

Natural Helpers® Leaders



What do the Natural Helpers leaders do?

The Natural Helpers® program is designed to be supervised by at least two adult leaders. They need to be selected early in the planning process and should be active members of the Advisory committee. The leaders share three roles:

- Coordinate and conduct the Initial Training. (If leaders do not conduct the Initial Training then they locate trainers to do so.)
- Teach the Ongoing Training.
- Coordinate the overall program.

These roles may be divided up between the leaders as they see fit.

The leaders oversee the entire program from the survey process and selection of participants to the Initial and Ongoing Training. It is essential that at least one of the leaders work at the school, in order to be immediately accessible to individual Natural Helpers and to the people Natural Helpers are assisting.

Many successful Natural Helpers teams have consisted of a teacher and a person from the school's support staff. Other examples include MSU Extension staff members and school counselors, school staff members and community agency staff members.

What are the characteristics of successful Natural Helpers leaders?

Successful Natural Helpers leaders have:

- A desire for the job.
- An ability to relate well to students and adults in the school or community.
- Enthusiasm about the Natural Helpers® program.
- Helping skills and familiarity with school and community resources.
- Organizational skills.
- Knowledge in at least some of the major areas of concern listed on the survey and a willingness to learn more.
- The ability to work extra hours to conduct training sessions and special projects.
- Availability during the school's day to assist Natural Helpers, if needed.

Natural Helpers leaders must take care of themselves. Just as student Natural Helpers have their own stresses and the added stress of helping others, Natural Helpers leaders have their own stresses as well as the stress of helping others. In addition, they have the third stress of coordinating the other Natural Helpers. Successful leaders recognize their limits, express those limits to others, and realize that they must help themselves before they can be effective in helping others.