

#PeerTalk

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Rosalind at the Talking Talkshops stall

fantastic insights into what it's like to be a peer worker, to make the transition from service user, and inspiring examples of how they use their lived experience in their roles.

Peer Support Fair

Wednesday 2nd March saw our second networking event ~ this time a Peer Support Fair.

Eight organisations held stalls with information about their peer support services, promotion packs and exciting things to sign up to.

"A good chance to celebrate and learn from one another"

Peer Support Fair feedback

The event opened with an overview of the national Side by Side programme and an update on our Peer Support Network, as part of our role in Side by Side.

We heard from two peer workers; Marianne Farmer from CNWL and Edgar Rogers from Wandsworth and Westminster Mind, who both gave



Duncan Marshall @Duncfish · Mar 2

Sam saying #peersupport values something so important - YOU!
#K&CPEERTALK #SIDEBYSIDE

Two examples of peer support which have been successfully implemented were showcased; Wandsworth and Westminster Mind's peer coaching by Sam Tallant, and Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust's extensive peer support throughout the organisation from hospital and community services to eating disorder and substance use services, by Karen Nelson.





It was great to hear their stories of progression and success and take away tips and inspiration.

The formal event closed with a Q&A panel formed of the key speakers from the day. This sparked off stimulating discussion which our attendees took into the designated networking period whilst enjoying their tea and cakes.

“It’s opening up a culture where it’s not shameful to have a mental health condition”

~ Karen Nelson at the Peer Support Fair

It was fantastic to meet so many people from different organisations and backgrounds, all passionate about taking peer support further ~ whether by becoming a peer worker, or by expanding existing services.

From the Peer Support Fair we also have 5 new sign-ups to the Peer Bank, bringing the total to 16 – if your organisation is looking for paid or volunteer peer workers, get in touch to check our expanding peer bank!

Thank you to all our speakers for

your inspiration, stall holders for providing information and networking with attendees, and to all who came along to make the event a success.

We have had some good feedback, with many people keen to attend our next event later in the year. One suggestion has been for us to host a follow up meeting, where organisations can continue to share good practice, network and link up with each other.

To this end, we will be holding a [Peer Support Network Meeting](#) on [Monday 25th April](#) at Second Cup from 10.30am to 12 noon. Hot drinks will be provided. This will be a time for organisations to network further, form partnerships, inspire and problem solve challenges with each other. Future meetings could be held in different areas of the K&C/QPP patch if that would help attendance.

New Peer Support Network Meetings being set up

Several attendees commented on the [Peer Support Directory](#) and how it would be useful to be able to access a ‘map’ of peer support in the area, so we will continue to develop this and will soon be in touch with organisations to find out more about their projects.

“It allowed people to have an opportunity to discuss key issues relating to specific settings and to identify issues that are relevant across different settings.”

Peer Support Fair feedback

Peer Worker Meetings

All peer workers (paid or voluntary) working in Kensington and Chelsea and/or Queen's Park and Paddington are welcome to join us at our Peer Worker Network Meetings.

Working in a new role or being the only one in an organisation in your role can be isolating. The purpose of these monthly sessions is for peer workers to get together, network, chat and share their experiences, achievements, challenges and to problem solve together over tea and cake.

Meetings will last an hour and a half and will be facilitated by Zoe Copeland (*K&C Mind*) and Karen Nelson (*CNWL*)

The next meeting will take place at Kensington & Chelsea Mind on **Tuesday 5th April** from 2 – 3.30pm email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk to register your place.

“The value of bringing all peer workers together for group supervision and mutual support cannot be over-estimated.”

ImROC ~ Peer Support Workers – a practical guide to implementation

Peer Support Training

Our second cohort of peer support trainees start their 4 week course on 7th April. We look forward to another set of interesting and thought provoking discussions.

Wanted: Peer Facilitators

Depression Alliance have been running their peer support meetups locally as part of Side by Side since September 2015.

Peer Facilitators are a valuable part of the network, and are needed to help the meetups to run. There is now a vacancy for more volunteer Peer Facilitators.

Depression Alliance are looking for people with personal experience of depression to meet and greet and welcome new people and be part of the group socially. This is in order to develop the network with the people with experience of depression at the forefront.

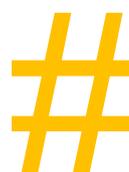
If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Peer Facilitator for Depression Alliance, contact Louise Jones, Side By Side Coordinator on 07954 401636 or

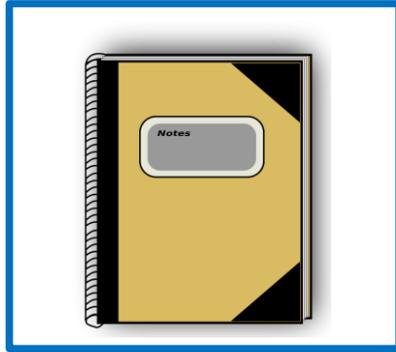
Louise@depressionalliance.org

You can find out more about Depression Alliance below.

