

#PeerTalk

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Peerfest

peerfest 2016

Peerfest is the annual, national celebration of peer support.

Initially started by national Mind in 2013 after the publication of their research, [Mental Health Peer Support in England: Piecing Together the Jigsaw](#). Peerfest is now put out to tender each year.

Peerfest 2016 will be run by [Sound Minds](#) in partnership with [Antenna Collective](#).

Tickets for this year's Peerfest are available from their [website](#) now.

Peer Fusion

Our third Peer Support Network event will take place at the Tabernacle on **Monday 23rd January** from 9am ~ 4pm. This will conclude the Side by Side project.

Peer Fusion is open to all local people/workers with an interest in peer support. Topics will include setting up peer support, sustainability, peer workers' professional development.

There will of course be ample opportunity to network with others interested / involved in peer support, chance to find out what peer support is happening locally, and to learn and develop skills, wherever you are in your peer support path.

Get involved! If you would like to speak about your experience of peer support (providing or receiving), or would like to showcase your organisation's peer support, [get in touch!](#)

Tickets will go live at the end of November. Watch this space for further announcements!



UFM 20th Anniversary

The User Focused Monitoring team at the Advocacy Project evaluate mental health services in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster via peer research.

It is a method of service evaluation that puts service users at the heart of the process. The UFM programme in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster was the first of its kind. UFM started from the premise that if the evaluation of services is to genuinely reflect the views of the people who use them, then users should lead the process at every stage.

UFM is celebrating its 20th anniversary on Wednesday 5th October from 4.30 – 7.15pm. At the celebration, there will be presentations, poetry readings, music and food.

Find out more and reserve your place [here](#).

'UFM isn't just any old survey team. As a member I work on the whole process of interviewing from beginning to end. I help to decide what area of services to examine, design the questionnaire, interview the people, make recommendations on the report and feed it back to commissioners and managers. For me, this is what makes it such a satisfying job to do.'

UFM member

Network news

At September's Peer Support Network Meeting we had a mix of organisations who have been involved with peer support for a while and those who are new to it.

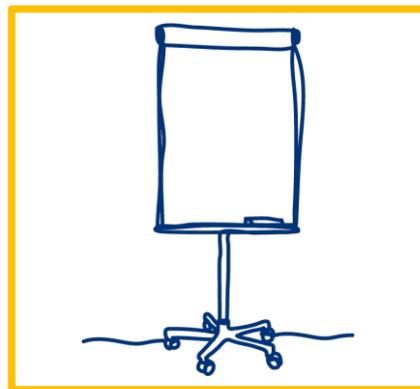
Items discussed included:

- [Attendance and community engagement](#)
- [Supporting peer mentors](#)
- [Peers' responsibilities](#)
- [Volunteers who don't have paperwork that might be required](#)

There was also a reminder of a few ways services can be promoted through the network:

- [Our Peer Support Video](#)
- [Presentations at Peer Fusion](#)

For more information, contact [Zoe](#).



Five more trainees completed our Peer Support Training course this month, bringing our total to 28.

The Peer Support Training course will run at least once more. This will be in November before the Side by Side project's official end in January.

For more information and to get onto the waiting list to attend the training, contact [Zoe](#).

CHAMPS - research



CHecking Agreement about Mental health Peer Support is a study being conducted by the University of Manchester aiming to find out:

- What peer supporters find helpful
- What peer supporters find unhelpful
- If there is a relationship between providing peer support and the wellbeing of peer supporters

CHAMPS want to collect views from as many UK peer supporters as possible. Results will be shared with participants and the peer support community.

To be eligible to take part, you must:

- Have personal experience of a mental health problem
- Currently provide mental health peer support, or have done in the last 5 years
- Have provided the above peer support as a formal role in an organisation
- Have provided the above peer support in the UK
- Be aged over 16

Taking part takes about an hour and involves:

- Being presented with statements about peer support and saying whether you agree or disagree
- Being asked about your experience of providing peer support
- Completing wellbeing questionnaires (optional)

If you would like to take part, before you start, there is a participant information sheet which you can read.

This gives you information about the privacy of your data, your right to withdraw from the study, and information on how to make a complaint.

It is possible to take part via pen and paper if you don't want to take part online. Contact Eilish Burke on 0161 3060 0400

Participants will be entered into a prize draw to win one of four £50 vouchers for a retailer of their choice.

