

#PeerTalk

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Peer Fusion: January

Our next and final peer support networking event to conclude the two-year Side by Side project will take place locally in January. Watch this space for updates...

The event will be open and relevant to all people interested in peer support, from service users and front line staff to peer workers, managers and interested public.

We are in the process of putting together the programme now ~ if there is anything in particular you would like to see or to learn about, please let us know!

At this stage, we can guarantee talks and workshops, the local and national pictures of peer support, networking opportunities and of course, lunch and refreshments provided.

Showcasing Peer Projects

We have created a new regular feature in #PeerTalk called 'Peer Project.'

This is where we showcase a different local peer project each month. This month we have [Talking Talkshops](#).

If you would like your organisation / project featured in the next issue, contact

zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk we'd love to feature new and existing projects to get the word out there!

'The discussions were interesting and gave an overview of the different contexts that Peer Support is taking place. 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.'

Attendee of our Peer Support Fair



BME Peer Support

Does your organisation provide peer support to people from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities?

It has been identified that people from these groups find it harder to access peer support, and in providing peer support for them, organisations find barriers to delivering peer support and finding people to engage with the peer support on offer.

For this reason, we hosted a BME Peer Support Meeting back in May, specifically for organisations providing peer support for people from BME communities. This was so that organisations could pool resources, share information and ideas and problem solve some of these barriers together.

This BME Peer Support Meeting is scheduled to run again next month ~ if this is of interest to your organisation, please register your place ~ and spread the word! See Dates for the Diary for details.

‘An important issue to note for the future is that the need for peer support and the provision of peer support might look different in different communities.’

[Mental Health Peer Support in England: Piecing Together the Jigsaw](#) (Mind)



Mental health peer support in England: Piecing together the jigsaw
September 2013

Peer 2 Peer



Peer2Peer was a European Union funded project with the aim to share the skills of peer support throughout its partner organisations across seven European countries.

The resulting legacy of the project is a training manual resource, to prepare people with experience of mental health difficulties to take on peer roles to support others with their recovery and contribute to the creation of a recognised employment and career pathway.

The handbook comprises 12 sessions (1 introduction, 9 on various topics and 2 assessment sessions) to meet 5 learning objectives:

- Explore the development of the recovery approach in mental health
- Explain peer support and its role in recovery
- Demonstrate the development of relationships based on peer support values
- Apply strengths based approaches in the peer support role
- Demonstrate an awareness of how to practice safely and effectively in the formalised peer support role

Access the training materials and watch a video about the Peer2Peer project [here](#).

CPD & Training Needs

At the July Peer Worker Meeting, it was identified that peer workers are keen to upskill and enhance their personal and professional development.

Every peer worker has their individual skillset and training needs. For example, one person's training needs may be around building confidence in IT skills, whereas for another they may be around assertiveness and conflict resolution.

Training needs may relate directly to the intricacies of a specific role or workplace environment, for example understanding the Mental Health Act, supporting people with suicidal ideation, or substance use.

Some peer workers may be up to date with the skillsets required for their role and wish to expand their skills or branch out beyond their area of expertise. This could be anything from developing understanding in another area such as addictions, or a different diagnosis.

From an organisational perspective, it is important to value peer workers and volunteers, and to invest in them and their futures. One way to do this is to provide or source training for them to enhance their abilities in their current roles, but also to support them on their long term career paths.

Supervision is a good time and place to discuss training needs, firstly as

'All peers in employment need support and encouragement to pursue their own personal and professional development. As they gain experience in post they will become clear about the sort of training they want to help them become more effective as peer workers.'

ImROC Briefing Paper 7 'Peer Support Workers: A practical guide to implementation

they relate to the role, and secondly as they relate to the individual's interests and future plans.

Some training which peer workers (or those wishing to move into peer work) may wish to consider include:

- Peer Support Training
- Train the trainer
- Conflict resolution
- De-escalation
- IT skills
- Mental Health First Aid
- Introductory modules

Introductory modules could be in areas such as coaching, motivational interviewing, counselling, CBT and other therapeutic techniques. These are often one day taster sessions.

There is a new a regular on the second to last page for CPD opportunities, drawing awareness to upcoming training courses and events that may be of interest or benefit to peer workers.

