Scottish Recovery Network

Let's do Peer2Peer!

Hints and tips for people running Peer2Peer training

Peer2Peer is helping people to develop peer support opportunities in communities across Scotland as well as internationally. However, we know that using resources for the first time can be daunting.

So where do I start, how do I do it, what will it cost, will people attend...questions, questions, questions!

With this in mind, we spoke to several people across the country who shared their experiences of using the Peer2Peer manual to deliver training in their organisations and communities. This companion guide is the result of these conversations, along with our own experiences of supporting people to use Peer2Peer in a variety of settings. Knowledge is power and we hope that this guide will help you to feel more confident about using the Peer2Peer manual to develop training and peer support in your organisation and/or community.

The guide is in four sections with additional materials at the end:

- Peer2Peer
- Preparing for Peer2Peer
- Delivering Peer2Peer
- After Peer2Peer

Additional materials

- Creating a positive learning experience
- Budget planning
- Peer2Peer course outlines
- Certificate template (this is available to download from www.scottishrecovery.net)

Thanks

We would like to thank Ruth Stevenson of Ruthless Research for her support in this guide including carrying out interviews with those delivering Peer2Peer. We would also like to thank ACUMEN, Fife Employment Access Trust, Flourish House, Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living, Moray Wellbeing Hub, ReStart, Health in Mind and Dundee Peer Recovery Network for sharing their learning.

Background

What is Peer2Peer?

Peer2Peer was originally developed through a European project to provide an opportunity for people living with mental health challenges to develop peer support skills. Scottish Recovery Network was a partner in the project and has played a major role in developing and promoting the use of the Peer2Peer resource.

The Peer2Peer manual is available to download free of charge. Scottish Recovery Network also have some hard copies that we can send to addresses in Scotland.

There is no licence or permission required for its use. We would however love to hear how you are using Peer2Peer and identify if we can help promote your work.

How is Peer2Peer different from other training courses?

Peer2Peer stands out from other training courses for a number of reasons. This course is very different in that the aim is to provide an experiential learning resource that focuses on valuing lived experience.

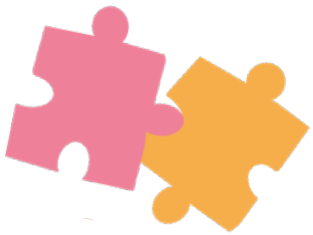
It is up to you how you choose to deliver Peer2Peer. It can be used in full or in part by anyone that might benefit. The manual is there to provide a framework. Some people choose to deliver it by the book while others adapt it in various ways or use it for stand-alone workshops.

It has been inspiring to see what happens when people can pick up a resource and are not bound by restrictions in how to use it or how much it costs. This enables creativity and personalisation to take a lead role in ensuring any workshops or courses focus on the needs of the people attending rather than having to fit into a prescribed programme.

The most important thing is that it is delivered in a way that best suits the needs of the group and/or organisation using it.

We know that in Scotland Peer2Peer has been successfully used:

- To train individuals to fill Peer Support Worker roles in host organisations and beyond
- To set up or raise the profile of the Peer Support movement in local areas
- To provide additional training for existing volunteers in host organisations
- To build individuals' confidence as a route towards future volunteering
- To support the personal recovery of people in local communities
- To provide a different kind of learning opportunity for people in local communities
- As part of a pathway into further education or learning



Is Peer2Peer accredited?

No, Peer2Peer is not accredited as this allows there to be more flexibility and creativity in the way it can be used, which is very important to us. We want as many people as possible to be able to benefit from the opportunity without the constraints built into assessments.

There are other options to evidence people's participation and learning:

- Certificates of participation and/or learning – use the template or create your own, it's allowed
- Host a celebration event where participants can share their learning and experiences
- Speak to your local college to see what options could be available for accredited learning
- Adult Achievement Awards- if accreditation is an important factor for those participating. https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/adult-achievement-awards-pilot-programme

If you are looking for an accredited course there is the PDA Mental Health Peer Support https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47021.html. Scottish Recovery Network can discuss this with you as it is also an option though we have found that people prefer to start with Peer2Peer.

