

# Evidence Brief: Peer Support Workers

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Produced by the HEE Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer a quick overview of the published reports, research and evidence on a workforce-related topic. A starter for 10 on the evidence if you will.

**Please acknowledge this work in any resulting paper or presentation as:**

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## Key publications – the big picture

[The NHS Long Term Plan](#) January 2019, NHS

See p. 90 The NHS Long Term Plan was developed in partnership with those who know the NHS best – frontline health and care staff, patients and their families and other experts.

“Examples of specific requirement in the Workforce Implementation Plan” which highlights Peer Support Workers

[NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24](#) July 2019, NHS

At the beginning of the year, the NHS Long Term Plan renewed our commitment to pursue the most ambitious transformation of mental health care England has ever known. Today, the Mental Health Implementation Plan provides a new framework to ensure we deliver on this commitment at the local level. The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health, published in 2016, represented a major step, securing an additional £1 billion in funding for mental health, so that an additional 1 million people could access high quality services by 2020/21.

[Peer Support Workers' Benchmarking report](#) September 2020, Health Education England

The National Workforce Stocktake and Benchmarking Study of Mental Health Peer Support Workers was undertaken between January and April 2020, with the objective of providing a comprehensive snapshot of the size and shape of the Peer Support Worker profession's contribution to mental health services in England on 30th September 2019. It ran alongside a separate data collection on the prevalence of Social Workers within mental health services in England. The project was commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) and undertaken by the NHS Benchmarking Network. The workforce stocktake aimed to provide a detailed profile of Peer Support

Workers employed within NHS mental health services and the associated delivery context including the following themes:

- Service provision and activity
- Workforce size
- Workforce demographics
- Workforce key performance indicators including sickness, vacancies and temporary staffing

[Exploration of peer support models to support LGBTQ+ people with their mental health](#) 2020, Central for Mental Health

The aim is to help Health Education England in its wider consideration of peer support roles, to review how, for LGBTQ+ communities, there is a particular interest in how to ensure both life experience and mental health experience can be used in a positive way to support others.

[Peer support models for children and young people with mental health problems](#) 2020, Centre for Mental Health

This piece consults secondary research from a wide range of sources, ranging from government reports to third sector studies and both qualitative and quantitative pieces. This is in conjunction with our primary research involving first-hand visits and interviews with service providers and schools.

[Peer support and peer support workers in older people's mental health](#) 2020, Centre for Mental Health

The term 'Older People' is widely used in the NHS to describe people over an arbitrary, but sometimes unspecified age. Yet it otherwise covers the full spectrum of humanity. It is generally applied to people over 'normal working age', which has become an inexact term in recent times due to changes to state pensionable age. Chronological age may be an obvious indicator of growing older, but differences in ageing are dictated by biological, psychological 'how old do I feel?' and social 'how old am I perceived to be?' factors. Some services for older people are provided to anyone aged 50+ on the basis that factors

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associated with later life such as retiring or retirement planning, the onset of health conditions associated with being older and children being grown up (and having children of their own) are common events from this age onwards.

[Peer support roles in mental health services](#) May 2016, Iriss  
Key points: Peer support is not new and exists in many forms, from informal sharing of experiences, to formalised peer support roles (paid and unpaid) in services.

- Through the development of formalised peer support roles, people with lived experience of mental health problems are trained and employed to support others.
- An increasing number of organisations and services are developing peer support roles. There are now around 80 paid posts in mental health services and a far higher number of unpaid role

[Peer support in mental health care: is it good value for money?](#)  
June 2013, Centre for Mental Health  
Peer support workers - people with their own lived experience of mental illness - provide mutually supportive relationships in secondary mental health services. Increasing numbers are being employed, both in this country and elsewhere. But good quality evidence on the effectiveness of this form of service delivery is in short supply and even less is known about its cost-effectiveness.

[Peer support workers: theory and practice](#) June 2013, Centre for Mental Health  
Peer support is “offering and receiving help, based on shared understanding, respect and mutual empowerment between people in similar situations”. In this paper we will examine the concepts and principles of peer support and present examples from organisations which now have peers in their workforce.

[Peer support workers: a practice guide to implementation](#)  
October 2012, Centre for Mental Health

Our experience with the ImROC programme has led us to the conclusion that the widespread introduction of people with lived experience of mental health problems into the mental health workforce is probably the single most important factor contributing to changes towards more recovery-oriented services. In the first paper on this topic (Repper, 2013) we discussed the theoretical background, core principles and the range of potential benefits. In this paper we will discuss practical issues of implementation in more detail.

## Case Studies

[An evaluation of Mental Health Peer Support groups across Buckinghamshire](#) March 2017, HealthWatch Bucks

What was the project about?

Healthwatch Bucks commissioned Buckinghamshire Mind to undertake an evaluation of mental health peer support groups across the county over a period of four months, from October 2016 to January 2017. The research focuses on:

- Current provision
- Defining the unmet need
- Exploring the key features of best practice
- Proposing a costed way forward More detail on each of these areas can be found in the attached appendices. Each appendix is designed to be a stand-alone document to support voluntary sector organisations in the county to implement a peer support programme.

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[Our recovery journey: two stories of changes within Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust](#) March 2015, Mental Health and Social Inclusion *Abstract only*\*

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to describe Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust's journey of developing more recovery-focused services from two perspectives: that of the Trust project lead for recovery and that of a Recovery College Student and Peer Support Worker.

Design/methodology/approach: First person, narrative account from the Trust project lead for recovery and that of a Recovery College Student and Peer Support Worker. Findings: Reflective account describing process and progress made towards establishing a Recovery College and Peer Support Worker Posts in Clinical Teams.

[Video: Peer Support](#) March 2016, Henry Shepherd  
Film about Peer Support workers in the NHS.

[Peer Support Workers](#) n.d., Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Peer support workers are people who have experienced mental health problems either themselves or as a carer. They are employed by the Trust to use their experience to support others on their recovery journey. These individuals complement the Trust's mental health worker expertise and knowledge with their own insight, experience and suggestions.

