



CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT

Preparing for Employment & Peer Support Certification:

A Reflective Practice & Readiness Toolkit

How to Use This Resource

This self-reflection tool was created by Support House Centre for Innovation in Peer Support and has been informed by *Peer Support Canada's National Peer Support Certification Handbook*. The intention of this tool is to support individuals who are considering participation in the national certification process.

This resource is not developed, reviewed, or endorsed by Peer Support Canada. It is designed as a reflective guide to help you build your understanding of the competency standards and consider your readiness for peer support certification.

This tool is meant to:

- Support self-reflective practice prior to engaging in the certification process
- Help you become familiar with the standards that guide certification
- Encourage you to think about how your skills, knowledge, and lived experience align with the competencies

It is **not a substitute** for connecting directly with Peer Support Canada regarding certification requirements, application processes, fees, or timelines.

For official information and updates, please visit:

- [Peer Support Canada FAQ](#)
- [National Peer Support Certification Handbook](#)

To Cite this Document

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Support House: Centre for Innovation in Peer Support (2026). *Preparing for Employment & Peer Support Certification: A Reflective Practice & Readiness Toolkit*

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Purpose:

This tool is designed to support your reflection on Peer Support Canada's National Certification Handbook and the Practice Standards. This worksheet invites you to explore how your lived or living experience, values, knowledge, skills, and practice align with the National Practice Standards and Peer Support Canada certification process and employment readiness. Use what feels meaningful—this is a personal reflection tool.

Reference: [Peer Support Canada \(2023\). National Peer Support Certification Handbook](#)

Peer Support Core Values in Practice

- **Core Values:** Reflect on how you demonstrate the Core Values of Peer Support in your relationships and practice

Reminder

The values of peer support guide all aspects of practice and are reflected across the National Practice Standards and certification process. Demonstrating alignment with these values is about how you show up in relationships, decisions, and reflection—not perfection.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. How do I demonstrate hope and a recovery-oriented approach in my work?

2. How do I support self-determination and choice?

3. How do I build empathetic, respectful, and equal relationships?

4. How do I act with integrity, maintain trust, and uphold confidentiality?

5. How do I support whole-person health and wellness?

6. How do I continue learning and growing in my practice?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Hope, Recovery & Self-Determination

Scenario:

A peer you support tells you they want to stop attending treatment appointments because they feel they are not helping. Other members of their care team are concerned and ask you to encourage them to continue.

1. How would you honour the person's right to make their own decisions while also supporting them to fully explore the possible impacts of stopping treatment?

2. What peer support values and principles would guide your response when the person's wishes differ from the concerns of the care team?

3. How could you foster hope and support informed decision-making without directing, persuading, or taking responsibility for the choice the person makes?

Health, Wellness & Whole-Person Support

Scenario:

A peer shares that their mental health has improved significantly over the past few months, and they are feeling more hopeful about their recovery. However, they are currently experiencing housing instability, increasing social isolation, and concerns about their physical health. They tell you that while their mental health is better, these other challenges are making it difficult to move forward and focus on their goals.

1. What does this situation reveal about the connection between mental health, overall wellness, and a person's quality of life?

2. How might you help the peer identify strengths, resources, and past successes that could support their vision of recovery and wellness?

3. How can peer support promote hope, empowerment, and self-directed action without taking responsibility for solving the person's challenges?

Empathy, Equality & Respect

Scenario:

During a conversation, a peer shares beliefs, values, and life experiences that are very different from your own. Some of their comments make you uncomfortable and challenge your personal assumptions. While the peer is not placing anyone at risk, you notice yourself having emotional reactions and finding it difficult to remain fully present in the conversation.

1. How would you ensure the peer feels respected, heard, and supported when their beliefs or values differ significantly from your own?

2. What personal biases, assumptions, or emotional reactions might affect your ability to remain non-judgmental, and how would you manage them?

3. How can cultural humility, respect, and mutuality strengthen peer support relationships when differences arise?

Integrity, Boundaries & Trust

Scenario:

Over the past several months, you have built a strong and trusting relationship with a peer. Recently, they have begun texting and calling you frequently outside of working hours when they are struggling. During one conversation, they tell you, "You're the only person I trust. I don't feel comfortable talking to anyone else about what I'm going through." While you appreciate the trust they have placed in you, you are becoming concerned about their reliance on a single source of support.