How can Scottish Recovery Network help you to use Peer2Peer in your organisation or community?

Remember, you are not on your own when you are delivering Peer2Peer. Approaches will differ and that is what makes Peer2Peer exciting. There's no 'one size fits all' but there's plenty of insight that can be tapped into from the Scottish Recovery Network, people who have delivered Peer2Peer, and participants who have taken part.

If you have any questions or would like to connect with other people delivering Peer2Peer, get in touch and we will do our best to help you.

Preparing for Peer2Peer

This section discusses some of the practicalities that you may want to consider as part of your planning process.

Although the manual itself is free there are other aspects of delivering the course that might incur a cost depending on the organisation/groups circumstances and the approach you choose to take. Think about who can help you or support your idea and what each of you can bring to the table!

Developing a budget is a key factor in your planning process. A budget planning document is included in the additional materials at the end of this guide.

Here are some things you might like to consider:

1. Do we have the time to plan sessions?
People delivering Peer2Peer tend to convert the training into their own bespoke programme in advance of delivery.

One organisation chose to co-produce each session with the group of participants week by week. This still requires some planning time.

2. Do we have a venue/room?
Some things are important when finding an appropriate room. A few things to consider: Is the room accessible? Free from outside noise? Big enough to comfortably accommodate a group? Tables and access to IT if required?

3. Do we have access to materials?
As a facilitator, there are some materials that you might find useful. Coloured pens, flip chart paper, Post-it notes, print outs of session plans and activities.

4. Will we provide refreshments?
Refreshments are always welcome. Your ability to provide these, and to what extent, depends on your budget/what you already have access to.

How can I identify participants for a Peer2Peer course?

It is important that people choosing to attend a Peer2Peer course are in a position to benefit from and make a meaningful contribution to the learning within the group.

Peer2Peer can be a good way to develop the skills of an existing group. It can also be a great way to bring people from your organisation or a number of local organisations together to develop peer support skills.

'It was an existing group that was quite active anyway so Peer2Peer was there to enhance some of these skills and help them work together as a group, so they were really keen to do it.'

ACUMEN

The people we spoke to across Scotland discussed the importance of developing a recruitment process that included a mix of the following:

- Hold information sessions to talk through what the course is about and demonstrate the kind of tasks and activities that will be involved
- Have individual conversations with those interested in attending. This can help people to think about preparing for future opportunities
- Using non-attendance of pre-course appointments as a gauge of who is likely to be able to commit
- Giving participants the opportunity to 'opt out' after the first session
- Promote the opportunity through social media, local networks and newletters

'We found it worked really well to hold information sessions in advance of starting Peer2Peer. We did exercises to give people a reasonable expectation of what the course would be like so that they could gauge whether they would be able to commit to it.'

FEAT

How can I schedule the delivery of a Peer2Peer course?

It will not come as a surprise to hear that there is no one way of scheduling the delivery of a Peer2Peer course.

We have included some examples of what the course could look like run over different scheduling periods in the example course outlines at the end of this guide. Including:

- 2 hours, half-day, and a whole day
- Weekly, fortnightly or, monthly
- 4, 6, 8 or, 12 weeks or even across a whole year
- Intensive weekend course

Those who have delivered it told us:

- Larger gaps between sessions tend to result in more dropouts and people forgetting what they learned previously. Weekly or fortnightly sessions generally work best
- Scheduling sessions for first thing in the morning tends to mean higher levels of absence, so starting after 10.30am is a good idea
- Other commitments such as work or childcare will impact on whether people can attend, so the needs of the group should be taken into account
- Think about how peak holiday periods (Christmas, Easter, and Summer) may impact attendance and continued participation. It is important to communicate during these periods

You can choose what you think will work best for your group, as this decision is very much a balancing act between how much content you would like to cover and how much time participants are prepared to commit.

