



PREGNANCY & SUBSTANCE USE: A PEER'S ROLE

Module 1.1: Is This Your Calling?

Craft a Personal Elevator Speech – Template and Tips

The sample script for a personal elevator speech is offered below, but it's important that you customize the statement to reflect your specific role. Change the wording to make sure it feels comfortable and natural to you, while keeping a professional tone. Showing respect and professionalism towards yourself in the way you talk about your role can model how you expect others to treat you in a situation.

Sample Elevator Speech – Fill-In Script

Hello, I'm [name] and I'm a [name of your specific role – peer, peer specialist, peer coach, etc.] with [name of your organization]. If you're not familiar with [name of your specific role – peers, peer specialists, peer coaches, etc.], we are nonclinical professionals with lived experience of mental health and/or substance use. We walk alongside others who are navigating similar experiences to offer support, share hope, and affirm that recovery, on each person's own terms, if possible. Peer support has shown to have many positive outcomes for patients, like [select 1–2 **Anticipated Positive Outcomes***]. Peers work in lots of settings in [name of your community/your state/across the United States], but I work specifically with [population of focus at name of your organization, setting].

I'd like you to know that when I'm working with pregnant/postpartum participants in [name the specific setting if applicable (prenatal visits, delivery rooms, child welfare meetings, etc.)], my main role is to [you can tailor this as needed to convey your main purpose in that specific situation]. While it may be others' role to [list a few main ways the peer role is misunderstood with this specific type of professional or in this specific type of setting – examples: recommend a specific treatment plan, monitor court mandated actions], it is not my role because peers [select 1–2 key **peer core values**** or guidelines you want the listener to know].



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If you have any questions about peer support or my role today, I'm happy to answer them. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of [participant's] care team.

***Anticipated Positive Outcomes of Peer Support**

- Offer empathy and show recovery is possible
- Offer a safe, nonjudgmental space for people to explore
- Help people identify goals they want to achieve
- Help people determine the action steps they want to take to reach their goals
- Connect people with desired supports that will help them achieve their recovery goals
- Help people reach their desired goals
- Increase personal and recovery capital
- Educate on realistic and obtainable options
- Empower to make informed decisions
- Increase self-efficacy and respect autonomy
- Increased treatment motivation
- Increased treatment engagement
- Increased treatment retention
- Help individuals improve their relationships with treatment providers, family members, and social supports

(These are just suggestions; feel free to name specific, local outcomes your organization has seen, or some of your personal motivations.)



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****Peer Core Values**

- Support choice
- Share hope
- Withhold judgment about others
- Listen with emotional sensitivity
- Are respectful (are curious and embrace diversity)
- Educate and advocate
- Are honest and direct (address difficult issues with caring and compassion)
- Are mutual and reciprocal
- Share power equally (embody equality)
- Are strengths-focused
- Are transparent (set clear expectations and use plain language)
- Focus on the person, not the problems (are person-driven)

If your work takes you to multiple locations where you work with a variety of other professionals in your community, it may help you to develop a few different elevator speeches tailored for some of your most frequent encounters (e.g., maybe you have one way you explain your role to healthcare providers that may be slightly different than how you explain your role in meetings with justice system or child welfare staff). Know your audience.

While your elevator speech may feel like a mouthful, conveying a dense amount of information about your role, your purpose, and your boundaries early on can save a lot of time wasted in misunderstandings and frustration. It's likely even when you fill in all the blanks that you can deliver your speech in less than 2 minutes. Be sure to use a slow,



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natural talking speed. This will allow the listener to take in the information, and it shows your confidence in the importance of what you're saying. (Rushing may convey you're nervous, lacking confidence, or not convinced that what you're saying matters.) Keeping it at 2 minutes or less will make sure you're focusing on the key messages and not overwhelming the listener with too much detail early on.

It's important to practice being able to deliver your elevator speech in a confident and smooth manner. Even if it feels silly, practice your speech in a mirror or selfie video. Then take the next step and practice with a trusted friend or coworker; ask for constructive feedback. Keep practicing until it feels natural. Remember, you are in this role for a reason. Your experience and expertise are highly valued and so important in this work.



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