



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

What is Peer Support?

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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.



saskhealthauthority.ca

Vision, Mission, Values and Philosophy of Care

VISION

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

MISSION

We work together to improve health and well-being. Every day. For everyone.

VALUES

- **SAFETY: *Be aware.*** Commit to physical, psychological, social, cultural and environmental safety. Every day. For everyone.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY: *Be responsible.*** Own each action and decision. Be transparent and have courage to speak up.
- **RESPECT: *Be kind.*** Honor diversity with dignity and empathy. Value each person as an individual.
- **COLLABORATION: *Be better together.*** Include and acknowledge the contributions of employees, physicians, patients, families and partners.
- **COMPASSION: *Be caring.*** Practice empathy. Listen actively to understand each other's experiences.

PHILOSOPHY OF CARE: Our commitment to a philosophy of Patient and Family Centered Care is at the heart of everything we do and provides the foundation of our values.



SHA Treaty Land Acknowledgement

Honouring Relationships with Indigenous People

We acknowledge that we are gathering on **Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 territories and the Homeland of the Dakota, Lakota and Métis.**

Recognizing this history is important to our future and our efforts to close the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples by knowing what the land and the traditional people of the land offer us.

www.saskhealthauthority.ca/trc

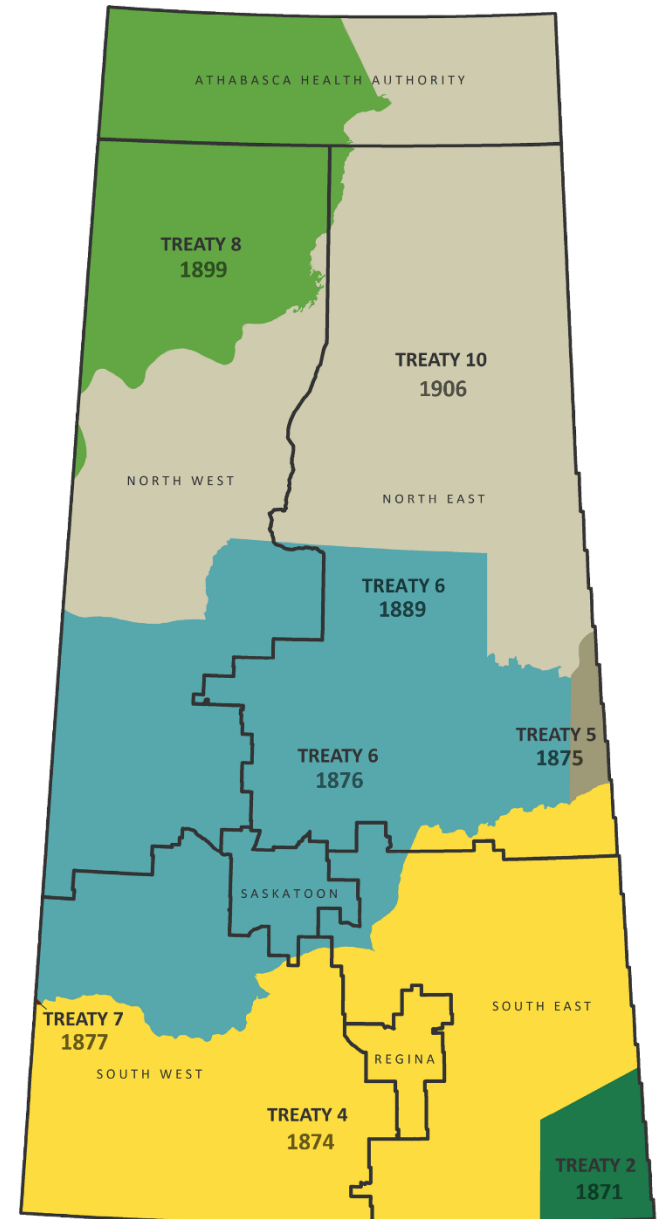


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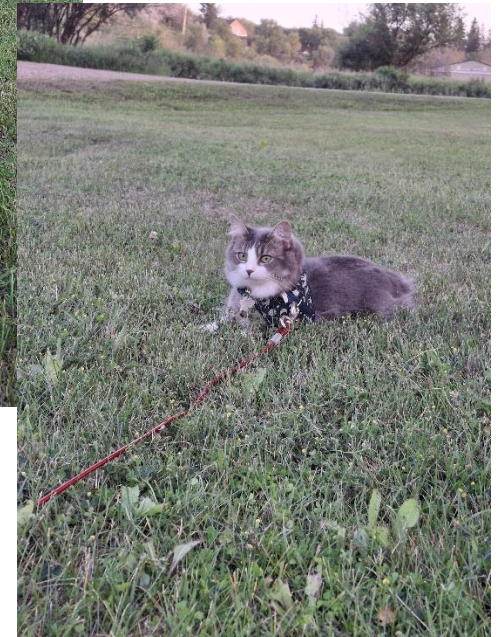
Treaty Territories and Saskatchewan Health Authority Areas

Depictions of Treaty boundaries are subject to variation. These boundaries are usually not surveyed and are estimated based on written descriptions.