What are the key topics in a Peer2Peer course?

You can deliver Peer2Peer in whatever way you want to. It is yours to use, and amend, and add to as you see fit. Feedback is that Peer2Peer works best if you make it your own.

Most start by reading the manual and choosing the parts that they think would be most relevant to their own participants and circumstances. For some, the whole manual felt relevant and they decided to deliver Peer2Peer 'by the book'. If you want to you can simply deliver the course by reading it from the manual. Others emphasised key points, changed the order of sections, or merged sections together.

'From the start we added to the standard Peer2Peer course in two main ways – firstly by widening the context of 'peer' to other life challenges beyond mental ill-health, and secondly by rooting the course within our organisation and the anti-stigma work that we do.'

Moray Wellbeing Hub

Some developed new sessions to complement what they found in the manual. Adding in more detail on areas of particular interest to their group or organisation, for example:

- Stigma
- Working in groups
- Group dynamics
- Putting peer techniques into practice
- The peer relationship in different settings
- Telling your own recovery story

Whatever you choose it is important to give some time at the beginning of the course to ensure the participants get to know each other and to create a positive learning environment. We are also aware that time may be a pressure. Feedback is that it is better to have fewer topics with good time for reflection and discussion than to try to cram too much content in.

You can find example outlines of what others have covered in their Peer2Peer course in the additional materials section at the end of this guide. It is good to have a plan but remember that you can be flexible and adapt your plans to the group. Those delivering Peer2Peer told us that their plans and approaches were constantly evolving. As they got to know the people in the group, they tweaked their content to meet their needs and interests.

Delivering Peer2Peer

Now for the exciting part! The planning is done, you have recruited your participants and you are ready to begin.

What is the role of a Peer2Peer facilitator?

The facilitator plays an important role. Not as a leader, teacher or expert but as someone who can create and nurture a positive group dynamic allowing the group to get the most out of the Peer2Peer experience.

'In practice we've found that very little comes from the facilitator, it is very much about encouraging dialogue and getting people to think critically and learn from each other's stories.'

Flourish House

Although it is not essential, it has been shared that delivering Peer2Peer as someone with lived experience can help participants to engage. Knowing that you are amongst peers can build confidence and encourage fuller participation, which enables individuals to explore their personal stories in a safe environment.

'People can relate to Peer2Peer because it's all done from the perspective of lived experience. There's no judgement, we've been there. It's a great leveller.'

Dundee Peer Recovery Network

We have included some information on creating a positive learning experience in the additional materials section.

Should there be more than one facilitator?

We know that having a co-facilitator (perhaps someone who has already undertaken Peer2Peer) can share the admin tasks and make running the sessions easier and more enjoyable.

You can also consider delivering Peer2Peer as a partnership as it gives organisations/groups the opportunity to pull together the resources they have.

