
PEER SPECIALIST RESEARCH

April 10, 2024

Presented by Shannon Pagdon



BACKGROUND

[Exploring the impact of peer support in early intervention in psychosis](#)

[H White, L Price, T Barker - Mental Health and Social Inclusion, 2017 - emerald.com](#)

Purpose Peer support (PS) has, over recent years, been implemented across a variety of NHS adult mental health settings. In November 2015, peer support workers (PSW) were introduced to an Early Intervention in Psychosis Service (EIS) in the Midlands. The purpose of this paper is to focus on organisational factors, asking how do PS impact on an early intervention in psychosis multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Design/methodology/approach Six EIS MDT members participated in an hour-long focus group. The data were analysed using ...

1 peer specialist interviewed

[Peer support in early intervention in psychosis: a qualitative research study](#)

[J Nguyen, L Goldsmith, LS Rains... - Journal of Mental ..., 2022 - Taylor & Francis](#)

Background There is evidence that peer support can be helpful for people suffering from psychosis, but there is a lack of research describing peer support in the context of Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP). Aims We aim to investigate the key elements of peer support in EIP and how peer support workers might best be recruited and supported in their work. Method We used purposive sampling to recruit seven participants for semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Results Destigmatisation of ...

7 peer specialists interviewed

[Implementing youth peer support in an early psychosis program](#)

[L Hopkins, G Pedwell, K Wilson... - The Journal of Mental ..., 2020 - emerald.com](#)

Purpose The purpose of this study was to identify and understand the barriers and enablers to the implementation of youth peer support in a clinical mental health service. The development of a lived experience workforce in mental health is a key component of policy at both the state and the federal level in Australia. Implementing a peer workforce within existing clinical services, however, can be a challenging task. Furthermore, implementing peer support in a youth mental health setting involves a further degree of complexity ...

NO peer specialists interviewed

PREVIOUS PROJECT

- Co-produced with current OnTrackNY Peer Specialist trainers
 - Extensive consultation with acting peer specialists
 - 2/4 research team leads were OTNY peer specialists
 - All research team members had lived experience & have worked in peer support roles
- Co-production & consultation components
 - 1. Peer spec trainer / Research team (x4) co-developed initial process & PowerPoint to introduce the project to current peer specialists
 - 2. Preliminary project presented during monthly TA calls
 - Group feedback + offers to set up individualized calls
 - 3. Protocol refined based on group + individual feedback
 - 4. Interviews with PS (N=17), by SP & NJ

SPECIFICS ON CURRENT PROJECT

- We are seeking to understand diverse aspects of peer specialist roles and quality improvement within those roles (Nationally)
 - In the future, we also plan to interview participants working with peer specialists and peer specialist trainers
- All interviewees will have narrative autonomy, peers can receive their transcripts and edit, add, or specify areas you do not want to be quoted
- All interviewees will be compensated \$50
- We welcome further involvement of peers are interested, including participating in coding, additional questions on the interviews, or being on our advisory council
- Currently, we have completed 5 interviews and are scheduling 30 more

ENSURING NARRATIVE AUTONOMY

- All participants supported to:
 - Designate sections of their interviews they do not want to be quoted on
 - Make edits, additions or clarifications
 - Make decisions about level of access – i.e. whether the peer specialist trainers they work under could access de-identified versions of the transcripts

Are you a peer specialist working in early psychosis services?



Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh are conducting interviews to deepen our understanding of peer specialist roles in early psychosis programs (often referred to as Coordinated Specialty Care or CSC), including challenges, barriers and perspectives on improving working conditions, compensation and career development opportunities. This research project is led by a former CSC peer specialist (Shannon Pagdon), and grounded in lived experience of psychosis.

Who is eligible to participate?

Any current or former peer specialist who works in or previously worked in a US-based early psychosis program is eligible to participate.



Is there compensation?

All participants will be compensated \$50 following their interview.

For more information
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FLYER



ENSURING PLURALISTIC CODING & INTERPRETATION

- Building on the “multiple coding” approach of Sweeney et al (2012)
 - Meetings in which each team member comes to the meeting with the following
 - 3 key observations
 - 2 issues or problems that the team member noticed
 - 2 takeaways for quality improvement
 - No sharing of interpretations prior to meeting
 - Discussion after each team member (4-5) shares their observations
 - Discussions recorded & themes will directly informing formal coding protocol

SPEAKING TO THE FIELD

- Peer specialists brought a variety of their perspectives and experiential knowledge into the interviews.
- Research is a great way to support professional development and mentorship of peer supporters
- Peer support is much needed area of further research
 - Representation of PS directly in research remains highly underutilized
- Many important themes and ideas were shared, some key points included:
 - Lack of training and understanding around structural racism and how that plays out in early intervention programs, as well as the pressure it can put on peer specialists who are part of minoritized groups
 - The problematic lack of lived experience in leadership, and the call for vastly expanding the hiring of individuals who can bring that lived experience into their roles
 - An overall absence of career mobility in peer specialist roles, as well as incredibly inadequate pay for those in the role. Previous peer specialists directly named pay as the reason they had to leave their roles

QUESTIONS?

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