[Regional Peer Support Workers Forum – embedding and developing the peer support worker role across the region](#) Spring 2018, Healthcare Library Northern Ireland

The formation of the Regional Peer Support Workers Forum began in early 2016, alongside the introduction of peer support workers into the statutory mental health services. The implementation of this exciting new role formed part of the

cultural shift within services to utilise the abilities, skills and perspectives of those of us with lived experience of recovery from mental ill health.

## HEE Star

More resources and tools are available in the “**New Roles**” section or by searching “**peer support workers**” in the [HEE Star](#)

## Statistics

You can find relevant statistics on the [Health and Care Statistics Landscape](#) under “**Health and Care**” and use the “**Mental Health and Dementia**” filter

## HEE National Data Programme

HEE staff can look at the [National Data Warehouse \(NDL\)](#) SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

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### Published Peer Reviewed Research

#### Systematic Reviews and Literature Reviews

[A systematic review of influences on implementation of peer support work for adults with mental health problems](#) March 2020, Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology

Purpose: The evidence base for peer support work in mental health is established, yet implementation remains a challenge. The aim of this systematic review was to identify influences which facilitate or are barriers to implementation of mental health peer support work.

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[Potential Benefits of Incorporating Peer-to-Peer Interactions Into Digital Interventions for Psychotic Disorders: A Systematic Review](#) April 2018, Psychiatric Services

Peer-to-peer interactions and support groups mitigate experiences of social isolation and loneliness often reported by individuals with psychotic disorders. Online peer-to-peer communication can promote broader use of this form of social support. Peer-to-peer interactions occur naturally on social media platforms, but they can negatively affect mental health.

[Peer support workers: evidence-based workforce knowledge summary](#) March 2017, Surrey and Sussex Library and Knowledge Services on behalf of HEE

This is one of a series of bulletins providing an outline of the evidence-base for workforce interventions that have been identified as important in transforming models of care. The bulletin summarises the findings of a more detailed literature review commissioned by Health Education England, details of which are available alongside this summary on HEE Star

[Peer workers' perceptions and experiences of barriers to implementation of peer worker roles in mental health services: A literature review](#) August 2016, International Journal of Nursing Studies

Peer workers perceive and experience personal, interpersonal and contextual barriers to their integration in mental health services. An integrative multi-level approach is needed to address these barriers and to establish an authentic integration of peer workers. A literature review was designed to answer the following question: What are peer workers' perceptions and experiences of barriers to the implementation of peer worker roles in mental health services

[Online Peer-to-Peer Support for Young People With Mental Health Problems: A Systematic Review](#) 2015, JMIR Mental Health

Adolescence and early adulthood are critical periods for the development of mental disorders. Online peer-to-peer communication is popular among young people and may improve mental health by providing social support. Previous systematic reviews have targeted Internet support groups for adults with mental health problems, including depression. However, there have been no systematic reviews examining the

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effectiveness of online peer-to-peer support in improving the mental health of adolescents and young adults.

[Peer Support Workers in Health: a qualitative metasynthesis of their experiences](#) October 2015, PLOS ONE

Peer support models, where an individual has a specific illness or lifestyle experience and supports others experiencing similar challenges, have frequently been used in different fields of healthcare to successfully engage hard-to-reach groups. Despite recognition of their value, the impact of these roles on the peer has not been systematically assessed. By synthesising the qualitative literature we sought to review such an impact, providing a foundation for designing future clinical peer models

[Telephone based self-management support by 'lay health workers' and 'peer support workers' to prevent and manage vascular diseases: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#) December 2013, BMC Health Services

Improved prevention and management of vascular disease is a global priority. Non-health care professionals (such as, 'lay health workers' and 'peer support workers') are increasingly being used to offer telephone support alongside that offered by conventional services, to reach disadvantaged populations and to provide more efficient delivery of care. However, questions remain over the impact of such interventions, particularly on a wider range of vascular related conditions (such as, chronic kidney disease), and it is unclear how different types of telephone support impact on outcome.

[Consumer-providers of care for adult clients of statutory mental health services](#) March 2013, The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews

*HEE Knowledge Management Team, January 2021*

In mental health services, the past several decades has seen a slow but steady trend towards employment of past or present consumers of the service to work alongside mental health professionals in providing services. However the effects of this employment on clients (service recipients) and services has remained unclear.

[Using personal experience to support other with similar difficulties](#) September 2010, University of Nottingham

The support that people with experience of mental health problems provide for one another has been well described in self-help literature (e.g. Chamberlin, 1988) and in accounts of living in the old asylums (c.f. Porter, 1987). This mutual or peer support appears to offer particular or additional value because “.. they have found their way out of the hole that you find yourself in” (Arnold, 2009) so the experience has credibility, peers embody personal inspiration and hope, and they can share practical strategies and coping mechanisms.

## Competencies

[Mental health nurses and mental health peer workers: Self-perceptions of role-related clinical competences](#) June 2018, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**

In a mental healthcare that embraces a recovery-oriented practice, the employment of mental health peer workers is encouraged. Although peer workers are increasingly working together with nurses, there is a lack of research that explores how nurses and peer workers perceive their role-related competences in clinical practice. The aim of this study was to clarify and understand these self-perceptions in order to identify the specificity and potential complementarity of both roles.

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[Professional competencies for promoting recovery in mental illness](#) 2012, Psychiatry: interpersonal and biological processes *Abstract only*\*

This study explored professional caregiving from the perspective of people diagnosed with schizophrenia to develop proposed professional competencies for promoting recovery. We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with 40 people diagnosed with schizophrenia to explore their experiences of caregiving.

[Recovery-promoting professional competencies: perspectives of mental health consumers, consumer-providers and providers](#) 2011, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required*\*

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to empirically validate a set of conceptually derived recovery-promoting competencies from the perspectives of mental health consumers, consumer-providers and providers. Methods: A national sample of 603 consumers, 153 consumer-providers and 239 providers completed an anonymous survey via the Internet. The survey

*HEE Knowledge Management Team, January 2021*

evaluated respondents' perceptions about a set of 37 competencies hypothesized to enhance clients' hope and empowerment and inquired about interactions with providers that enhanced clients' recovery process.

