



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous

Leveraging Lived Experience with a Peer Support Program

Presented by :

Lucette Wesley, CMHA

Lyne Wilson, NAV CANADA

Julie Johannesson, Correctional Services Canada

Christy Richards, Correctional Services Canada

Our goal:

- To empower you to return to your organization to PITCH and start to BUILD a sustainable peer support program

Today's Outline:

- Making the case for peer support program
- The elements of a peer support program:
 - Policy development
 - Peer selection
 - Training
- Promotion and Evaluation
- Table questions

About Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL



HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal fluctuations in mood • Normal sleep patterns • Physically well, full of energy • Consistent performance • Socially active 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervousness, irritability, sadness • Trouble sleeping • Tired/low energy, muscle tension, headaches • Procrastination • Decreased social activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness • Restless or disturbed sleep • Fatigue, aches and pains • Decreased performance, presenteeism • Social avoidance or withdrawal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed mood • Unable to fall or stay asleep • Exhaustion, physical illness • Unable to perform duties, absenteeism • Isolation, avoiding social events

Actions to Take at Each Phase of the Continuum

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on task at hand • Break problems into manageable chunks • Identify and nurture support systems • Maintain healthy lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize limits • Get adequate rest, food, and exercise • Engage in healthy coping strategies • Identify and minimize stressors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and understand own signs of distress • Talk with someone • Seek help • Seek social support instead of withdrawing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek consultation as needed • Follow health care provider recommendations • Regain physical and mental health
--	---	---	---

Mental Health 101: Protective Factors

- Social support (relationships)
- Sense of belonging (community or cultural connection)
- Environmental factors (workplace, community, home)
- Personal resilience (physical, emotional wellbeing, personal coping skills, optimism)

About Peer Support

What is Peer Support ?

Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful.

Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another's situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain.

Peer Support is different from EFAP

Peer Support

- Peers have a similar lived experience
- Informal conversations, as needed
- No predetermined number of interactions
- Is therapeutic but not therapy
- Based on hope with recovery as goal

EFAP

- Psychologist provides professional support
- Clinical setting, once a week
- Determined number of sessions
- Is professional therapy
- One aspect of the recovery process

Why Peer Support?

Peer support is rooted in the knowledge that “hope is the starting point from which a journey of recovery must begin.” Peer support workers can inspire hope and demonstrate the possibility of recovery. They are valued for their authenticity because they can relate to the challenge and have found their way to recovery.

MHCC, Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Peer Support can be a valuable component on the path of recovery for people with a mental health challenge

Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada

Making the case “The Pitch”

Making the Business Case

There is widespread acknowledgement that today's bio-medically dominated, deficits based mental health services are at best only part of the solution, and at worst may be damaging to recovery. We now know what helps people to recover. While many acknowledge there is a role for mainstream services and medical treatments, people are virtually unanimous about the paramount importance of **personal resourcefulness, personal support and self-belief in their recovery.** Peer support initiatives are probably the best evidence based approach to foster these.

Mental Health Peer Support Project Committee

report to MHCC Making the Case for Peer Support Sept. 2010

Elements of the Pitch

- Identify trends
- Determine benchmarks and goals
- Capitalize on existing policies, strategies, processes
- Include soft goals (engagement surveys)

Who do staff want to talk to? Are there gaps in your existing systems?

- What happens when staff are reluctant to use (or suspicious of) the employee assistance program?
- What happens when they exhaust their psychological benefit services?
- Who follows up after a critical incident (personal or professional)?

Objectives

- Increased EAP usage
- Changes to benefits usage
- Increased productivity
- Improvement in psychological health and safety measures, including engagement

And could lead to:

- Decreased sick leave, STD, LTD costs (frequency, duration or overall costs) and more sustainable return to work experiences

National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety

1. **Psychological Support**
2. Organizational Culture
3. Clear Leadership & Expectations
4. Civility & Respect
5. Psychological Competencies & Requirements
6. Growth & Development
7. Recognition & Reward
8. Involvement and Influence
9. Workload Management
10. Engagement
11. Balance
12. Psychological Protection
13. Protection of Physical Safety

Why is Psychological Support important?