1. How would you balance empathy and connection with the need to maintain sustainable and ethical boundaries in this situation?

2. Why are healthy boundaries important for both the peer and the peer support worker, and how do they contribute to a sustainable support relationship?

3. How can peer support promote empowerment, interdependence, and community connection without fostering dependency?

Growth, Learning & Demonstrating Alignment

Scenario:

During a supervision discussion, a supervisor shares feedback that, while your lived experience is a valuable part of your peer support practice, there have been times when your personal stories have become longer than intended and shifted the focus away from the peer's needs and experiences. As you reflect on this feedback, you recognize that your desire to build connection and offer hope may sometimes be influencing how and when you share.

1. What considerations help determine when, how, and how much lived experience to share in a peer support relationship?

2. How would you apply this feedback to strengthen your use of purposeful self-disclosure and maintain a peer-centered approach?

3. In what ways does responding constructively to feedback demonstrate self-awareness, professional growth, and a commitment to continuous learning in peer support practice?

Principles of Practice in Action

- **Principles of Practice:** Reflect on how you apply peer support principles in everyday interactions.

Reminder:

The Principles of Practice describe how peer support is carried out in relationships and day-to-day work. Certification requires demonstrating how you apply these principles through your actions, decisions, and examples.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. How do I support each person's unique recovery journey?

2. How do I build collaborative, trusting relationships with peers?

3. How do I use my lived experience in a way that supports the other person?

4. How do I maintain clear boundaries and role clarity?

5. How do I support connection to resources and community?

6. How do I practice self-awareness and self-care in my role?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Individual Recovery & Self-Determination

Scenario:

A peer's recovery goals focus on improving relationships with family, while service providers are primarily focused on reducing symptoms and increasing treatment adherence.

1. How would you support the peer in identifying, communicating, and pursuing their self-defined recovery goals when they differ from the priorities identified of the care team?

2. What role does self-determination play when a person's vision of recovery does not fully align with the goals emphasized by service providers?

3. How could you help amplify the peer's voice and support them in communicating their priorities within a collaborative care planning process with the care team?

Relationships, Equity & Lived Experience

Scenario:

A peer tells you they feel stuck and asks what helped you through a similar experience. They then say, "You understand what it's like—just tell me what I should do."

1. How would you use your lived experience in a way that offers hope and connection while avoiding advice-giving or directing the peer's decisions?

2. What peer support values and principles would guide your response when a peer looks to you as an expert rather than as an equal?

3. After sharing your experience, how would you bring the focus back to the peer's own strengths, preferences, and self-defined path forward?

Respect, Differences & Boundaries

Scenario:

Over time, you have developed a strong and trusting relationship with a peer. They invite you to attend a family celebration outside of your professional role and say, "You're not just my peer support worker—you're my friend. It wouldn't feel right if you weren't there."

1. How would you navigate the tension between authentic connection and professional boundaries in this situation?

2. What factors would you consider when deciding how to respond to the invitation, and why?

3. How could you maintain the peer's sense of belonging, connection, and trust if you decide not to attend the event?

Wellbeing, Support & Collaboration

Scenario:

A peer shares that they have been experiencing increasing stress, isolation, and emotional distress. While they acknowledge they are struggling, they repeatedly decline suggestions to connect with additional supports and say they would prefer to rely only on their conversations with you.

1. How would you respond when a peer's choices differ from what you believe might be helpful for them?

2. What role does self-determination play when a person chooses not to engage with available supports?

3. How can peer support encourage connection, empowerment, and informed choice without taking responsibility for the person's decisions?

Lived/Living Experience & Readiness to Support

- **Lived/Living Experience:** Reflect on how you use your lived or living experience intentionally and ethically.

Reminder:

You are in control of your story. Sharing lived experience in peer support is about choice, intentionality, hope, and supporting others—not proving yourself.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. What does my lived/living experience mean to me?

2. How does my experience shape how I support others?

3. How do I know I am ready to support others?

4. How do I share my story in a hopeful and intentional way?

5. How do I define what recovery means to me?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Understanding Lived/Living Experience

Scenario:

During a peer support group, a participant asks why lived experience is considered valuable expertise. They say, "I understand why professional training is important, but why is someone's personal experience considered expertise?" Several other participants express curiosity and look to you for a response.

1. What makes lived experience a valuable source of knowledge in peer support practice?

2. How do lived experience and professional expertise complement one another in supporting recovery and wellness?

3. How can sharing lived experience help foster connection, credibility, and hope without positioning one person's experience as the right path for others?

