

**Peer Pen Pals:** CPS-led activity where INDs read positive and motivational pen pal letters from fellow HRH MHPSPs. INDs read about other peer members hobbies, interests, and aspirations. INDs were encouraged to discuss what they had in common with other peer members. INDs wrote several letters in response to the letters received and also wrote additional letters to another MHPSP to build new social connections. INDs were encouraged to write about their own recovery, strengths, hobbies, interests, etc. INDs were able to identify their own positive qualities and how far they have come in their recovery.

**Thinkblot Game:** INDs participated in an interactive game of "Inkblot." The game is a spin on the classic Rorschach test. The Rorschach test is a psychological test in which subjects' perceptions of inkblots are recorded and then analyzed using psychological interpretation, complex algorithms, or both. INDs divided into two teams. INDs were shown a card with an inkblot on it and had to come up with as many ideas as possible for what the inkblot looked like. MHPSP staff encouraged and challenged INDs to use creativity skills and team building skills to brainstorm ideas within their teams. INDs were encouraged to support one another, encourage creative idea sharing, and share positive feedback about team responses. INDs were encouraged to think about games they can play at home with others to continue building social skills.

**Peer Superlatives:** MHPSP staff read off "Who is most likely to..." cards which encouraged INDs to think about funny, interesting, and unique characteristics about themselves and other peer members. Examples include "Who is most likely to get pulled over for driving too slow?" and "Who is most likely to want to go home?" INDs were able to identify positive qualities and characteristics about themselves and challenges themselves to think about how well they know each other. INDs were challenged to think about the people they have in their social networks outside of the MHPSP and how they could ask questions to get to know them better.

**Text Twist:** INDs participated in an interactive game that challenged creative thinking and team building skills. The peer leader chose a recovery-oriented word and scrambled the letters to let the teams choose from. INDs divided into two teams while one peer member wrote the scrambled letters on the board. Teams took turns coming up with as many words as they could from the listed letters. Team members assisted each other in creating words and were able to build off previous guessing to earn points for their team. INDs were able to interact with one another and provide each other with positive feedback for identifying new words.

**Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills:** INDs read about assertive communication styles and how to speak with others appropriately so one can get his/her needs met. INDs read about "interpersonal effectiveness" which is a communication style practiced in Dialectal Behavioral Therapy (DBT). INDs read about the acronym "DEARMAN" which reminds one how to communicate effectively (Describe, Express, Assert, Reinforce, Mindful, Appear, and negotiate.) INDs were able to discuss how they communicate and how they could change their communication following "DEARMAN" to improve their communication styles. INDs also read about "GIVE" which helps foster positive relationships with others. "GIVE" stands for Gentle, Interested, Validate, and Easy. INDs were able to discuss how non-verbal language such as eye contact and body language help create positive relationships.

**Self-Directed Activities:** INDs participated in a variety of interactive board games and card games to practice team-building, communication, and socialization skills. INDs were able to choose the board game that they wished to play. MHPSP staff challenged INDs to choose the activity they wanted to try and INDs were able to provide encouragement to each other and teach new players how to play the games.

## MHPSP Interventions – Socialization

MHPSP challenged INDs to think about ways they can implement these activities into their recovery and when they return home (inviting friends over to play games at home, etc).

**Loneliness:** INDs are provided the definition of loneliness which is defined as "affected with, characterized by, or causing a depressing feeling of being alone; lonesome." INDs read an article about the "The Epidemic of Loneliness" featured in Psychology Today. The article discusses how connectedness is an essential human need and although many people can be around others throughout the day, they can still feel lonely. The article discusses that loneliness can be a risk factor for many medical conditions including heart disease, insomnia, and depression. MHPSP staff encourage INDs to share if they are experiencing increasing loneliness as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. INDs are challenged to think about how they cope with loneliness in a healthy way and are challenged to share what they can do to reach out to others during this time to support friends/family/peers if they are expressing feelings of loneliness.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/loneliness>