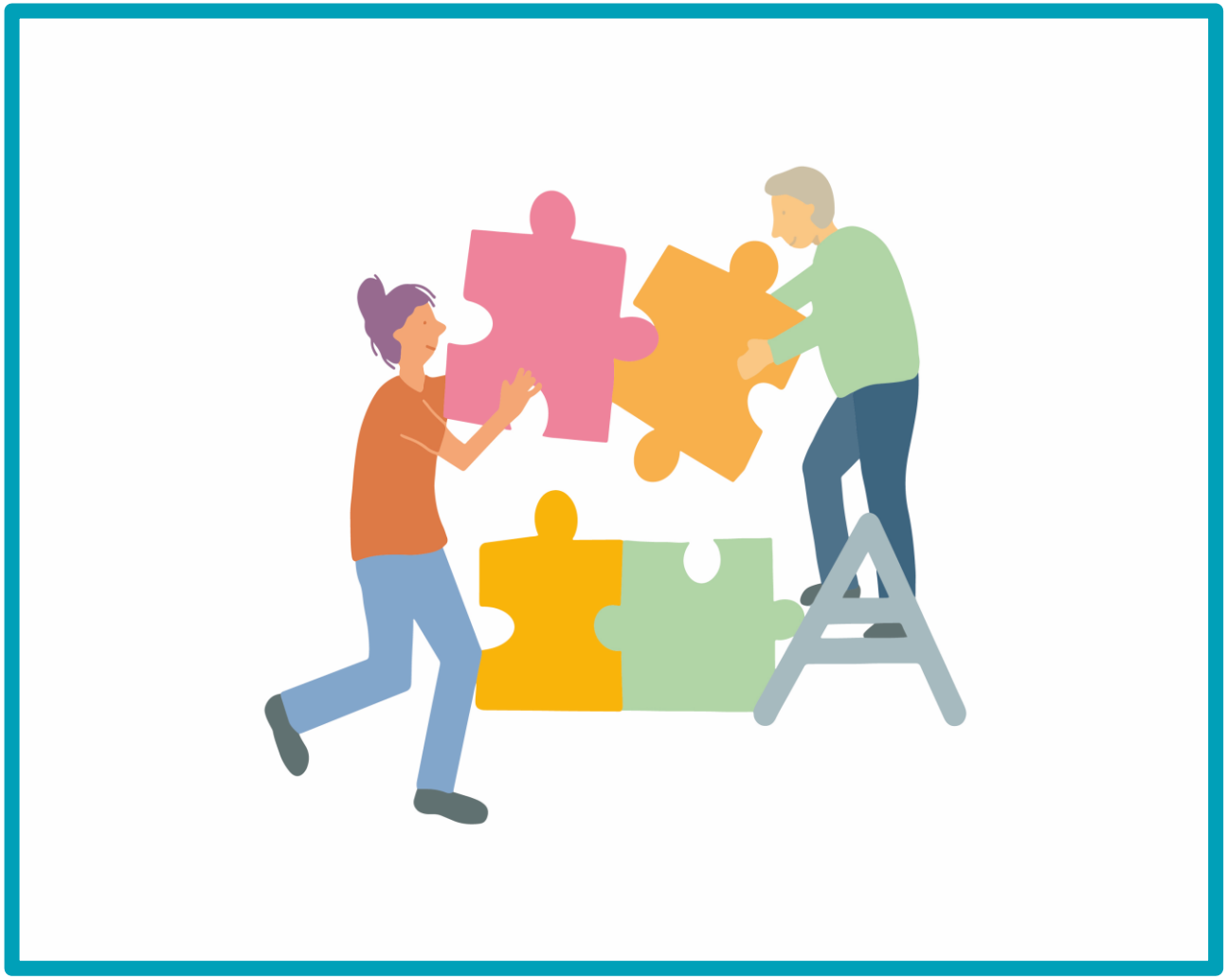
PREPARING FOR PEER 2 PEER



MINI KNOWLEDGE PREPARING FOR PEER 2 PEER

Scottish Recovery Network

peer2peer

PRE-PROGRAMME: *PREPARING FOR PEER 2 PEER*: Evaluating readiness to undertake the peer support journey of development.

- Define and agree the key components of an empowering and safe learning environment, in the context of the conversations and their purpose.
- Come together to explore the Recovery Story Workbook.
- Complete a pre-programme personal stocktake.
- Reflect on the above work and decide next steps.

