

# The emergence of local peer hubs across Victoria - outcomes and future directions

## Presenters

**Cassy Nunan** – Former Project Manager, Peer Workforce Development: now Consultant, Consumer Advocacy and Leadership – Wellways (MI Fellowship)

**Rick Corney**– Grampians Mental Health Peer Workers Network– Wimmera Uniting Care

**Darren Dorey** – Great South Coast Peer Hub– Wellways (MI Fellowship)

**Paula Kelly**–Eastern Peer Support Network – Eastern Health

**Sherie Stiefler**–Peninsula peer hub – Mentis Assist



# Overview of presentation

**Presenter: Cassy Nunan  
(Wellways, MI Fellowship)**

- Rationale and evidence base
- Regional peer hub/network presentations
  - Grampians Network
  - Great South Coast
  - Melbourne East
  - Peninsula
- Workshop/discussion



# Rationale for peer hubs/networks

## **Peer support is effective but workers face challenges:**

- ▶ Carter and Repper (2011) report that peer support offers tremendous outcomes for service users – peer workers face many challenges in their roles.

## **Government has ratified and funded peer programs:**

- ▶ ‘Recovery is a vision and commitment shared at all levels of an organisation. The vision is sustained by a diverse, appropriately supported and resourced workforce that includes people with lived experience. It includes peer-run programs and services’ (Commonwealth Framework for Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Services 2013, p. 17).



# Rationale for peer hubs/networks

## Challenges, according to the evidence:

- Peer worker job descriptions are unclear
- There is often lack of support in the workplace for peer roles
- Peer workers rarely access role specific training
- There are challenges in maintaining the distinct 'peer' practice approach
- Role isolation (ie. being the only person in a region, in a peer support role)



## Rationale cont..

### Impacts, according to the evidence:

- Difficulties maintaining boundaries with participants
- Low confidence in the role
- Challenges maintaining self-care
- Other staff not understanding the role
- Stigma in teams (other staff devaluing the role)
- Feeling stressed and overworked
- High turn over of peer worker employees

Repper & Carter 2011. 'A review of the literature on peer support in mental health services. *Journal of Mental Health*, 20(4). pp.392-411.

Moran et al. 2012. 'Challenges Experienced by Paid Peer Providers in Mental Health Recovery: A qualitative Study. *Community Mental Health Journal*.



**Presenter: Cassy Nunan**

## **Purpose of Peer Hubs**

Peer Hubs/networks are a practice focussed forum that seek to rectify the challenges faced by peer workers. Generally, Peer Hubs focus on:

- Professional development to ensure rigour and affirm the integrity of specialised peer work roles
- Reflective practice to hone skills
- Debriefing challenges relating to using lived experience, and reflections about self-care approaches,
- Discussing workplace co-option challenges, stigma and discrimination – and reflect on strategies to address these
- Networking opportunities



# GRAMPIANS PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Rick Corney

## Formation, membership and stakeholders:

- ▶ Paul Hartwood / MIND formed the network with support from his management
- ▶ The network held its first meeting in mid 2014
- ▶ The network has support from the members employers to meet bi-monthly with no funding.
- ▶ Our membership is made up of Consumer Consultants, Peer Workers & Carer Consultants
- ▶ Organisations represented include both Clinical & Community services – Wimmera Uniting Care, Ballarat Health Services, MIND, ACSO, MI Fellowship & Grampians Community Health



# GRAMPIANS PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Rick Corney

## Network Focus Areas

- Building relationships with fellow peers
- Who is doing what within their respective organisations
- A confidential environment for discussion
- Support for one another
- For some members, this is the only form of peer support they receive in their role
- Taking ideas or information back to respective organisations





# GRAMPIANS PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Rick Corney

## Challenges

- The vastness and diversity of the region, we cover (40,000 sq. km)
- Finding a location for meetings to limit travel time
- Identifying the differences in employment roles and the impact that has on members feeling valued by their employers

## Vision/moving forward

- Growing the network membership
- Help to establish similar networks in other regions
- Will we have the ongoing support of our organisations if the funding model changes under the NDIS



# GREAT SOUTH COAST PEER NETWORK

**Presenter: Darren Dorey**

## **Formation, Membership and stakeholders**

- ▶ Formed with support from the organisations employing Peer Workers, recognising the need for support and direction for a relatively new work force. We were aware that we could collaborate with each other and forge a path to a better understanding of the potential for Peer work. We recognised that we could support each other through the challenges that often organisations don't perceive.
- ▶ There's a possibility of funding being allocated to the hub.
- ▶ Membership comprises eleven workers from four organisations: two Consumer Peer Support workers, one Consumer Consultant and one Carer Consultant from South West Health Care Mental Health Services; a Consumer Peer Support Worker from Acso. From MI Fellowship, one Consumer Peer Support Worker, two Carer Peer facilitators and three Consumer Peer Facilitators; and a Peer Facilitator from Brophy.