### Defining the role

[Patient, client, consumer, survivor or other alternatives? A scoping review of preferred terms for labelling individuals who access healthcare across settings](#) March 2019, BMJ Open

Objectives: Use of the term 'patient' has been recently debated, compared with alternatives including 'consumer' and 'client'. This scoping study aimed to provide an integrated view of preferred labels across healthcare contexts and countries to clarify labelling preferences of individuals accessing healthcare.

[Clarifying the role of the mental health peer specialist in Massachusetts, USA: insights from peer specialists, supervisors and clients](#) January 2014, Health and Social Care in the Community *Abstract only*\*

Mental health peer specialists develop peer-to-peer relationships of trust with clients to improve their health and well-being, functioning in ways similar to community health workers. Although the number of peer specialists in use has been increasing, their role in care teams is less defined than that of the community health worker.

[What do peer support workers do? A job description](#) July 2012, BMC Health Services Research

The extant literature suggests that poorly defined job roles make it difficult for peer support workers to be successful, and hinder their integration into multi-disciplinary workplace teams. This

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article uses data gathered as part of a participatory evaluation of a peer support program at a psychiatric tertiary care facility to specify the work that peers do.

### Implementation

[Peer specialists: Exploring the influence of program structure on their emerging role](#) August 2019, Psychological Services

Although peer specialists play an increasing role in mental health service delivery, little is known about the best program structures for maximizing effective service delivery. This study reports on qualitative data from a larger study on peer specialists working with veterans in a Veterans Affairs homelessness program who were dually diagnosed with substance abuse and mental health concerns.

[Welcoming peer workers in NHS settings: facilitating readiness with an Early Intervention in Psychosis team](#) January 2019, Mental Health and Social Inclusion

Purpose A pilot project commissioned to assess feasibility and impact of peer support in an Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) service highlighted the importance of team readiness. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the lessons learned in recognising and facilitating team readiness in an NHS setting.

[What happens when peer support workers are introduced as members of community-based clinical mental health service delivery teams: a qualitative study](#) May 2019, Journal of Interprofessional Care *Abstract only\**

The insights of people who have experienced mental health issues are at the core of recovery frameworks. The inclusion of

peer support workers in clinical care teams is crucial to a recovery-supportive focus.

[An exploration of factors that effect the implementation of peer support services in community mental health settings](#) February 2018, Community Mental Health Journal *Abstract only\**

This study explored the integration of peer services into community mental health settings through qualitative interviews with peer-providers and non-peer mental health workers. Results show peer job satisfaction was contingent upon role clarity, autonomy, and acceptance by non-peer coworkers.

[The implementation of a peer support scheme in an assertive rehabilitation ward in high secure forensic services](#) 2017, Mental Health and Social Inclusion *Abstract only\**

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the implementation of a peer support volunteer scheme in a high secure setting and to explore the peer support volunteer's experiences conducting this role, based predominantly on an assertive rehabilitation ward.

[Introducing New Peer Worker Roles into Mental Health Services in England: Comparative Case Study Research Across a Range of Organisational Contexts](#) November 2015, Administration and policy in Mental Health *Athens log in required\**

A wide variety of peer worker roles is being introduced into mental health services internationally. Empirical insight into whether conditions supporting role introduction are common across organisational contexts is lacking.

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[Implementation of consumer providers into mental health intensive case management teams](#) January 2015, The Journal of Behavioural Health Services and Research

In mental health care, consumer providers (CPs) are individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) who draw upon their lived experiences while providing services to others with SMI. Implementation of CPs has proven to be challenging in a variety of settings.

[No difference in psychosocial and mental health outcomes for clients receiving statutory mental health services from consumer-providers compared to professionals](#) August 2013, Evidence-based mental health *Athens log in required\**

Outcomes: Outcomes for clients in receipt of statutory mental health services: psychosocial well-being (quality of life, function, social relations), mental health outcomes (general symptoms, depression) and adverse events and adverse effects not otherwise captured.

[Toward the implementation of mental health consumer provider services](#) April 2006, The Journal of Behavioural Health Services and Research *Athens log in required\**

Encouraged by the New Freedom Commission, mental health systems such as the Veteran Administration (VA) are now becoming more recovery-oriented. Consumer providers (CPs)--those with serious mental illness who are further along in recovery who provide services to others with similar mental health problems--are viewed as a key part of this change.

## Impact/ Effect

[A critical discussion of Peer Workers: implications for the mental health nursing workforce](#) March 2016, Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**

The Partners in Recovery (PIR) programme is a recent Australian national policy initiative that employs Peer Workers (PWs) who have a lived experience of mental health problems in a variety of roles.

[Developing a change model for peer worker interventions in mental health services: a qualitative research study](#) October 2015, Epidemiology and Psychiatric Services *Athens log in required\**

A range of peer worker roles are being introduced into mental health services internationally. There is some evidence that attests to the benefits of peer workers for the people they support but formal trial evidence is inconclusive, in part because the change model underpinning peer support-based interventions is underdeveloped.

## Practice examples

[Peer specialists in suicide prevention: Possibilities and pitfalls](#) August 2019, Psychological Services *Athens log in required\**

The emergence of peer specialists with histories of suicidality in mental health care services is a recent but scarcely researched societal phenomenon. The current study aimed to explore how peer specialists who have experienced suicidality (either attempted suicide or suicidal ideation) use their experiences to contribute to suicide prevention in mental health care services.

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[Developing peer support worker roles: reflecting on experienced in Scotland](#) August 2019, Mental Health and Social Inclusion *Abstract only\**

This article describes the development of peer support roles and programmes in Scotland, and includes findings from an evaluation of a peer support worker pilot scheme. The evaluation assessed the impact of the pilot on service users, peer support workers and the wider service system, along with considering the issues involved in implementing peer support programmes.

[Strategic Storytelling: An Exploration of the Professional Practices of Mental Health Peer Providers](#) July 2019, Qualitative Health Research *Abstract only\**

Peer providers of mental health services use their personal illness and recovery narratives to help other mental health service users. Despite a substantial body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of these providers, little is known about the underlying strategies they employ in their professional practice.

