

#PeerTalk

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First Peer Worker Meeting

We were pleased to welcome a good turnout to our first Peer Worker Meeting, which took place last month.

A mixture of paid and volunteer peer workers introduced their roles and services. This was found to be very useful for both facilitating and sign-posting and networking opportunities.

The delegates also found it helpful to discuss issues relating specifically to peer support with other peer workers.

Topics included wellbeing at work, career progression, peer group

engagement and supervision.

The group decided to meet monthly and to alternate the day it is held in order to suit different working patterns, including part time peer workers.

“Well needed; good to meet other peer workers from different areas.”

Attendee at first Peer Worker Meeting

If you're a peer worker (paid or voluntary) working in the Kensington and Chelsea and/or Queen's Park and Paddington area, join us at the next Peer Worker Meeting on **Tuesday 17th May** from 2 – 3.30pm.

Meetings last an hour and a half and currently take place at Kensington & Chelsea Mind. Email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk to register your place.

If you're joining us, please bring information leaflets about your service(s) if possible. Delegates at the last meeting said this would be helpful.

“Today has given me confidence”

Attendee at first Peer Worker Meeting



First PSN Meeting

Following feedback from our Peer Support Fair, we set up a follow-up Peer Support Network (PSN) Meeting to provide a space for local organisations to continue to network and share expertise and explore challenges together.

We met in Portobello Road last month and discussed topics of importance to local organisations such as...

- Keeping up momentum
- Safeguarding peer workers
- Supporting peer workers
- Supervision of peer workers
- Valuing volunteers
- Co-production
- Working with small budgets

“Really useful sharing good practice, problems and opportunity to network”

~ Feedback from Peer Support Network Meeting

It was agreed that meeting again in 2 – 3 months' time would be helpful as this will give time for developments to get underway, and having more to feed back and update on.

With this in mind, we are looking into holding our next Peer Support Network Meeting in July. Once this is confirmed, exact details will be in the 'dates for the diary section of future #PeerTalk issues.

Peer Support Training

4 more Peer Support trainees are well on their way to completing our Peer Support Training course.

On completion of two successful cohorts, we will be running the course again in May/June.

We do have a few people currently on the waiting list ~ the remaining places will be available, subject to eligibility, on a first-come-first-served basis.

The Peer Support Training is a 4-week course with a half day weekly training session. Trainees are expected to attend every session.

Requirements for the course:

- personal lived experience of mental health / emotional difficulties
- interest in becoming, or currently working locally as a peer support worker (paid or voluntary)

The course covers all aspects of peer support roles and involves learning through listening, discussing and doing activities.

Please contact zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk to reserve your space.

We look forward to hearing from you!

“Confidence builder, useful for developing communication skills and utilising previous experience.” ~ Peer Support Trainee

New resources



National Mind have updated the Peer Support section of their website.

This now includes a video of projects resulting from a small grants scheme in 2014. The projects started out in peer support. The focus of the video is on 'Engaging Communities and Training.' You can watch the video [here](#).



There are also resources available for organisations looking to start, expand and sustain their peer support services. These cover the following areas:

- [Beginners' guide to finding funding](#)
- [How to constitute your group](#)
- [How to start your project](#)
- [Setting up a social enterprise](#)

The national Peer Support Directory is still being updated ~ if you would like your organisation or service included, contact zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk for a form to complete and return to National Mind.

View the Peer Support section of the National Mind website [here](#).

Appolutely Fabulous

The Elefriends app has already had over 1,000 downloads. And for good reason! I downloaded it to find out...

It's quick and simple to sign up – either with an email address, or via Facebook – and you don't have to give any personal information at all – you just choose the 'nick name' you wish to be known by.

I wasn't quite sure what to expect at first, as it's been a few years since I used online forums – I didn't know how this would work in an app.

It was much more streamlined than I expected. Everything is in one place – all posts in the main feed, or you can add people to your own feed and see only what people you connect with have to say.

The app is very straight forward, and even has a quick tutorial to explain the functions. Its notifications are brief and link to the content in question.

It also felt safe - you can choose to have private messages 'on' or 'off' so as not to be overwhelmed, and if you see anything concerning, you can report it to the Ele.

Listen and be heard. Join the herd... Download the Elefriends App for Android [here](#) and iPhone [here](#).