# GREAT SOUTH COAST PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Darren Dorey

## Network Focus Areas

- Professional development,
- Workforce development,
- Reflective practice,
- Peer to peer support,
- And debriefing



# GREAT SOUTH COAST PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Darren Dorey

## ***Benefits and Outcomes***

- ▶ The greatest benefit is being able to share experiences and challenges, without fear of repercussion or feeling inadequate in the normal work place

## **Challenges**

- ▶ The biggest challenge has been the fact that a majority of us work part time and finding a mutual time when we can all meet has been hard. Also the growing and varied work load that we all experience means that often we are not able to attend regular catch ups.
- ▶ - Clear communication from affiliated organisations around support (if any) that they are prepared to provide.
- ▶ - Knowing how to move forward and also, the Tyranny of Distance



# GREAT SOUTH COAST PEER NETWORK

Presenter: Darren Dorey

## *Vision/moving forward*

- To continue providing mutual support while adapting to meet the needs of a growing work force.
- To introduce professional development pathways and seek ongoing funding to support this.



# Eastern Peer Support Network

Presenter: Paula Kelly

## Formation, membership and stakeholders:

- Was formed under an alliance of both clinical and community Mental Health and AOD Eastern Region stakeholders to respond to the need to identify, support and foster the Peer Workforce in the region
- Funded by former Medicare Local (now Eastern Melbourne phn) as pilot project
- Those involved include carer and consumer peer workers from clinical and community organisations
- Formed partnerships with Peak bodies such as VMIAC, SHARC/APSU



# Eastern Peer Support Network

Presenter: Paula Kelly

## Network focus areas:

- The network was co-designed to meet the needs of participants, including workforce development, peer to peer support, gaining knowledge about service providers in the region, and networking opportunities amongst liked minded people.



# Eastern Peer Support Network

Presenter: Paula Kelly

- **Benefits:** Loss of the siloed and lone worker effect that peers feel, often as a result of working part time and in most cases being the only peers at the service.
- **Outcomes:**
  - Identified lack of training and education opportunities as pathways to employment.
  - Identified the lack of availability of reflective practice and peer to peer supervision.
  - Recognised that non peer-workers within the sector had very little knowledge of the roles and benefits of the peer workforce. A large amount of peers work in unidentified peer roles.





# Eastern Peer Support Network

Presenter: Paula Kelly

## Challenges:

- Not all services engaged.
- The funding was very limited and for short time, with no further funding offered.

## Vision/moving forward:

- Regional evidence that identified the needs and potential benefits of a peer network proved to be correct. The hub demonstrated the need for peer workers to work together in a community of practice, with the hope to ensure ongoing best practice within the peer workforce



# PENINSULA PEER HUB

Presenter: Sherie Stiefler

## Formation, Membership and Stakeholders

- Hub formation was initially driven by the Operations Manager at Peninsula Health who brought together the clinical and community mental health services. A working party was formed to develop the peer workforce on the Frankston Mornington Peninsula and it was recognised a space for peer reflection was needed.
- One block funding was provided by Medicare Local.
- Consumer and carer workers and volunteers from both clinical and community organisations. The membership is also extended to peer workers in the AOD sector.



# PENINSULA PEER HUB

Presenter: Sherie Stiefler

## Hub Focus Areas:

- ▶ The hub is used for peer to peer support, group reflective practice, and professional and workforce development.
- ▶ We are also looking at introducing innovative service delivery for the area.



# PENINSULA PEER HUB

Presenter: Sherie Stiefler

## Benefits and Outcomes:

- Consumer and carer peer workers have a space to share what is working well and what is not, while receiving feedback and support.
- We are able to take good ideas back to our organisations to enhance practice.
- We learn from each other individually and share training that benefits all.
- The benefits flow on to those we support and the organisations we work for.



# PENINSULA PEER HUB

Presenter: Sherie Stiefler

## Challenges:

- The Hub is not peer led and run, it is overseen by the original Working Party and much still has to be authorised by that group.
- Negotiating time to attend the Hub can be difficult due to many workers being part-time.
- The value in the Hub may not be a priority at times for organisations.



# PENINSULA PEER HUB

Presenter: Sherie Stiefler

## Vision/moving forward

- To be peer led and run.
- To enhance services in our region.
- For all organisations to value the benefits of the Hub for workers, organisations and the region thereby viewing attendance as best practice.



# Summary

Presenter: Cassy Nunan

## Benefits and outcomes:

- Hubs have proven to be an appropriate and beneficial response to needs, such as practice and skill development, support and debriefing. They also offer affirmation for a workforce that is often not understood or recognised as making a valuable contribution.
- Connection for workers in unique roles (often part-time and 'siloed') and a profession that is in early days of development.
- Can confront challenges that are often not recognised.
- Diverse and dedicated membership offers significant learnings.
- Progressing the professionalism of the workforce, with flow-on benefits for participants and host organisations.



# Summary

Presenter: Cassy Nunan

## Challenges

- Ongoing funding to co-ordinate and cover expenses.
- Being valued and supported in an ongoing manner by host organisations
- Not all hubs are peer run
- Co-ordinating members to meet when many are part-time and in wide-spread locations.

## Vision

- To progress the professionalism of the peer workforce, as integral to mental health service provision.
- Expansion of the development of peer hubs/networks across Victoria.



# Discussion