[Emerging Roles for Peer Providers in Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders](#) June 2018, American Journal of Preventative Medicine

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess states with best practices in peer provider workforce development and employment. A growing body of research demonstrates that peer providers with lived experience contribute positively to the treatment and recovery of individuals with behavioral health needs. Increased employment opportunities have led to policy concerns about training, certification, roles, and reimbursement for peer provider services.

[Military veteran engagement with mental health and well-being services: a qualitative study of the role of the peer support worker](#) August 2017, Journal of Mental Health

Background: Many UK military veterans experiencing mental health and well-being difficulties do not engage with support services to get the help they need. Some mental health clinics employ Peer Support Workers to help veteran patients engage, however it is not known how the role influences UK veteran engagement.

[A Peer Mentorship Program for Mental Health Professionals in Veterans Health Administration Home-Based Primary Care](#) 2017, Clinical Gerontologist *Abstract only\**

Objectives: Mental health professionals working in integrated, interdisciplinary primary or geriatric care settings may have limited training for this growing model of care. Peer mentorship is one avenue of professional development support. We describe the development and evaluation of a peer mentorship program for mental health professionals working within Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) programs.

[Using Peer Navigators to Address the Integrated Health Care Needs of Homeless African Americans With Serious Mental Illness](#) March 2017, Psychiatric Services

Objective—Impact of a peer navigator program (PNP) developed by a community based participatory research team was examined on African Americans with serious mental illness who were homeless.

[An Innovative Model of Depression Care Delivery: Peer Mentors in Collaboration with a Mental Health Professional to Relieve](#)

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[Depression in Older Adults](#) May 2016, The American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry

Objectives—Traditional mental health services are not used by a majority of older adults with depression, suggesting a need for new methods of health service delivery. We conducted a pilot study using peer mentors to deliver depression care to older adults in collaboration with a mental health professional. We evaluated the acceptability of peer mentors to older adults and examined patient experiences of the intervention.

[Peer support workers: an untapped resource in primary mental health care](#) March 2015, Journal of Primary Health Care

The treatment of moderate to severe mental illness in a primary health care setting is an area under development and can be contentious. The capacity, capability, resourcing and willingness of staff and organisations all feature in the discussions among specialist services and primary health care providers about the opportunities and barriers associated with primary mental health care. This paper presents the peer support worker as an untapped resource that has the potential to support the patient, primary health care staff, and general practitioner in the care of people who fall outside the current understanding of 'mild' mental health problems, but who would nonetheless benefit from receiving their care in a primary health care setting

[Improving access to primary mental health services: are link workers the answer?](#) 2014, London Journal of Primary Care

Key messages: Mental health link workers placed in general practices improve access to talking therapies for black and minority ethnic communities. Collaborative networks in healthcare involving primary care can support and facilitate quality improvements in mental health care for people from black and minority ethnic communities.

*HEE Knowledge Management Team, January 2021*

[Peer workers' role in smoking-cessation groups for people with mental illness](#) June 2013, Australasian Psychiatry *Abstract only*\*

Objectives: The objective of this article is to evaluate the impact of peer workers' involvement as co-leaders in smoking-cessation programmes provided within mental health services.

[Early experiences of employing consumer-providers in the VA](#)

November 2008, Psychiatric Services  
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)—the largest integrated health system in the world—is implementing recommendations from the President's New Freedom Commission for the care of people with serious mental illness ( [1](#) ). The commission's 2003 report concluded that to improve access to care and quality of care, systems need to be more recovery oriented and services need to be of high quality and consistent with evidence-based practices.

## Challenges/benefits

[Challenges faced by peer support workers during the integration into hospital-based mental health-care teams: Results from a qualitative interview study](#) May 2020, The International Journal of Social Psychiatry *Abstract only*\*

BACKGROUND Being aware of the challenges that may occur during the implementation of peer support work in psychiatry is important to facilitate the integration of peer support workers (PSWs) into multidisciplinary mental health-care teams. AIM The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges faced by PSWs during their integration into hospital-based mental health-care teams.

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### [Peer Specialists in Community Mental Health: Ongoing Challenges of Inclusion](#)

December 2019, Psychiatric Services  
Despite the tremendous growth of the peer specialist workforce in recent decades, significant ethical, political, and procedural challenges remain regarding recruitment and retention of peer staff. This column explores such challenges and potential pitfalls by examining the limits of current accommodation practices, the complexity of "shared identities," and the fraught interplay of disability, stigma, and employee misconduct.

### [The stigma of identifying as having a lived experience runs before me: challenges for lived experience roles](#)

June 2019, Journal of Mental Health *Athens log in required\**  
BACKGROUND Lived experience practitioners can contribute to improved outcomes for people with mental illness, supplementing traditional mental health services and reducing health care costs. However, lived experience practitioners frequently face stigma and discrimination within their work roles. AIM To understand the impact of stigma and discrimination on the effectiveness of lived experience roles from the perspective of lived experience practitioners.

### [Peer Specialists in Community Mental Health: Ongoing Challenges of Inclusion](#)

September 2019, Psychiatric Services *Athens log in required\**  
Despite the tremendous growth of the peer specialist workforce in recent decades, significant ethical, political, and procedural challenges remain regarding recruitment and retention of peer staff. This column explores such challenges and potential pitfalls by examining the limits of current accommodation practices, the complexity of "shared identities," and the fraught interplay of disability, stigma, and employee misconduct.

### ['Walking the tightrope': The role of peer support workers in facilitating consumers' participation in decision-making](#)

August 2018, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**  
In adult mental health services, the participation of consumers is essential. The aim of this study was to explore the challenges faced by peer support workers when involving mental health consumers in decision-making about their care and the strategies they employed to overcome these challenges so as to improve mental health consumers' participation in decision-making and recovery.

### [Relationship of peer specialists to mental health outcomes in South Florida](#)

2018, International Journal of Mental Health Systems  
In recent years the use of peer specialists in the delivery of mental health of care across the US has increased. Although data on the benefits of using peer specialists is limited and/or equivocal, states are making policy and funding decisions to support the expansion of peer specialist services. This data is even more limited in the state of Florida where no studies were found to document the effect of peer specialists on mental health care outcomes.