Readiness to Support Others

Scenario:

A peer shares a situation that closely mirrors a challenge you are currently navigating in your own life. As they describe their experience, you notice strong emotional reactions and recognize that some of the same questions and uncertainties are present in your own recovery journey. You want to support the peer effectively while remaining aware of your own needs and boundaries.

1. How would you balance authenticity and self-awareness when supporting a peer whose situation closely resembles your own?

2. Why is it important to recognize the difference between your recovery journey and the peer's unique experience?

3. How can reflective practice, supervision, or self-care support ethical and effective peer support in situations like this?

Sharing Lived Experience Intentionally

Scenario:

A peer shares that they are feeling discouraged and hopeless after experiencing a recent setback in their recovery. As they talk, you recognize similarities to a challenge you faced in your own journey and recall how difficult it was to maintain hope during that time. You believe your experience may be relevant, but you want to ensure that any sharing supports the peer's needs rather than shifting the focus to yourself.

1. What considerations help determine when and how to share lived experience with a peer who is feeling hopeless?

2. How can peer support offer hope while honouring the peer's current experiences and emotional responses?

3. What peer support values and principles would guide your response in this situation?

Code of Conduct & Ethical Practice

- **Code of Conduct:** Reflect on how your practice aligns with ethical and professional expectations.

Reminder

The Code of Conduct is rooted in the core values of peer support and reflects a commitment to ethical, respectful, and safe practice. Demonstrating alignment is about reflection, accountability, and a commitment to act in accordance with these expectations in all peer support work.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. How do I demonstrate ethical practice and integrity?

2. How do I respect diversity, rights, and personal values?

3. How do I maintain boundaries and confidentiality?

4. How do I respond to situations involving risk or harm?

5. How do I ensure my actions do not cause harm or take advantage of relationships?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Code of Conduct & Ethical Practice

Scenario:

While reviewing information sent to your team, you realize that you have received confidential information about a peer that was not intended for you to access. The information includes personal details that the peer has not shared with you directly. You are aware of the information but want to ensure that your actions remain consistent with peer support values, confidentiality expectations, and the trust at the centre of the relationship.

1. How would you navigate the tension between knowing information about a peer and recognizing that they did not choose to share it with you?

2. What role does trust play in situations involving confidentiality and privacy within peer support relationships?

3. How can peer support workers demonstrate integrity and accountability when confidentiality concerns arise?

Boundaries, Privacy & Safety

Scenario:

During a conversation, a peer tells you they have been having thoughts of harming themselves. They share that they have not told anyone else and ask you to keep the information confidential. They express concern that others may overreact or take away their choices if they disclose how they are feeling. You want to maintain trust and connection while responding in a way that supports the person's safety and well-being.

1. How would you respond when a peer asks you to keep information confidential that raises concerns about their safety?

2. What role does transparency and informed consent play when discussing the limits of confidentiality in peer support relationships?

3. How can peer support promote safety, choice, and self-determination during difficult conversations about self-harm or suicide risk?

Knowledge Standard in Peer Support

- **Knowledge Standards:** Reflect on how your understanding of peer support concepts informs your work.

Reminder

The Knowledge Standard reflects both learning and experience. Demonstrating this standard is about showing how you understand peer support concepts and how you apply them in practice in ways that support recovery, respect, and self-determination.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. How do I understand recovery/wellness and apply it in practice?

2. How do I understand and apply self-determination and trauma-informed principles?

3. How do I build effective peer relationships using communication and support skills?

4. How do I respond to complex situations or crisis appropriately?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Understanding Core Knowledge

Scenario:

A new team member joins the organization and is curious about the role of peer support. During a conversation, they ask, "How is peer support different from clinical support? Aren't both trying to help people recover?" They are genuinely interested in understanding how lived experience, mutuality, and recovery-oriented practice shape the peer support role.

1. What core values and principles make peer support different from clinical support?

2. How does mutuality and the purposeful use of lived experience influence the peer support relationship?

3. Why is it important for peer support to maintain its unique identity while working collaboratively with clinical services?

Understanding Context

Scenario:

A peer shares that they have felt excluded, judged, and treated differently because of their experiences with mental health and substance use challenges. They describe feeling unwelcome in some community spaces and unsupported in situations where they hoped to find understanding and connection. They are beginning to question whether they truly belong or will be accepted by others.