The [Recovery College](#) often offers courses which may be useful.

Spotlight on carers

It can often be assumed that the term 'carer' only applies to those who have taken on an official, or registered role as a carer. In fact, a carer can be anyone who plays a part in looking after someone – family, or a friend or neighbour, for example.

The person being cared for may have a long term health condition, disability or mental health difficulty.

Carers may give practical support, such as help with housework and shopping, interpreting or emotional support and helping someone cope with their mental health.

Some of the difficulties carers encounter include...

Stress / worry ~ it is understandable to worry about someone we care about who is not doing so well, about the illness or difficulty the person has, and the consequences of this. This can make it difficult to concentrate on other things, or to switch off all together.

Isolation ~ If a carer is very busy sorting things out for someone else, it can become difficult for them to find or make time to socialise. Sometimes this is made more difficult by the carer feeling that their life is very different to that of others around them. Sometimes the carer may feel they can't talk about their worries and activity as a carer for fear of breaking confidentiality or putting the person they care for at risk of stigma.

'I was completely unaware that what I was doing was a carer role and of the effect it was having on me. I didn't think about reaching out for support for myself.'

'How to Cope as a Carer' ~ Mind

Financial concerns ~ caring for someone else can bring expenses with it; travelling to see them, picking up their shopping or prescriptions, etc. This can become an extra strain on top of other worries, meaning that the carer cuts back on their personal spending to account for it, which can cause practical issues and anxiety for them.

Physical health problems ~ some aspects of caring can be physically demanding, such as lifting, but caring responsibilities can also bring tiredness and aches and pains through stress. Not having enough time or energy to exercise and cook properly can also lead to physical problems.

'Despite having physical health problems myself, I care for my sister and my elderly parents. I get so tired and have little help. I wish I could have a week off and just sleep. But you just have to keep going.'

'How to Cope as a Carer' ~ Mind

Frustration / anger ~ If a carer has given up aspects of their life to be

able to carry out their role as a carer, or feels as though they have no choice in this, they may feel frustrated and/or angry. If this builds up, it may come out directed at those closest to the carer, or the person they care for. This can then lead to feelings of guilt.

'You feel like your peers cannot relate to what you have to deal with at home. You are envious of people around you that have a 'normal' life, especially if you have no other family support.'

'How to Cope as a Carer' ~ Mind

Carer's own mental health ~ Often when it comes to looking after someone we care about, it can feel hard to put ourselves first, but this is important given the issues that can arise with carer's own mental health, as outlined above. Being a carer can impact self-esteem, where there are feelings of not being worthy of care and attention. A decrease in social contact can make the idea of socialising feel more difficult and daunting, which can eventually lead to depression and/or anxiety.

Peer support benefits for carers

Peer support can help with many of these issues. The opportunity to talk to someone who is going through similar struggles is beneficial in getting things off the chest, new ideas for how to look after your own health and needs, and fit this in around caring responsibilities.

It can also help to build up a

network of people who understand what it means to be a carer and can support each other, and understand the differences in practicalities, such as needing to answer a phone call during a social meeting, for example.

Making contact with others can reduce social isolation and increase structured activity and support networks, which in turn can improve one's own mental health. The more emotionally well and resilient one is, the more one can be available for others.

'Social media like Facebook has been really helpful to get emotional support from friends. I wish I'd had Twitter when I was younger, it would have been a great way to vent frustration and talk to others in a similar place.'

'How to Cope as a Carer' ~ Mind

Online peer support can be an easier way to access peer support if leaving the house proves difficult, or it's hard to get out during sociable hours. These can exist in their own right, or as part of established websites and networks, such as Facebook.

When using online peer support, make sure you feel it is a safe space, as sometimes (as with Facebook) your full name is visible. It can be good to check it is moderated for safety, or run by a trusted organisation.

Sources of peer support for carers...



[The Carers Network](#) ~ This network supports people in Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham. They hold peer support groups for:

- People with mental health conditions
- Older people
- People with learning disabilities
- People with autism
- Bangladeshi communities
- [People over 65 who care for someone approaching the end of their life](#)



[The BME Carers and Families Forum](#) ~ supported by Midaye, this service has been running since 2012. It is open to residents of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham. The support available to carers and family members includes information and various activities, as well as the chance to meet and talk to others in a similar situation.



