

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT

**Peer Support
Examining Bias Toolkit**

Support/House



1-833-845-WELL (9355) Ext 390

supporthouse.ca

centreinfo@supporthouse.ca

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.

How to Use This Resource

To Cite this Document

You may with proper citing share resources within this document for your own purposes. Please use the following citation when referencing or using any materials from this document:

Gremmen, A. & Hopkins, E. (2021). Peer Support Examining Bias Toolkit. Support House: Centre for Innovation in Peer Support.

Legal

The views represented herein solely represent the views of the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support. Information in this document should not replace your own research and due diligence. The information used to create this resource draws on the experience of the Centre and public sources, referenced throughout. The materials in this resource are general guidelines only. This resource is not intended to provide legal advice. If there is a discrepancy between this document and any applicable legislation, the legislation will always prevail.

Acknowledgements

Authors
Ethan Hopkins , Peer Integration & Systems Support, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support Alyssa Gremmen , Peer Integration & Systems Lead, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
Content Advisor
Richard Adair , Manager, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
Content Reviewer
Betty-Lou Kristy , Director, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support
Branding Coordinator
Lisa McVey , Communications & Marketing Coordinator, Centre for Innovation in Peer Support

If you have questions about this resource, please contact
centreinfo@supporthouse.ca | www.supporthouse.ca

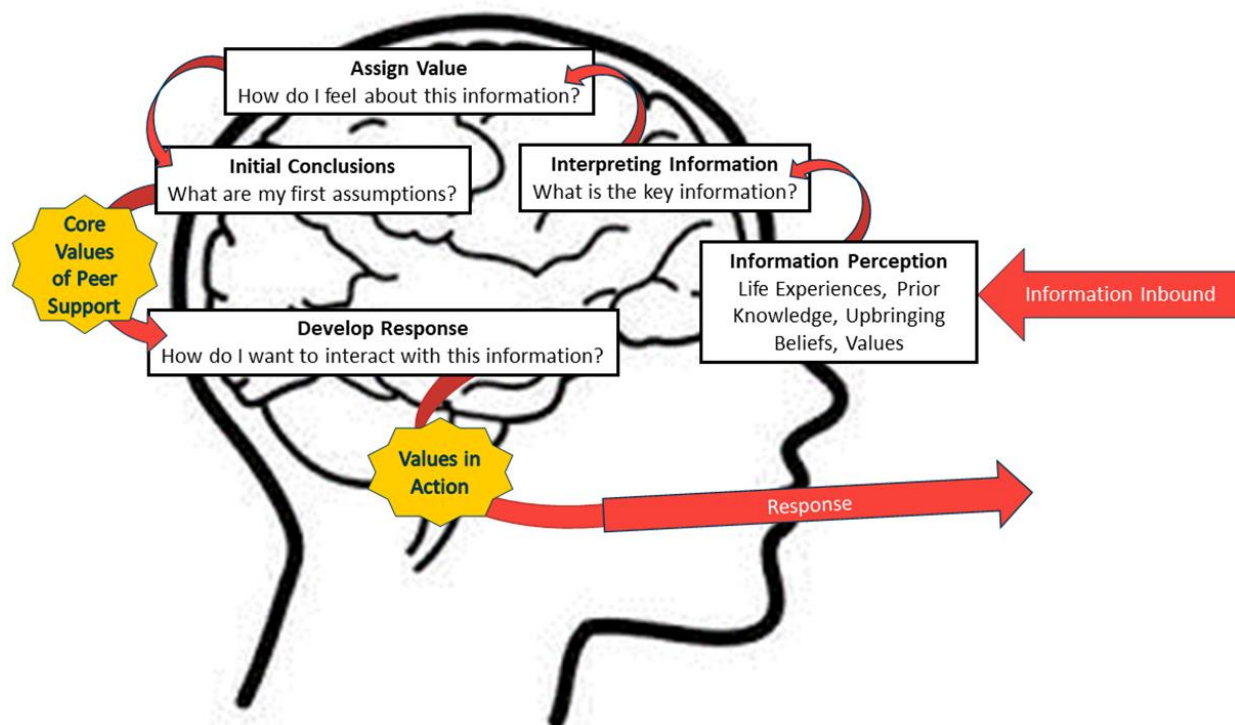


BIAS DEFINITION

“Bias is a natural inclination for or against an idea, object, group, or individual. It is often learned and is highly dependent on variables like a person’s socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, educational background, etc.” (Psychology Today).

