

# Enhancing Your Peer Support Skills

Live & On-line Peer Support Training  
Facilitated by Kim Sunderland & Hayley Peek

**Sep 28 – Oct 1 & Oct 5 – Oct 8**  
**8:30 am to 12:30 pm EST**

Conducted via Zoom

*Peer Support is rooted in the wisdom that comes from an individual's lived experience, paired with a desire and aptitude to offer support to others who are experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges.*

*This 4-day workshop (held on-line over 8 mornings) will use Zoom to connect participants. A conversational learning approach is used along with many opportunities for interactive exercises, role plays, and self-reflection. Participants are required to attend all 8 on-line sessions (to the best of their ability).*

## **Workshop Objectives:**

*To enhance peer support capabilities by learning more about, and practicing skills related to, the principles of peer support.*

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Gain confidence and knowledge about, and grow their ability to offer, peer support in accordance with the MHCC Peer Support Guidelines.
- Better understand the peer support principles of hope, recovery, self-determination, empowerment, and trust, and have opportunities to practice how these principles are fostered within relationships.
- Gain knowledge about communication techniques that honour peer support principles and trauma informed care, and have practice using them.
- Better understand the range of professional and personal boundaries related to peer support, and have practice in managing boundaries.
- Learn more about resiliency and self care, and reflect on their own practices.

## **Facilitator Bios:**

Kim Sunderland has promoted peer support programs in community, clinical settings and workplaces across Canada since 2010. Kim is co-author of the MHCC Guidelines for the Practice and Training of Peer Support, and the inaugural Executive Director of Peer Support Canada.

Hayley Peek chose to use her lived experience with mental health to inspire her consulting career. She has Facilitated Peer Support Trainings, contributed to a panel of experts on the topic of Peer Support, and co-created a workplace interactive workshop that's focused on how to support someone in struggle.

## **Self Assessment – Are you suited to be a Peer Supporter?**

Do these primary characteristics of a peer supporter match with your lived experience and preferred approach?

- Do you have lived experience with mental health and/or substance use challenges, and are now in a positive state of recovery?
- Do you wish to offer emotional, social, and practical support to others who are currently experiencing challenges?
- Are you willing to practice active listening with an open-mind and no judgement (rather than provide unsolicited advice believing that you have the answer to another's problem)?
- Are you willing to support another person as they try to find their own path towards wellness?
- As you strive to empathize with the person you are supporting, are you able to relate to your own lived experience?

*“Peer Support is about being an expert at not being an expert and that takes a lot of expertise.”*  
*Recovery Innovations*

# Enhancing Your Peer Support Skills : Module Outline

**Note:** Time spent within each module will vary depending on the group. Opportunities exist for participants with existing peer support experience to ask questions about past challenging peer support experiences, and/or to take a deeper dive into some topics.

## Module 1: Getting Ready for the Day

- Safe Spaces and Guidelines for the Day
- Confidentiality
- Emotional Self-Awareness
- What is Peer Support

## Module 2: Key Principles of Peer Support

- Hope
- Non-Judgemental Acceptance
- Listening, Being, and Empathy
- Recovery
- Self-Determination (Choice)
- Empowerment

## Module 3: Supportive Communication Techniques

- Communication Techniques: OARS
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Holistic Support
- Goal Setting and Change
- Affirm and Reframe
- Power Mitigation & Relationships

## Module 4: Resiliency, Self Care, and Personal Growth

Module 4a) – Resiliency *(Note: Module 4a completes Day 1)*

- What is Resiliency
- The Impact of Hope, Neurobiology
- Experimenting with Resiliency Practices

Module 4b) – Self-Care *(Note: Module 4b completes Day 2)*

- Why is Self-Care Important?
- Reactionary Self-Care vs Maintenance Self-Care
- Overcoming Hurdles that keep us from our Self-Care

Module 4c) – Professional Growth *(Note: Module 4c completes Day 3)*

- Acknowledging Our Fears
- Understanding the Need for Compassionate Personal Boundaries
- Continuing Your Professional Development

## **Module 5: Supporting Through Crisis**

- Acknowledging Our Concerns
- What Makes a Situation a Crisis
- Supporting Through Crisis
- Exploring Community Resources

## **Module 5b: Supporting Through Risk of Suicide**

- How to Ask? What to Do?
- What Makes a Situation a Crisis
- Supporting Through Crisis
- Exploring Community Resources

*(Note that this is NOT a suicide intervention course. Suicide intervention concepts will be discussed as we explore our role as peer supporters. Courses such as ASSIST or SAFEtalk are recommended for the full breadth of suicide intervention skills.)*

## **Module 6: Learning More About Specific Challenges**

- Social Challenges:
  - Supporting through Stigma
  - Social Determinants of Health
- Professional Challenges:
  - The difference between Advocacy and Peer Support
  - Managing Professional Boundaries
- Learning More about Specific Challenges
  - Who should we be learning from? How do we learn more?
  - Trauma Informed Practices
  - Sharing your Story

## **Module 7: Summary: Pulling It All Together**

- Final Review of Principles of Peer Support, Values, Code of Conduct, Knowledge & Competency Expectations
- The Value of Resiliency, Self-Care, and On-going Professional Development
- Reflection of how ready you feel to offer formal (or informal) peer support; What is your plan for continuing skill development?
- Reflection of how to maintain your wellness, and what to do if you notice your wellness slipping.
- Reflection of how to connect with a peer support community to stay grounded in peer support principles.