Social and Peer Support in Health: An Ecological and Global Perspective
Edwin Fisher, Ph.D.
Health Behavior 756-001
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
Mondays, 9-11:50 AM, Room 324, Rosenau Hall
Spring, 2014

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Overview
This course has four broad purposes.

1. Review key features of social support, a very powerful but not well understood aspect of human behavior and experience.
2. Review applications of social support to health promotion.
3. Consider these issues from a global and cross-cultural perspective.
4. Through the group project and term paper, provide the student the opportunity to contribute to an application of peer support and examine how (a) fundamental features of and research on social support inform that application, as well as how (b) the process of application heightens understanding of fundamental features of and research on social support.

The course is divided into two sections. From January 13 through March 3, we will review foundational and research literature on social support. From March 17 to the end of the semester, we will review applications of social support.

The underlying theme of the course is that the two sections are related, understanding social support and can enhance our ability to develop effective peer support interventions.
Student Project and Term Paper

During our first class on January 13, we will discuss a number of current topics in peer support for which students might develop a document, report, or other “product.” These include, just as a short list of possibilities:

- Economic or business cases for peer support programs
- Addressing mental health/behavioral health through peer support
- Peer support and the elderly
- Peer support for rural populations
- How to manage, supervise, and provide back-up to peer supporters
- The roles of instrumental and emotional support in peer support
- Comparison of peer support across different kinds of health problems, e.g., diabetes management vs HIV/AIDS
- Peer support in specific country or cultural settings
- “Reverse innovation” or “Twinning”; transferring lessons from developing to developed countries
- Exploring the tension between lay persons and health professionals, including, e.g., paradigm shift in modern medicine and health care, evolution vs revolution, roots in social activism, empowerment of minority groups
- New ways of measuring impact of peer support programs, e.g., positive psychology, happiness index

We will continue this discussion in our 2nd class, on January 27. At the conclusion of this, students will choose a specific topic on which they would like to develop some document or “product” that may be useful to the field. They will be free to do this individually or in small groups of 2 – 4. The document or “product” can be anything from a manual or report for the field to a research proposal or review of existing research. At the end of the semester, these may be selected for promotion through Peers for Progress such as through its website or newsletters, etc.

We will discuss these student projects every week or so in class to compare notes and provide some guidance in students’ development of the projects. In our last class (April 21), students will present their product or document.

Term Paper – Reflecting on the product or document which you (and your group, if applicable) have developed during the semester, describe how (a) fundamental features of and research on social support inform your work, as well as how (b) the process of application heightens understanding of fundamental features of and research on social support.

Due Friday, May 2, 5 pm by hard and electronic copy, 12-point, Times New Roman, 0.75 in. top and bottom margins, 1.0 in. side margins, maximum = 15 pp.

Mid-Term Assignment – As preparation for the Term Paper, describe one example of each of how (a) fundamental features of and research on social support inform the work you are doing for your project, as well as how (b) the process of application heightens understanding of fundamental features of and research on social support.

Due Friday, March 7, 5 pm by electronic copy to edfisher@unc.edu and to jlb@email.unc.edu, 12-point, Times New Roman, 0.75 in. top and bottom margins, 1.0 in. side margins, Maximum = 5 pp.

Grading Scheme Assignment of final grades will be guided by the following:

- Term Paper 35%
- Mid-Term Assignment 20%
- Class Participation 35%
- Project (Document or Product for the field) 10%
**Section 1 – Foundations and Research on Social Support** (January 13 – March 3)

In this first section of the course, we will review classic and current literature on social support, what it is, how it enters into health, and how it works.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/13</td>
<td>What is social support? Where does it fit within an ecological view of health and health behavior?</td>
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<td>1/20</td>
<td>MLK Day – No Class</td>
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| 1/27 | Fundamentals


For Reference – Not Assigned:


2/3 | Social Networks & Environmental Determinants of Social Support:


**National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America**, 110(15), 5797-5801. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1219686110

### 2/10 Attachment


- Lecture 1: Caring for Children, pp. 6-19.


**Assignment:** Bring a Valentines Day card or copy of one!

**Optional:**


### 2/17 Psychosocial studies of social support and social influence

**Psychosocial Studies of Social Support**


### 2/24 What is universal? What is specific? Cross-cultural perspectives on social support

**Regarding social support and peer support in different cultures:**

**Review:**


Dutton, Y. E. (2012). Butting in vs. being a friend: cultural differences and similarities in the evaluation of imposed social support. [Comparative Study]. The Journal of social psychology, 152(4), 493-509.


Section 2 – Social and Peer Support Interventions (March 3 – April 28)
In this section of the course, we turn toward practical applications of social support in prevention, health, and health care.


Read and come to class prepared to describe what you think is most interesting about your choice of two of the following regarding diabetes, mental health, and asthma, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS:

Diabetes:


Effectiveness of a Diabetes Self-Management Support Intervention in Vietnamese Adults with Type 2 Diabetes. *Journal of Science, Technology, and Humanities*, 11(1), 41-79.

**Mental Health:**


**Asthma, Maternal & Child Health, HIV/AIDS:**


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3/10 Spring Break

3/17 Practical Challenges in Developing and Managing Peer Support Interventions


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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Successes and Failures: Reaching the Hardly Reached, and Learning from Failure: Lessons Learned, Failure Factors, and Success Factors</th>
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<td>Fisher, E. &amp; Boothroyd, R. Response to Smith et al. and Smith et al., Rejoinder</td>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Network Approaches</th>
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<td>3/31</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Channels of peer support: Email, Web</th>
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<td>4/7</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Valarie Clark Worthy, Sisters’ Network</td>
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<td>Assignment: See the movie, Her</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<td>Workshop on Developing a Peer Support Program</td>
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4/14 | Primary Care, the Patient-Centered Medical Home, and Peer Support  
Guest Presenters:  
Samuel Cykert, MD, Professor of Medicine, Associate Director of Medical Education for the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers program (NC AHEC)  
Diana Urlaub, MPH, Program Manager, Peers for Progress Program Development Center.  
Readings:  

4/21 | Retrospect and Student Presentations  
**Class Presentations, 4/21:** Students will circulate ahead of time* and bring 8 copies of their product for all class members to class on April 21. There will be 5 products. We will take 15-20 min for each which will include the student’s presentation of the product (about 5 min) and then the class’ general discussion of it.  
* Send current draft of product to edfisher@unc.edu and jlbr@email.unc.edu by end of day, Thursday, 4/17.  This of course does **not preclude** further work over the following several days. Bring 8 copies of revised version to class on 4/21.  
**Reading:**  