"A great resource for those struggling with mental illness"
~ user review, Google Play

Spotlight on older adults

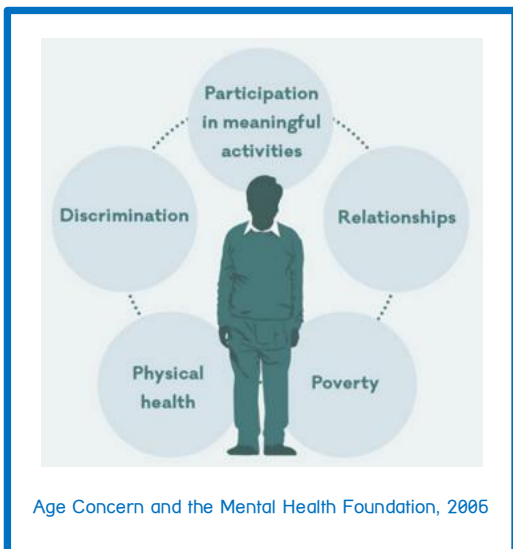
The term 'older adults' refers to those aged 60 and over. Sometimes it is assumed that mental health problems are inevitable and to be expected in older age. This is not the case. However older adults, just like the rest of us, need to take care of their mental health just as they would their physical health.

In 2014, the number of people aged 65 and over made up over 18% of the UK population

Office for National Statistics, 2015

Ageing does not inevitably lead to mental health difficulties ~ many older people continue to enjoy good mental health. However there are certain factors that can make older adults more vulnerable to experiencing mental health difficulties...

In 2006, Age Concern and the Mental Health Foundation listed five key factors that affect the mental health and wellbeing of older people: discrimination, participation in meaningful activity, relationships, physical health and poverty.



Age Concern and the Mental Health Foundation, 2006

Other areas of life which can impact the mental health of older adults...

- Retirement
- Isolation
- Bereavement
- Crime

Other areas of life which can impact the mental health of older adults include retirement, isolation, bereavement, physical health conditions, and crime.

Retirement ~ the transition into retirement can lead to suddenly having very little structure to one's life, which can be a difficult adjustment.

Work can be where we spend a large proportion of our time and contribute to how we see ourselves; retirement can therefore have an effect on one's sense of identity, self-worth and self-esteem as socio-economic status changes.

Retirement can also bring financial change which requires further adjustments and can raise anxieties about future financial security.

Work can also be the main contact we have with other people; colleagues and clients, which can often lead to an increase in isolation when one stops working.

Isolation ~ this can be more common in older people as their own families grow up and move on, and as older friends and relatives pass away. Caring for a partner can also make it harder to find time to socialise.

Bereavement ~ this can be a very difficult process for anyone, causing distress and leaving us vulnerable to deterioration in our mental health. In particular, becoming widowed can contribute to poor mental health in older adults.

Depression affects 22% of men and 28% of women aged over 65 years

Health Survey for England 2005 ~ Health and Social Care Information Centre

Physical health conditions ~ ageing can bring with it an increase in physical health problems, some of which make it harder to engage in activities which previously brought happiness and socialising. It can also raise concerns and anxieties about one's health and vulnerability.

Older people are more likely to be taking medication for health conditions ~ often more than one and this can also be a factor increasing their vulnerability to mental health difficulties.

Older people can be targeted because of their perceived or actual vulnerability or, their unequal access to safety

Crimes Against Older People: Prosecution Policy ~ Crown Prosecution Service

Crime ~ Older people can fall victim to 'elder abuse' which can take many forms including physical abuse, financial abuse, and neglect. Older people can also be targeted for scams.

In 2014, an Age UK [study](#) found fear of crime associated with reduced social networking outside the home, depression, poor self-reported health and low quality of life.

As a group, older adults tend to find the following barriers to seeking support with their mental health:

- **Age-related restrictions imposed by services**
- **Generational stigma**
- **Mental health stigma**

Sometimes symptoms of mental health problems in older adults can be missed by professionals because they often overlap with other problems experienced by the person at that time.

It is estimated that 85% of older people with depression receive no help at all from the NHS

Depression in old age is the 'next big crisis' ~ The Times Online, 2014

Dementia is an organic disease which affects many older adults. Rather than a mental health difficulty that can be worked on and resolved, dementia is progressive.

This doesn't mean, however that all hope is lost ~ many people manage to live independently for years following diagnosis.

Receiving a diagnosis of dementia can be a stressful time, bringing about depression, anxiety and increase one's sense of isolation. The confusion caused by memory difficulties can also bring on panic and anxiety.

You can find out more about dementia [here](#).

It is predicted that the number of people living with dementia will double have doubled by 2030

World Alzheimer's Report ~ Alzheimer's Disease International

A combination of the factors above can sometimes lead to other changes in an older adult's life, such as an increased use of alcohol due to loneliness, pain, boredom and depression.

You can find out more about mental health in older adults from the Mental Health Foundation [here](#) and the World Health Organisation [here](#).

As with any specific group of people, sometimes it can be helpful to talk to or be amongst others who share similar experiences.

Providing peer support can also help people to make a positive contribution, socialise, form a positive sense of identity and feel valued.

Watch a video about dementia peer support workers' experiences:



Provision of peer support for older adults is available locally from several organisations detailed below.

If you are aware of other organisations providing peer support for older adults, please let us know so we can add them to our local Peer Support Directory.