[Carers UK](#) ~ have an online forum

where carers can talk to each other. They discuss caring responsibilities, share information and strategies as well as 'general chit chat.' There is an area specifically to discuss mental health, and as it is online, you can dip in and out and access it at any time that suits you.



[Hestia](#) ~ provide a monthly carers' informal support group to allow carers to come together and enjoy refreshments and meet other carers. Private 1:1 sessions are available if required.



[Al-anon](#) ~ run support groups for anyone who has been affected by another person's drinking. Meetings offer a space where people can share their experiences with other people affected by alcoholism. There are many groups that run within or close to Kensington and Chelsea at different times and on different days.

'Many carers find it helpful to talk to someone who knows exactly what they are going through, because it's happening to them too.'

~ Caring for Carers
(www.caringforcarers.info)



Age UK ~ run support for carers quarterly in Kensington and Chelsea.

The support is activity based, with opportunity to talk to other carers. For further details contact [Kate Nash](#) 020 3181 0002



[Turning Point](#) ~ provide regular peer support groups for families and carers of those who use drugs and/or alcohol.

Open to anyone resident in the Tri-borough areas of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham. Call 0208 960 5599 for more information.



[Westminster Carers Service](#) ~ operate a Carers Timebank, where members exchange their skills to give and receive support to each other.

Membership is free, and one of the benefits included is access to mutual support.

Elefriends



Elefriends, Mind's online peer support community have recently released badges.

If you are a member of Elefriends, you can feature a [badge](#) on your profile to show that you've visited your local Mind, attend a local Mind group, fundraised for Mind, or that you're an Elefriend.

These badges are also available for download so you can use them on other platforms such as Facebook.

Elefriends have also created badges for real life; there are 4 designs, available from Mind shops for a £1 donation. Our local Mind shops are in Shepherd's Bush and Fulham.

If you want to spread the word about Elefriends, you are now able to download [promotional materials](#) that you can print yourself to put up and pass to others.

Get involved!

National Mind's communication team are currently working to promote peer support in a way that is accessible to different groups. Their current focus is on young African Caribbean men.

If you are part of this group and would be interested in attending a workshop to contribute to this, contact [Lucy](#).

Side by Side Update

Beneficiaries ~ at the beginning of the Side by Side programme, 37 organisations received grant funding to start a peer support project between December 2015 and October 2016. As a result, peer support has been delivered to:

- 827 new people
- 93 people who had previously accessed peer support

Throughout these projects, 83 members of staff have been involved in the delivery, and 174 volunteers.

Evaluation ~ the evaluation of participants' involvement in peer support continues whilst the projects are still underway.

Side by Side hubs (such as Kensington and Chelsea Mind) have been interviewed a second time, along with strategic partners and grantee projects, in order to gather their experiences of giving and receiving peer support.

BME Researcher, Sajid left at the end of last month and his post has been recruited for by Leeds Mind.

Media ~ National Mind commissioned national research about support networks. This data formed part of a press release sent out by local hubs. Many local radio stations and local newspapers have released stories across the country.

Elefriends ~ Information gathering is currently underway to find out how best to promote Mind's online peer support community to rural

communities. Some work in this area has already begun.

Hub work ~ nationally, local Side by Side hubs have reached out and involved 278 local groups and organisations so far, which is already over the initial target.

Strategic partners ~ in total, 1009 people have given and received support through the strategic partners' projects so far. Our local strategic partner is Depression Alliance. For more information contact [Louise](#).

Commissioners ~ Several local hubs have had success in working with their local commissioners to raise the profile of, and influence local planning and development of services to incorporate good peer support. We are currently in conversation with our local commissioners on these topics.

Policy and Campaigns ~ national Mind has been working with NHS England to deliver an event on how local voluntary sector can make change in the commissioning process. They hope to make a date for this in September.

Blue Light ~ Mind launched this initiative a year ago to enable the availability of peer support for emergency services staff across England. Our local hub's details have been given out to those accessing or providing Blue Light peer support so that they are able to link in with the work our hub is doing locally. Find out more about Blue Light [here](#).

