CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT

Characteristics of Effective Supervisors

Support House

Centre for Innovation in Peer Support

How to Use This Resource

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Acknowledgements

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About the Centre

The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support provides both direct service and system focused supports across Ontario. The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support team has a robust expertise in the application of the *Guiding Standards of Peer Support.*

The Centre has been recognized as a "benchmark of excellence" in peer support, and meaningful co-design and engagement of people with lived/living experience and family & caregivers.

The Centre's Focus: Professional Peer Support

The Centre focuses on providing, and supporting the practice of *professional peer support*.

The practice of professional peer support is emotional, social and/or practical support delivered by mutual agreement by persons who self-identify as having lived/living with similar circumstances and/or challenges. Professional peer support workers have engaged in training and skill development to enhance their ability to support empowering and empathetic relationships with others in their pursuit of self-determined wellness and/or change (Hopkins & Gremmen, 2022).

Professional peer support is when those with personal lived/living experiences work or volunteer in designated roles in mainstream/traditional services while ensuring that the critical aspects of hopefulness, recovery-orientation, empowerment, non-judgmental acceptance, and trust are promoted within the peer support relationship. Professional peer support is an intentional service provided where there is an identifiable 'giver' and 'receiver' of care. Professional peer support workers uphold the fidelity of peer support*,* while also honouring the responsibilities of their workplace (Hopkins & Gremmen, 2022).

For more information on professional peer support, we invite you to read *Understanding Peer Support: A Proposed Core Service in Ontario* on our Resource Hub

Supporting Provincial Systems & Partners

The **Centre's Provincial, Systems & Partner** stream works within the mental health and substance use/addictions system to support peer staff, supervisors, and organizations from the approach of the *Guiding Standards of Peer Support* with a focus on professional peer support. The Centre also supports organisations to empower people with lived experience and/or family/caregiver experience through meaningful engagement and co-design.

Our full programing is offered through our **Virtual Learning Centre & Resource Hub** which supports the most current, best practices in Peer Support. Through our **Virtual Learning Centre**, we offer trainings, consultation, our peer professional development webinars, and provincial communities of practice. Our **Resource Hub** is home to our toolkits, models, and resources. All of these offerings support the implementation and practice of peer support within Ontario.

We continue to evolve, listening to input from our stakeholders across the province to identify gaps and needs within the system, and using quality improvement processes to pivot, pilot, evaluate and then scale and spread new innovations in peer support.

Supporting People Engaging in Services

The **Centre's Peer Programming** stream began as a consumer survivor initiative under the name TEACH (Teach, Empower, Advocate for Community Health) in 1999. TEACH later came to be housed at Support & Housing Halton (now Support House) and continued to evolve in order to meet the needs of our community, eventually amalgamating with Support House's peer support provincial systems & partner support program, the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support.

Today, the Centre's Peer Programming utilizes its expertise from having provided peer support services for over 23 years in the Halton-Mississauga region to offer quality programs that are designed, developed, implemented, and evaluated by people with lived experience. This stream is focused on peer-led psychosocial and rehabilitative programming. Together, we build community and connection through creating safe spaces to heal and grow for people navigating mental health and substance use/addiction challenges, as well as supporters/families.

Our History

In 2014, the Mississauga Halton LHIN Mental Health & Addictions Leadership Table began discussing future funding priorities. Peer support was identified as the main priority. After consultations and research, the Mississauga Halton LHIN created the Enhancing and Sustaining Peer Support Initiative in 2015. This initiative created peer support positions, supported service coordination, and supported the training and development of these positions across the region.

Support & Housing Halton (now Support House) became the lead agency that hired and housed the Peer Support Systems Lead and the Substance Use & Provincial Systems Lead in a program that would become the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (Centre). This team worked to sustain the new peer support positions that had been funded, build infrastructure, and bridge the many stakeholders impacted by this initiative.

In January of 2020, the Centre amalgamated with Support House's direct-service-facing peer support program, TEACH. The Centre now has a direct service stream of peer support programming as well as a system and partners stream, which has grown beyond the Mississauga/Halton area to include the entire province of Ontario.

