

# Peer Support Workers Mental Health

## Information for Consumers and Carers

### Key points

- You can meet with a staff member who has a lived experience of:
  - Mental health challenges and/or substance use or addiction
  - Supporting or caring for someone experiencing mental health challenges
  - Accessing mental health services for treatment, care and support
- They are called Peer Support Workers
- Peer Support Workers can support you and your family/carers.

### A Peer Support Worker will

- Understand what you are going through as they also have a personal lived experience as a consumer or carer
- Listen and not judge you
- Share their experiences and can talk to you about what helped them
- Tell you about support services (e.g. advocacy services, legal aid, community groups, carer support groups etc.)
- Describe your rights and responsibilities
- Walk alongside you, with understanding and care, in your journey with the mental health service (e.g. attend your clinical appointments and family meetings to support you)
- Advocate for your inclusion in the care you receive as a consumer or a carer.

### Who is a Consumer?

- A consumer is a person experiencing mental illness or psychological distress
- This can include substance use or addiction
- A consumer is anyone receiving or looking for, treatment and support from mental health services.

## Who is a Carer?

- A carer is someone who is actively supporting, assisting or providing unpaid care to a consumer
- A carer may or may not live with the consumer
- A carer may be a family member, friend or another person, including someone under the aged of 18 years, who has a significant role in the life of the consumer.

## Connecting with a Peer Support Worker

- Peer workers are available to all consumers, families and carers accessing the service
- Peer workers are in the following locations: Inpatient Units, Community Mental Health, Community Care Units (CCU), Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC), Hospital Outreach Post-Suicidal Engagement Program (HOPE)
- Peer workers provide support via phone calls, telehealth and face-to-face meetings
- If you would like to speak with a peer worker, please ask any of our staff and they will connect you.

## It is important to understand what Peer Support Workers cannot offer

- Peer workers do not provide clinical assessments or decision-making about your diagnosis, medication or treatment
- Peer workers do not provide case management or psychosocial support (e.g. helping you obtain housing or Centrelink payments)
- Peer workers are not a triage service and operate on limited hours (speak with your peer worker about their availability)
- Peer workers do not accompany you to external appointments (e.g. your GP) or social events
- Peer Support is not an emergency service
  - During a crisis please call Triple Zero (000) or
  - Contact Triage on T. 1300 874 243
  - There are support helplines available (e.g. Lifeline).

**Further Information:** Speak to a staff member or your treating team.

This information is general only.  
Northern Health encourages you to ask questions  
and get specific advice from your treating team.

# Northern Health



If you need an Interpreter or  
the support of an Aboriginal  
Liaison Officer, please speak  
to a staff member.



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