

## Wellways practice framework: Peer work

**Peer work is essential in creating an environment for recovery by intentionally using lived experience of mental illness to inspire hope, confidence and a sense of empowerment while working with people to build a meaningful life.**

### 1.1 Wellways peer work principles

- Peer work at Wellways is based on principles of Intentional Peer Support (Mead, 2008). This way of working focuses on:
  - learning versus helping
  - relationship versus the individual
  - hope and possibility versus fear
- Peer work focuses on hope and recovery rather than illness (Orwin, 2008)
- Peer work is based on equal relationships built on shared experiences and values that are characterised by reciprocity and mutuality (Clay, 2005)
- Peer work explores the other person's world view: where they've come from, their family and cultural background and life experiences. This can help people make sense of their experience of mental health issues (Mead, 2008)

### 1.2 Evidence base for the Wellways peer work approach

Studies into peer support provide evidence that peer work increases people's engagement with issues such as housing and employment, and increases a person's ability to bring about changes in their lives. Literature suggests that instilling hope and using role modelling, as well as the nature of relationship between peer workers and participants are unique contributions from peer workers (Davidson et al, 2012).

Repper and Carter (2011) in their review of literature on peer support state that peer support workers promote:

- hope and a belief in the possibility of recovery empowerment and increased self esteem
- self-efficacy and self-management of difficulties
- social inclusion, engagement and increased social networks

### 1.3 Features of the Wellways approach

- Wellways actively employs lived experience workers to practice peer work.
- Wellways' Peer Workforce Framework supports the practice of peer work through:
  - peer worker training to increase knowledge skill and confidence for peer workers
  - peer worker supervisor training to provide practical understanding of the lived experience approach
  - peer worker group supervision (Peer Hubs) to share best practice information and discuss highlights and challenges of the role

### 1.4 References

Clay, S. (2005). About us: What we have in common. In: S Clay, ed, (On our own, together: peer programs for people with mental illness) Nashville: T Vanderbilt. University Press.

Davidson, Larry et al. (2012). Peer support among persons with severe mental illnesses: a review of evidence and experience. *World Psychiatry*, 11, pp. 123 - 128

Mead, S. (2008). (Intentional Peer Support An Alternative Approach. Plainfield). USA

Orwin, D. (2008). Thematic Review of Peer Supports: Literature review and leader interviews. Commissioned by the *Mental Health Commission*. Wellington.

Repper, J. and Carter, T. (2011). A review of the literature on peer support in mental health services. *Journal of Mental Health*, 20(4), pp. 392- 411

## Community Recovery Model

People affected by mental health issues have the right to create a good life by making a home, engaging in meaningful work or learning, and building good relationships with friends, family and people in their community.

The Wellway's Community Recovery Model recognises that real and lasting recovery does not occur in isolation, and can be best achieved by working at three levels to:

- promote recovery and positive change for people with mental health issues
- assist families and friends in building resilience
- create welcoming communities.



### Family and friends

- We understand mental health issues
- We know what helps recovery
- We look after our own wellbeing

### Individual

- I can take charge of my life
- I feel connected to people
- I am part of my community

### Community

- We include people with mental health issues
- We stand up for equal rights
- We create opportunities for people