

How ImROC can help you to develop Peer Workers in your service

What is peer support?

Peer support is about people who have similar experiences coming together to offer and receive help based on a shared understanding. This occurs quite naturally in all walks of life and is often helpful, reassuring and motivating. In mental health services, the extra-ordinary value of peer to peer relationships has been demonstrated in the rapid increase in peer worker posts created in statutory and non-statutory services. Research demonstrates that these peer workers can improve the sense of hope, motivation, community engagement and self-management of the people they support (https://imroc.org/resource_tag/our-briefings/); they can help change the culture of services, and being employed as a peer worker is generally very good for the recovery of the peer workers themselves.

Why employ peer workers?

Given the evidence of the effectiveness of peer support, there is every reason to employ people with lived experience in the workforce – in dedicated peer support worker posts and in any other post for which they have the qualifications, values and experiences required. However, since the single defining distinction between a peer worker and non-peer is the fact that they explicitly draw on their lived experience of mental health problems in their work, it is essential that they receive training and supervision to support them to do this safely, appropriately and effectively.

Our Offer

The development of a new role in your workforce involves a huge amount of work – defining the role, developing job descriptions, determining training and support needs, sorting out pay banding, working out how they fit into the existing workforce.... Peer Workers bring the additional challenge of breaking traditional rules about boundaries and speaking openly about their lived and life experiences.

ImROC can draw on extensive experience of developing peer workers in a range of different services to support you. We have a range of consultants with extensive experience of recruiting, training, employing, supporting, developing and working alongside peer workers – as well as several consultants who themselves continue to work as peers in services.

We will meet you to discuss your local service, your ideas about peer support, your goals, partnerships and funding. We will then match you with the most suitable ImROC consultant who will then become your point of contact with ImROC. They will work with you to develop a plan of action and build in ImROC support. This might include:

- Supporting you to set up a peer support steering committee
- Providing training to raise understanding of Peer Workers and the evidence of their impact
- Coproducing local plans for the employment of peer workers: in what parts of the service, in what sort of roles, with what kind of support?
- Offering workshops for local teams to raise their understanding and ownership of peer worker positions: how can peer workers enhance the support that they offer?
- Running a ten day peer support training in your locality OR offer places on the ten day peer support training in Nottingham Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust OR coproduce a peer support training course to run in your service
- Running specialist training for peer workers employed in specialist services (eg dementia services, secure services, substance misuse services, perinatal services or child and adolescent services)
- Coproducing a supervision policy for your peer workers with you
- Workshops on specialist subjects (like safe and appropriate disclosure, social media and peer support, how does peer support differ from support provided by professionals who also use services ...?)
- Outcome monitoring workshops
- Ongoing mentorship, advice and support as you implement peer workers
- Participatory development sessions to agree relevant recruitment and employment policies, code of conduct, safeguarding and employment support for peer workers.

Do get in touch with us and we will discuss a bespoke support package for you.

Our way of working:

- Values based
- Coproduced
- Practice based evidence.
- PDSA cycle
- Locally, regionally, nationally, internationally

How to find out more – contact imroc@nottshc.nhs.uk or call 07392 318188.