### [Does Stigma Towards Mental Illness Affect Initial Perceptions of Peer Providers?](#)

March 2016, The Psychiatric Quarterly *Athens log in required\**  
Peers (i.e. people with lived experience of mental illness and/or addictions) are being hired in large numbers to offer support for people with serious mental illnesses, but little is known about how peer providers are viewed. The goal of this study was to measure reactions towards actors posed as peer providers.

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[So if we like the idea of peer workers, why aren't we seeing more?](#) June 2015, World Journal of Psychiatry

The employment of peer support workers is widely encouraged in recovery-oriented mental health systems and services, providing a tangible example of how to translate recovery values and principles into actions. In Scotland, despite a long-term policy commitment to recovery approaches, the creation of peer worker roles has been slow and patchy. This paper describes findings from a study on the levers and barriers to the development of peer worker roles in two Scottish health board areas.

[Peer worker roles and risk in mental health services: a qualitative comparative case study](#) May 2015, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

New peer worker roles are being introduced into mental health services internationally. This paper addresses a lack of research exploring issues of risk in relation to the role. In-depth interviews were carried out with 91 peer workers, service users, staff and managers. A grounded analysis revealed protective practice in minimising risk to peer worker well-being that restricted the sharing of lived experience, and a lack of insight into how peer workers might be involved in formal risk management. Alternatively, analysis revealed potential new understandings of risk management based on the distinctive, experiential knowledge that peer workers brought to the role.

[Effects of employment as a peer support worker on personal recovery: a review of qualitative evidence](#) March 2015, Mental Health Review Journal *Abstract only\**

The purpose of this paper is to systematically identify, appraise and synthesise qualitative research into how working as a peer support worker (PSW) affects personal recovery.

[The contribution of experiential wisdom to the development of the mental health professional discourse](#) June 2015,

Schizophrenia Bulletin *Athens log in required\**

Experiential wisdom, derived from expert knowledge of service users and carers, is of increasing importance in all aspects of UK mental health practice,<sup>1,2</sup> research,<sup>3</sup> and education.<sup>4,5</sup> It occupies an important, historical role in user-led traditions in mental health as it is central to the development of the personal recovery approach.<sup>6</sup> The UK government requires mental health services<sup>1</sup> to offer service users opportunities to influence service development because listening to the user voice has been recognised to improve professionals' empathy with service recipients.<sup>4,5</sup>

[Do stereotype threats affect peer providers?](#) September 2014, Administration and Policy in Mental Health *Athens log in required\**

Mental health organizations are increasingly employing peers, but not without set-backs. This brief commentary explores the possible adverse impact of stereotype threats on the performance of peer providers. A review of social psychology literature would suggest that at least some of these set-backs emerge from the peer's apprehension about fulfilling some of the negative stereotypes that exist about people with mental illnesses. Additional training and supervision are indicated for both peer and non-peer staff members in order to reduce the salience of negative stereotypes in the workplace.

[Introducing peer worker roles into UK mental health service teams: a qualitative analysis of the organisational benefits and challenges](#) May 2013, BMC Health Services Research

The provision of peer support as a component of mental health care, including the employment of Peer Workers (consumer-providers) by mental health service organisations, is increasingly

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common internationally. Peer support is strongly advocated as a strategy in a number of UK health and social care policies.

Approaches to employing Peer Workers are proliferating. There is evidence to suggest that Peer Worker-based interventions reduce psychiatric inpatient admission and increase service user (consumer) empowerment. In this paper we seek to address a gap in the empirical literature in understanding the organisational challenges and benefits of introducing Peer Worker roles into mental health service teams.

[Benefits of working as a certified peer specialist: results from a statewide survey](#) September 2013, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required\**

Objective: Certified peer specialists (CPSs) are an emerging workforce across the United States and are a critical component of recovery-oriented mental health systems. This study examined possible benefits of working as a CPS. Method: A statewide survey of trained CPSs in Pennsylvania was conducted in Winter/Spring 2010. A total of 271 CPSs responded to the online survey.

[Challenges experienced by paid peer providers in mental health recovery: a qualitative study](#) June 2013, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

Peer providers are increasingly employed in mental health services. We explored challenges experienced by 31 peer providers in diverse settings and roles using in-depth interviews, as part of a larger study focusing on their recovery (Moran et al. in Qual Health Res, 2012 ). A grounded theory approach revealed three challenge domains: work environment, occupational path, and personal mental health.

[Challenges faced by mental health peer support workers: peer support from the peer supporter's point of view](#) 2012, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required\**

Objective: This study aimed to identify the various challenges encountered by peer support workers in Western Australia in the course of their work and to identify possible solutions to those challenges. Method: We used the nominal group technique to collect and analyze the data.

[Benefits and mechanisms of recovery among peer providers with psychiatric illnesses](#) March 2012, Qualitative Health Research

Providing peer support to individuals with psychiatric disabilities has emerged as a promising modality of mental health services. These services are delivered by individuals who experience mental illnesses themselves. The purpose of this study was to explore how working as a peer provider can enhance personal recovery.

[Identifying consumer-provider benefits in evaluations of consumer-delivered services](#) 2002, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required\**

Consumer-delivered services are different in many ways from traditional mental health services and require unique approaches to how they are studied. A thematic analysis of interviews with 14 peer providers from Friends Connections, a peer-support program for persons with recurring mental health and substance use disorders, was conducted. Responses indicate that peer providers benefit from their roles as helpers, a finding consistent with the helper-therapy principle.

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### [Hiring consumer-providers: barriers and alternative solutions](#)

June 2001, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

The hiring of consumers as providers of mental health services has steadily increased over the last decade. This article, based on the literature and two round table discussions, explores three prevalent barriers (i.e., dual relationships, role conflict, and confidentiality) and proposes alternative solutions to each.

## Occupational identity

### [The transition from patient to mental health peer worker:](#)

[A grounded theory approach](#) April 2019, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**

Peer workers are increasingly being engaged in contemporary mental healthcare. To become a peer worker, patients must evolve from having a patient identity to a peer worker identity. This study aims to understand how mental health peer workers experience their transition and how it affects their view of themselves and their direct working context.

