

CREATING HOPE WITH PEER SUPPORT

Peer support has a vital role
to play in suicide prevention



What is peer support?

Peer support exists in many forms, from support groups to paid Peer Workers within mental health services. The core elements of peer support are:

Shared lived experience:

Building trust and empathy through personal connection

Mutual relationships of equals: Walking alongside, rather than ‘fixing’ – fostering partnerships of equals

Supportive relationships rooted in hope:

Peer Supporters not only embody the reality of recovery, but also hold space for others, offering hope even in their lowest moments

Intentional space for growth:

A collaborative environment where people explore, learn, and move towards mental health recovery together

Why is peer support so powerful?



Breaking isolation

Peer support helps ease the profound isolation felt by those affected by suicide, whether struggling, supporting, grieving, or surviving. It offers a non-judgmental space to share fears, thoughts, and emotions — with time, compassion, and connection — especially when people feel misunderstood or hesitant to burden loved ones.



Combating stigma and encouraging early help

By sharing lived experiences, peer support breaks the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide. It creates a safe space for open dialogue, allowing people to seek help early without fear of being labelled, which can prevent crises from escalating.



Accessible and immediate

In moments of crisis, the presence of an understanding Peer Supporter can be life changing. Offering compassionate listening rather than problem-solving, Peer Supporters provide a moment of pause, helping people reconsider their options and feel supported.



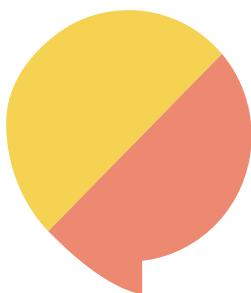
Flexible and culturally relevant

Peer support is especially impactful for diverse communities because it offers flexible, culturally relevant, and person-centred care. Unlike traditional services, peer support adapts to cultural values, language, and community-specific needs.



Empowering recovery through shared experience

Peer support is built on equality and shared power by emphasising the active role people with mental health challenges play in both their own and others' recovery. By walking alongside someone who “gets it,” Peer Supporters help others feel less alone and explore what will help them live the life they choose.



**“97% of the people..
don't need escalated to a
medical intervention.”**

Wendy Given, Chief Operating Officer, The Neuk

Myth busting

**Inferior to
clinical
approaches**

Peer support offers a different kind of value and support that complements, rather than competes with, traditional care. It addresses social and emotional needs in ways that clinical models often can't, especially for those who feel disconnected or misunderstood by formal systems. Peer support has the flexibility to work across sectors to provide early intervention and ongoing support for those in distress.

**Lack of
evidence
base**

There is a growing evidence base for peer support across the world (Scotland, Australia, Canada and Singapore to name a few) demonstrating peer support successfully improving people's hope, self-belief and mental health recovery.

**Peer
support
is risky**

Risk is inherent in all types of mental health treatment and support. There is risk when taking medication, sitting on waiting lists, and there is risk of misdiagnosis. Why is the risk associated with peer support treated differently? Peer support takes a peer relationship and formalises it with boundaries, values and a way of working that protects everyone involved.



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www.PeerRecoveryHub.Net