Peer Support Examining Bias Model

The Peer Support Examining Bias Model was created by Ethan Hopkins at the Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (2021). It is adapted from: the ladder of inference, initially developed by Chris Argyris and published in Senge, P. M. (1990). The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization. Doubleday/Currency.



We naturally have biases and ways of understanding information. It is important to be aware of this, and to pause and consider how these biases could be altered to align with the Values of Peer Support before we respond to someone we are supporting (see Guiding Standards of Peer Support document).

EXAMPLE: Someone tells us “I had a really rough day, my dad was rude, I got 60% on a test, I was late for the bus and I lost my pen.”	
Stage	Example
Information Perception: Often unconsciously, when we receive information, we filter it through our perceptions (life experiences, prior knowledge, upbringing, beliefs and personal values).	Our parents raised us with high academic expectations and punctuality is something we consider to be a core value of ours.
Interpreting Information: We then interpret this information in accordance with our perceptions, retaining certain elements and disregarding others.	We pick out the 60% on a test and being late for the bus as the “important” parts of the story.
Assign Value: From the elements we have retained we assign a value regarding how we feel about the information.	We feel that a 60% is a low grade and that punctuality is important.
Initial Conclusions: These perceptions, interpretations and values make up our initial conclusions and first assumptions.	This individual needs to focus more on learning and must prioritize being on time.
Once we acknowledge our initial conclusions, we can consciously challenge our assumptions.	
Core Values of Peer Support & Developing a Response: At this point we can ground ourselves in the values of peer support and use them to help guide us in developing a response.	Reflecting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I honouring what this person is determining is important right now? • Am I respecting them as a person with integrity? • Am I being empathetic or judgemental?
Values in Action & Conveying our Response: When deciding how to convey our response we can then use the values in action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The peer support worker genuinely listens to me • The peer support worker gives me encouragement • The peer support worker does not express disapproval of me or the choices I make • The peer support worker tells me my feelings and opinions are worthwhile

Working Through our Perceptions

Step One – Observe your underlying, default responses

Record your authentic first thought and first feeling in regard to supporting the following experiences, identities and attitudes of others. These are for your personal reflection only.

Experience, Identity or Attitude	Thought	Feeling
Substance Use (cannabis, opioids, crack, cocaine, crystal meth etc.)		
Addiction (any substance or activity)		
Psychosis (e.g., hallucinations, delusions)		
Suicidality		
Self-harm		
Grief		
Homelessness		
HIV		
Hoarding		
Criminal activity		
Trauma		
Personality disorders		
Mood disorders		
Anxiety disorders		
Drug use and mental illness occurring together		
Engagement in sex work		
All gender identities		
All sexual orientations		
Living with mice, ticks, fleas, bed bugs		
Religious/spiritual beliefs and practices that are different from yours		
Someone of a race that is different than yours		
Someone with skin colour that is different than yours		
Contraception use		
Racist beliefs		
Transphobic/homophobic beliefs		
Xenophobic beliefs (Prejudice against people from other countries)		
Someone involved with the criminal justice system		
Someone with a history of violence		

Step Two – Contemplating and challenging our perceptions

Choose three of the items you would like to challenge from above.

Why do you think/feel this? (Life experiences, prior knowledge, upbringing, beliefs, values)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What assumptions have you made?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Using the Values of Peer Support, how can you interact with your assumptions?
(See Guiding Standards of Peer Support document)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What Values in Action can we use to support this individual?
(See Guiding Standards of Peer Support document)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We encourage you to continue to reflect on how bias appears in your life and work and revisit this model as it serves you.

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)
- ***Examining Bias Toolkit***

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

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



1-833-845-WELL (9355) Ext 390

supporthouse.ca

centreinfo@supporthouse.ca

References

Psychology Today. Bias. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/basics/bias>.

Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday/Currency.