



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

BUFFALO STATE • The State University of New York

# Buffalo State Alumni Mentor Orientation

2024

# Orientation Objectives

- Learn about history and purpose of the Buffalo Alumni Mentorship Program
- Learn about services offered through Buffalo State and Compeer
- Gather basic information about mental health with Compeer
- Discuss relationship building with Compeer in the Buffalo State program
- Understand the expectations of a Buffalo State Alumni Mentor



# Who We Are: Buffalo State

## The Office of Alumni Engagement: Supporting Alumni Mentors

The Buffalo State Alumni Association strives to foster an engaged and passionate community of Buffalo State alumni in support of the institution and each other. Our goal is to be a vital partner in the success of Buffalo State through the significant engagement of alumni.

## Roar 2 Success: Supporting Student Mentees

ROAR stands for Recognizing Opportunities Achieving Results. The program is focused on providing advocacy and customized support to first-year students. We work to build skills, connect students with resources, and provide advocacy.

## Core Values

Student  
Centered

Community  
Engagement

Social  
Responsibility

Respect for  
diversity

## Purpose Statement

- Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive university committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Our mission is to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning.

## Who We Are: Compeer

Since 1985, Compeer Buffalo has been providing social support in the form of friendships, to individuals (ages 6 and up) who are striving for mental wellbeing. We know that friendship decreases loneliness and isolation, therefore we offer one-to-one community-based mentoring, school-based mentoring, social activities, mental health education, peer support program, and a higher education program



## Core Values

Mental Well-Being

Inclusion

Trust & Transparency

Integrity

Curiosity

## Purpose Statement

Champion Mental Wellbeing. Connect People. Building Relationships... One friend at a time

# How Our Friends Find Us

- Buffalo State identifies students who could benefit from improved mental well-being and mentorship
- Any Buffalo State student in the Roar 2 Success Program

What makes someone eligible for the Buffalo State Alumni Mentor Program?

What are they eligible for?

- Mentorship and friendship with their Buffalo State Alumni Mentor
- Compeer Social Activities
- Support from both Compeer and Buffalo State

- Increased social support
- Decreased loneliness and isolation
- Self-identified improved mental health

What is the goal of the program?



# Mental Well-Being

# Mental Health Education

## Mental Health First Aid

- International program
- Teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders
- More than **2.5 million people** across the United States have been trained in Mental Health First Aid
- Certification valid for 3 years
- **FREE** of cost to all Compeer Volunteers

## Workplace Mental Wellness

- 90 minute session with actionable take aways
- Organization leader
- Adding intentional efforts to the workplace



**Mental Health**  
**FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
MENTAL WELLBEING

# Mental Health: Myth or Fact?

1. Myth/Fact: 1 in 5 people live with a mental health condition in the US.
2. Myth/Fact: Less than 50% seek professional assistance.
3. Myth/Fact: People with mental health challenges have a low quality of life.
4. Myth/Fact: Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide.
5. Myth/Fact: Anxiety is rare and untreatable.



Source: NAMI, Mental Health America (MHA), CDC, Mind.org

# Loneliness & Isolation

- ✓ The effects of loneliness are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day
- ✓ Loneliness can cause cognitive and physical decline
- ✓ Having strong social relationships is a protective factor against mental illness
- ✓ Loneliness was associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety and suicide
- ✓ Human connection is a major source of happiness & health

**My mental health  
has made me lonely**

**Feeling lonely has  
damaged my  
mental health**

Source: Lifespan Research Foundation, Harvard University

# Where We've Come From and Where We're Going: Understanding Trauma and Healing

## Impact of ACE's

“

The results concluded that 1 in every 6 people have at least 4 or more ACEs and that 6 in every 10 people have at least 1 ACE.

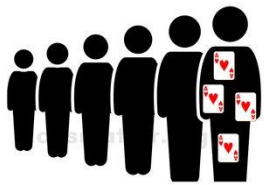


photo credit: @chocoreaper

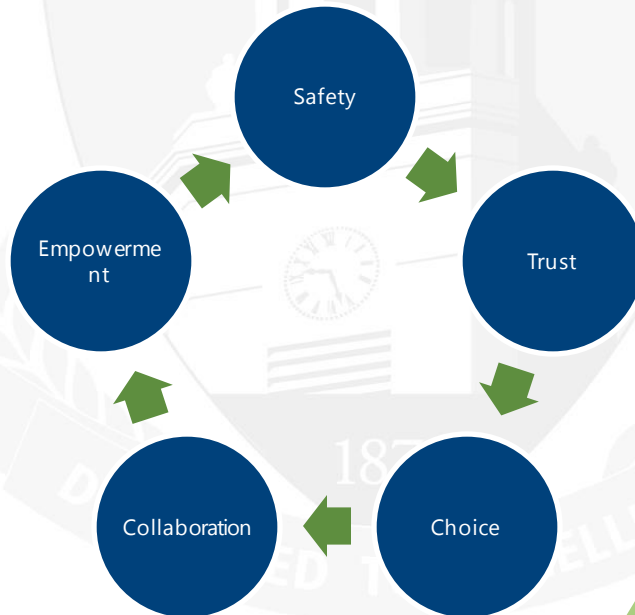
our childhood trauma causes us to bleed on people who didn't hurt us



acesmatter.org



## Trauma Informed Approach



## Healing-centered approach





# Let's Talk Stigma

Join the Conversation

Avoid  
stigmatizing  
words

Speak out

Share stories

Continue  
Learning



# Friends & Mentors



## Selecting a Match

- Compeer to oversee the mentee intake with Buffalo State staff and send intake documents to mentees
- Compeer will discuss the strengths, needs, interests, etc. of the mentors and mentees in partnership with Buffalo State to determine who may be good fits to be matched together.
- Buffalo State holding informal mixer with both alumni and mentees shortly after the mentor orientation. Allow for an opportunity for everyone to meet and see if any relationships naturally form.