Open Age ~ With two dedicated centres (Chelsea and Ladbroke Grove) and two hubs (Westbourne Park and Queen's Park) as well as operating out of community venues in Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham, Open Age run around 400 activities each week for people aged 50+.

Amongst these activities, Open Age provides peer support with for the following groups:

- Older unpaid carers
- Housebound people
- Long term health conditions
- Stoke survivors
- Older men

Find out more about these groups on their website [here](#).



London Telephone Communities for Older People ~ Community Network's London Telephone Communities' service for older people over the age of 65 works to connect older Londoners over the phone for free. Find out more [here](#).



CNWL provide a [Living Well Service](#) for older adults in Kensington and Chelsea. The multi-disciplinary team works with people aged 65 and over with a mental health diagnosis, or people any age with a dementia diagnosis.

It is a 'step-down' service providing community support for people not in current need of community mental health team support, which supports people to work towards recovery goals, such as reducing social isolation, identifying obstacles and minimising barriers to participation in the community. There is also signposting available for carers to find appropriate support for themselves.

A peer support worker forms part of the multi-disciplinary team, using her personal experience of mental health difficulties to work both 1:1 to support individuals to work towards their recovery goals, and to facilitate groups on topics such as anxiety and depression. These are an opportunity for older people to meet others who share similar experiences

The Living Well Service takes referrals from the community mental health team, GPs and community organisations such as Age UK and Memory Cafés. More information [here](#).

Side by Side Update

The Side by Side hubs from around the country met at the end of April to network and share ideas.

Research evaluation ~ As part of the evaluation, some projects are supporting their service users to complete wellbeing logs. This will form an important part of the research to support the benefits of peer support.

The full Evaluation Report for the whole of the programme should be available at the end of the programme in the spring of 2017.

BME ~ Sajid, the new BME researcher has started his role and is working to increase BME participation in the evaluation.

Elefriends ~ Elefriends are currently looking into how to make it more accessible to people from BME and rural communities.

There is now an Elefriends video about accessing peer support in the community. Watch it on Vimeo:



Peer support information ~ National Mind are in the process of creating an information resource about peer support. This will be available in June.

Peer Work Opportunities

Currently there are a few vacancies for peer workers ~ a mix of paid and voluntary positions in different areas...



Central and North West London 
NHS Foundation Trust

certitude
everyone has the right to a good life



CNWL ~ Peer Support Worker vacancies for St Charles Hospital. Search 'peer support' in 'London' on www.jobs.nhs.uk for more details.

The Blurt Foundation ~ The Blurt Foundation's work supports people with depression. They have a vacancy for a volunteer Peer Support Group Facilitator for their online peer support group. Find out more and apply [here](#).

Free Your Mind ~ Vacancy for volunteer peer mentors in the London area. Applicants must have personal experience of Childhood Domestic Violence and be over the age of 18. Find out more and apply [here](#).

Depression Alliance ~ Volunteer peer group facilitators are wanted to welcome attendees to their meetups and participate in the groups. For more information contact louise@depressionalliance.org

Certitude ~ Vacancy in Lambeth for Peer Intern to support people with mental health difficulties. This is a paid post. Find details [here](#).

Peer Support News

National Voices paper ~ *'What is the role of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in care and support planning?'* was published in March this year by National Voices.

The paper explores the contributions VCSE organisations can make to individuals' support and care planning. Of the 4 developments it intends to contribute to, 2 of these incorporate the views and expertise of people with lived experience.

The document frequently mentions peer support as an effective means to link people in with their communities, support people with their care and support planning process, normalise experiences of different conditions and to help them decide what matters to them. You can read the full document [here](#).

Peer Support Charter ~ Together for Wellbeing has updated its website's pages on peer support - you can access the information [here](#). They have also created a Peer Support Charter, which you can find [here](#).

Peerfest 2016 ~ On 3rd May, the Peerfest planning team ran an event for those who had submitted an expression of interest to run Peerfest this year.

Ideas were shared and potential partnerships formed. The deadline for tender applications is Tuesday 31st May, with shortlisting announced the week beginning Monday 6th June. Find out more [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 (May)	Peer Workers (paid or voluntary) in K&C and/or QPP	Tuesday 17 th May 2 – 3.30pm	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Support Training	Individuals with personal experience of mental health / emotional difficulties	4 week course Tuesday mornings 24 th May – 14 th June	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Email zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk to reserve your space
Peer Worker Network Meeting (June)	Peer Workers (paid or voluntary) in K&C and/or QPP	Wednesday 8 th June 2 – 3.30pm	K&C Mind Meeting Room	Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
Peer Support Network Meeting	Local organisations offering / wanting to offer peer support (K&C / QPP)	July - TBC	TBC	zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk
BME Peer Support Meeting	Organisations starting up or currently providing BME peer support (managers, supervisors, project leads, peer workers)	TBC	TBC	Register your interest with Zoe.copeland@kcmind.org.uk



Improving mental health through peer support



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