1. How might experiences of stigma and exclusion affect a person's sense of identity, connection, and recovery?

2. Why is it important for peer support workers to consider the impact of oppression, racism, and other forms of discrimination when supporting peers?

3. How can peer support promote belonging, empowerment, and social inclusion while recognizing the diverse experiences and identities of the people we support?

Harm Reduction, Recovery & Self-Determination

Scenario:

A peer shares that they continue to use substances and do not currently have a goal of stopping. They explain that substance use helps them cope with stress and difficult emotions, but they have also experienced some negative consequences. The peer has had previous experiences with services where they felt judged, pressured to stop using, or excluded because of their substance use. They tell you they are unsure whether they can trust support services and are worried that people will only focus on their substance use rather than their overall wellbeing.

1. How do harm reduction, self-determination, and recovery-oriented practice relate to one another when supporting someone who uses substances?

2. What impact might stigma and past experiences with services have on a person's willingness to seek support or build trusting relationships?

3. How can peer support promote hope, safety, and empowerment without directing a person's choices about substance use?

Competency & Practice Skills

- **Competencies:** Reflect on how you demonstrate peer support skills and competencies in practice.

Reminder

The Competency Standard is demonstrated through how you show up in relationships, situations, and reflection. It is not about perfection—it is about applying peer support values, skills, and self-awareness in real situations and showing readiness to continue learning and growing in your role.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. How do I build safe, respectful relationships?

2. How do I communicate with empathy and adapt to others?

3. How do I use critical thinking and flexibility in my role?

4. How do I demonstrate teamwork, reliability, and initiative?

5. How do I reflect on my practice and continue improving?

Acquired Experience & Applying Peer Support in Practice

- **Acquired Experience:** Reflect on how your experiences have prepared you for certification.

Reminder

Acquired experience is demonstrated through how you apply peer support values, knowledge, lived or living experience, and skills in real-world situations. As you complete this reflection, focus on specific examples of supporting peers, maintaining boundaries, navigating challenges, and applying recovery-oriented practice. Certification is not only about the hours you have completed—it is also about your ability to reflect on those experiences and demonstrate your readiness to provide effective peer support.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Describe your formal peer support roles?
2. How have you intentionally used lived experience to support others?
3. What training, supervision, or preparation supported your practice?
4. What examples demonstrate your use of peer support values in real situations?
5. How have you adapted your approach to meet different needs of those you have supported?
6. How many hours of formal peer support experience do you estimate you have completed?
7. Describe a peer support situation that best demonstrates your readiness for certification. What happened, what peer support values guided your actions, and what did you learn?

Peer Support Practice Applied Skills Worksheet

Building Effective Relationships

Scenario:

A peer attends meetings consistently but tends to provide very brief responses and rarely initiates conversation. When asked questions, they often answer with only a few words before becoming quiet again. You notice that building rapport has been slower than expected and are unsure whether the peer feels comfortable, engaged, or fully heard in the relationship.

1. How would you balance encouraging engagement with respecting a peer's readiness, communication style, and choice about what they wish to share?

2. Why is it important to avoid interpreting silence, hesitation, or limited participation as a lack of interest or motivation?

3. How can peer support create opportunities for connection and trust while honouring each person's unique experiences, identities, and comfort level?

Supporting Safety & Wellbeing

Scenario:

During a conversation, a peer becomes increasingly distressed and overwhelmed. They tell you they do not think they can cope with what is happening and are struggling to identify any next steps. You can see that the situation is becoming more urgent, and you want to respond in a way that is supportive, safe, and consistent with your role as a peer support worker.

1. How would you balance being present and supportive with recognizing when additional supports or interventions may be needed?

2. What role does trust, transparency, and collaboration play when responding to a peer in crisis?

3. How can peer support remain recovery-oriented and person-centered during situations that feel urgent or emotionally intense?

Substance Use, Harm Reduction & Peer Support Practice

Scenario:

A peer tells you they recently experienced an overdose and are feeling uncertain about what comes next. They share mixed feelings about their substance use. Part of them would like things to be different, while another part is not ready to make significant changes. They express fear of being judged and say that previous conversations with service providers have left them feeling ashamed rather than supported. They are looking for someone who will listen and respect their choices while helping them consider options for their wellbeing.