[Liminality in the occupational identity of mental health peer support workers: A qualitative study](#) April 2018, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing

Peer support is increasingly provided as a component of mental health care, where people in recovery from mental health problems use their lived experiences to provide support to those experiencing similar difficulties. In the present study, we explored the evolution of peer support workers' (PSW) occupational identities. A qualitative study was undertaken alongside a pilot randomized, controlled trial of peer support for service users discharged from a mental hospital in London, UK.

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## Views, perceptions and experiences

### [More 'milk' than 'psychology or tablets': mental health professionals' perspectives on the value of peer support workers](#)

December 2020, Health Expectations

**BACKGROUND** Though growing numbers of peer support workers are employed in the UK National Health Service (NHS), conflicts persist between core values of peer support and values which exert power within these services. **OBJECTIVES** To explore what NHS mental health professionals value about the peer support worker role. **DESIGN** Five professionals from different professions and mental health settings were interviewed twice. The first interviews explored their experiences of working with peers.

["And now I know how you feel . . .": Lived experience of surviving mental illness as a prosumer](#) July 2020, Psychological Services *Abstract only\**

In this article, through a reflexive account, I present the ways the sudden onset of clinical depression in my own life brought me closer to the vulnerabilities (due to stigma around mental illness) as well as opportunities to contribute to the mental health of my clients as a prosumer. In delineating this process, I have also highlighted how my role as an active qualitative researcher of homeless mentally ill people in India during the episode of my clinical depression helped me reaffirm my identity as a therapist or an "enabler" who could empathize with and create a humanizing therapeutic space for my clients as well as research participants.

[Peer Worker Perspectives on Their Potential Role in the Success of Implementing Recovery-Oriented Practice in a Clinical Mental](#)

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[Health Setting](#) 2020, Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work  
*Abstract only\**

Purpose: Recovery-oriented practice (ROP) is growing internationally in mental health services. The study aimed to examine the perspectives of peer workers about ROP pre-implementation within one service. This is important to improve clinicians' understandings of how service users feel and experience the organization's culture, thereby improving recovery focus. Method: A focus group using semi-structured questions.

[Workplace experiences of mental health consumer peer workers in New South Wales, Australia: a survey study exploring job satisfaction, burnout and turnover intention](#) June 2020, BMC Psychiatry

BACKGROUND Consumer peer workers are individuals with lived experience of mental health issues and recovery who are employed to use their lived experience to support others. The consumer peer workforce has expanded substantially in recent years. While some research has explored the workplace experiences of peer workers, no previous studies have explored job satisfaction, burnout or turnover intention for this workforce. METHODS Consumer peer workers in New South Wales, Australia were invited to complete a survey designed to explore their workplace experiences.

[‘You don’t know what you don’t know’: the essential role of management exposure, understanding and commitment in peer workforce development](#) January 2019, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**

The peer workforce has increased significantly in recent years; however, structured development and support for the roles are lacking. This paper explores the role of executive and senior management understanding in the employment of peer roles. In-  
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depth, semi-structured interviews and one focus group were conducted with 29 participants from a range of nongovernment and public mental health services within Queensland, Australia.

[Peer Workers in the Behavioral and Integrated Health Workforce: Opportunities and Future Directions](#) June 2018, American Journal of Preventative Medicine

The growth of the peer workforce in behavioral health services is bringing opportunities to organizations and institutions that serve people living with mental and substance use disorders and their families. Peer workers are defined as people in recovery from mental illness or substance use disorders or both that possess specific peer support competencies. Similar roles are identified for families of people in recovery.

[Taking a Gamble for High Rewards? Management Perspectives on the Value of Mental Health Peer Workers](#) April 2018, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

Mental health peer work is attracting growing interest and provides a potentially impactful method of service user involvement in mental health design and delivery, contributing to mental health reform. The need to effectively support this emerging workforce is consequently increasing. This study aimed to better understand the views of management in relation to peer work and specifically explores the value of peer work from the perspective of management. This qualitative research employed grounded theory methods.

[Qualitative study of peer workers within the 'Partners in Recovery' programme in regional Australia](#) February 2018, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing

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In Australia and internationally, Peer Workers are increasingly being incorporated into the mental health workforce.

Underpinning this trend is the conviction that the inclusion of workers with lived experience in overcoming mental health challenges is central to transforming service delivery. Given there are few identified Australian studies into the experiences of Peer Workers, this paper reports findings from qualitative interviews conducted in a Partners In Recovery programme in one regional area in Australia.

[Tokenistic or genuinely effective? Exploring the views of voluntary sector staff regarding the emerging peer support worker role in mental health](#) September 2017, Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing

What is known on the subject: The introduction of PSWs within mental health services has grown substantially both internationally and locally; however, no recognized studies have focused on the evolution of this role within a Northern Ireland (NI) context. Research is increasingly focusing on service users' and PSWs perspectives on mental health service provision. Despite this, few studies exist which exclusively report staff views in relation to the PSW role.

[Acknowledging Rural Disadvantage in Mental Health: Views of Peer Workers](#) October 2017, Perspectives in Psychiatric Care

Purpose: The aim of this article was to present views and opinions of people employed to work from their personal experience of significant mental health challenges (peer workers). The specific focus was on their capacity to contribute meaningfully to mental health service provision and in rural areas and associated barriers.

[Consumer providers' experiences of recovery and concerns as members of a psychiatric multidisciplinary outreach team: A qualitative descriptive study from the Japan Outreach Model Project 2011-2014](#) 2017, PLOS ONE

The objective of this study was to clarify consumer providers (CPs) subjective experiences as members of a psychiatric multidisciplinary outreach team that provided services to individuals with a mental illness living in the community.

[Factors Supporting the Employment of Young Adult Peer Providers: Perspectives of Peers and Supervisors](#) October 2017, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

In Australia and internationally, Peer Workers are increasingly being incorporated into the mental health workforce. Underpinning this trend is the conviction that the inclusion of workers with lived experience in overcoming mental health challenges is central to transforming service delivery. Given there are few identified Australian studies into the experiences of Peer Workers, this paper reports findings from qualitative interviews conducted in a Partners In Recovery programme in one regional area in Australia.

["Very much evolving": a qualitative study of the views of psychiatrists about peer support workers](#) June 2016, Journal of Mental Health

Background: Mental health services continue to develop service user involvement, including a growth in employment of Peer support workers (PSWs). Despite the importance of the views and attitudes expressed by psychiatrists, this topic has not previously been studied.

