

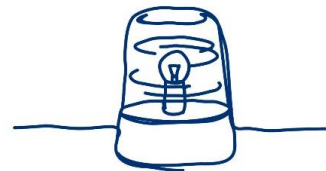
Peer support presentation

Introductory note:

- This brief presentation can be used to introduce the idea of peer support and its benefits.
- If you feel comfortable to, we'd encourage you to share your own passion for peer support, and why you think it is so important.

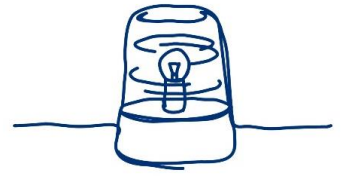
Slide 1	This presentation will provide a very brief introduction into peer support, its benefits and why we should think about it in the emergency services.
Slide 2	<p>There is no one definition of peer support but 'at its core, peer support is about the relationships that people build as they share their own experiences to help and support each other.'¹ Peer support is mutually beneficial and in this context founded on shared experiences of mental distress or a mental health problem.</p> <p>Peer supporters have described it as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'To me peer support is comradeship, that virtual or physical arm around someone's shoulder to say you are a human being too and despite the calls, the radio transmissions, the deployments, the workload that you have time to talk, to offer help to someone who is struggling. To help us remember we have feelings that it's ok that we get upset and that we have bad days.' • 'Peer support has helped me find hidden strengths, confidence and happiness in my own life which I think proves that with the right help at the right time, you can pretty much deal with anything' <p>You will probably find that peer support is happening all around you organically. In peer support people give a part of themselves and their experience in order to create connection and to support recovery. It gives people the space to share what they are experiencing and truly feel heard. To be empowered to seek the support and find their solutions.</p> <p>Peer support is about helping people to recognise and realise their strengths and abilities, acknowledging that people may have problems but these problems do not define their whole life, and seeing vulnerability as an integral part of being human and not necessarily as a weakness.</p> <p>The quotes you see on the slides were given by Blue light peer supporters about what it means to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may want to add in here what peer support means to you, and maybe share your experience of it if you have them.

¹ Side by Side Summary of early research findings May 2017, <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/6121917/side-by-side-early-research-findings-summary.pdf>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may also want to share our mental health at work: be there for your colleagues video at this point.
Slide 3	<p>Mind's survey of blue light personnel found individuals 'are also just as likely to seek help from a colleague as from a GP, and two-thirds were most likely to seek support from family and friends'. This indicates that peer support is what people value most in managing their mental health, across all of the emergency services.</p> <p>Encouraging and putting in place peer support could help to ensure people are able to access information, signposting and help to stay well and get support when they are struggling with a mental health problem.</p> <p>As you will see from the post it's on this slide 'knowing that you are not alone' is a key element to Peer Support. It can be summed up by <i>Brene Brown's quote</i> "The two most powerful words when we're in struggle... "me too"</p>
Slide 4	<p>Peer Support has been shown to have many potential benefits including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased self-esteem and confidence Greater acceptance and 'normalisation' of feelings Improved problem solving skills Increased sense of empowerment Support to return to work or remain in work Better relationships at home and at work Greater feelings of being accepted and understood Reduced stigma Greater hopefulness about their own potential More positive feelings about the future Building stronger teams <p>'There is evidence that peer support can help people feel more knowledgeable, confident and happy and less isolated and alone.'² Nesta. You can read the full report here.</p>
Slide 5	<p>There is no one way to provide or promote peer support within the emergency services. When thinking about setting up peer support it might be helpful to reflect on the findings of a study into peer support in high risk organisations, which said more research is needed but found that the consensus on the main goals of peer support, they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to provide an empathic, listening ear; to provide, low-level psychological intervention; to identify peers, who may be at risk to themselves or others; and to facilitate pathways to professional help. It was agreed that the goals of peer support do not relate solely to recovery from a traumatic or highly stressful incident, but relate to psychological and physical health and wellbeing more broadly.*

² https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/peer_support_-_what_is_it_and_does_it_work.pdf



	<p>(Guidelines for Peer Support in High-Risk Organizations: An International Consensus Study Using the Delphi Method)³</p> <p>You might want to signpost people to read more here</p>
Slide 6	<p>How you approach peer support is up to you, and there are many ways of providing peer support including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-to-one (face to face or telephone) • Drop-in • Groups (peer support or other activity, e.g. walking group) • Establish a network of peer supporters • Online peer support • Peer mentoring <p>Research from the Side by Side programme suggested that ‘most change was achieved when there was active giving and sharing of peer support in a two-way interaction, especially in groups.’ You can read more about this here.</p>
Slide 8	Thank you and any questions.

³ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/kcmhr/publications/assetfiles/interventions/Creamer2012-PeerSupport.pdf>