*The more employees feel they have psychological support, the greater their **job attachment, job commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, work mood positivity, desire to remain with the organization, organizational citizenship behaviours** (discretionary behaviours that are beneficial to the organization and are a matter of personal choice), and **job performance**.*

*When adequate psychological support is present, employees experiencing psychological distress in the workplace will be...better equipped to **stay safe and productive at work** while they recover, and, if work absence is required, will be more likely to have a **quicker and more sustainable work return**.*

What happens when employees lack psychological support?

Employee perceptions of a lack of psychological support from their organization can lead to:

- ***increases in absenteeism***
- ***withdrawal behaviours***
- ***strain***
- ***conflict***
- ***turnover***

*Strain can then lead to greater issues such as **fatigue, headaches, burnout and anxiety.***

*Lack of psychological support can also result in **loss of productivity, increased costs and greater risk of accidents, incidents and injuries.***

Guarding Minds at Work Activity:
Measuring your psych health and
safety

Nav Canada

Light the Way is NAV CANADA's mental health peer support program.

- Those who look to *Light the Way* for help are tapping into the support and understanding of people who have experienced a similar mental health challenge – either personally or through a loved one.
- These Peer Supporters are now in a positive state of recovery or readiness and have volunteered to share their experience in order to help others facing a similar challenge. This “lived experience” provides common ground for a dialogue, as does being employees of NAV CANADA.

Sample Objective - NAV Canada

Objectives of our Mental Health Peer Support Program

- **Support employees** coping with mental health issues, either personally or through a loved one, **to find their own path to recovery;**
- Reinforce **organizational** core values and build a supportive community at work; and
- Recognize and value the potential for **broader societal change** by championing mental health peer support in our workplace

Activity: Articulate your best pitch for a peer support program

“The Build”

1. Policy Development

Peer Support Program – the basics

What it is

- Voluntary
- Informal or formal program
- Confidential
- Person-centred
- Iterative (as many interactions as needed)
- Therapeutic
- Recovery-focused

What it is not

- Mandatory
- Documented
- Organization-driven
- Restricted to a certain number of interactions
- Therapy

Step by Step

1. Articulate the objectives and how you will measure success
2. Defining the roles, responsibilities, and expectations
3. Develop process for risk of harm to self or others, and how to maintain wellness for all peers and their supporters
4. Determine intersection with disability/accommodation process and other policies
5. Identify time commitments and how to track time

Step by Step

6. Define recruitment and selection criteria
7. Determine training plan and ongoing support (regular check ins, annual group meeting etc)
8. Develop communication plan
9. Develop reporting mechanism (respecting confidentiality)

Workplace Readiness

- Refer to your handout
 - Do you have senior leadership buy in and appropriate authority to implement?
 - Is the organisation committed to getting internal buy in at all levels?
 - Do you have collaborative relationships with your stakeholders (Union, Association, EAP, Insurance provider etc)?
 - What is the primary motivation for launching such a program?
 - Are there enough resources available to manage and sustain a Peer Support Program?
 - Has your organization provided mental health awareness training?
 - Are there any other mental health initiatives in place or is this an isolated program?
 - Do you have a policy on improving psychological health and safety?
 - Does your organization have policies in place to prevent and address bullying and harassment?
 - Do you provide benefits (drug and disability) to promote health?
 - Can you commit to creating a healthy and safe environment for your peers to maintain their health? (Their involvement may require flexibility with their supervisors/managers/leaders)
 - What is the level of commitment to confidentiality in your organization?
 - Does your organization have robust communication channels with employees?
 - Will your culture support it?
 - Is there still stigma in your workplace?

What policies need to be in place?

- Health and Safety (Psychological component)
- Harassment and Bullying (WorkSafeBC)
- Anti-discrimination
- Respect in the Workplace
- Confidentiality
- Conflict or Dispute resolution
- Accommodation
- Stand-alone Policy on Peer Support

Lunch Break

WHO/WHAT/WHERE/WHEN/HOW/WHY

“The Build”

2. Peer Selection

Peer Supporter Criteria

Worker with Lived Experience and Recovery who has demonstrated skills and abilities in:

- Interpersonal Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Ethics and Reliability

And Values:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| • Dignity, Respect and Social Inclusion | Hope & Recovery |
| • Integrity, Authenticity and Trust | Self Determination |
| • Empathetic and equal relationships | Health and Wellness |
| • Lifelong learning and personal growth | |

MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support

Recruitment & Selection process

- Develop clear role definition and expectations
- Determine pre-requisites
- Plan recruitment (call for expression of interest)
- Screen for basic criteria
- Interview
- Reference checks

Sample Interview Questions

- Use Behavioral Interview Skills
- Questions:
 - Why they expressed interest
 - Personal recovery path
 - How they handle triggers
 - Why they feel they can be successful
 - Past situations where retained confidentiality
 - Their approach to case study situations
 - How will they take care of own health

Peer Support Expectations –Sample

- Successfully complete peer support training as identified by the Peer Support Program
- Establish rapport with colleagues and build a relationship based on trust, respect, genuineness, confidentiality and empathy while **maintaining clear boundaries**
- Apply and respect the principles of self care to mitigate the impact of peer support work
- Support colleagues as they strive to make positive changes, identify their strengths and goals and explore with them how they might work towards those goals
- Explore with colleagues the availability of existing resources, empower and support colleagues in contacting and accessing appropriate existing services such as XXXX, community services (not strictly mental health), health care providers and others services to meet the various needs expressed, as required
- Respect and maintain confidentiality of personal information, in accordance with the guidelines of the Peer Support Policy
- Complete peer support reports, as required
- Agree and abide by the Code of Conduct and
- Support research and evaluation of the program by gathering of peer support outcome while respecting the limits of confidentiality of the program

Activity: Write your organization's peer
job description

“The Build”

3. Train your peers

Peer Support Training: Getting started

- What kind of training would they need? How does the training plan need to be customized to your workplace?
- Time Availability (short bursts or classroom training)
- Space and equipment (videos, lectures, case studies, role playing)
- Internal resources (Train the Trainer, or external trainers)

Peer Support Training

Potential Components

- Understanding mental health and mental illness
- Understanding psychological healthy and safety in the workplace
- Understanding the Peer Support program
- Outline the role and responsibilities of a peer supporter
- Emotional intelligence (Beliefs, Values and Biases)
- Communication skills (how to engage, respond, reflective and intentional listening, conflict resolution, motivational interviewing)
- Setting limits and boundaries

Peer Support Potential Training cont'd

- Understanding resources available (internal and external, networking , supports available)
- Crisis intervention and suicide prevention awareness
- Self care, resilience, emotional wellbeing (stress prevention,
- Ending a peer relationship

Promote

Embed and Promote

- Visible and easily accessible internally (develop internal communications plan, consider brochures, handouts or posters)
- Integrate into new staff orientations
- Promote annually during mental health events
- Include in strategic plans
- FAQ

Measure

Tracking Peer Program Usage

It is important to consider how to track usage. To ensure confidentiality, consider limiting your tracking to:

- Peer Supporter Name
- Hrs at work
- Hrs outside of work
- Types of services: Referral-internal resources; Referral-external resources; Peer to peer interaction

Measurement Criteria

- Peer Program Usage (respecting confidentiality)
- Engagement scores
 - Presenteeism, leadership support, unnecessary absenteeism
- Sick leave, STD, LTD costs, Return to work sustainability
- EAP usage
 - Can you identify mental health related ?
- Benefits usage
- Employee Feedback
- Productivity
- Return to work sustainability
- Grievances and/or complaints

Resources

Online Resources

- www.cmha.bc.ca
- www.cmha.ca
- www.bottomlineconference.ca
- www.heretohelp.bc.ca
- www.mentalhealthworks.ca
- www.guardingmindsatwork.ca
- www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com
- www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

BC Suicide Prevention Initiative

Training founded on breaking silence – asking/talking about suicide to raise awareness, support help-seeking, provide a compassionate, non-judgmental and informed response



- 2 day Suicide Intervention Training
- Developed in '83, over 1M people in 30+ countries trained
- Proven intervention model
- Experiential - skills practice and development



- Half day Suicide Alertness Training
- Developed in 2006, used in over 20 countries
- Brief training to identify and avert suicide risk
- Basics of recognizing/taking action to connect with resources



Contact Information

- Lucette Wesley, lucettehome@yahoo.com
- Lyne Wilson, lyne.wilson@navcanada.ca
- Julie Johannesson, julie.johannesson@csc-scc.gc.ca
- Christy Richards, christy.richards@csc-scc.gc.ca

Questions?

Thank You