Watch the CHAMPS video, read more and take part [here](#).



Spotlight on students

The term 'students' for the purpose of this article, includes anyone aged 18+ in education – this could be at college or university.

University students are at particular risk of developing mental health problems and face specific challenges in accessing appropriate support.

Student Minds

The average age of higher education students overlaps with the most common age that people first experience mental health difficulties.

Research has estimated that around 29% of students experience mental distress, however there is considerable variability in prevalence statistics.

Student Minds

Student life can be stressful for a number of reasons...

Being away from home ~ Many students move away from their family and friends when they start university. This can be very unsettling at a big time of change, and their support network is likely to be harder to reach.

Life skills ~ Becoming an adult and moving away from home can necessitate taking on new responsibilities and sudden independence whilst in an unfamiliar setting. The individual may not have built up or practised the life skills required to navigate the new landscape without an existing support network.

Social isolation ~ Most students are encountering a new environment, a new location and a new social group. Making new friends can be daunting, and not having a social group you know well can make it hard to open up if feeling stressed.

Academic pressure ~ Most college and university courses are delivered in a different way to courses in schools, at a different pace and with more independent learning required. There may be pressure to reach a certain level of attainment across different modules.

Exam stress ~ Most college and university courses have assignments and exams throughout the academic year. The pressure of achieving the grade in all these tests and meeting expectations can mount up.

Relationships ~ College and university is often a time when relationships begin or end. Some students may have a partner back home and the long distance relationship can add extra pressure.

Nightlife ~ Universities are renowned for their freshers' fairs and nightlife, and there can be peer pressure when it comes to consuming alcohol or taking drugs. This can be a lot to balance in addition to studying.

Financial issues ~ Student life often brings with it new financial pressures such as rent and bill payments, negotiating direct debits, household shopping and budgeting. Many students get an additional job to help pay the bills or fund their lifestyles which can lead to burnout.



[Student Minds](#) is the UK's student mental health charity. It networks with universities, launch campaigns, support students and run peer support groups.

Some of Student Minds' research projects include:

'A great space to vent, express eating disorder related problems with people who understand but also a space to discuss other difficulties that can be related'

'Eating Disorder Group member, Student Minds

- [Looking After A Mate](#)
To understand the student experience of supporting a friend or partner with mental health difficulties
- [Grand Challenges](#)
To discover what students and staff find most difficult about living with a mental health difficulty at university

Student Minds' peer support groups currently run in various universities across the country.

The peer support groups are facilitated by volunteers who have been trained to facilitate peer support discussions.

Peer support on offer from Student Minds includes:

- [Positive Minds Course](#)

Available at Kings College London

- [Eating Difficulties Group](#)

Available at University College London

- [Supporting supporters workshop](#)

Contact your local [Student Group](#) for more information

If you are interested in setting up a peer support group on your campus, find out more [here](#) or [get in touch](#) with Student Minds. They provide guidance for setting up a peer support group, and run a group facilitator training programme.

Sources of peer support for students in London...



SOAS ~ SOAS has several different peer support schemes:

- [New students](#)
- [Mental health support group](#)
- [Bereavement support group](#)
- [Cancer support group](#)
- [Talk For Health peer support training](#)

The mental health support group is for people experiencing mental health difficulties as well as those who support people with mental health difficulties.



London School of Economics LSE provides different aspects of peer support via individual peer supporters from different backgrounds to increase the chances of finding someone who has had similar experiences. The webpage also contains details of how to become a peer supporter.



Kings College London ~ Peer supporters are undergraduate and graduate students trained by KCL. KCL is looking for new trainee peer supporters for this new academic year. If you're a student at Kings, find out more details on how to become a peer supporter [here](#).



University College London UCL provides various peer support options. Students for Students is an informal space for students who are struggling to meet and support each other. Student Minds run an eating disorders group, Medics4Medics offers support specifically for those facing stress relating to studying medicine, and are looking into some Look After Your Mate support.



Loughborough University London ~ LUL offers different aspects of peer support to provide academic and pastoral support:

- [Peer Mentoring](#)
- [Peer Assisted Learning](#)
- [Peer Led Study](#)

For more information about these options or to become a peer supporter, see the website via the link above.