CPD Opportunities

Training / event	Date	Location	Content	Cost
Mental Health First Aid Lite	Wednesday 10th August Wednesday 19th October Wednesday 7th December Wednesday 18th January Wednesday 15th February	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Three hour introductory mental health awareness course	Free for those living and/or working in Kensington and Chelsea
Perinatal Mental Health for Healthcare Professionals	Thursday 1 st September	London South Bank University (Elephant & Castle)	Psychotic / non-psychotic disorders, perinatal anxiety, suicide, case reviews, maternal & infant relationships	£90 for Allied Health Professionals, £35 for students
Mental Health in the Community	Tuesday 13 th September	Wandsworth	Short mental health awareness course. Certificated. Includes training manual	Free for self-help groups, peer facilitators and those wanting to start their own group
Supporting People with Young Onset Dementia and their Families	Wednesday 5 th October	Camden	Young onset dementia, impact of diagnosis on younger people, their families and carers.	£145
Domestic Abuse and Impact on Mental Health	Tuesday 8 th November		Awareness & best practice methods. Complex issues, individual & social impact	£150
Voices in Global Mental Health	Friday 11 th November	Holloway Road	Perspectives from experts by experience & professionals in the field. Ethical & professional issues	£50 for non-BPS members

Other websites to check regularly for mental health / peer support training and events include:

[Young Minds](#) [Time to Change](#) [Eventbrite](#) [NSUN](#) (National Survivor User Network)

Peer Project: Talking TalkShops



[Talking TalkShops](#) is a not for profit organisation providing peer support. Meetings are weekly and free of charge. JW talks about his experience at Talking TalkShops...

The meetings allow attendees to voice their thoughts in a confidential, non-judgmental environment. Sometimes we set goals, and equally build confidence and begin to achieve the solution to our problems.

At Talking TalkShops people from all backgrounds and denominations meet weekly to make positive and significant changes in our lives.

We are here to reflect and clarify upon our thoughts. We meet to support each other in a non-confrontational way to help our peers present and to feel in control of their days to make a positive change - to be active and awake within both their lives and their community.

'I've been coming here for 6 months now - it's been great to listen to and share other people's experiences. It's a total mix of people which I find really interesting. There is no pressure to say anything if you don't want to - sometimes it's just good to listen.'

JW - member of Talking TalkShops

Peer Support News

Peer Support for Disabilities ~ The Work Foundation and Disability Rights UK published two studies in May this year, which suggest that peer support can be beneficial in increasing the employment prospects of people with disabilities., from securing and retaining employment to career progression. Read 'Peer Support for Employment: a practice review' [here](#), and 'Peer Support for Employment: a review of the evidence' [here](#).

'The time is right to build good practice and evidence on peer support to enable people living with health conditions or impairments to work to their full potential.'

Peer Support for Employment: A practice review – Executive Summary – Liz Sayce and Natasha Fagelman

Peerfest update ~ Plans for Peerfest are now underway. There is a call for speakers, workshop providers, and performers. The team are particularly keen to hear from BME, LGBT and rural groups/organisations. Keep up to date via their official website [here](#).

Journal of Mental Health Training, Education and Practice ~ An academic article has been written exploring a pilot collective narrative therapy 'Tree of Life' group on an inpatient ward. One of the authors is Westminster's Senior Peer Support Worker, Francesca Lepori. The article is available for purchase [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	Wednesday 17 th August 11am – 12.30 Thursday 15 th September 10 – 11.30am	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Support Training	Individuals with personal experience of mental health difficulties / emotional distress	Thursdays 8 th – 29 th September	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Spaces now available. Email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Support Network Meeting	Local organisations offering/wanting to offer peer support (K&C / QPP)	Thursday 8 th September 10 – 11.30am	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
BME Peer Support Meeting	Local organisations providing peer support to BME communities	Thursday 29 th September 10 – 11.30am	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peerfest16	People with lived experience of mental health difficulties	13 th October	Rich Mix Shoreditch London	Official website
Peer Fusion	All local people / workers interested in Peer Support	January 2017	TBC	Expressions of interest to Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk



Improving mental health through peer support



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