INTRODUCTION

If you are reading this then you are considering facilitating a Peer 2 Peer development programme. One of the critical components of peer support is understanding how to use lived experience as a process to facilitate and empower others. Central to that is the creation and reflection on the recovery story of each of the possible participants. Rather than have this 'in' the programme we saw it as helpful, to use this as a way of discovering for you, and participants their state of readiness for the programme. This includes their thinking about how they can use their experience to inspire and empower others.

PREPARING FOR PEER 2 PEER: THE PROCESS

It is likely that you support participants through this reflective process. This could be a 1-1 conversation or a conversation in a small group. There are no right and wrong answers, and we expect you to invite participants to complete the reflection within an agreed period of time and then have a further conversation. At that point you can both decide the next steps.
Guidance on having conversations can be found in the Facilitator Handbook. Participants are issued with the Pre-Programme Conversation Workbook, which has clear guidance on the process of Pre-Peer 2 Peer reflection and invites the creation of the first iteration of the Personal Recovery Story. The structure around this is very much about how the participant thinks and records their lived experience and recovery journey in a way that is both accessible, empowering and inspirational to others. This series of conversations will ensure both parties of the readiness of the participant to undertake Peer 2 Peer. We envisage that the Recovery Story is continually reflected on and updated during the programme.

PREPARING FOR PEER 2 PEER

PURPOSE

It's a personal commitment to be a peer supporting and inspiring others. In that process participants will be learning about facilitating others to think through their recovery journey from a strengths-based perspective around learning, so it's good for potential participants to undertake that stocktake and reflection, irrespective of where they are on their peer journey.

USING LIVED EXPERIENCE TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER OTHERS

Valuing lived experience is an important principle in recovery approaches. It is unique in that it asks participants to apply their lived experience of mental health and recovery in support of others. This means using the experience of mental health problems as part of the solution. This has a role to play in promoting and supporting recovery. This can promote hope as well as strengthen a sense of purpose and a positive identity for people affected by mental health issues.

Peer support is a way of offering help and support on a more equal footing. It's about people finding a way forward together, where people are recognised as experts in their own experience. Good peer support also works in a way that acknowledges that both parties can learn things from each other and support each other's recovery journey. They are not based on trying to fix people or one person being the professional expert. This is different from the expert-patient dynamic.

In the peer support relationship, using and drawing on your personal recovery experiences is a powerful tool in communicating hope and creating connections with others. Sharing your recovery experiences provides others with the opportunity to practice what you have learned about how role modelling can communicate possibility and potential.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY 1: PERSONAL STOCKTAKE (REPLICATED IN PARTICPIANT WORKBOOK)

The first reflective activity is to complete a personal stocktake. The ladder of change is a simple self-assessment which can help participants see where they are in their thinking and behaviour. This ladder is laid out over the next few pages. This will enable you as a facilitator to work through what is expected of your participants and consider the best way to support them through the process.

In terms of using this as a reflective tool the following could be helpful:

- Participants read through the three pages before marking anything.
- Participants mark the statements that feel real to them in the moment, not where they have been or want to be, but a snapshot in time.
- With the statements they do choose, they then take it a step further and think about what this means in their developing role in peer support.
- Finally on page 7, there is final reflection which can be the basis of your conversation.

STUCK	
1	**I am not interested in thinking or discussing my situation. I may be causing myself harm, or harming others, due to either lack of awareness or a willingness to open-up. I am not achieving my full potential.**
2	**I am fed up with the status quo and may see the potential for change. I am not ready to engage with others or seek support.**
How can you use this in a positive way in your role/emerging role in peer support?	

ACCEPTING HELP	
3	I am feeling more and more that I don't like how things are. Change may still be feeling impossible or scary, but I'm ready to engage with others to move forward.
4	I am engaging with others in a more consistent and helpful way. I may not be driving the change, or taking full personal responsibility, but I am in the process.
How can you use this in a positive way in your role/emerging role in peer support?	

BELIEVING	
5	I can see that I want change, I know what I want and what I don't. I am accepting that it is down to me to make change happen with support from others. My thinking and behaviour is changing, and I am more focussed, and self-determined.
6	I am experimenting and doing things differently. Some things are working, others are not, I'm using my support mechanisms to keep my hopes alive.
How can you use this in a positive way in your role/emerging role in peer support?	

LEARNING	
7	I am open and ready to learn, I am motivated, believing more in myself and my capacity to change things. I am actively engaging the support of others, especially in reflecting on the impact of the changes.
8	I have overcome significant setbacks with the support of others and my personal learning reflections. I have thought about giving up, but I am managing to stay focussed on my goals.
How can you use this in a positive way in your role/emerging role in peer support?	