Hash Up

It was brought to our attention during our Peer Support Fair that the ampersand (&) in our hashtag was cutting it short, so we have had to remove it. Our hashtag is now **#KCPeerTalk** ...join us on Twitter to raise the profile of peer support by using our hashtag, the **#SidebySide** hashtag and **#PeerSupport**. Follow us [@KandCMind](https://twitter.com/KandCMind)





Tell us your story...

As we saw at the Peer Support Fair, stories engage people. They have a narrative, and a character we can relate to. People often find it therapeutic to share their story.

Stories have a character we can relate to~ why not let that be you?

If you've found peer support useful, why not tell us your story? We are looking for peer support stories to help demonstrate the impact and benefits of peer support, both locally and nationally.

Help us demonstrate the impact and benefits of peer support...

You can see an example of Alice blogging about her experience of peer support [here](#).

Contact zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk for guidance through the process



A word from our partner

Depression Alliance ~ strategic partner

There are lots of different ways people can benefit from peer support and our approach is all about bringing people together in social situations to reduce the isolation and loneliness that can come with depression or indeed any other mental health condition.



"Coming for coffee on a Friday is my highlight of the week - its making me feel part of life again"

As a result of the Side by Side project we have set up some regular meetups: weekly coffee on a Friday morning at Whole Foods Café in High Street Kensington, a monthly evening pub meet up at the Metropolitan Bar by Baker Street tube station and also a lunch club at Smart in Gertrude Street.

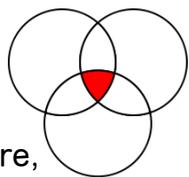
Our groups are social, as well as encouraging participation in the national research into the benefits of peer support.

If you, or anyone you know in the area who you feel would benefit from meeting others in a safe, social environment please get in touch.

Contact Louise Jones, Side By Side Coordinator on 07964 401636 or Louise@depressionalliance.org

Find out more about Depression Alliance's Side by Side project [here](#).

Intersectionality



You may have noticed the 'Spotlight on...' feature, focusing on peer support provision for the highlighted group.

The purpose of this is to support services to provide accessible peer support whilst valuing our diverse community, as well as to promote existing services and inspire new developments locally.

The difficulty in considering one specific group of people is intersectionality. Usually, it's not only one aspect of a person's situation that affects them, but several. For example a) having mental health difficulties as well as b) being a man and c) being a young person.

In this example, he is not only struggling with the stigma of mental health but society's expectations of him to be strong as a man, and also the stress of university, moving away from home and forging new friendships. In addition to these individual factors, he is experiencing difficulty where these 'intersect.' His mental health problem results in low self-esteem, but this is exacerbated by his being a man and feeling as though he ought to be strong, and that his mental health difficulty is a weakness.

His mental health difficulty makes him not want to go out, but he fears he will lose his friends if he doesn't. So when reaching out to a specific group of people, we need to take into account their situations holistically and where they intersect.

Spotlight on BME

BME stands for Black and Minority Ethnicities. Mind is already aware that people from BME communities (as well as rural communities) find it difficult to access peer support. Therefore, the Side by Side programme has a specific emphasis on increasing the provision of peer support for these communities.

That's not to say it's as simple as just setting up a 'BME peer support service.' We want to make sure that peer support is available and accessible for all BME people, whether it's aimed at BME communities specifically, or the diverse local community as a whole.

"The fact that this is a BME group takes it beyond mental health...the specific experiences of being black survivors are very important. It is not just the experience of mental health issues that has had an impact on our lives, but the fact that we are black people with those experiences. While other groups may offer compassion, this specific experience adds something to it"

Project interviewee ~ The Freedom to Be, the Chance to Dream

Due to the nature of communities coming from different places, a number of barriers present themselves when providing an appropriate service.

Language barriers ~ Whilst it often isn't difficult to find an interpreter for a meeting or a translator for written materials, this can take time and

Common barriers faced when providing services for BME communities...

- **Language barriers**
- **Isolation**
- **Different frames of reference**
- **Cultural differences**
- **Spirituality**
- **Different interpretations**
- **Experience of racism**
- **Intersectionality**

money so needs to be budgeted for. It can also add complicated logistics and some things really don't translate well and the meaning can get lost.

Isolation ~ Various factors can contribute to social isolation; language is one. Sometimes people are housed in the middle of a community very different to theirs and struggle to fit in. At other times, people from the same communities are placed together which can help socialisation with the immediate community, but may make it difficult to integrate with the wider community. Some people don't want to be judged by their own community, and experience a sense of isolation within a community. This is where outreach is important

Frames of reference ~ A frame of reference is the 'map' we have as individuals to make sense of the world. It's informed by our

background, family, education and experiences.

People from different cultures have different frames of reference, for example how we understand hearing voices. For some it is seen as mental illness, whereas others see it as good or bad spirits. Such differences can present a barrier for people from certain cultures who view things differently either because they don't seek help because they don't recognise it as illness, or that they are used to such support coming from their local community and wouldn't approach a medical professional about it.

