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Harnessing the 'lived experience' My humanity is no different to your's

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Development of the Peer Workforce

- Recognition of the benefits of peer support that has always existed
- Recognition of seeing the peer workers as agents of change – this has been a significant step in the movement to transform the delivery of mental health services
- International developments – Daniel Fisher
- Australian developments - PHaMS

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Identified Development Needs

- Through consultation with PHaMS programs, it became evident that training and support were needed for their peer workers
- It was also identified that training was needed for managers and other team members
- The importance of additional selection criteria apply when recruiting peers. eg 'the lived experience'. The candidate must be able to articulate their 'lived experience' in an appropriate way that will benefit and support the client

Mind's Response

- Discussions with Shery Mead and separate workshops provided for Peer Workers and Managers in March 2009
- A Mind Peer Support Training Manual was developed by Robyn Callaghan and myself. The training has been delivered in Australia and Indonesia and has been well received by participants.
- Increased emphasis on Peer workforce development in the Mind Strategic Plan 2010- 2015
- Formation of the Consumer, Carer, Family and Peer Engagement Unit in 2010

Major Aspects of the Training

- Flexible and adaptable to the needs of Peer Workers and teams and organisations who work with them.
- Supportive and conducted in a safe environment that enables participants to share a common bond that their lives have been deeply challenged by mental health issues eg: " Who Am I?"

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Major Aspects of the Training

Peers have an understanding of what supported their recovery, what didn't, what challenges they had to meet, what skills they needed to develop and what resources supported recovery.

It is through being deeply reflective of their own experience, the peer worker gains greater insight.

The sessions provide information and group work designed to enhance the skills of reflective listening, reflective practice, moving forward in the journey and self care.

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Quotes from the Training Evaluation

- ‘The networking opportunities – the opportunity to see how others approach their role and their work. ‘Medication’ and the ‘Who am I?’ story get a distinction’
- ‘The space we were given to express ourselves freely leading to healthy debate and discussion. A very safe environment, due mainly to the atmosphere created by the trainers on day one’

Future Developments

- Development of a national Peer Worker competency framework by the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CSHISC)
- Aimed at a **Certificate 1V Mental Health Peer Work**. The Mind training manual will attract credit as Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)
- Further information at: www.cshisc.com.au

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