A note on lived experience

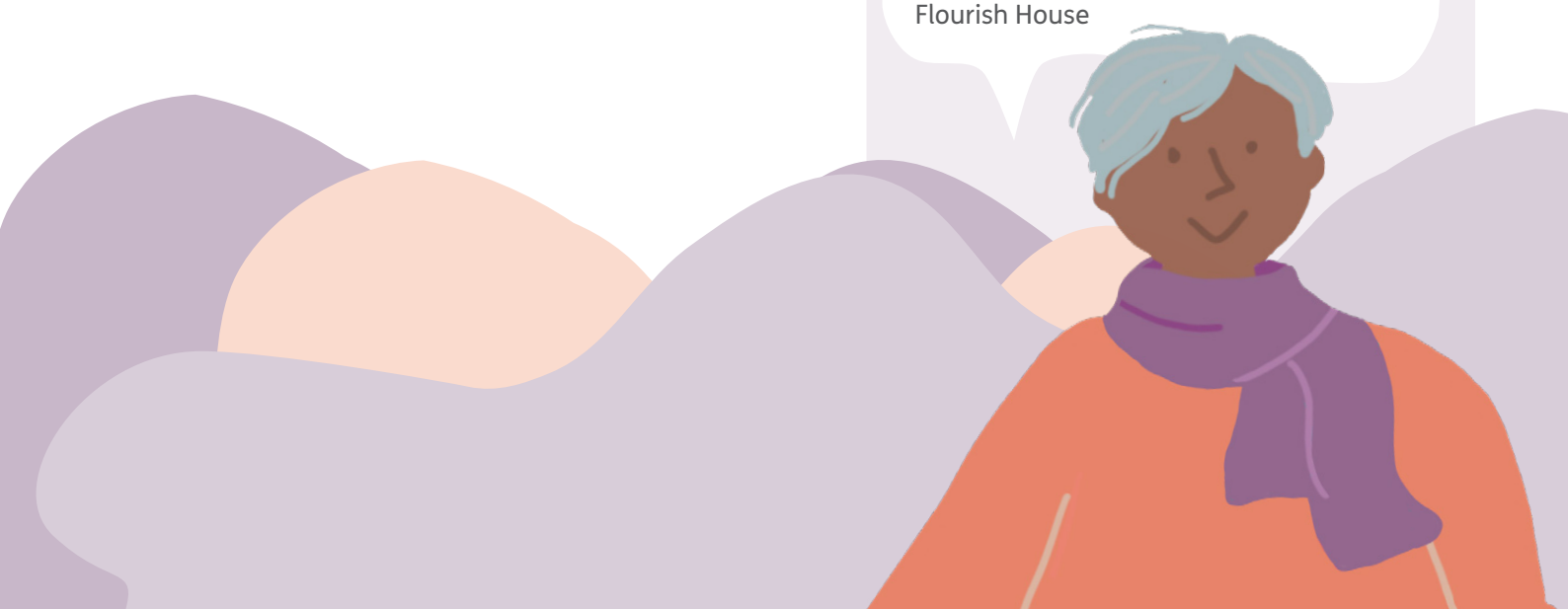
Lived experience sits at the heart of Peer2Peer. The course aims to support people in recognising value in their life experiences while framing these as a strength and an opportunity.

Throughout Peer2Peer, the participants must feel that their lived experience is valued and valuable. As they progress they should grow to understand their own experience and find meaning in using their own experience in a positive way for themselves and others.

The ethos of Peer2Peer is that everyone in the room can learn from one another whether they are participant or facilitator, taking a collaborative approach in the spirit of peer support.

'When I am delivering Peer2Peer I don't come at it like I am the boss that knows everything, but I am able to give examples and explain things using my own lived experience.'

Flourish House



Are there other resources that can help me to deliver Peer2Peer?

The Peer2Peer manual is made up of different activities and exercises. You may also choose to intertwine your own ideas, materials and resources from previous roles or experiences too.

'We were grateful that Scottish Recovery Network shared resources with us showing us some of the work happening in other regions and how people delivered the course already. They really helped us by directing us towards sites to look at and different speakers to listen to.'

FEAT

Those who have delivered Peer2Peer developed new ideas and resources by using the internet and other outside sources, including:

- Stories, videos and materials on the Scottish Recovery Network website www.scottishrecovery.net
- The Peer2Peer website http://p2p.intras.es
- Resources identified via Google search
- Short films or case studies
- Resources created by others delivering Peer2Peer
- Ted Talks and animations on relevant topic i.e. compassion, stigma
- Parts from the PDA Mental Health Peer Support (Scottish Recovery Network can provide)

How can I make Peer2Peer a good experience for all?

