



Peer Leaders Online Training

A free course from the Chronic Illness Alliance

This project was funded by the
Department of Health under the
Health Conditions Support Grant Program





What is it?

- Online course funded by the Dept Health HCSG
- Step-by-step guide to setting up and running a peer support group (PSG)
- Aimed at new or aspiring peer leaders, and those looking to enhance or expand existing skills
- Free and accessible to anyone, no prior knowledge or experience running a PSG is required
- Developed with rural or regional peer leaders in mind
- Useful in situations where there are barriers to attending other training, such as mobility issues or fatigue
- Can also be used by organisations to train their peer leaders



How it works

- Delivered via Moodle: an interactive, open-source e-learning program
- Cross-platform compatibility, no need to download software
- Screen reader compatible
- Self-paced and self-assessed
- Progress is tracked using a completion tracker
- Participants are awarded a Certificate of Completion upon completion of all Units
- Ongoing and unlimited access gives participants the opportunity to revise information as often as they wish



PLOT Content: Core Units

5 core units, each containing 3 chapters, covering:

- Leadership and facilitation skills
- Planning the group program
- Promoting the group
- Governance and financial matters
- Navigating through difficult times
- Looking after yourself in the role
- Tips and real world examples



Course Overview: Core Units

Unit 1: Getting started

- Peer support groups
- Benefits of peer support groups
- Online peer support groups
- Telephone-based peer support programs
- Combining different types of peer support
- Who is the group for?
- Understanding the needs of your group
- Removing barriers to participation
- Mapping the community landscape
- Finding your niche
- Filling the gaps
- Learning from others

Unit 2: Creating the group

- Choosing the best peer support program for your group
- Complexity of the group
- Purpose
- Promoting the group
- Naming your group
- The membership process
- Building membership through referrals
- A leader or facilitator?
- The role of the support group facilitator
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere
- Breaking the ice
- Creating group cohesion
- Active listening
- Whole group debriefing

Unit 3: Shaping the group

- Meeting agendas
- Keeping a record
- Planning a meeting
- Decision-making
- Roles and responsibilities
- Group rules
- Statement of purpose
- Group values
- Finding volunteers
- Screening volunteers
- Training your volunteers

Unit 4: Getting down to business

- Brainstorming
- What's the priority?
- Working backwards
- Developing an Action Plan
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Budgets
- Cash flow
- Fundraising
- Clear objectives
- Good governance
- To incorporate or not?
- New rules for incorporation
- Office bearers
- Constitution
- Policies and procedures
- Reducing risk
- Insurance

Unit 5: Staying in the lead

- Group dynamics
- Personal considerations
- Strategies for dealing with negative dynamics
- Parting ways
- Losing a member
- Celebrating achievements
- Telling the story of the group
- Sustainability
- Remaining relevant
- Maintaining attendance
- Is it time to wind the group up?
- Succession planning
- Secondary trauma
- What is burnout?
- Strategies for self-care
- Finding balance
- Sharing the load
- Debriefing
- Self-care plan



Activities

- Hands-on activities designed to be completed in the real world environment of the PSG
- Designed to convert concepts into skills and put theory into practice
- Each activity covers a key step involved in setting up a PSG, or building the capacity of an existing group
- Practical tools and templates that will continue to directly benefit PSGs, eg budget templates etc
- Each chapter and activity builds on the previous one to consolidate skills and knowledge



Additional Modules

- 2 additional modules: Health Literacy, and Illness & Intimacy
- Designed to assist in facilitating group discussion
- Includes Facilitation Handbooks containing suggested session plans, group activities and handouts



Course Overview: Additional Modules

Additional Module: Health Literacy

- What is health literacy?
- Why is health literacy so important?
- The health literacy learning curve
- The health literacy journey
- Tools and strategies to improve health literacy
- Patient Decision Aids



Additional Module: Illness & Intimacy

- Session 1: The impact of illness on relationships
- Session 2: Why is intimacy so important?
- Session 3: Expressing intimacy
- Session 4: Let's talk about "it"
- Session 5: It's not all about sex
- Session 6: Reflection and celebration



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Considering leading a peer support group?
This course is designed to enhance and expand
your existing skills towards successful leadership
of your peer support group.

