

Peer Based Approaches

Peer based approaches principles and values are aimed primarily at adult social care employers, managers and care workers and may be helpful to those working in other social care settings.

It may be helpful for anyone considering either setting up or developing an existing peer support arrangement. The set of principles could be used as a checklist to see if an existing arrangement is effective or contains the elements for further improvement.

Peer support is defined and operated in a range of ways and in some instances is not explicitly described as peer support. The essence of peer support is that it offers something that is mutually beneficial.

What is peer support?

With-you say:

There are several types of peer support, but they all aim to:

Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help each other.



- Bring together people with shared experiences to support each other.
- Provide a space where people feel accepted and understood.
- Treat everyone's experiences as being equally important.
- Involve both giving and receiving support.

Many people can benefit from peer support, it could be used with aspects such as wellbeing, hope, self-esteem, acceptance, and relationships.

Many other approaches draw on the principles and practice of peer support and this extends beyond the promotion of wellbeing into professional development and outcomes. The emphasis on mutuality and the sharing of lived experiences remains central to successful peer support.

Peer support **is not** the provision of an intervention by one person to another. That said, it can involve the giving and receiving of support.

Core principles

The following table illustrates one example of a set of principles. Research suggests that these have been developed to suit their own specific purposes, and these may differ across sources.

Peer support networks may wish to develop their own principles that are adapted to meet their own needs.

Here we outline seven principles and where available, examples of this are highlighted.

Principle	Definition	Practice Examples
<p>Mutuality and respect – A relationship based on shared experience, empathy, authenticity, and respect.</p>	<p>The experiences of people who give and receive support are never identical. We may fall into the trap of labelling which can cause a sense of confusion, loneliness, fear, helplessness, and hopelessness.</p> <p>Other peer supporters draw on personal experiences and apply their understanding in a professional support setting.</p> <p>Peer workers in mental health settings share some of the experience of the people they work with and demonstrate an understanding of the experience of mental health challenges.</p>	<p>Effective supervision supports good working relationships, helps you to address any issues and celebrate achievements, gives you the opportunity to discuss learning and development.</p> <p>Chapter Mental Health (Chester) - wellbeing coaches who may or may not have similar lived experiences.</p> <p>Peer support workers in mental health and learning disability/autism commissioned by the NHS.</p> <p>The National Survivors User Network - a charter which is now widely available along with a downloadable poster.</p>
<p>Reciprocal – Where all contribute to and gain from the relationship in a shared process of problem-solving.</p>	<p>Peer relationships means that people provide assistance, understanding and encouragement to each other, creating a balanced exchange of support.</p>	<p>Skills for Care's local networks for managers are a place for managers to come together with other managers in their local area. They offer a safe space to connect with peers, an opportunity to be open with each other and to support each other's challenges, as well as building and sustaining a positive collective identity.</p> <p>Schwartz Rounds provide a structured forum where all staff, clinical and non-clinical, come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in health and social care. Rounds can help staff feel more supported in their jobs, allowing them the time and space to reflect on their roles.</p>

**Recovery
Focused and
Non-directive**

- one person doesn't 'prescribe' what is good for someone else. It enables a person to grow within and beyond what has happened'

peer support should focus on self determination and the right to take personal responsibility for goals and ambitions. Personal recovery is unique to individuals. It is not the same as clinical or service recovery

Actions are based on the identification of a person's own resources and search for their own solutions.

It is not about introducing someone to ideas that have worked for them.

Inspiring hope in others through motivation and encouragement at a person's own pace. Development of personal belief, energy, and commitment.

Development of practical strategies and tools to manage personal challenges to enable the person to take back control.

Facilitating access to opportunities that the person values and enabling them to participate in roles and relationships of their choice.

[Person-centred and community based working \(strength based approach\) guide](#) contains information, ideas and bite-size learning about person-centred and community-based working. We've used stories and examples of what providers told us works well and is important for people to live good lives.



Strengths-based

– recognises that people will have strengths and skills and these can be used in pursuit of objectives and ambition.

Even in times of significant distress, there can be an exploration of the positive qualities and assets of a person. Hidden achievements can be identified and steps, however, small can be celebrated.

[Using conversations to assess and plan people's care and support](#) outlines the key principles of conversational assessment, to help you to use this approach. Taking this approach can help you to plan care and support, with individuals, that reflects their wishes and needs.

[Personalised care](#) requires joined-up approaches where people work across boundaries, integrate resources from different places and share information appropriately, to ensure that people who use the NHS receive a seamless experience.

Inclusive – peer support can help engage with and contribute to communities.

This broadens the role of peer support, through applying a strengths and assets approach and looking outwardly rather than internally. This can be applied both personally and individually as well as organisationally.

where possible you should be able to identify with a peer from a range of life experiences including race, culture, age, gender or sexuality

What strengths and assets in a care home, people who draw on care and support, and staff/volunteers can bring to a community and what can the home gain from its local assets. In this respect a 'community' is not exclusively a place, but can also include a community of interest, which, can generate peer support.

[Schwarz rounds](#) provide includes all staff, clinical and non-clinical, come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in health and social care.

Progressive – a shared learning journey of growth and development

Seeing peer support as much more than a ‘buddying’ type relationship but one in which all concerned embark on a shared journey learning more, new skills, new resources, reframing challenges as opportunities.

can be both enabling and facilitative and seek to connect or reconnect people with other resources or networks that can provide support

[A reflective supervision programme](#) can be designed and delivered to support the development of the giving and receiving of reflective supervision practice, using a flexible blended learning approach including e-learning.

[Health and wellbeing coaches](#) support people to increase their ability to self-manage, motivation levels and commitment to change their lifestyle.

[An action learning set \(ALS\)](#) is a group of people within a workplace that meet with the specific intention of solving workplace problems. The main aim of an ALS is to come away with a set of realistic actions that will help to solve or understand the issues at hand.

Safe – being able to express ourselves freely in a supportive relationship where all parties feel safe.

Effective peer relationships involve a mutual understanding of feeling safe. This can be done by agreeing rules e.g. confidentiality, showing compassion, authenticity, a non-judgemental attitude and an acknowledgement that nobody has all of the answers.

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[Social care manager’s Facebook group](#) is a network to stay in touch with your peers and connect one another’s services. Our Facebook group is open to all registered managers and front-line managers in similar roles.