SELF HELP
peer support • recovery

The Value of Peer Support

Peer supporters have actively encountered a mental health and/or addiction issue and intentionally share their lived experience and recovery journey as part of their role.

Through peer support, peer staff and volunteers provide a different type of support — providing connection and nurturing the necessary hope for recovery.

INDIVIDUALS BENEFIT FROM PEER SUPPORT AND PEER-PROVIDED SERVICES

Reduction in symptoms[3, 13]

Decreased substance use[12, 13, 14]

Increased self-efficacy[9, 10, 15, 16]

Development of coping and interpersonal skills[17]

Adoption of healthy behaviours[18]

Are more empowered and hopeful[10, 16, 19]

Improved daily functioinng[9] and quality of life[9, 15, 20]

Increased goal setting and recovery planning[19, 20]

Improved social functioning and expanded social networks[9, 10, 15, 20, 21]

Increased ability to reframe experience and re-construct identity[25]

Increased medication adherence[3, 22]

"The peer navigator shared her experiences in non-technical terms which made it easier to bridge the gap to hope and the potential for recovery[7]"

THE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SYSTEM BENEFITS FROM PEER STAFF ROLES

People who access peer support have fewer and shorter hospitalizations[1, 2] and a reduced need for intensive mental health services[3], saving the healthcare system money

Accessing peer support increases service-user satisfaction with treatment[4] and leads to better communication between service-users and care providers[1]

Peer supporters provide authentic empathy and validation not offered by other mental health providers[5, 6, 7]

Peer staff and volunteers are able to connect with difficult to engage individuals, leading to increased service utilization[8, 9]

Peer supporters model recovery, decreasing stigma and altering attitudes among mental health providers[7, 9, 10]

Services become more recovery-oriented and person-centered when they employ peer staff[7, 9, 11]

Involving peer staff in systems-level planning leads to more innovative policies and programs[26]

"The peer navigator brings an enlightened perspective... has changed how the team thinks about mental health[7]"

PEER STAFF BENEFIT FROM THEIR ROLES

Role provides meaning and purpose for their lived experience[23]

Improved ability to cope with distress[9, 10]

Increased hope and empowerment[23]

Skill development[9, 23]

Increased self-efficacy[24]

"Being a peer navigator has been surprisingly good for my mental health; facilitating groups, sharing my process and journey[7]"

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