## The First Interaction

- Compeer staff will reach out to schedule a time to meet on Buffalo State campus with the mentor and mentee
- Compeer staff will be present to introduce you to each other for the first time
- We help you break the ice
- Learn about each other's interests
- Exchange contact information
- Set up your next meeting/visit



Do You Have Ideas for Things to Do?

# Things You Can do With Your Friend

- Out to eat
- Bowling
- Video games
- Parks
- Board games
- Walks
- Playground
- Buffalo State Library
- Basketball
- Mall
- Ride bikes
- Kayaking
- Teach an instrument
- Walk dog(s)
- Buffalo State campus events
- Buffalo State sporting events
- Movies
- Bowling
- Coffee
- Canalside



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

BUFFALO STATE • The State University of New York



The Office of Alumni Engagement will be sending you monthly emails with campus events and planned activities

# Reporting Your Hours

# How to Report Hours

## Mentor Portal

- Personalized for your match(es)
- Contact information for your friend
- Track monthly hours & activities
- History of your involvement

## Call/Email

- If unable to access portal
- More detailed notes/updates
- Want to send photos



Report Monthly Hours By 5<sup>th</sup> of each month



# Building the Relationship



# Support Through Challenges



Listen



Actively involve your friend in decision making



Connect your friend with an appropriate professional support



Contact Buffalo State or Compeer



Sign Up for Mental Health First Aid Training

# Routine & Consistency



★ Friendship is a 2-way street

★ Establishing a routine leads to feelings of security and comfort

★ Consistency builds trust

★ Be patient with the timeline!





# Boundaries



- Boundaries create a healthy relationship and establish clear expectations
- Boundaries don't always match, talk through challenges
- Propose compromise
- Activity limitations, refer to handbook
- Guardian/Caregiver Relationship

## Boundary Scenarios

### Things to think about:

1. How would you respond to your friend?
2. Does anyone else need to be made aware of the situation?
3. Are any boundaries being crossed?

## SCENARIO

You have planned an activity with your Buffalo State friend who you have been matched with for 4 months. When you stop by to pick up your friend, they ask if they can bring their roommate. Your friend explains their roommate really wants to come. This is the third time your friend has made this request.

## SCENARIO

You have been matched with your Buffalo State friend for 3 months and have kept in regular contact. Recently you have not been able to get in touch with them via text or by leaving voice messages. How do you respond?

## SCENARIO

**Part A:** You have been matched with your Buffalo State friend for about 5 months and their birthday is coming up. You'd like to do something special, like go out to eat and give a gift. What do you need to keep in mind for this special occasion?

**Part B:** When planning visits with your Buffalo State friend after the birthday outing, your friend asks for you to do some activities that cost money and wants you to pay. How do you navigate this?

## SCENARIO

You are matched with your Buffalo State friend for about one month when your friend requests to connect with you on social media.  
How do you reply?

## Takeaways

- Contact your Buffalo State or Compeer staff point person to discuss behavior changes or challenges
- Set clear expectations from the start
- Discuss alternatives with your friend
- Healthy relationships adhere to boundaries, it is OK to say no

# Confidentiality



Record Keeping



Talking About Your  
Friend With Others



Social Media



Safety Of Friend



## Milestones & Wrapping Up

- Celebrate your milestones!
- Be honest with your friend if you are ending the match
- Always keep your Compeer and Buffalo State point of contact informed regarding any changes



# Staying Connected

## Navigating Your Role

### Commitments:

- Monthly updates by 5<sup>th</sup> of month
- Update documents as they expire
- Sign up for a free Mental Health First Aid training
- Read the monthly Volunteer News to Know for events, announcements, and opportunities



## Stay Connected With Us

@compeerbuffalo  
(All Platforms)

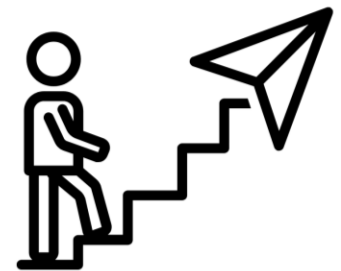
@buffalostatealumni  
(Instagram & Facebook)  
@buffalo state alumni  
association  
(LinkedIn)



Share your experience with us by sending us photos,  
we'd love to feature you on our social media!

## Next Steps

1. Electronically sign Expectations & Agreement form
2. Review the Volunteer Handbook
3. Complete any outstanding paperwork
4. Look out for an email update from Compeer & Buffalo State



Thank You!