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[Patients' views: peer support worker on inpatient wards](#) 2016, Mental Health and Social Inclusion *Abstract only\**

The purpose of this paper is to explore patients' experiences of intentional mental health peer support (PS). Seven in-depth interviews were carried out by an independent researcher with individual inpatients who volunteered via a PS worker following leaflet and poster distribution explaining the research on the two wards.

[Introduction of a child and adolescent mental health link worker: education and health staff focus group findings](#) October 2008, Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing

Policy guidance suggests that outcomes for adolescents with mental health problems can be improved by secondary education services (SES) and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) working more closely. This study reports on staff experiences of the introduction of a mental health link worker (MHLW). The findings of two focus groups are presented, conducted with staff from CAMHS and SES.

## Mental Health Literacy

[Mental health literacy and attitudes in a Swedish community sample - investigating the role of personal experience of mental health care](#) January 2008, BMC Public Health

Mental ill health is a common condition in the general population, yet only about half of those with a mental disorder have treatment contact. Personal experience may affect attitudes, which in turn influence the help-seeking process. This study investigated differences in mental health literacy and attitudes among mentally healthy persons and in persons with symptoms of mental illness with and without treatment contact.

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## Conceptual Framework

[Constructing a positive identity: A qualitative study of the driving forces of peer workers in mental health-care systems](#) February 2018, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only\**

There is growing recognition in mental health for the perspective of individuals with lived experience of mental health problems and mental health service use. As peer workers, these individuals can use their specific experience to benefit and support peers and professional caregivers, and to participate at all levels of mental health-care systems.

## Integration

[Integration of peer specialists working in mental health service settings](#) May 2015, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

Peer specialists are people in recovery employed to share their experiences to promote the recovery of others affected by mental illness. Examining workplace integration indicators that predict the job satisfaction of peer specialists employed in a variety of behavioral health settings is critical to ensure the retention and effectiveness of this viable workforce.

[An examination of the integration of certified peer specialists into community mental health centers](#) August 2012, Community Mental Health Journal *Athens log in required\**

The formal role of Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) is a recent addition to the mental health field. CPSs are people in recovery employed within the mental health system, mostly by community mental health centers, to provide support through sharing life

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experiences with those working toward recovery from mental illness. This brief report examines participant's experiences being a CPS, responsibilities and activities as a CPS, and integration into community mental health centers.

### [Integration of a peer provider in a mental health clinic: perspectives from a peer provider and a clinic director](#)

September 2012, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required\**

The purpose of this contribution is to provide a candid description from the perspectives of both a clinician and a peer provider regarding the unique process by which a peer provider became a member of a mental health service delivery team. Our hope is to convey and advance the recognition of peers as essential mental health care providers and to help guide other mental health clinics that may be considering hiring peer providers.

### [Developing strategies to integrate peer providers into the staff of mental health agencies](#)

May 2007, Administration and Policy in Mental Health *Athens log in required\**

This study informs new strategies that promote integration of peer providers into the staff of social service agencies. Executive directors, human resource managers, supervisors and co-workers at 27 agencies in New York City were interviewed in-depth. Focus groups with peers were conducted. Consistent with previous research, respondents identified attitudes toward recovery, role conflict and confusion, lack of policies and practices around confidentiality, poorly defined job structure and lack of support as problems that undermined integration.

## Research

### [Establishing a Research Agenda for Understanding the Role and Impact of Mental Health Peer Specialists](#)

September 2017, Psychiatric Services

Mental health peer specialists are individuals with serious mental illnesses who receive training to use their lived experiences to help others with serious mental illnesses in clinical settings. This Open Forum discusses the state of the research for mental health peer specialists and suggests a research agenda to advance the field. Studies have suggested that peer specialists vary widely in their roles, settings, and theoretical orientations.

## Self-disclosure

### [The role of self-disclosure by peer mentors: Using personal narratives in depression care](#)

July 2019, Patient Education and Counselling *Abstract only\**

Self-disclosure is recognized as an important aspect of peer support, but little is known about its use by peers. This study aimed to qualitatively understand peer self-disclosure in the context of depression care delivery to older adults.

## History

### [The mental health consumer movement and peer providers in Israel](#)

October 2018, Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences

Self-help peer-support groups in Israel emerged in the 1980s and, over time, dynamically interacted and co-developed with the statutory mental health (MH) system. In this editorial, I outline historical milestones of how the evolution of the Israeli mental health system was influenced by the consumer movement. A

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brief depiction of the consumer movement history. At first, consumers operated outside of the mainstream MH system.

[The patient as a policy factor: a historical case study of the consumer/survivor movement in mental health](#) 2006, Health Affairs

This paper analyzes the history of the modern consumer/survivor movement and its impact on the policy-making climate in the mental health field. The growing attentiveness to consumers' perspectives is presented largely as a consequence, not a cause, of radical restructurings of the mental health system.

### Place in integrated/ multidisciplinary teams

[What happens when peer support workers are introduced as members of community-based clinical mental health service delivery teams: a qualitative study](#) 2020, Journal of Interprofessional Care *Abstract only\**

The insights of people who have experienced mental health issues are at the core of recovery frameworks. The inclusion of peer support workers in clinical care teams is crucial to a recovery-supportive focus. Peer support workers facilitate egalitarian spaces for non-peer staff and consumers to frankly discuss the lived experience of mental illness.

[Knowledge and expertise in care practices: the role of the peer worker in mental health teams](#) September 2019, Sociology of Health and Illness

Our research examines how different forms of knowledge and expertise are increasingly important in caring for people experiencing mental illness. We build on theoretical developments regarding multiple ontologies of knowing about

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illness. We examine how experiential knowledge of mental health problems, learned by being subject to illness rather than through objective study, is enacted in mental healthcare teams.