About the course

This free course is designed to be a step by step guide to setting up and running a peer support group as well as a resource to help build the capacity of an existing one.

[Find out more](#)

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FAQ





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◀ Getting down to business

Conclusion: Final Word ▶

Staying in the lead

Unit five



Chapter 1 Navigating through the tough times

Introduction

At some point in its life, every group is likely to go through a "rough patch" due to internal conflict or a traumatic event such as a member passing away. Regardless of the reasons, the result is often a sense of disharmony or distress within the group, and as a peer leader you should be prepared to recognise the signs and deal with such situations. In this Chapter we will discuss some of the more common causes and explore possible strategies to assist you in addressing these challenges.

Note: Before you continue reading, please download Unit 5 Resource Kit [\[HERE\]](#). It contains all the necessary facilitator notes, participant handouts and activities sheets required to complete this Module. You can print as many copies as required.



Group dynamics

In every social setting there are group dynamics at play. People talk with one another and about other people, share their experiences and often make special friends, meeting outside the formal activities. Peer support groups are no different. In some ways this level of informal communication between members is the glue that can hold a group together. It can also contain the seeds of a group's poor performance or even disintegration.

User Bookmarks

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Resource Kits

- [Unit 1](#)
- [Unit 2](#)
- [Unit 3](#)
- [Unit 4](#)
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Course completion status

Status: Complete

You are required to view all activities before you're able to view and obtain a copy of your Certificate. Also note that activity completion status is only updated every 15 minutes. Click your browser [Refresh] button in a few minutes to view your updated status.:

Required criteria	Status
Activity completion	52 of 52



Choosing the best peer support program for your group

Over the course of Unit 1 you have gathered together some important information through conducting a Needs Assessment and a Community Matrix. Hopefully this process has provided you with a deeper understanding of what your target group needs and wants, are more aware of what other groups and programs are out there in the community, have identified where the gaps are, and are satisfied that you will not be duplicating what already exists. The result of all your hard work is that you are now in an excellent position to create the best kind of peer support program to meet your peers' needs.

In other words, the key factors to consider in creating the best peer support program are:

- Will the *form* of your PSG cater for the needs, preferences and expectations of your target group?
- Do you have the *resources* to provide this program option at this stage (including how much time you and others are prepared to donate, costs involved and other resources)?



Tips & Hints

Use your imagination

Peer support is something that happens organically in many different forms and under many different circumstances, and is often found in the most unlikely places. Don't limit yourself to considering only the more traditional or formal settings of peer support: your PSG can *do* and *be* whatever works for its members. The possibilities are endless!



Activity

What sort of programs should your group be offering?

The purpose of this activity is to take the opportunity to revisit the original ideas you had about what kind of PSG you were hoping to set up, and make some decisions about what form your PSG will take.

Required materials:

- None

Task:

Reflect on what you have learned about the peers themselves, and the capacity of your PSG to provide such a program, then answer the following questions:

- What form should your PSG take?
- Have you changed your plans since your original ideas at the beginning of the course?
- If yes, what was it that made you change your decision?

Copy of your Certificate. Also note that activity completion status is only updated every 15 minutes. Click your browser [Refresh] button in a few minutes to view your updated status.:

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Administration

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Benefits for peer support professionals

- Consistency in training: peer leaders who are spread out in different regions or at different levels of experience can undertake the same training
- Cost-effective means of training peer leaders – key chapters or units can be a first step before providing specialised information on the specific organisation and health condition
- If you are a Peer Leader yourself it will help you employ the best standards
- If you auspice PSGs it is a way of ensuring the PSGs are adhering to the best standards



Be part of the CIA PLOT...

- Promote PLOT to your PSGs, and encourage aspiring peer leaders to undertake the course
- Provide feedback on the course to help us make it the best it can be
- Additional peer support resources to come from CIA: evaluation tool & updated Best Practice Framework

www.peerleadersonlinetraining.net