

**The Emerging** Peer Workforce

Developing,  
Sustaining, Managing  
& Leading

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## MI Fellowship

- 30% workforce has lived experience (not all peers)
- Over 50 peer workers including: recovery facilitators, speakers bureau educators, Brainwaves radio team, per educators, Helpline workers, employment consultants
- Peer workforce framework for organisation
- Peer workforce development project manager
- Intentional Peer Support (IPS) model
- Training for supervisors on the peer workforce & peer worker training
- Peer Hub (reflective practice mutual support forums)



## Defining the Workforce

- Required & intentional use of lived experience as a consumer and/or carer
- A discipline, not just a role
- Peer roles can include...
  - *support workers, buddies, research workers, project workers, speakers, educators, group facilitators, advocates, consumer consultants, counsellors, community development workers, supervisors, managers...plus???*



## Peer work is...

...the practice of facilitating learning, transformation and empowerment **for individuals, groups, organisations and communities** through the purposeful valuing and applied use **of mutual lived experience in overcoming adversity.**

**Peer work is an emerging** practice and profession that responds to the innate human needs for connectedness, relatedness and equality. Informal peer work has always existed.

**Peer work values** the wisdom of related and collective lived experience while also respecting the diversity and strength of individual difference.

**Peer work aims to build** transformational relationships of reciprocity which challenge traditional notions of expertise and power.


**Peer work frequently occurs** amongst groups of people where human rights are a systemic issue and it strives to uphold and advocate for these rights.

**Peer work is differentiated** from other 'helping' professions in that it is:

- **Not about 'helping'** but instead about empowering and facilitating self-determination.
- **Not about creating or imposing** professional recommendations, meanings and language frameworks onto people's experience, but instead seeks to understand and relate to people's own language, meaning and capacity for growth.
- **Usually carried out with a smaller and more flexible** set of boundaries which enable interpersonal sharing and connection.


**Peer work is innately hopeful.**

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 mental illness  
fellowship victoria

## Management Considerations

- Valuing the contribution, being open to the new
- Growing the workforce
- Expertise in supervision, sustaining quality & ethical peer work, professional peer supervision
- Preserving the discipline & avoiding colonisation
- Avoiding isolation, mentoring
- Workplace culture impacts
- Real workloads, roles, tokenism
- Reasonable adjustment & wellness
- Pathways, glass ceilings





## Contact

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