dilemmas, valuable experience gained when helping others)	4.4%
16	<b>Others</b> (soft skills, take up more responsibilities in caring and helping people I know, learn the	11.1%

	importance for us to make the first move when approaching people who we are not closer to, helped me understand that helping can come in other forms, equipped me with the skill of using both my heart and mind when helping others, awareness of the importance of confidentiality, potential employers showed interest during interview sessions regarding nature of SMU peer helpers program, makes me more committed to activities in school, stirred up deeper desire to help others)	
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**Table 8: Most-Liked Things About Being A Peer Helper**

Q: What do you most like about being a peer helper?

No	Responses	%
1	<b>Fellow Peer Helpers</b> (meeting nice people, opportunity to be around large group of nice people, getting to know more people, friends I make are genuine, friends who think the same way, genuineness of everyone, support network, to know a lot of like-minded people, occasional gathering to allow us to mingle, like being part of the group)	45.5%
2	<b>Opportunity to Help/Contribute</b> (contributing to SMU community, make people happy, can bring smiles to people's faces, able to make an impact in someone else's life, ability to understand my peers and assist them, a passport that verifies that you are someone who is friendly, feeling of being appreciated, being able to help others in fruitful manner, very fulfilling – able to help my friends, satisfaction of helping others, enjoy the fact that I'm doing something for the school and my school mates, joy in seeing people participate and enjoying the events I organize, opportunities to assist my peers)	18.2%
3	<b>Increased Competency to Help</b> (being a more supportive friend, trained to help others)	18.2%
4	<b>Increased Understanding of Self and Others</b> (understand people's feelings, learn more about handling emotion both from myself and others, picked up skills that made me more aware of my own values and principles, growing mentally and emotionally, introspection that it encourages)	13.6%
5	<b>Acquiring Counseling skills</b> (acquiring counseling skills, counseling techniques)	9.1%
6	<b>Increased Confidence Felt</b> (having the confidence when reaching out to peers who are troubled, more confident in my abilities to help my friends, being more confident of my empathy, listening and counseling skills, confidence improvement)	9.1%
7	<b>Improved Communication/Interpersonal Skills</b> (learning communication and interpersonal skills, tips in communication, skills improvement)	6.8%
8	<b>Training Sessions</b> (the training sessions, trainings are useful and practical, training, being able to role play and put to use what we have been taught)	6.8%
9	<b>Others</b> (sense of peace and calm during peer helping session, helps put in perspective life, always prepared to do something worthwhile, nicely furnished wellness centre, being able to learn from others' problems)	4.6%