About Support House:

Support House is directed by our core values. They guide our agency's decisions and actions, unite our staff, define our brand, and inspire our culture. We put people first – our supports are **person directed**. We **connect and engage** and start conversations to build and maintain relationships. We focus on **health and wellness** practices to inspire our culture. All employees are required to adhere to our values-based Oath of conduct.

The Role of a Supervisor

There are two primary facets of being a supervisor, leadership and management. **Leadership and Management are not the same thing**, many people may have one skill without the other.

"Management is control, in business, [this is often referred to as] the triple constraint of management" referring to the things within management control – scope, time and cost.[3] Other organizations and management models have expanded this a further and you can find up to six constraints of management, which add risk, quality, and resources.[7] "**Management is the control and interplay of these variables.**"[3]

Now there is a major aspect of work missing from management constraints… people! **People come under leadership; you can't control people like you control management variables**. "If you push people down deep inside you really do not know which way they will go or what they are really thinking."[3] **People need to be led, not pushed or controlled. Leadership is the development of a collection of skills and behaviours that support people to achieve desired outcomes.** Having a diverse set of skills and behaviours, will enhance your practice as a leader. Leadership is an art; flexibility in your approach and utilization of a variety of skills is needed to effectively support the needs of your team and organization. We have organized these key leadership skills and behaviours under six "leadership domains."

The role of a supervisor includes both, the management of those constraints, and the leading of those you supervise.

Management Constraints

Scope

The scope of a project refers to the expected deliverables and outcomes.[1,10,12] Sometimes there is flexibility, or range in scope and other times it is a concrete expectation.[1,10,12]

Cost

The cost of a project is the overall, all-encompassing cost of delivering on a project.[1,10,12]

"Items that may be a cost constraint include: project cost, team member salaries, cost of equipment, cost of facilities, repair costs, material costs."[12]

Time

Time refers to the amount of time it will take for a project to be completed, and produce the identified deliverables.[1,10,12]

Risk

Risk includes any threats, or opportunities for the project.[10] These should be anticipated and considered but are sometimes unexpected.[1,10,12] When embarking on a project, the amount of risk the team, funders, etc. are willing to tolerate (risk tolerance) must be considered.[1,10] An example of risk is a different political party being elected, resulting in a redistribution how ministry funds are spent.

Resources

Resources are factored into the cost constraint when considering effective resource allocation.[12] "Some resources to consider include: people, equipment or materials, facilities, and software."[12]

Quality

Quality is tied to scope as it refers to the "characteristics of a deliverable."[10] This includes how well the deliverables meets the expectations of the team, funders, and consumers.[12] Any of the previously mentioned constraints can impact the quality of deliverables.[1,10,12]

Leadership Domains

Communication

Transparency

- Honest and direct in communication with their team[5]
- Shares how and why decisions are made[11]
- Open communication about what is happening at the organization that impacts workers[6]

Shares Important Information/Provides Clear Direction

- Regular communication regarding direction about expectations, processes, goals, work delegation and any other important information so that team members can effectively do their jobs[4,5,8,9]
- Understands the best communication style/methods to use for each team member[11]
- Diligently communicates changes to team targets or procedures to keep everyone informed[8]
- Shares successes, progress, concerns, opportunities, future plans, and anything else that the team is likely to benefit from[5,6]

Approachability

- Maintains a positive attitude, prioritizes fairness and acts with careful consideration[8]
- Easily accessible and encourages their team to approach them with their needs concerns, or questions[4,5,8]
- Open to constructive feedback and input from their team as well as other supervisors, and when appropriate, incorporates it into their workplace[2,5]

Performance Oversight

Genuinely Listens

- Seeks updates on project progress, challenges or concerns[6]
- Seeks to understand situations so that they can address them in a way that is appropriate, supportive and respects their team[8]

Provides Feedback

- Provides positive and constructive feedback to their team[2,5]
- Supports team members with timely feedback and encourages open dialogue up front[5,6]

Supports Growth

- Coaches/Mentors their team members in their development, supporting their learning and encouraging them to contribute to projects that support their growth[4]
- Allows team members to explore and take risks with the understanding that mistakes are opportunities for learning[11]
- Objectively assesses team members' strengths and any needs for improvement; applying strengths creatively and discussing how growth can be supported[2,4,11]

