The Value of Peer Support

Peer supporters have actively encountered a mental health and/or addiction issue and intentionally share their lived experience and recovery journey as part of their role.

Through peer support, peer staff and volunteers provide a different type of support — providing connection and nurturing the necessary hope for recovery.

INDIVIDUALS BENEFIT FROM PEER SUPPORT AND PEER-PROVIDED SERVICES

- Reduction in symptoms
- Decreased substance use
- Increased self-efficacy
- Development of coping and interpersonal skills
- Adoption of healthy behaviours
- Are more empowered and hopeful
- Improved daily functioning and quality of life
- Increased goal setting and recovery planning
- Improved social functioning and expanded social networks
- Increased ability to reframe experience and re-construct identity
- Increased medication adherence

“Reducing symptoms, decreasing substance use, increasing self-efficacy and the adoption of healthy behaviours can improve daily functioning and quality of life, and increase the ability to reframe experience and re-construct identity. Increased medication adherence further supports recovery.”

PEOPLE WHO ACCESS PEER SUPPORT BENEFIT FROM PEER STAFF ROLES

- People who access peer support have fewer and shorter hospitalizations, and a reduced need for intensive mental health services, saving the healthcare system money.
- Accessing peer support increases service-user satisfaction with treatment and leads to better communication between service-users and care providers.
- Peer supporters provide authentic empathy and validation not offered by other mental health providers.
- Peer staff and volunteers are able to connect with difficult to engage individuals, leading to increased service utilization.
- Peer supporters model recovery, decreasing stigma and altering attitudes among mental health providers.
- Services become more recovery-oriented and person-centered when they employ peer staff.
- Involving peer staff in systems-level planning leads to more innovative policies and programs.

“The peer navigator brings an enlightened perspective... has changed how the team thinks about mental health.”

PEER STAFF BENEFIT FROM THEIR ROLES

- Role provides meaning and purpose for their lived experience.
- Improved ability to cope with distress.
- Increased hope and empowerment.
- Skill development.
- Increased self-efficacy.

“Being a peer navigator has been surprisingly good for my mental health; facilitating groups, sharing my process and journey.”

THE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SYSTEM BENEFITS FROM PEER STAFF ROLES

- “The peer navigator shared her experiences in non-technical terms which made it easier to bridge the gap to hope and the potential for recovery.”

“People who access peer support have fewer and shorter hospitalizations, and a reduced need for intensive mental health services, saving the healthcare system money. Accessing peer support increases service-user satisfaction with treatment and leads to better communication between service-users and care providers. Peer supporters provide authentic empathy and validation not offered by other mental health providers. Peer staff and volunteers are able to connect with difficult to engage individuals, leading to increased service utilization. Peer supporters model recovery, decreasing stigma and altering attitudes among mental health providers. Services become more recovery-oriented and person-centered when they employ peer staff. Involving peer staff in systems-level planning leads to more innovative policies and programs.”
Sources


