

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT

Peer Staff Job Description

Version 2

**Support
House**



Centre for
Innovation in
Peer Support

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Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (Centre) is embedded in Support House. The Centre promotes & facilitates the meaningful engagement, empowerment and enhanced capacities of people with lived experience and families, as well as effective peer support services regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally. Copyright 2022© by Support House and Centre for Innovation in Peer Support. All rights reserved worldwide. This resource may be freely reproduced and distributed. Citation of the source is required under copyright law.

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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 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 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.

Job Description Template

Nature of the Work

The Peer Support Worker is someone who has a similar life experience to/of [INSERT CONTEXT]. They have engaged in special training and skill development to use their experience and other skillsets to enhance their ability to support others. This is a non-clinical role.

Essential Duties

Supporting People Engaging with Services:

- Establish and maintain supportive relationships with people engaging with our services
- Act in accordance with the Guiding Standards of Peer Support (comprised of Mental Health Commission of Canada's *Values of Peer Support*, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's *Peer Support Values in Action*, Peer Support Canada's *Code of Conduct, Principles of Practice & Core Competencies*)
- Support a person-directed care philosophy
- Share lived/living experiences with people engaged with our services when this is of service to them
- Encourage people engaging with our services and support them in their wellness goals
- Advocate with and, if necessary for, people engaging with our services
- Act as a role model in demonstrating the ways you support yourself
- Provide reassurance and support when there are experiences of crisis or distress
- Support the exploration of choices and options with people engaging with our services
- Support navigation of the health and social services systems, including making referrals to other supports when identified by the people engaging with our services
- Support inbound referrals and intake processes
- [ADD] Any other role specific requirements (Examples: facilitate groups, provide one-to-one support, support court appearances, etc)

Community Partnerships:

- Maintain knowledge on local community resources and learning opportunities
- Foster relationships with community partners
- Promote and facilitate education and awareness of our services

Working as Part of a Team:

- Work collaboratively with team members
- Participate in team meetings, agency events and committees
- Attend regular supervision
- Support program planning, evaluation and reporting

Other Duties

- Complete any administration and documentation tasks
- Abide by all legal requirements as well as agency policy, procedure and practices

Essential Knowledge, Experience & Training

Applicants should have completed a formal peer support training and possess experience related to the practice of peer support. Additional assets may include previous experience as a Peer Supporter in a staff, volunteer, or intern capacity.

Knowledge and Training on the *Guiding Standards of Peer Support*:

- Mental Health Commission of Canada's *Values of Peer Support*,
- Centre for Innovation in Peer Support's *Peer Support Values in Action*,
- Peer Support Canada's *Code of Conduct, Principles of Practice & Core Competencies*

Understanding of Recovery and Wellness

- Proficient knowledge of how to apply Person-Centred and/or Person-Directed Care approaches
- Knowledge and training on trauma-informed care practices
- Knowledge that recovery and wellness are unique and holistic in nature
- Awareness of how to support harm reduction

Self-Awareness

- Awareness and training of how to examine your biases and support in a way that is anti-oppressive and inclusive

Crisis

- Training in supporting people experiencing distress and crisis
- Training in assessing safety
- Knowledge of confidentiality, Duty to Protect and Duty to Report

Other Assets:

- Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Level 1 and 2)
- Brief Action Planning
- First Aid and CPR
- Group Facilitation training
- LivingWorks trainings: SafeTALK, ASIST, Suicide2Hope
- Mental Health First Aid

Essential Skills & Abilities

- Ability to assess how and when to skillfully use selective disclosure (sharing your story)
- Proficient in setting and maintaining boundaries
- Effective conflict resolution skills
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to effectively work as part of a team
- Ability to take initiative
- Ability to be flexible/adaptable
- Ability to engage in reflective practice and seek out ongoing learning
- Excellent problem-solving ability
- Effective time management and organization skills
- Proficient in the use of [INSERT APPLICABLE SOFTWARE]
- Proficient in the use of [INSERT APPLICABLE VIRTUAL PLATFORM(S)]

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:

- ***Guiding Standards of Peer Support*** (from Mental Health Commission of Canada, Peer Support Canada & Centre for Innovation in Peer Support)
- ***Understanding Peer Support: A Proposed Core Service in Ontario***
- ***Peer Support Implementation Toolkit***
- ***Peer Staff Hiring Guidelines*** (available to organisation leaders upon request)

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR VIRTUAL LEARNING CENTRE & RESOURCE HUB](#)

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)



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