



CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PEER SUPPORT

Preparing for Employment & Peer Support Certification:

A Reflective Practice & Readiness Toolkit

**ACQUIRED EXPERIENCE & APPLYING PEER SUPPORT IN PRACTICE
WORKSHEET**

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](#)

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?

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?

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