Goldsmiths ~ Goldsmiths offer peer-to-peer support via their Dedicated Listening Service (DLS). For more information, see the link above.



University of West London ~ UWL offers peer mentoring. Peer mentors can be requested, or you can attend one of the mentoring drop in sessions.



Nightline ~ Nightline works across 38 universities in London and all Open University students in the UK. It offers out of hours peer support via phone, Skype and instant messaging.

CPD Opportunities

Training / event	Date	Location	Content	Cost
Mental Health First Aid Lite	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
Mental Health Awareness Training	Tuesday 11 th October	Volunteer Centre Kensington & Chelsea	Mental health, stigma, factors influencing mental health, own wellbeing, overview of adult services	Free
Mental Health Matters	Sunday 23 rd October	Russel Square	Workshops and discussions with a focus on mental wellbeing, lifestyles, capitalism, race, gender.	£12.50
Invisible Struggles: A Young People's Mental Health Conference	Saturday 29 th October	Kensington	Interactive workshops, guest performances, networking and volunteering opportunities, understanding of local services	Free. Open to those aged 15 – 25 only
Mental Health and the Black Community: Prison by Another Name?	Friday 14 th October	Hackney	Interactive mental health workshop considering the spiritual nature of mental illness, effectiveness of medications, life inside mental health wards, the relationship between smoking cannabis and mental health, dealing with mental health as a community	Free

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: Midaye



Midaye is planning to run a weekly peer support group for women. This group mirrors traditional ways that women in the Horn of Africa come together to provide support to each other. The group is welcoming and informal, and led by a community facilitator and volunteers.

'I am constantly helping others in the group... I feel rewarded. It makes me happy and increases my confidence. I feel useful and important.'

Member of Midaye's Women's Peer Support Group

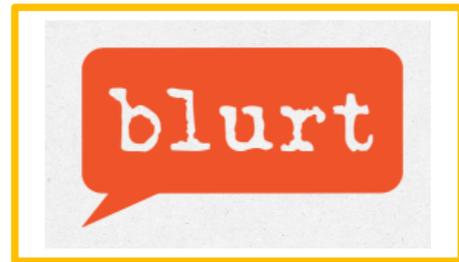
The participants share similar personal experiences of issues that impact on their daily lives. They cope with their issues through discussion and learning from each other. As a result they develop links, build social activities and contact into their lives more fully, through new relationships with their peers.

The group is due to start in October. For further information, contact Hanan 0208 969 7456

'I was very isolated and at home most of the time. I was sick a lot, seeing my GP a lot. Now I hardly go to my GP. I feel healthier.'

Member of Midaye's Women's Peer Support Group

Peer Support News



Peer Facilitator voluntary roles ~ The Blurt Foundation is looking for new Peer Facilitators for their online peer support community. Find out more and apply [here](#).



Maternity Champions ~ The National Childbirth Trust implemented peer support in the form of 'Maternity Champions' – volunteers recruited from the local community. Read a report on the project [here](#) and women's views of the project [here](#).

Living examples ~ National Mind has released yet another [case study](#) of peer support from another area of the country. Spread the word and share it via social media. It really helps to promote peer support when we can read case studies directly from people who have experienced it (providing or receiving)... if you'd like to contribute yours, get [in touch!](#)

'Now, I want to reach out to other people who've been through similar things.'

[Victoria, on her experience of peer support](#)

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	Thursday 6 th October 3 – 4.30pm Thursday 17 th November 10 – 11.30am Thursday 8 th December 2.30 – 4pm	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Seminar for Health Professionals	Health professionals working locally (K&C / QPP)	Thursday 6 th October 1 – 2pm	St Charles Centre for Wellbeing	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peerfest16	People with lived experience of mental health difficulties	Thursday 13 th October	Rich Mix Shoreditch London	Official website
Peer Support Training	Individuals with personal experience of mental health difficulties	Tuesday mornings 15 th November – 6 th December	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Email Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Support Network Meeting	Local organisations offering/wanting to offer peer support (K&C / QPP)	Thursday 1 st December 2.30 – 4pm	Kensington and Chelsea Mind	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Fusion	All local people / workers interested in Peer Support	Monday 23 rd January 2017	The Tabernacle	Expressions of interest to Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk



Improving mental health through peer support

