



Setting up peer support



Improving mental health through peer support



What is Peer Support?

The principles and benefits of peer support

“Peer support means receiving support and understanding from someone who's equal, had similar (not necessarily the same) experiences and insight”

(Peer2Peer Steering Group)

Principles of peer support

Mutuality - Coming together sharing a common ground where you both give and receive support.

Equality - Being viewed and treated equally, knowing that your story is important as anyone else's.

Trust & Respect – Having a trusting relationship where others respect and accept you for who you are. A relationship where you are not judged or undermined.

Hope/Recovery - Inspiring hope and a belief of a positive future by focusing on the positives, your achievements and for what you have or will overcome.

Shared Experience & Knowledge - Sharing your journey, experiences and your knowledge to help others.

Empathy - Being among others who can put themselves in your shoes, someone you can relate to who really does understand.



Peer Support can help you if you are being affected by

- Stress & Anxiety
- Anger
- Depression
- Addiction
- Physical Health Conditions
- Loneliness & Social Isolation
- Stigma

Or if you simply need someone to talk to



Different models of peer support

Peer Support is not a 1 size fits all system, therefore peer support comes in many different forms.

Self help groups

A self-help group means coming together with others so you can support each other by sharing experiences, knowledge, practical help and have people to talk to who can give you emotional support

Peer Education

This will be someone who has their own experience of mental health using their knowledge and training to educate others.

Online support groups

An online support group can be anything from a group/forum on Facebook to a moderated online community such as Elefriends or Friends In Need. If you find meeting others in person overwhelming, have difficulty in social situations or meeting new people, this offers you an opportunity to still benefit from the support of others

Structured Courses/programmes

Structured courses bring together a group of people with a common difficulty and a common goal. A structured course will be facilitated, which could be a professional, who will educate the group on a specific topic whilst providing useful practical tips and exercises.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring means being supported one to one by someone who can use and share their own experiences, knowledge, difficulties and successes to help you.

Peer Support means walking the same road together, helping each other out along the way.

(‘Peer Support Charter’ Together UK)





Steps to establishing and developing your own peer support

Step 1 - Getting started (Who, What, When & Where)

Identify the model & identity of your peer support. Consider why you are starting the group and who you wish to help. Think ahead to what the outcome will be for your group and whether it will be short or long term. You may already have expertise that you can utilise or you may need to seek training or involvement from a professional with lived experience of mental health.

Setting

A suitable environment is important to a successful group. You will need to locate your group somewhere that is quiet, confidential and large enough to comfortably accommodate a group of people. If you are supporting someone 1to1 consider where you will meet.

Frequency & Duration

Identify how often you would like to meet and for how long (this may be influenced by your venue).

Step 2 - Establishing your peer support

Roles & Responsibilities

Depending on the model of your peer support group, identify responsibilities and responsible persons. Consider your role, do you want to be responsible for continually arranging and facilitating the group? Would you like the group to be self led? Do you wish to appoint a different group leader? Do you intend on recruiting a professional person to lead the group or run a structured course?

Costs

Consider costs of the group which may include the hire of a venue, advertisement and refreshments. Firstly look to reduce costs wherever possible; you can approach venues for free space or host your group in the community. Those who attend may be happy to contribute a small amount to cover any overheads however be sure to consider other options.

It is important to always be transparent when dealing with money. Be vigilant, keep accurate records and be open to scrutiny.



Steps to establishing and developing your own peer support

Step 2 - Establishing your peer support (Cont.)

Advertising

How are you going to tell people about your peer support? Cost effective advertisement is important and may not be as hard as you think.

- Word of mouth is a great way of letting people know about your peer support network so be sure to talk about it. You can also approach local support providers, social services and community groups to spread the word.
- You may want to consider creating a simple flyer or leaflet. Think of high footfall areas where you can place your leaflet for free such as the library, citizens advice bureau, supermarket community boards or local newspapers.
- Social networking is an easy way to communicate with people. Any person can set up their own page on various sites for free.

Step 3 - Running & Developing your peer support

Boundaries & Code of Conduct

Problems such as a person disrupting the group, talking too much or becoming overly familiar can happen. Consider outlining basic rules & boundaries. You can involve everyone who is a part of your peer support group in this process to ensure you include what is important to everyone. You may wish to put this in writing, or cite this at the beginning of each group to set the tone.

Training

Consider whether additional training would benefit your peer support network. This may mean accessing a course yourself or exploring options for a professional to become involved in your group. You can also look to utilise various free programmes, guides, booklets etc.

Additional Funding

In order to further develop your support network you may wish to explore additional funding. Consider approaching local supermarkets/business who often have different charitable aims. Approach your council for information about community-based funding and grants. Contact larger organisations such as National Lottery Good Causes, The Co-operative or Big Lottery Fund.

What is Side by Side?

Side by Side - Improving mental health through peer support
Mind In Northamptonshire is part of Side by Side, a programme that aims to improve the lives of people with mental health problems by increasing access to peer support. Mind, Bipolar UK, Depression Alliance and grant-funded projects are working together, with support from the Big Lottery Fund, to increase access to peer support and research its benefits. In particular, we're working to ensure that people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and people living in rural areas have access to peer support.

Where can I get more information?

As part of the Side by Side campaign, we aim to support local groups, individuals and organisations with peer support. If you would like more information or if you would like some support get in touch with your local Mind.



Kettering

(01535) 523216

Northampton & District

(01604) 534310

Corby

(01535) 267280

Oundle Rural

(01832) 275020

Rushden

(01933) 312800

Wellingborough

(01933) 223591