

Models of Youth Peer Work

Prevention and Health Promotion

Scope of Practice

- Engage in mental health promotion activities within the community.
- Collaborate in the co-design and co-facilitation of mental health programs.
- Participate in and/or facilitate group activities to support mental wellbeing.
- Provide appropriate resources and assist with system navigation for young people.

Position Descriptions & Recruitment

- Ensure position descriptions emphasise values alignment, strong communication skills, and the value of lived experience.
- Utilise youth-friendly and creative recruitment methods to attract diverse candidates.

Supervision & Mentorship

- Provide regular, reflective, and supportive supervision for peer workers.
- Include structured goal setting and dedicated space for debriefing within supervision sessions.
- The mentor should be a member of staff or volunteer who champions peer workers, and is separate from their manager and clinical supervisor.

Training & Professional Development

- Offer opportunities to pursue further training, such as Introduction to Peer Work (LEx Hub), Foundations of Peer Work (LEx Hub), and Youth Mental Health First Aid (external).
- Ensure ongoing access to Communities of Practice for peer connection and learning.

Ongoing Development

- Provide opportunities for peer workers to co-facilitate or coordinate programs as part of career development.
- Support pathways into facilitator or administrative roles within the organisation.

Benefits

► Empowered and Skilled Workforce

Peer workers gain confidence and skills through strong training and support.

► Meaningful Youth Engagement

Lived experience and youth-friendly recruitment improve connection with young people.

► Clear Career Pathways and Retention

Clear growth opportunities help retain and advance peer workers.

Models of Youth Peer Work

Mild to Moderate Services

Scope of Practice

- Provide low-level one-on-one peer support.
- Assist young people in finding and using appropriate mental health resources.
- Support and assist with appropriate service navigation

Position Descriptions & Recruitment

- Emphasise on strong interpersonal and ethical skills rather than formal clinical qualifications.
- Use creative recruitment strategies such as social media advertising, storytelling interviews, and youth testimonials to engage potential peer workers.

Supervision & Mentorship

- Offer regular supervision that prioritises emotional safety, wellbeing, and the maintenance of healthy boundaries.
- Ensure peer workers have access to leadership with lived experience to model and guide best practices.
- Encourage the development of mentoring relationships to foster growth and support.

Training & Professional Development

- Provide access to training such as the Introduction to Peer Work and Foundations of Peer Work through Lex Hub.
- Offer training opportunities like Youth Mental Health First Aid.
- Ensure peer workers have ongoing access to Communities of Practice to support continuous learning and connection.

Ongoing Development

- Support progression into leadership or coordination roles within peer work teams.
- Enable peer workers to use their lived experience and service skills as a foundation for pursuing formal health or mental health qualifications.

Benefits

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▶ Meaningful Youth Engagement

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Models of Youth Peer Work

Acute / Severe & Complex Services

Scope of Practice

- Work as embedded members of care teams to ensure integrated support.
- Provide support between clinical sessions to maintain engagement and continuity of care.
- Assist young people in accessing services such as housing, alcohol and other drug (AOD) support, and LGBTQ+ affirming services.
- Co-facilitate youth reference groups and contribute to the development of youth-friendly mental health resources.

Position Descriptions & Recruitment

- Clearly articulate the scope of peer work within clinical settings to define expectations and responsibilities.
- Explicitly define the limits of non-clinical roles to avoid overlap with clinical duties and promote role clarity.

Supervision & Mentorship

- Ensure supervision includes a strong focus on mental health safety, regular debriefing, and work around professional boundaries.
- When embedded in care teams, incorporate cross-disciplinary input into supervision to support collaboration.
- Foster resilience in peer workers through structured reflection and strengths-based mentoring.
- The mentor should be a member of staff or volunteer who champions peer workers, and is separate from their manager and clinical supervisor.

Training & Professional Development

- Provide access to foundational training including Introduction to Peer Work and Foundations of Peer Work (Lex Hub).
- Offer external training such as Mental Health First Aid to strengthen peer support capacity.
- Prepare peer workers for working within clinical environments and multidisciplinary teams through targeted training and support.

Ongoing Development

- Create clear pathways into clinical, allied health, or system navigation roles for interested peer workers.
- Support mentorship opportunities that lead into leadership roles within youth and lived experience sectors.

Benefits

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► Clear Career Pathways and Retention

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