

Title: "Risk" is a Dirty Word

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Background: Navigating the peer worker role within multidisciplinary clinical teams can be like walking a tightrope, especially when the word "risk" overshadows the conversation. My journey as a peer worker has been transformed by one radical principle: treating "risk" as a dirty word.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention: In our multidisciplinary team, we've redefined success with a few bold rules:

1. Leave the Ego at Home: Clinicians prioritize collaboration over hierarchy, valuing all voices equally.
2. Engagement Opportunities: My contributions are recognized and valued in various spaces, thanks to ample engagement opportunities.
3. Risk is a Dirty Word: We maintain awareness of potential risks but shift our focus to building trust and highlighting the strengths and potential of peer workers.
4. Scope with Love: "Scope" is a term of endearment here, emphasizing boundaries while fostering mutual respect and understanding.
5. Empowerment for Growth: I have been enabled to develop and grow my own connections within the sector and community.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation: Implementing these principles has created a supportive and productive environment. By valuing each team member's input and maintaining clear boundaries, we provide comprehensive and empathetic care. Eliminating the focus on risk and emphasizing trust has empowered both clients and peer workers, fostering positivity and stronger recovery outcomes.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Our success highlights the power of a respectful, inclusive approach in multidisciplinary teams. Moving forward, we aim to refine these strategies further and share our insights to promote best practices in other settings.

Implications for Practice or Policy (optional): Our model shows that treating "risk" as a dirty word and focusing on trust can significantly enhance peer support's effectiveness. Broadly adopting these principles could improve collaboration and client outcomes across healthcare settings.

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