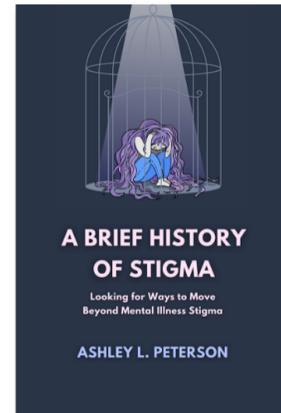




Peer Support to Reduce Mental Illness Self-Stigma

mentalhealthathome.org



A Brief History of Stigma: Stigma Reduction Toolkit Peer Support

Peer support can be a powerful tool to help reduce self-stigma and promote empowerment.

Forms of Peer Support

Peer support can be embedded in mental health treatment services, it can be offered as stand-alone services, or it can occur on an informal basis, such as in online mental health communities. It may occur in mutual support groups, or it may be one-on-one. [WRAP](#) (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) groups are an example of a peer-facilitated service.

Recovery colleges are a model of peer support developed in the UK. They involve classes and workshops that are co-developed and co-delivered by mental health professionals and peer support workers. Classes focus on building knowledge and skills to help people navigate mental illness life and improve well-being.

These resources have more info on the recovery college model:

- AOD Provider Collaborative (NZ): [Recovery Colleges: An Overview of the International Experience](#)
- Canadian Mental Health Association Calgary: [Recovery College White Paper](#)
- ImROC (Implementing Recovery Through Organizational Change) (UK): [Recovery Colleges 10 Years On](#)
- Maudsley Charity (UK): [Recovery College](#)
- The Health Foundation (UK): [Power of People: Recovery College](#) video

Benefits of Peer Support

Peer support isn't a form of mental health treatment, but it can play a unique role in helping people make sense out of the way that mental illness has affected their lives. Trained peer support workers can help with building skills to moving in a recovery-oriented direction.

Research has shown that peer support has the potential to improve:

- Self-stigma
- Empowerment
- Self-esteem
- Self-confidence
- Social inclusion
- Belief that recovery is possible
- Functional ability
- Quality of life
- Self-efficacy (sense of being capable of doing things)

It has also been linked to fewer days spent in hospital and decreased re-hospitalization rates. It's also been shown to be cost-effective for the health care system overall to invest in peer support.

Sources: [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#), [Centre for Mental Health](#), [Mental Health America](#).

Peer Support Programs

Here are just a few examples of peer support programs and training:

- Mental Health America: [National Certified Peer Specialist \(NCPS\) Certification](#) | [Peer Partners Program](#)
- [Mind](#) – Peer Support
- [NAMI Peer-to-Peer](#)
- [Scottish Recovery Network](#)

Support Groups & Forums

Looking for a peer support group? Here are a few options:

- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#) (ADAA): online support group
- [Beyond Blue](#): online forums for residents of Australia
- [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#) (DBSA): online support groups
- [Empower Survivors](#): peer support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI): support groups are offered at the state affiliate level
- [NoStigmas](#) offers ally training in peer support as well as an ally community
- [Painted Brain](#): peer groups on Zoom held Mondays through Fridays
- [SANE](#) mental health charity support forum

Background Info

If you're interested in advocating for peer support services in your community, these sites have background info that can help to make the case and provide information for implementation.

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Calgary & Habitus Consulting: [Peer Support White Paper](#)
- [EEnet](#) (Evidence Exchange Network for Mental Health and Addictions): What are the core elements of peer support programs?
- [ImROC](#) (Implementing Recovery Through Organizational Change): briefings on peer support and recovery topics
- Mental Health America: [Peer Support: Research and Reports](#)
- Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC): [Making the Case for Peer Support](#) | [Peer Support Guidelines](#)
- [Peer Support Canada](#)

A Brief History of Stigma

A Brief History of Stigma has more information on what mental illness stigma is and what to do about it. You can learn more about the book on [Mental Health @ Home](#).

It's available on [Amazon](#) and [Google Play](#).