Workload Oversight

Priority Management

- Understands the bigger picture and is familiar with organization goals in order to determine which projects need to be given priority[4]
- Explores how goals become actions, breaking down difficulties into series of steps that are feasible[11]

Workload Organization

- Plans and organizes the workflow purposefully and provides clear direction regarding any expectations as to how it should be carried out[4]
- Takes into account team members' workloads, strengths, needs, feedback and work-life balance when organizing the workload in order to be productive while balancing team wellness[2,4,5]

Delegates

- Delegates when it streamlines a project, increases efficiency and/or maximizes outcomes[6]
- Identifies the person on their team who is best-suited to take on a task while finding meaningful ways for the whole team to contribute to a project[2,5]
- Trusts team members to complete their assigned tasks at a high degree of quality, allowing them to learn and problem solve rather than micromanaging, while remaining approachable if guidance is needed[2,5]

Adaptability

Flexibility

- Understands that different circumstances require different approaches[6]
- Demonstrates flexibility and creativity, and is open to exploring new ideas[5]

Critical Thinking

- Thoroughly thinks through decisions and actions, considering a plethora of potential impacts (negative and positive) and chooses the direction most likely to be of support to the project, consumer, team and organization[4]

Problem Solving

- Assesses the situation, finds the root of the problem, and then develops an effective plan and structured process for addressing it using critical thinking and creativity[2,4]
- Comes to solutions that are fair and in alignment with policy, procedure and legislation[2]

Conflict Resolution

- Understands different conflict styles, trends of conflict in their team and objectively supports the team in addressing, resolving and negotiating conflict[2,4]
- Listens and mediates conflict between team members and with other programs/departments when necessary[2,4,5]

Relationship Building

Trust

- Engages and connects with team members[8,9]
- Respects their team and the value everyone brings[9]
- Shows confidence in themselves and their team[5]
- Encourages the organization to continue supporting diversity and inclusion[4]

Empathy & Compassion

- Acknowledges that team members are human beings first, and employees second[2,9]
- Approaches team members and their challenges with empathy and compassion[2,9]
- Makes an effort to be understanding and accommodating when the team needs support while facing professional or personal challenges[5,6]

Teamwork

- Recognizes the value of working together as a team, including team members in decision-making and strategizing processes[4,5]
- Values team members' perspectives as equal to their own when collaborating[5]

Encouragement & Recognition

- Provides support, motivation, encouragement and accountability to their team[2,4]
- Recognizes and celebrates reaching team goals and milestones[5,6]
- Acknowledges the individual strengths and skills team members bring to the team and how they play a vital role in the work they contribute to

Leading by Example

Passion

- Shares what they enjoy about their work and encourages team members to get excited about their contributions[6]
- Shows genuine enthusiasm, motivation and passion for organization objectives and inspires their team members to share that excitement[5,9]

Self-Awareness

- Possesses emotional intelligence, being aware of their emotions and those of others[5]
- Self-identifies areas to continue their learning and growth regarding self-reflection, the subject of their work and supervision practices[4,5]

Role Modelling

- Takes initiative and models practices expected of their team[2,11]
- Shares in the responsibility of completing mundane or unappealing tasks[2,9]
- Approaches their work with positivity and optimism[5,6]

Humility

- Shares what the new things that they learn with their team[5]
- When a project does not meet expectations due to a choice they made, they accept responsibility and seek to learn from the mistake[5,6]

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's

Provincial Systems Virtual Learning Centre & Resource Hub
for Peer Supporters & Organizations

Support House's Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's full programming is offered through our Virtual Learning Centre & Resource Hub which supports the most current, best practices in Peer Support.

Through our Virtual Learning Centre, we offer trainings, consultation, our Peer Professional Development Webinar Series, and provincial communities of practice. Our Resource Hub is home to our educational toolkits, documents and videos. These offerings support the practice and implementation of Peer Support within Ontario.

Products on our Resource Hub:

- *Leadership Styles*

CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR VIRTUAL LEARNING CENTRE & RESOURCE HUB

CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

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