






The Value of Peer Support

What is Peer Support?

Peer support provides non-professional mental health support based on empathy and understanding from individuals who share similar life experiences or challenges. It fosters community and shared hope, complementing but not replacing traditional professional mental health care.

Core Principles of Peer Support

-  Mutual Respect
-  Shared Experience
-  Empathy
-  Active Listening
-  Empowerment

I didn't feel judged. I felt understood for the first time.

Effects of Peer Support

Studies have shown that peer support is effective in decreasing depression and anxiety. Studies have also shown that the effects of peer support in tandem with mental health care had the greatest outcome; however, peer support on its own is incredibly promising.

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health issue in any given year. 

Benefits of Peer Support

Peer support decreases the stigma around mental health and substance use by sharing mutual experiences. Sharing recovery journeys can incite hope and help people feel less alone in their journey. It can also bridge the gap of traditional mental health care. Wait times can be long, and professional help can be expensive - or it could be unavailable in the area, or maybe someone just isn't quite there yet. Peer support can bridge those gaps until those barriers are gone. Peer support empowers and helps build confidence while improving mental health outcomes.

Myth	Fact
Peer support is just venting.	Peer support is a structured approach based on the core principles.
You need to be a mental health professional to help.	Peer supporters are trained. Their value is in lived experience.
Peer support replaces medication or therapy.	Peer support complements formal care.

The Power of Peer Support

Engaging with a peer supporter is distinct from speaking with a counselor or doctor; it's about connecting with someone who has experienced similar challenges. With a peer supporter, you can bypass the formalities often associated with traditional healthcare professionals. Plus, there's no need for a doctor's referral to access peer support.

This type of support can significantly impact a person's recovery journey and greatly enhance their emotional well-being. A peer supporter does not seek to "fix" or "save" the individual; instead, they empower them to make their own decisions and drive their progress forward. It's akin to taking the wheel in one's own recovery journey.