This extends to the approach to treating the symptoms too; for some prayer might be the answer, for others herbs, or rest, faith-based healing, talking or a community gathering may work – the local GP surgery is not where everyone would turn for support.

“Language differences make it harder to access help both practically and emotionally, when psychological distress needs mother tongue communication.”

BME Commissioning Excellence ~ Mind

In certain cultures, rather than becoming isolated, or going to the doctor, it is the community or a religious figure that supports a person at a time of need

Spirituality ~ This is an integral aspect to many people's lives and wellbeing. A person's spiritual beliefs can often provide a framework to understand mental

“We recommend you commission peer support initiatives and ensure that these cater to and recruit from BME communities”

BME Commissioning Excellence ~ Mind

health difficulties.

We always need to be mindful of [intersectionality](#) – where someone experiences the impact of multiple factors on their wellbeing, and account not just for these different issues, but the inter-relating impact of these and resulting multiple disadvantage.

The great thing about peer support is that it can bring communities together to help each other in a way that suits them, in their own language and within their cultural frame of reference. Sometimes this BME (or any other group) specific peer support can be more helpful than generic peer support provided for everyone. However in a generic open group, there is still a shared experience and different perspectives can be shared which can be helpful in a different way.

In summary, it is important to ensure there are services which are appropriate and accessible for all members of the community, regardless of background.

We can do this by reaching out to people where they are and offering support that is useful and meaningful to them.

We need to make sure information is in places where **everyone** will see it and in languages people can understand. As with all new services – let's find out what people want first and get them involved!

“It really doesn't matter how articulate you are, psychological services such as IAPT are consistently failing people from BME communities because they are based on ideas around Western psychiatry; the one size fits all approach is patently inadequate.”

~ Local BME service user

Local provision ~ Locally we have several organisations providing peer support specifically for people from BME communities; [Migrants Organise](#), [Wandsworth & Westminster Mind](#), [Al-Hasaniya](#), [Midaye](#). Do you know any more we can add to this list? It will help us with mapping peer support across Kensington & Chelsea and Queen's Park & Paddington for the Peer Support Directory ~ let us know!



Run Peerfest 2016?

Peerfest is an annual national celebration of peer support. If your group / organisation is peer-led and would be interested in running Peerfest 2016, either alone or with another group, you can register your expression of interest – deadline 18th April. You can find more details, the application form and tender specification [here](#). Find out about last year's Peerfest [here](#).



Local peer support map

We are compiling a directory of peer support services and organisations available in the local area.

Make sure you're included – contact us to provide the basic details necessary to be added to the directory.

Peer Bank

The Peer Bank is a list of details held of individuals interested in working in peer support locally – paid or voluntary. The form is [here](#).

This list will be made available on request to local organisations looking to recruit peer workers.

Peer Support News

Side by Side Peer Researcher ~

Sajid Mohammed started his role as BME Peer Researcher on 21st March. He works 4 days a week; 3 for Leeds Mind, with the other day available to work with Side by Side funded grants projects. The principle aim of his role as BME researcher is to work with grants projects to promote the research evaluation so that the voices of BME people are heard and any barriers to this are reduced.

Networking Event The 3rd ~

After a very successful second event, we are in the process of planning our next networking event to take place towards the end of the programme. We have some exciting ideas already and have accounted for feedback from the Peer Support Fair. If you have any ideas for what you'd like to see at the next event, or how you'd like this to go, drop us a line and let us know!

zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk

National Peer Directory ~

National Mind are in the process of updating their online [Peer Support Directory](#). It's a great opportunity to promote the big picture of peer support and promote your service. If you would like your service to be included, contact

zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk for a form to send on to National Mind.

Blue Light Programme Video ~

The Blue Light Programme of peer support for emergency services staff have released a video about the project watch it [here](#).

Dates for the diary...

What is it?	Who is it for?	When is it?	Where is it?	How do I register?
Peer Worker Network Meeting	Peer Workers (paid or voluntary) in K&C and/or QPP	5 th April 2 – 3.30pm	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Recruiting & Employing Peer Workers	Managers of local organisations (K&C / QPP)	13 th April 2.30 – 4pm	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Supporting Peer Workers in the Workplace	Local managers / supervisors of peer workers (K&C / QPP)	27 th April 2.30 – 4pm	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Supported Open Dialogue Conference	People interested in finding out about Peer Supported Open Dialogue and how this has been used and experienced	25 th April 10am – 6pm	Bloomsbury, London	Eventbrite link here .
Peer Support Training	Individuals with personal experience of mental health / emotional difficulties	4 week course Thursdays 7 th – 28 th April	K&C Mind Meeting Room	This course is full Email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk To be placed on the waiting list
Peer Support Network Meeting	Local organisations offering / wanting to offer peer support (K&C / QPP)	Monday 25 th April 10.30 – 12noon	2 nd Cup 216 Portobello Road W11 1LJ	Email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk to reserve your space



Improving mental health through peer support