1. How would you balance empathy, hope, and respect for self-determination when supporting a peer who is uncertain about making changes to their substance use?

2. What peer support values and principles would guide your response in a conversation about overdose, harm reduction, and personal choice?

3. How could you support the peer in identifying strengths, resources, and safety strategies while remaining within the peer support role?

Interpersonal & Relational Practice

Scenario:

A peer shares that they often feel uncomfortable speaking up during meetings with service providers. They worry that their concerns, preferences, or goals will not be taken seriously and sometimes leave appointments feeling unheard. As a result, they have become increasingly reluctant to participate in discussions about their care and support.

1. How would you support a peer who feels their voice is not being heard within a care or service planning process?

2. What role do power dynamics, stigma, cultural identity, or past experiences play in a person's willingness to participate in decision-making?

3. How can peer support help create conditions where people feel empowered to share their perspectives, preferences, and goals?

Thinking, Flexibility & Boundaries

Scenario:

A peer approaches you with a concern that falls outside your role and expertise as a peer support worker. They explain that they trust you and would prefer to receive help from you rather than being referred to someone else. You want to be responsive and supportive while ensuring the peer receives appropriate support and that you remain within the boundaries of your role.

1. How would you recognize when a request falls outside the peer support role, and why is that distinction important?

2. What are the potential risks to both the peer and the peer support worker when role boundaries become unclear?

3. How can peer support remain collaborative and person-centered when connecting someone with additional supports or services?

Hope, Self-Management & Teamwork

Scenario:

During a team discussion, a colleague expresses frustration about a peer who has experienced several setbacks and has not made progress toward the goals identified by the team. The colleague comments, "Nothing is working." You recognize that the peer continues to face significant challenges, but you have also observed strengths, efforts, and small signs of growth that may not be visible to others.

1. How might systemic barriers, stigma, or differing definitions of success influence perceptions that "nothing is working"?

2. How would you contribute to a team discussion when you hear language that suggests a person is not making progress?

3. How can peer support help shift the focus from deficits and challenges to strengths, possibilities, and person-defined goals?

Self-Awareness, Initiative & Growth

Scenario:

After a conversation with a peer, you realize that aspects of their story closely connected to your own lived experiences. You notice that the interaction brought up strong emotions and thoughts that have stayed with you after the conversation ended. While you were able to remain present and supportive during the interaction, you recognize the importance of reflecting on the impact the conversation had on you and considering any support you may need.

1. What signs might indicate that your personal experiences are affecting your ability to remain grounded and peer-focused?

2. How would you respond if you recognized that a conversation had activated strong emotions or unresolved experiences for you?

3. Why is ongoing self-reflection essential to the purposeful and ethical use of lived experience in peer support?

4. What role do reflection, supervision, and self-care play in maintaining effective and ethical peer support practice?

Preparing for Certification

Purpose

This self-reflection tool is designed to support your understanding of Peer Support Canada's National Certification Standards and your readiness to begin the certification process. It invites you to reflect on your readiness to demonstrate your competencies through self-assessment, references, and the scenario-based panel interview. Focus on what feels meaningful—this is a personal reflection process, not a test.

Reminder

The Competency Standard is demonstrated through how you show up—in relationships, in real situations, and in your ability to reflect on your practice. Certification is not about being perfect. It is about:

- Applying peer support values and skills in real ways
- Demonstrating self-awareness and reflection
- Showing openness to feedback, learning, and growth

Readiness means being able to speak to your experiences honestly and thoughtfully, and to continue developing in your role as a peer supporter.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Why am I pursuing Peer Support Canada certification right now, and what motivates me?

2. How can I clearly demonstrate these standards in written responses?

3. What examples show my skills, knowledge, and experience as a peer supporter?

4. How can I communicate my readiness for the role?

5. How open am I to feedback, growth, and learning—especially if I encounter challenges or setbacks?

Personal Learning Plan

My Strengths	Which areas of peer support practice feel most natural to me?

Areas of Growth	Which standards do I want to strengthen?

Next Steps	
Additional Trainings	
Supervision Goals	
Peer mentorship	
Practice Opportunities	
Certification Timeline	

Target Date for Employment or Certification	
Am I ready?	
Am I preparing for next 6 months?	
Am I preparing for next year?	
What do I need to be successful?	

Who is in my network within the peer support community that I can access for support?			
Name		Phone Number/Email	
Name		Phone Number/Email	
Name		Phone Number/Email	