This map displays the Pre-1975 Treaties (Historic Treaties) in colour, as provided by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.



Who We Are



Peer Support

What is Peer Support?

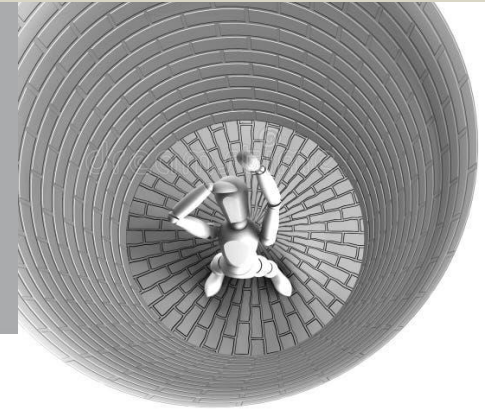
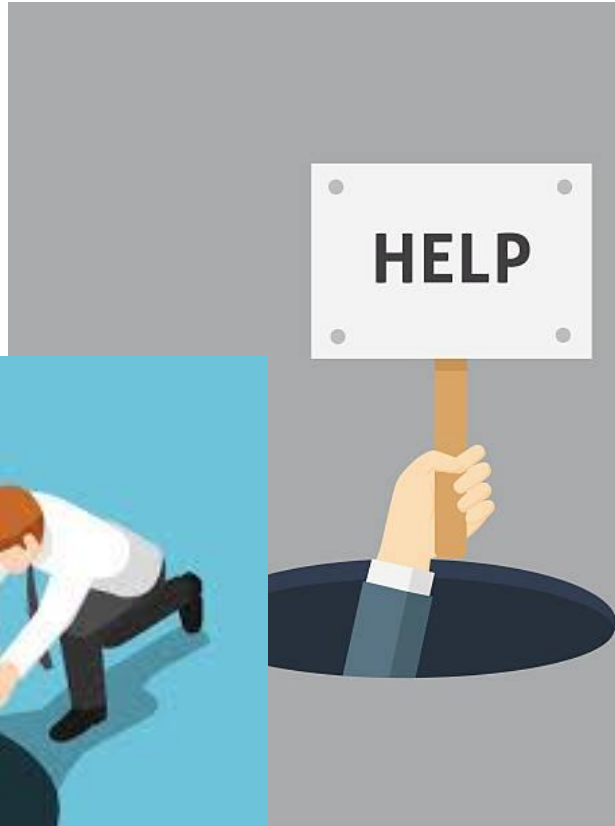
“ Peer support is the emotional and practical support between two people who share a common experience, such as a mental health challenge or illness. A Peer Supporter has lived through that similar experience, and is trained to support others.” – Peer Support Canada

“Your world opened up my world wider than I knew it could be.”

A Saskatoon peer support client to their Peer Supporter

Peer Support

Mental health & substance use challenges and the person in the hole



What do peer supporters do?



Difference between PS & Clinical

Clinical	Peer Support
Formal, sterile	Informal, relaxed vibe
Medical language & diagnosis	Plain language, describing what's happening with few labels
Meeting in clinical settings	Usually meeting in the community
Care can feel standardized – one size fits all	Tailored to the needs & life goals of the peer
Treatment goals/symptom reduction	Life goals/moving toward what we want more of
More professional relationship	More opportunity for community connections
Medical worldview/perspective	Holistic approach - more openness to different worldviews, understandings & experiences What's in our control?

A Peer Support Demonstration



Peer Support

At All Stages of Change

“Peer recovery support services provide social support to individuals at all stages on the continuum of change that constitutes the recovery process. Services may be provided at different stages of recovery and may:

- Precede formal treatment, strengthening a peer’s motivation for change;
- Accompany treatment, providing a community connection during treatment;
- Following treatment, supporting relapse prevention; and
- Be delivered apart from treatment to someone who cannot enter the formal treatment system or chooses not to do so.”¹

¹Kaplan, L., The Role of Recovery Support Services in Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care. DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 08-4315. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008.

Article accessed from <http://maapp.org/media/MAAPP-EFFECTIVENESS.pdf>

Peer Support

What are Peer Supporters Trained in?

Peer Support Canada offers guidelines for the training & practice of peer support and several training programs in Canada abide by these guidelines.