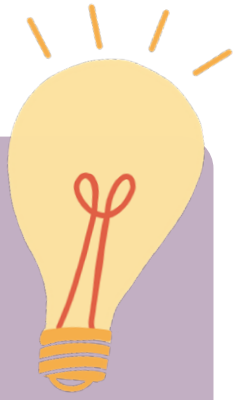
People learn differently and we know that it is important to nurture this. Participants will then feel able to contribute and will get more from the course when their learning needs are being met.

The course works best when a variety of different approaches weave together to accommodate different learning styles. This way, the delivery is varied, relatable, and easy to understand for all participants.

Peer2Peer facilitators told us that they had used:

- PowerPoint slides with starting points for discussion
- Handouts
- Fun exercises
- Writing exercises
- Short films
- Reading aloud relevant stories, poems or other excerpts
- Looking things up online together

Crucially, the approaches selected should be interactive and direct the group towards discussion and sharing of ideas.



An idea

Tap into the different ways people take in information and learn. Provide pens and paper on the tables for participants to doodle as it can boost memory and attention span. Fidget toys, pipe cleaners and modelling clay can help people regulate, bring fun, connection and positive energy into the room as well as help people focus on the task.

After Peer2Peer

It is important to think about what happens once people complete the course. Participants are invigorated and you will want to build on this enthusiasm. People will be keen to start putting their new skills into action and make a difference!

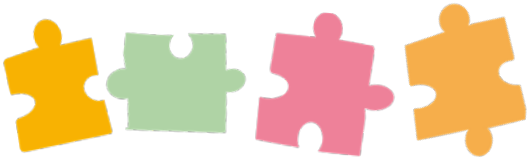
How can I build on the learning and skills developed through Peer2Peer?

We know that Peer2Peer can be transformational for people. They do not necessarily leave the course with the same mindset or plans they started with.

It works well to take the opportunity to notice and acknowledge this change and enable their next steps rather than leaving them to continue without support after the course finishes.

> **'We've had people say to us that Peer2Peer has changed their life.'**
>
> Dundee Peer Recovery Network

A number of Peer2Peer facilitators added in a next steps session at the end of their course. This keeps the momentum going and allows people to think about their journey so far and make plans to use their knowledge. This is a celebration of progress and a gentle opportunity to signpost individuals onwards.



At this final session some have invited in guests to meet the group, such as:

- Potential employers to highlight opportunities and advise on applications
- Providers of other learning opportunities to identify aligned courses
- Community partners such as employability services
- Past participants to talk about what they did next

You could make plans for a final session based around the needs of your group and the opportunities in your local area. It is important to show recognition and celebrate the learning that the participants have achieved. You could:

