



Staff Support in the Healthcare Setting Guidelines for Peer Support in High-Risk Organizations: An Internal Consensus Study Using the Delphi Method

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ISTSS: April 012, 25, 134-141

Key Recommendations of the Peer Support Guidelines

1. The Goals of Peer Support:

- a. Provide an empathetic listening ear
- b. Provide low level psychological intervention
- c. Identify colleagues who may be at risk to themselves or others
- d. Facilitate pathways to professional help

2. Selection of Peer Supporters

- a. Be a member of the target population
- b. Be someone with considerable experience within the field of work of the target population
- c. Be respected by his/her peers
- d. Undergo an application and selection process that should include interview by a suitably constituted panel

3. Training and Accreditation

- a. Trained in basic skills to fulfill their role (listening skills, psychological first aid, information about referral options)
- b. Meet specific standards in that training before commencing their role
- c. Participate in on-going training, supervision, review, and accreditation

4. Mental Health Professionals

- a. Occupy the position of clinical director
- b. Be involved in supervision and training

5. Role: Peer Supporters should

- a. Not limit their activities to high-risk incidents but be part of routine employee health and welfare
- b. Not generally see 'clients' on an ongoing basis: should seek specialist advice and offer referral pathways for more complex cases
- c. Maintain confidentiality (except when seeking advice from a mental health professional and/or cases of risk of harm to self or others)



6. Access to peer supporters

- a. Normally be offered as the initial point of contact after exposure to high-risk incident unless the employee requests otherwise
- b. In other situations, employees should be able to self-select their peer supporter from a pool of accredited

7. Looking after peer supporters

- a. Should not be available on call 24 hours per day
- b. Be easily able to access care for themselves from a mental health practitioner
- c. Be easily able to access expert advice from a clinician
- d. Engage in regular peer support supervision within the program

8. Program evaluation

- a. Programs should establish clear goals linked to specific outcomes
- b. Evaluated by an external, independent evaluator on a regular basis to include quantitative and quantitative feedback from users