



Hepatitis NSW

FOSTERING A VIBRANT PEER
WORKFORCE

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www.hep.org.au
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WHY DELIVER THIS PRESENTATION?

- Peers utilised inappropriately at present
- Why use peers anyway?
- How HNSW has built an effective peer workforce
- HNSW's peer programs
- How can you better utilise the unique experience of peers

UTILISING PEERS IN THE SECTOR

- Peers often used inappropriately:
 - ✓ For extra credibility
 - ✓ To appear community-engaged
 - ✓ To tick a box
 - ✓ To superficially improve a program or piece of work
 - ✓ Unfair remuneration for expertise



SO WHY PEER WORKERS?

- Unrivalled expertise
- Invaluable insight
- Empowering the community
- One of the most effective methods of community engagement
- Peers are passionate, engaged, and have a wealth of untapped experience



SO WHY PEERS?

PEER WORKERS	HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS
Years of expertise (professionally overlooked)	Years of expertise (recognised professionally)
Often victims of stigma	Often unaware of stigma
Similar life experiences	Very different life experiences
Part of the affected community	Part of the medical fraternity
Equal relationship with the <u>person</u>	Unequal relationship with <u>patient</u>
Lived experience of hep C	Textbook experience of hep C
Community resonance	Community disconnection

SO WHY PEERS?

- Viral hepatitis does not sit solely in the medical arena
- Adjust our perception to make the social impacts of viral hepatitis just as important
 - Healthcare professionals provide medical expertise
 - Peer workers provide social expertise



SO WHY PEERS?

- Role models for the affected community
- Develop an authentic community-driven response to viral hepatitis
- Bottom-up rather than top-down
- Involvement of peers can radically improve and enhance existing programs (if done appropriately)



THE EXPERTS ON LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C
ARE THE PEOPLE LIVING WITH HEPATITIS C



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HEPATITIS NSW AND PEER WORKERS

- 3 of 5 Hepatitis NSW's Education and Community Support programs have peers at the centre
- 1 uses a peer program in combination
- Peer workers at the centre of these three programs

HEPATITIS NSW AND PEER WORKERS

- Paying peers appropriately for their unparalleled expertise just the same as with non-peer staff
- Input into the outcomes of programs they are involved in
- Annual training – paid
- Debrief with staff or fellow peer worker always an option

THE CEEN & HEARD POSITIVE SPEAKER PROGRAM

- The power of personal story
- Share in the first-hand account of someone's experience of hep C.
- Ask questions that may be inappropriate to ask clients
- Workforce gains a realistic understanding of the experiences of people living with viral hepatitis



THE CEEN & HEARD POSITIVE SPEAKER PROGRAM

- Enhance existing training & education initiatives with personal perspectives
- Challenge the myths and stereotypes about hep C
- Address discriminatory attitudes in the workplace and elsewhere



THE HEPCONNECT PROGRAM

- Phone-based peer-support program
- Pairs people affected by viral hepatitis with someone with lived experience
- Scheduled phone conversations



THE HEPCONNECT PROGRAM

- Reduce isolation
- Boost treatment adherence
- Give people marginalised by stigma an authentic outlet
- Enables people to talk freely about their experiences with someone who has shared similar experiences



THE livingwell PROGRAM

- Chronic disease-self management
- Free course for PLWHCV
- Facilitated by peers + guest speakers
- Opens with the sharing the personal stories of the peer facilitators
- Participants gain knowledge, skills, resources, confidence, motivation



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THE livingwell PROGRAM

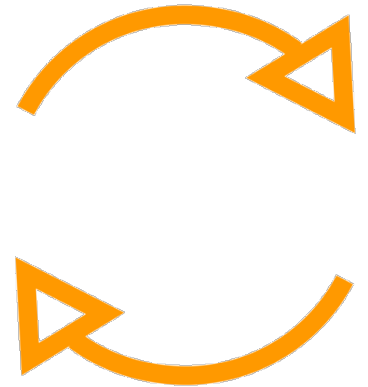
- Peers who have been in rehabs, spent time in correctional centres
- Role models
- Peers share what was helpful for them in similar situations
- Not another lecture by a disconnected ‘expert’
- A helpful conversation not a formal lesson

HOW CAN YOUR ORGANISATION WORK BETTER WITH PEERS?

- Start with peers don't just tack them on at the end
- Build programs with a peer-focus not a tokenistic addition
- Peers can enhance existing programs if utilised appropriately
- Utilise the expertise of peers!

HOW CAN YOUR ORGANISATION WORK BETTER WITH PEERS?

- Ownership of the programs peer workers are part of
- Invested in the program's outcomes
- Appropriate remuneration for expertise
- Ensure that peer workers benefit equally to the program/ organisation



HOW CAN YOUR ORGANISATION WORK BETTER WITH PEERS?

- LiverLife + peers = success
- Fibroscan at NUAA NSP + peers = success
- ASHM using Ceen & Heard speakers
- HNSW education sessions + Ceen & Heard peer workers



HOW CAN YOUR ORGANISATION WORK BETTER WITH PEERS?

- Book Seen and Heard speakers
- Bring in the Living Well program for your clients
- Encourage clients to access HepConnect



5 WAYS YOU CAN BUILD AN EFFECTIVE PEER WORKFORCE AND IMPROVE PROGRAMS/ OUTCOMES

1. Start with peer workers don't add them at the end
2. Seek funding for peer workers on par with staff
3. Place peer expertise level with medical expertise/
tertiary education/ qualifications
4. Involve peers in the inputs and outcomes
5. Investing in peers is an investment in a stronger
affected community – better outcomes