



Scottish Recovery Network

Formalised Peer Support Approaches

Benefits and Application in Scotland



Aims of SRN

- SRN aims to
 - Raise awareness of recovery
 - Develop our understanding of recovery
 - Build capacity by sharing information and by supporting efforts to promote recovery

Key tasks

- Narrative research project
- Communicating recovery
- Building capacity for recovery
- Practice development and influence

What is peer support

Using personal knowledge and experience of a particular issue to help and support others who are experiencing that same issue.

Formalised peer support

- Many different types exist
- Formal and informal peer support
- Formal peer support:
 - Training and employment of peer specialist workers to complement existing range of service
 - Lived experience is initial qualification
- One approach – does not reduce importance of existing peer support

The recent history

- International links and IIMHL
- SRN conference December 05
- Craigmillar pilot project
 - META training course and first Scottish graduates
 - Current recruitment
- Scoping exercise
- Delivering for Mental Health commitment

Peer support and recovery?

- Modelling and recovery
- Importance of support from peers regularly cited
- Closely aligned to recovery ethos
- Can promote better outcomes
- Impact on wider culture in service
- Can promote engagement

Peer support and recovery?

- Long standing demands for greater user involvement in services
- Employs people with experience of mental health problems
- Gives an opportunity to contribute and 'give back'
- Powerful empathetic relationship

Role and function

- Partly defined by setting
- More work required to define role in Scottish context
- 'Model' recovery and describe recovery process
- Use own recovery story in work
- Opportunity for service users to direct own care and recovery processes

Role and function

- Social, emotional support
- Based on developing knowledge of elements of recovery
- Ensure a forward looking wellness focus using recovery tools and techniques (WRAP?)
- Advanced statements
- Particular role in transitions?

Scoping Exercise

- Enthusiasm
- Questions on how fit
- Literature Review
- Focus groups
- What can formalised peer support add
- Support required

The added value to peer provider

- Increase in self esteem
- Empowerment
- Opportunity to develop skills and use experience
- Helper principle
- Employment
- Mutual relationship with peers

The added value to peer recipients

- “Been through the same as you”
- “Can guide you according to their experience”
- Trust
- Equality of relationship
- Instil hope
- Doing something for selves, not having done to

The added value to organisation

- Promoting Change
- Learning
- Change mindset. Change values
- “Putting money where mouth is” – with regard to involvement
- Expand the range of services

The impact

Studies suggest

- Larger social support networks
- Gains in quality of life and well being
- Enhanced self esteem and social functioning
- As effective, or more effective, than non-peer provided services
- Reduced hospitalisation

Concerns

- Role conflict
- Dual roles
- Confidentiality
- Ensuring user leadership
- Stressful nature of the role
- Peer specialists in existing statutory mental health teams?

Overcoming concerns

- Planning in partnership
- Clarity of role (negotiated job descriptions)
- Agreed procedures and policies
- Training for peers
- Support and supervision
- Supportive organisation and team
- Open dialogue, training for team, organisational development interventions

Making it work

1. “services must be aligned with consumer/service user objectives”
2. “administrators and clinicians must “buy-in” to the recovery philosophy. Typical efforts to elicit this buy-in include exhortation, training, and organisational development interventions”. Sabin and Daniels,

Final thoughts

- Not a panacea but will work well for some
- Recognise the challenge of this type of change
- Does not replace or downgrade other forms of peer support
- Exciting opportunity but all learning!

Contacts

SRN

- info@scottishrecovery.net
- www.scottishrecovery.net
 - Access papers and articles on formalised peer support including scoping exercise lit review
 - Join SRN mailing list
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The Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health

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- 0131 555 5959