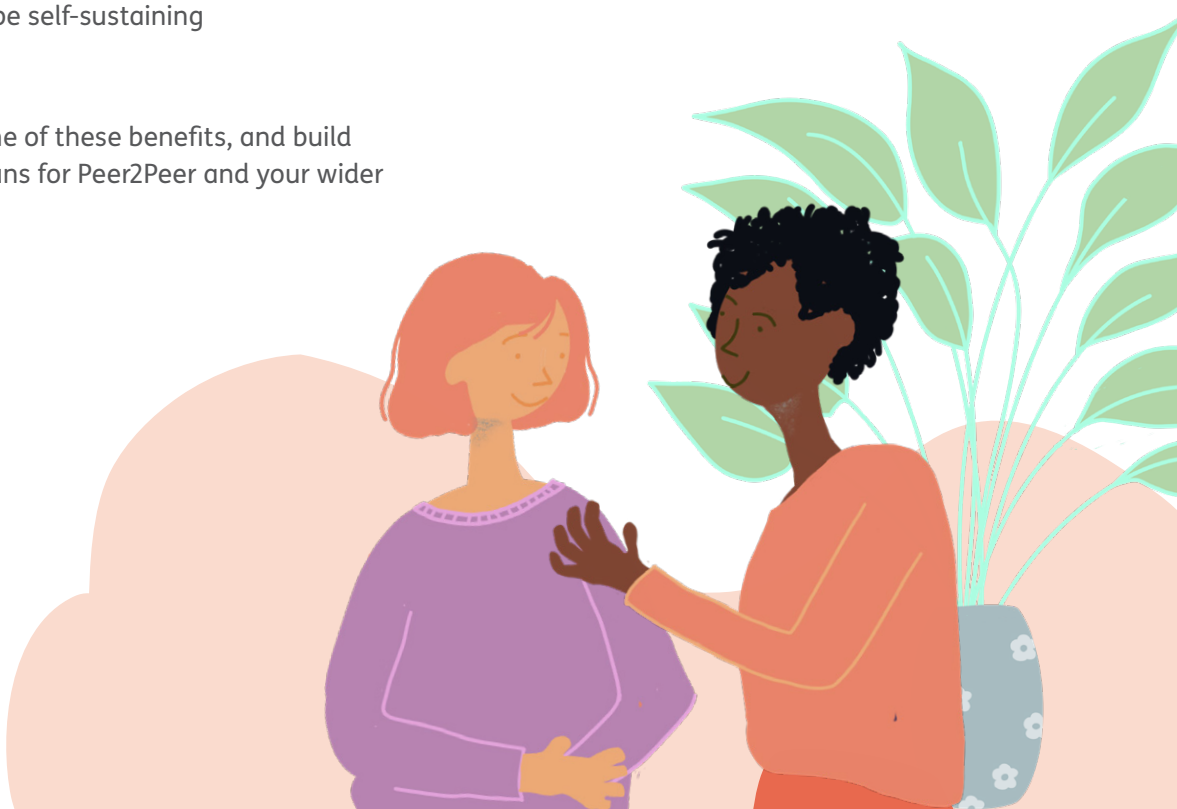
- Ask participants to share with each other how they have found working together
- Hand out certificates at a ceremony
- Have lunch/coffee or a joint activity
- Organise a celebration event with invited guests to share in their achievements e.g. family and friends, people in the community
- Invite the local press, influencers, or funders

How can my organisation build on the benefits of Peer2Peer?

Some of those who have facilitated Peer2Peer with their organisation found that offering the Peer2Peer course has led to benefits for their organisations. These have included:

- The opportunity to offer a wider programme to the community
- Partnership opportunities with other organisations who want to deliver Peer2Peer together
- Professional development for facilitators who prepare and deliver the course
- Peer2Peer graduates keen to co-produce or co-facilitate future Peer2Peer courses, enabling Peer2Peer to be self-sustaining
- Peer2Peer graduates keen to volunteer or work for the organisation
- Completion of the course as a means of evaluating the quality of applicants for Peer Support Worker roles
- Successful funding applications for resources to deliver Peer2Peer, helping the organisation to be more sustainable
- Paid requests to deliver Peer2Peer for other organisations, building a social enterprise model of working

You could anticipate some of these benefits, and build them into your future plans for Peer2Peer and your wider organisation.



Finally

Our top 5 tips for delivering Peer2Peer

1. Involving people with lived experience in developing, leading and co-facilitation is awesome
2. The knowledge is in the room
3. Whatever you do, avoid using the term role-play. Honestly, for some reason, it can tap into people's fear of making a 'show of themselves'! How about using skills practice
4. Embrace the Peer2Peer experience that you are creating for participants
5. Celebrate! It's important to recognise the commitment made by both yourself and the participants

So what are you waiting for?

At Scottish Recovery Network we are always happy to have a chat about your ideas and answer any questions. We have plenty of Peer2Peer examples and resources that you may find useful and we can connect you with others facilitating Peer2Peer courses similar to yourself.

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If you require this information in a different format please contact us.

Together we can make mental health recovery real

Get involved

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www.scottishrecovery.net

or join us on social media

Contact us
info@scottishrecovery.net

BSL users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL.
Find out more on **https://contactscotland-bsl.org/**

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