

Practising critical resilience as an advanced peer support worker in London: A qualitative evaluation of a peer-led hepatitis C intervention amongst people experiencing homelessness who inject drugs

We would like to declare no conflict of interest



Peer support



Peer Support Workers in Health: A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Their Experiences

- The ability of the Peer Support Worker to actively engage with other marginalised or excluded individuals based on their unique insight into their own experience supports a therapeutic model of care based on appropriately sharing their story.
- Implications for maximising the effectiveness of Peer Support Workers and in contributing their perspective to the development of a therapeutic model of care.

Using peer advocates to improve access to services among hard-to-reach populations with hepatitis C: a qualitative study of client and provider relationships

- Peer advocates can build rapport with clients through disclosing personal details about their lives.
- While this runs counter to assumptions about the need to maintain distance in client-patient relationships, the therapeutic benefits appear to outweigh the potential costs of this engagement.
- Therapeutic benefits of self-disclosure between peer advocates and their clients offer a moral grounding for self-disclosure as a means of building relationships with key hard-to-reach populations.

Practising critical resilience as an advanced peer support worker

- Advanced peer support workers (APSWs) functioning in the HepCare project as service providers.
- Exploration of their transition to service provider in the HCV screening and treatment support service.
- Five peer led in-depth interviews with APSWs were supplemented by a survey of health professionals, interviews with service users, documentary evidence in the form of job descriptions, observational notes and a blog from the field.
- Thematic analysis of the data was conducted, refined and finalised in a workshop with the research team and APSW participants.

Practising critical resilience as an advanced peer support worker

Three themes:

- Transition to Integration
 - “Some of us peers have no or very little education and a career seems a million miles away. Being trusted with the responsibility for others is massive. It helps us to develop key skills to move on with our lives.”
- Retaining 'Peerness'
 - Advanced role > lots of training but > *“I don't forget where I came from”*
- Practising Critical Resilience.
 - APSWs working in the enhanced role, reflect a resilient cohort in an advanced stage of their recovery journey
 - “I would say, self-belief. I wouldn't have thought I would have been able to handle sometimes pressure and sometimes stress as well and responsibility”

Implications: career development

- The advocacy and support enacted by the APSWs offer purpose and meaning alongside integration into a new social group. This is buffered by the supportive context of the programme and facilitates a motivating sense of worth.
- A platform for enactment of critical resilience as they transition to their advanced role, in the healthcare provider team.
- Policy guidance for the structured career development of APSWs



With thanks to the Find&Treat team and all our collaborators

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