Peer Support Values:

- **Hope and Recovery**

Topics for Peer Support Training include:

- **Self-Determination**
- Self-determination
- **Dignity, respect and social inclusion**
- Recovery Model vs. Medical Model & Personhood, not patient-hood
- **Integrity, authenticity and trust**
- Communication (Active skills, empathy)
- **Self-disclosure skills**
- **Health and wellness**
- Trauma-informed practice
- **Lifelong learning and personal growth**
- Stages of Change
- **Conflict Transformation**
- Source: Peer Support Canada
- **And more!**



Peer Support

Peer Support Canada Code of Conduct:

I will act ethically, according to the values and principles of peer support. I will treat all people with respect and dignity

I will respect human diversity and will foster non-discriminatory activities

I will honor the rights, beliefs and personal values of individuals

I will behave with honesty and integrity in providing support to peers

I will respect the privacy of individuals and maintain confidentiality within the limitations of program policies and the law e.g. potential harm to self or others

I will not knowingly expose a peer to harm. I will not take advantage of the peer relationship for personal benefit, material or financial gain

I will respect the boundaries of peer support work and will not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with the peers that I support

I will not provide peer support in a manner that negatively affects the public's confidence in peer support.

Source: Peer Support Canada



Peer Support

Informal Peer Support happens all the time...



Building YOUR Peer Support Skills

Someone shares something with you. How can you respond?

- Open-ended questions – usually starts with what? How? Or why? Can also use Tell, Explain or describe.
- Reflective Response – repeat back what you heard them say
- Empathy – what emotion do you think they might be feeling and why? E.g. So you feel ____ because _____?
- Relate – share a snippet of your own experience to connect, not to compete. Ask if they want to hear what's worked for you.

Things to keep in mind when supporting others:

- Seeking connection over solution
- Remember that we each are on our own journeys. What works for me might not work for you and vice-versa.

Peer Support

Questions, Concerns, Discussion!



Your Elevator Pitch for Peer Support

Let's practice!



END

Feel free to contact me with any further questions or for more information:

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Peer Support

Common Questions & Concerns:

Aren't peer staff too “fragile” to handle the stress of the job?

“No. Jobs in mental health settings are stressful for everyone, not just for peer staff. As a result, self-care is an important area of focus for all mental health staff, not just peer staff. It is true, however, that peer staff are asked to take on the additional burdens of disclosing some of their most personal experiences and putting these experiences to good use in helping others as well as bearing the additional scrutiny of having to represent all peers (i.e., if they do not do well in the job, it may factor in whether or not the agency will continue to value peer services). Managing these processes are important foci for supervision.”

“..... As long as the person can perform the essential functions of the job, consideration of his or her psychiatric history in terms of the use of arbitrary criteria of functioning is no longer acceptable practice. This is one of the many significant changes that are introduced when mental health practitioners shift from viewing an individual with a mental illness as a patient to viewing him or her as an employee.”

(Source: “Peer support among persons with severe mental illnesses: a review of evidence and experience,” Larry Davidson, Chyrell Bellamy, Kimberly Guy, Rebecca Miller, *World Psychiatry*, 2012; 11: 123-128.)

Peer Support

Common Questions & Concerns:

Don't peer staff relapse?

“All employees, including peer staff, take off time because of illness. Many staff who are not identified as peers take off time because of mental health issues. The same expectations for sick time and accommodations for illness should be applied for all employees, including peer staff. Even when facing adversity or not feeling well, peer staff can still serve as role models in showing the kind of determination, resilience, and persistence it takes to come back to work following a difficult period. In addition, the stress of working may be considered less onerous in comparison to the stress of prolonged involuntary unemployment, poverty, and isolation.”

(Source: “Peer support among persons with severe mental illnesses: a review of evidence and experience,” Larry Davidson, Chyrell Bellamy, Kimberly Guy, Rebecca Miller, *World Psychiatry*, 2012; 11: 123-128.)

Peer Support

Common Questions & Concerns:

Can peer staff handle the admin demands of the job?

“While some people might not have worked for a prolonged period before joining the peer workforce, and others might have had limited educational opportunities, many peer staff are equally if not more competent at administrative tasks than other staff members. For those who do struggle with these tasks, peer staff can be shown how to manage the administrative details of their jobs and, when needed, provided with supports to enable them to do so.”

Won't peer staff cause harm to clients by breaking confidentiality or by saying the “wrong” things?

“Peer staff, like all other employees, are expected to conform to policies and regulations regarding confidentiality and privacy. Training and supervision support this, and peer staff are employees who are just as responsible as any other staff for keeping client information confidential. There is no reason to believe that this will be any more difficult for peer staff than for anyone else. ”

(Source: “Peer support among persons with severe mental illnesses: a review of evidence and experience,” Larry Davidson, Chyrell Bellamy, Kimberly Guy, Rebecca Miller, *World Psychiatry*, 2012; 11: 123-128.)

Peer Support

Common Questions & Concerns:

Won't peer staff make my job harder rather than easier?

“Peer support provides an important and useful complement to existing mental health services. Peer staff can be especially effective in engaging people into care and acting as a bridge between clients and other staff. When well-trained and supervised, peer staff can serve rather to lessen the load carried by other practitioners, enriching consumers’ lives while allowing other staff to concentrate on their respective roles.”

(Source: “Peer support among persons with severe mental illnesses: a review of evidence and experience,” Larry Davidson, Chyrell Bellamy, Kimberly Guy, Rebecca Miller, *World Psychiatry*, 2012; 11: 123-128.)