

**New England MIRECC Peer Education Center**  
**Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital**  
**200 Springs Road, Bedford, MA 01730**

**Confidentiality & Peer Support Services in VHA**

**Vignettes for Group Discussion**

**Vignette #1:**

Dwayne, a VHA peer specialist, has been meeting with Richard for the past two months. Richard is seeking support as he takes care of his elderly mother who suffers from dementia. Last week, Richard talked about something new—his girlfriend, Cindy, and his frustration with Cindy’s 7-year old son, Steven. Richard complained that Steven “gets on my last nerve with his whining.” Richard stated that he has tried to talk with Steven and use time outs to address Steven’s misbehavior, but Steven does not listen to him. Richard said he became so frustrated with Steven last week that he shoved Steven who accidentally fell down a set of stairs and broke his arm. Richard expressed remorse for the incident.

**Questions for Vignette #1:**

1. Is there a confidentiality issue here?
2. If you were Dwayne, what would you do in this situation?

**Vignette #2:**

Stephanie, a VHA peer specialist, meets with six Veterans for individual mentoring on a weekly basis. Stephanie has a regularly scheduled meeting with her supervisor to talk about her work, but she also interacts with her supervisor in other places throughout the week. One week, Stephanie and her supervisor participate in an outreach event with several Veterans. During the outreach event set-up, Stephanie tells her supervisor that “John Doe has gotten back on the wagon and is taking his meds again” in the presence of some of the Veterans.

**Questions for Vignette #2:**

1. Is there a confidentiality issue here? If so, what should Stephanie’s supervisor do?

2. If you believe that there is a confidentiality issue, what do you think that Stephanie should do differently in the future?

**Vignette #3:**

Jake, a VHA peer specialist, facilitates a recovery group that focuses on recreation and physical activity as part of wellness. Jake took the group members on a fly fishing excursion. Everyone had fun while fishing, and Jake took photos of the group which he posted to his Facebook account later that day.

**Questions for Vignette #3:**

1. Is there a confidentiality issue here?
2. If you witnessed this scenario and believe that there is a confidentiality issue, what would you do?
3. If you believe there is a confidentiality issue, what do you think that Jake should do differently in the future?

**Vignette #4:**

Joanne is a peer specialist who works at the local VHA facility's substance abuse treatment aftercare program. For the past month, Joanne has been co-facilitating a peer support recovery group for Veterans participating in the aftercare program. Since beginning her facilitation of the peer support group, Joanne has heard and seen some interesting things. For example, during a recent group meeting, one of the Veterans talked at length about his previous history with drugs and involvement with a prostitution ring. The Veteran's story was very interesting and humorous at times. Later that evening, Joanne's good friend, Vicky, asked her how her day went. Hoping to share a laugh with her friend, Joanne told Vicky the interesting story shared in her peer support group, but she was careful not to mention any information that could identify the Veteran participants.

**Questions for Vignette #4:**

1. Is there a confidentiality issue here?
2. If you were in this situation, would you do anything differently than Joanne? If so, what would you do differently?

**Vignette #5:**

Carlton, a VHA peer specialist, co-facilitates a recovery-based peer support group for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. After one of the group meetings, Matt, one of the group participants, approaches Carlton to talk with him about Matt's intention to leave his wife for another woman. Matt reports that he met a woman online and she lives in New Mexico. Carlton learns that Matt has purchased an airline ticket and plans to fly to New Mexico tomorrow to stay with this woman without telling Matt's wife or the rest of his family. Matt thanks Carlton for all of his help in the peer support group and tells Carlton not to tell anyone else that Matt is flying to New Mexico to meet the woman of his dreams.

**Questions for Vignette #5:**

1. Is there a confidentiality issue here?
2. If you were Carlton, what would you do in this situation?