Shift Happens Here presents: Connect
How to Create Successful Online Peer Education Programs

Featuring: Dr. Otis McGresham @broncoaggie
Presented by: Kelly Addington @kelllyraddington & Becca Tieder @youbeccabelieve

In Brief:

Valuable peer education can happen online. By maximizing virtual engagement tools like social media platforms and being thoughtful about inclusivity, we have an opportunity to expand our audience and reach students who typically do not attend in-person peer education programs. In order to build trust and deepen connections in a virtual format, it is important that we carefully manage the space in a way that allows people to feel respected, safe and valued.

Points of Note:

- Because we can't see body language, it's important to check in to see how people are receiving the information.
- Create engagement opportunities every 15 minutes-- interact through chat, ask questions (can be rhetorical), etc.
- Don't create a space that you can't manage - if it's too big and you can't respond it can spiral.
- Share resources multiple times – introduce at the beginning, mention in middle and remind in closing (drop info into chat, build into PPT, etc.)
- Connect with a question or activity (icebreaker) to help make people feel comfortable.
- Create casual hang space that welcomes people to continue conversation or talk about something else is a great opportunity to do a mental health check.
- Provide engagement opportunities that we sometimes get in-person by encouraging people to turn on their camera and use smaller breakout rooms for discussion.
- Offer open group participation as well as anonymity if possible.
- Virtual fatigue is real. Consider micro programs on that are 1 to 3 minutes and focus on 1 specific thing --small section of the standard 60 minute in-person session. Make sure this information is able to stand alone.

Reflection and Questions to Consider:

- Remember to be kind to your whole self -- define your peace and protect it.
- How can you refer people to the resources that they need on campus and in the community?
- Getting past the virtual window -- How can we engage people beyond the facade that shows they're holding things together?
- What are some ways to check-in with peers—a sort of mental health check in our largely virtual world?
- How do we reach the people that need us most? Consider that despite our best effort to target groups, sometimes the people we want to reach most don't attend. The only way we can reach them is through intentional bystander behavior and relying on their peers to lead by example. Let those who do participate to know that we need them to be the ambassadors and bridge to show people that we can be better.

shiftcultures.org shifting culture one conversation at a time #shifthappenshere (tag us to ask? or share your thoughts) and to keep conversations going