



Supporting mental health recovery

Peer Workforce Development Project at Mind Australia

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Why the project?



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- Systems and processes to enable a thriving peer workforce
- Growing Peer Workforce at Mind Australia
- Approximately 30 Peer Support Workers
- Across three states

What did the project cover?



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- What works well? What could be improved?
- Provide clarity over definitions and roles
- Training and support tools for managers and peer workers
- Recommend a framework for reflective practice for peer workers
- Increase the positive profile of peer workers at Mind

Gathering information



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- How do we determine a high performance peer worker?
- What combination of experience, competencies, attitudes and psychological characteristics are a good basis for effective performance and retention?

Gathering information



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- **Valuing an inclination to “make the world a better place” within a committed teamwork environment**
- Extremely altruistic
- High levels of modesty
- Client satisfaction
- **Team work**
- Life experience
- A non-judgemental approach
- Highly empathetic and caring approach

Why did you decide to become a peer worker at Mind?



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A desire to make a difference utilising the recovery experience

- “Because I believe in the power of sharing personal experience of mental ill health and recovery
- “Wanted to give something back after a great support from many good people”
- “I wanted to give back to others - it’s what I missed out in my own experience. I would have liked to meet other people with similar experiences and have found support groups so helpful in feeling understood”

How do you think your colleagues would describe the work you do?



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- “That I use my experience to inspire hope in the clients that we work with”
- “That I have a lived experience, but they don’t know what that is and they haven’t heard my recovery story”
- “Some think it is an important or valuable role; others are a bit mystified what the role is and how it differs from others’
- “When I started as a peer worker in my program, the other members of my team were unaware of what peer workers did – so I spent some time educating them, how to utilise me, History of peer movements, value of secondary consultants and so on”

What are the areas you would like more support in order to do your job better?



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- Clarity surrounding the role and Role considerations
- An increase in level of support
- Targeted training or professional development opportunities
- Improvements to team understanding and dynamics

Implications for Mind



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- Role clarity
- Recruitment
- Orientation
- Training and support tools for managers
- On going supervision
- Profile of peer workers

Role Clarity



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- Position Descriptions need to outline the unique contribution of peer support work
- This will assist candidates to understand the inherent expectations and requirements of the role