



LIVED EXPERIENCE WORKFORCE PROGRAM (LEWP)

Orientation to Mental Health Peer Work Program

Have you been thinking about peer work but don't know whether it's the right career pathway for you, or whether you are ready to commit to the study?

LEWP is pleased to offer a free program for people who may be thinking about a career in mental health peer work within the non-government (NGO) mental health sector. The Orientation to Mental Health Peer Work Program is designed to:

- Help you explore what it means to be an effective Peer Worker and the knowledge, skills and characteristics needed
- Prepare you for the realities of employment in a peer work role
- Prepare you for the realities of the study needed to become a qualified Peer Worker
- Support you to decide whether it is the right pathway for you or whether using your lived experience in other ways may be more suited to what you want to do

The program will give you:

- An overview of the nature of peer work and the characteristics, personal and professional skills and knowledge needed to be effective in study and a peer work role including personal recovery
- A snapshot of what it's like to be a Peer Worker within the NGO mental health sector
- An understanding of what is required to successfully undertake the Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work and potential course costs
- Opportunity to connect with teams from the Registered Training Organisations based in SA, that deliver the qualification
- Links to other ways to use lived experience strengths and skills if peer work is not the right fit for you (e.g. advocacy)

The program is delivered over 5 or 6 days and is designed in a way that you are free to jump on board at the start and leave at any point in the program if you feel peer work is not for you. LEWP facilitators will support you by providing connections to other organisations and opportunities that you feel may better suit your needs e.g.:

- Organisations to help you build skills in lived experience advocacy e.g. to influence systemic change
- Organisations to help you build skills in lived experience representation e.g. sitting on committees and panels
- Personal recovery programs to continue building your own recovery skills

A Safe Space

We deliver the program in line with the values and principles of peer work. This includes being trauma-informed. We do not discuss or disclose traumas, stories and experiences. Rather, we provide a safe space for people with diverse experiences to think about the 'what' - what their experience has taught them and the strengths they've developed through this. The Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work teaches the 'how' - turning that knowledge into work practice.

What We Cover

Step 1 – 90 minutes

This is an information session, designed to provide you with a snapshot of the ways in which lived experience of mental distress and recovery can be utilised, and support you to begin thinking about a pathway that may be suited to you:

- Peer Work
- Advocacy and systemic change
- Representation

People wanting to know more about peer work can register to attend the next step.

Step 2 – 3 x 4-hour sessions

Step 2 is designed to be an induction to the role of peer work in the NGO mental health sector, with the aim of better preparing you for peer work study and employment and providing pathways to these. Sessions include information and interaction, allowing you to explore the topics in detail and reflect on your current skills, knowledge and strengths.

The sessions do not teach the knowledge and skills; this is done through the Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work, which this program will encourage you to undertake if and when you are ready.

We cover:

- History of peer work
- Mental health lived experience as a skill set
- Personal recovery
- Managing the potential impact of the role
- Guest speakers: NGO Peer Workers and Line Manager
- Mental health peer work in the NGO sector

Step 3 - 1 x 4-hour session with potential 2nd session

Step 3 introduces you to the Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work, as delivered by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) within SA.

The focus is on preparing you for the realities of study by outlining the general expectations of students, providing an overview of the likely course content and the concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). We cover:

- Thinking about study: the qualification, requirements and expectations of students
- Meet the Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Individuals who wish to enrol in the qualification will have the opportunity to be connected with the RTOs who deliver in SA to chat further. On some occasions, LEWP may work in partnership with an RTO to deliver this Orientation Program. In that case, an additional session is offered for program attendees to proceed directly to the RTO's course selection process (participation in this Orientation program does not guarantee a place in the qualification).

<https://mhcsa.org.au/lived-experience-workforce-program/>