SELF RELIANCE	
9	I have new ways of doing things and these are well established. Mostly I can manage change but at times of crisis, I may be at risk of slipping back. I have someone/people who check I'm OK, help me recognise the trigger points and take action when needed.
10	I am self-reliant and behave in ways that work well for me and people around me. I can manage by myself and equally know where and how to get support if I need it.
How can you use this in a positive way in your role/emerging role in peer support?	

What have you discovered from completing this personal stocktake?
What feels positive about the contribution you can make to others?
Note down anything you would like to discuss further.

REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY 2: PERSONAL RECOVERY STORY (REPLICATED IN PARTICPIANT WORKBOOK).

Peer support is a relationship that enables peers to role model hope and recovery within the peer relationship.

- Peer workers are evidence of the reality of recovery.
- It is evidence that people can learn and grow from challenges and setbacks.
- It is evidence that we all have hopes, dreams, and aspirations and can work towards and live out our potential.
- This offers something for people to aspire to.

The way in which participants frame their recovery story will be different. It is important that you as a facilitator make this clear and encourage them to think clearly about the impact, they want their story to have. To support them in developing their story we have created a framework for reflection and recording. At this point they are writing this for themselves, with your support, in preparation for the P2P Development Programme. This process supports them to move from their journey, to intentionally using the learning from their journey with others.

RECOVERY STORY KEY CHAPTERS

INTRODUCTION TO YOU

Who are you?

What matters to you?

What do you love doing?

What are you good at?

How can you encourage others to think about these questions in a peer support relationship?

THE BEGINNING

Lots of people have struggled with long term conditions, mental health challenges or addictions, yet there can still be silence on these issues because of the negative stigma surrounding them. Even those going through the recovery process may experience it hard to find their voice.

When were you aware something was wrong?

What were the early signs, what did you notice, what were you feeling?

Do you remember the lowest point, how did that feel and what was happening?

How did this impact you and others at the time?

How were you coping?

How can you use this part of your experience to connect to others and create hope?

THE TURNING POINT

A recovery mindset recognises the role of turning points, twists and turns in the recovery processes. The idea that certain key life events can trigger turning point experiences offers a valuable way to think about change. The complexity of life, relationships and circumstances, mean that it is unlikely to be one giant lightbulb moment that is the turning point (although it maybe) and more likely a growing feeling that change is required.

When were you aware something was changing, and that you wanted to move forward?

What were the significant turning points, what did you notice, what were you feeling?

Do you remember how your thinking changed, and you felt hope for the future?

How did this impact you and others at the time?

What were your first few steps on the road to recovery?

How can you use this part of your experience to connect to others and create hope?

ON THE JOURNEY

We all need people and activities in our lives that make us feel good, validate us as people and help us to grow and learn. Trauma of any sort can disrupt connection with others. Taking action to improve connections is likely to be a core part of the recovery journey. Some of the best benefits include higher levels of wellbeing, better coping skills, increased learning and a reduction in stress and anxiety.

What are the boundaries that you have put in place that have supported you on the recovery journey?

What types of support have had the greatest impact, especially when you were feeling low?

How have you used your strengths to help you recognise situations and behaviours that might trigger setbacks?

How are you regulating your thoughts, behaviours and emotions?

How can you use this part of your experience to encourage and empower others to find connection?

SURVIVING AND THRIVING

The fundamental difference between surviving and thriving lies in how you approach your daily life. When surviving, you tend to focus on immediate needs and live day-to-day without taking the time to consider your long-term goals, dreams or aspirations. On the other hand, thriving involves embracing a growth mindset – focusing on avoiding problems and actively seeking opportunities for personal growth and development.

Describe in a few words your vision for the future, including for your role in peer support.

What types of self-care are nourishing your mind, body and spirit, right now?

How have you created social connections that provide joy and learning, that can support you moving forward?

How are you taking positive and considered risks to support your vision for the future?

How can you use this part of your experience to empower others to thrive?

LANGUAGE AND IMPACT

Remember peer support is a mutual relationship – walking alongside, learning from each other – your story will not have all the answers. It is part of the peer relationship not the whole thing.

It can be helpful at this stage just to revisit your thinking on the previous pages.

Are you satisfied that the story reflects what you want to say, in the context of using your experience intentionally to support others in a peer relationship?

Are you comfortable with the level of personal disclosure (not over familiar or over emotional)?

Have you checked your story contains positive and encouraging language?

Have you checked that your story, as best you can, is unlikely to adversely trigger others?

Are you satisfied that your story would inspire others through the sharing of strategies and support?

LAST THOUGHTS

Having completed the personal reflection process, how do you feel about your current/desired role in peer support?