[Where do Peer Providers Fit into Newly Integrated Mental Health and Primary Care Teams? A Mixed Method Study](#) July 2018, Administration and Policy in Mental Health *Athens log in required\**

Interdisciplinary, team-based approaches are effective for delivering integrated care to people with multiple chronic conditions (Mechanic 2012). To best meet needs of people living with serious mental illness, peer providers have become a standard component of health care teams that provide recovery-oriented services. Peer specialists are individuals with lived experiences recovering from mental illness who are trained to deliver services that promote recovery, resiliency, and wellness (SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions 2016).

[From Physical Wellness to Cultural Brokering: Unpacking the Roles of Peer Providers in Integrated Health Care Settings](#) November 2018, Community Mental Health Journal *Abstract only\**

This qualitative study explored peer provider experiences working in newly integrated mental health and primary care pilot programs within a large public mental health system. Nineteen peer providers participated in semistructured interviews that focused on experiences delivering care within integrated teams. Interviews were analyzed using constant comparative methods informed by grounded theory.

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### Recovery

#### [Understanding Universal Elements in Mental Health Recovery: A Cross-Examination of Peer Providers and a Non-Clinical Sample](#)

January 2016, Qualitative Health Research *Abstract only*\*

In our study, we examined underlying human elements embedded in mental health recovery, by exploring shared positive change among peer providers with serious mental illnesses in recovery and a normative sample in spiritual growth following adversity. We conducted secondary analysis based on two independent qualitative study samples consisting of 31 American peer providers and 27 Israeli adults. We identified three shared and two distinct enablers of positive change: peer groups, significant mentor, self-transcendent experiences.

### Organisational Capacity

#### [Building capacity in social service agencies to employ peer providers](#) 2010, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal *Athens log in required*\*

Objective: While there is evidence that peer providers are valuable to service delivery teams, the agencies where they work face difficulties in fulfilling the potential of including peers on staff effectively. The purpose of this article is to report findings of a pilot test of a workplace strategy that promoted inclusion of peer providers at social service agencies by building organizational capacity to support people with mental health conditions in peer provider roles.

### Online peer-to-peer support

#### [The future of mental health care: peer-to-peer support and social media](#) April 2016, Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences

People with serious mental illness are increasingly turning to popular social media, including Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, to share their illness experiences or seek advice from others with similar health conditions. This emerging form of unsolicited communication among self-forming online communities of patients and individuals with diverse health concerns is referred to as peer-to-peer support. We offer a perspective on how online peer-to-peer connections among people with serious mental illness could advance efforts to promote mental and physical wellbeing in this group.

#### [Online peer-to-peer support in youth mental health: seizing the opportunity](#) April 2016, Epidemiology and Psychiatric Services *Athens log in required*\*

Naslund *et al.* (2015) provide a valuable contribution with respect to the potential of online peer-to-peer support to reduce stigma, promote social connectedness and ultimately, improve the wellbeing of people with serious mental illness. We offer two additional opportunities provided by online social media by fully integrating user-led interventions with research innovation and by advancing a science of social media interventions in mental health. In addition, we provide a brief description of a new model of social media-based interventions developed to enhance engagement and long-term recovery in youth mental health.

#### [Global health partnership for student peer-to-peer psychiatry e-learning: Lessons learned](#) December 2016, Globalisation and Health

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Global 'twinning' relationships between healthcare organizations and institutions in low and high-resource settings have created growing opportunities for e-health partnerships which capitalize upon expanding information technology resources worldwide. E-learning approaches to medical education are increasingly popular but remain under-investigated, whilst a new emphasis on global health teaching has coincided with university budget cuts in many high-income countries.

### Transition from patient to peer worker

[The transition from patient to mental health peer worker: A grounded theory approach](#) April 2019, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing *Abstract only*\*

Peer workers are increasingly being engaged in contemporary mental healthcare. To become a peer worker, patients must evolve from having a patient identity to a peer worker identity. This study aims to understand how mental health peer workers experience their transition and how it affects their view of themselves and their direct working context. A grounded theory approach was used.

### Training

[Peer support worker training: results of the evaluation of the Experienced Involvement training programme in Switzerland and Germany](#) October 2020, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing

The 'Experienced Involvement' (EX-IN) training programme prepares and certifies individuals who have experienced mental health problems to work as peer support workers and to support others challenged by similar conditions. We aimed to assess the impact of the EX-IN training on hope, self-efficacy, introspection,

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stigma resistance, personal recovery, health-related quality of life and employment in participants.

### Role in rural areas

[The role of the peer support worker in increasing rural mental health help-seeking](#) April 2020, The Australian Journal of Rural Health *Abstract only*\*

OBJECTIVE Mental health peer support workers draw on lived experience to provide benefit to people experiencing mental distress. People living in rural areas are less likely than their urban counterparts to seek professional help for psychological distress. The aim of this study was to explore the perceived value of rural peer support workers as facilitators to rural mental health help-seeking. DESIGN Data were gathered through a cross-sectional survey distributed by a social media boosted post.

### COVID-19

[A role for lived experience mental health leadership in the age of Covid-19](#) June 2020, Journal of Mental Health

In 2020 an invisible assassin has swept across the world, creating chaos, confusion and uncertainty. Covid 19 has taken many people's health, some people's lives and the lives of loved ones. It has destroyed livelihoods and put the financial futures of billions at risk. We are helpless, there is nothing to fight back with. We are trapped, we have to stay in our homes. We are physically isolated, our usual freedoms and way of life suspended.

## Evidence Brief: Peer Support Workers

### Competency Frameworks

HEE's New Roles in Mental Health Implementation Group for Peer Support Workers commissioned this competence framework to support the projected expansion in the number of peer support workers. It forms part of our [national programme](#) to develop new roles, and expand others, to transform the mental health workforce.

[The Competence Framework - Part 1 - Supporting document](#)

[The Competence Framework - Part 2 - Full list of competences](#)

[The Competence Framework - Part 3 - Curriculum](#)

More information about Peer Support Workers is also available on the [HEE website](#).

[Values Framework for Peer Working](#) October 2012, Scottish Recovery Network (SRN)

SRN have played, and continue to play, a key role in supporting and sustaining the development of peer working roles across the mental health sector. There are currently around 37 peer workers in paid employment in Scotland and many more involved in supporting and developing the role. With the [Scottish Government's new mental health strategy](#) supporting more peer to peer work, SRN aim to build on this success.

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