Sonder is an inclusive, not-for-profit organisation that supports people with mental health challenges, alcohol & drug use concerns, disability, chronic disease management and employment goals. Sonder embraces lived experience across multiple levels of the organisation, including within its Executive Management Team, Lived Experience Advisory Groups, Senior Peer Practitioners and Peer Practitioners within service delivery. At the time of writing this piece, 10% of Sonder's workforce operate in designated Peer Practice roles across Youth services, Adult mental health & AOD, Community services, Disability services and Aboriginal health services.

Sonder has worked with the Lived Experience Workforce Program (LEWP) since the establishment of its first Peer Practice roles in 2018. The organisation has since identified the LEWP's Lived Experience Standards and Guidelines as a strategic priority. Co-design, co-implementation and co-evaluation have been central to implementing a range of new processes to ensure adherence to the set of Standards and Guidelines.

In February 2021, Sonder hosted a 2-day consultation with 20 staff members representing the breadth of the organisation's range of services and lived experience workforce. A self-assessment of the Standards was completed, and an action plan developed.

A committee, comprised 50% of lived experience staff, was tasked with the implementation of the Lived Experience Standards Action Plan. Co-chair of the committee, Pru De Garis shared "we were incredible grateful for the advice and consultation from the LEWP throughout the stages of design and implementation. Their wisdom and support played an integral role in our organisation's knowledge and approach to this workforce."

Whilst Sonder acknowledges the continued work required to achieve the National Lived Experience Standards; the organisation is proud to highlight some of the key achievements from the Lived Experience Standards Action Plan to date:

- Commitment at Executive and Board level to the development of the Lived Experience Workforce.
- Recruitment to Sonder's first Senior Peer Practitioner in the organisation's Youth Services portfolio. A Senior Peer is responsible for peer supervision, recruitment, and training of Peer Workers. They also assist in the orientation and training of non-Peer Practitioners with purpose of increasing knowledge of disciplines, promoting confidentiality practice and embedding of the Peer Practitioner role across the organisation.
- Within Youth Services Portfolio, the Senior Peer represents the Lived Experience workforce on the Youth Services Strategic Leadership group and Youth Services Operational Leadership groups.
- Development of the Peer Upskill Program - including financial and time contribution to undertake the Certificate IV in Peer Work; and commitment to career pathways for Peer Practitioners such as Peer Supervisor and Senior Peer.
- Commitment to lived experience supervision. As part of the Peer Upskill Program, Sonder supports Peer Practitioners to undertake Supervision training and provide peer supervision to their colleagues. Peer Practitioners are supported to attend group supervision facilitated by an experienced Peer Practitioner.
- Change of role title to Peer Practitioner to better reflect the skillset and knowledge brought to the role.

- Review of all Job Descriptions to include a uniformed scope of practice for Peer Practice and rename the position to Peer Practitioner (previously Peer Support Worker).
- Lived Experience representation on Sonder committees, such as Clinical Governance, Reconciliation Action Plan and Quality Improvement Committee.
- Engaged Professor Nicholas Proctor of University of South Australia to establish Trauma Informed Practice Training across the organisation.

As a result of the Lived Experience Action Plan:

- The Committee has observed an increased understanding for the value and scope of practice for Peer Practitioner roles in service delivery roles
- There is meaningful consultation and decision-making with lived experience representatives which builds on the Youth and Family Reference groups already established within the headspace model.
- Peer Practitioners have reported to feel better supported, have clearer understanding of their roles at a service delivery perspective, improved wellbeing at work.
- There has been an improvement in retention rates of Peer Practitioners. In 2019/20, the turnover rate for the Peer Practitioner role was 24% compared to 6% in 21/22.
- 6 Peer Practitioners are currently supported by Sonder to undertake Certificate IV in Peer Work. 7 Peer Practitioners have been supported to and successfully completed the Certificate IV in Peer Work.

Sonder is committed to continue work towards the National Lived Experience Standards in collaboration with LEWP. The consultation, targeted advice, and generosity of LEWP's time has had a strong influence over the success of the project. Sonder remains committed to the Lived Experience workforce in South Australia, including the co-facilitation of the Lived Experience Community of Practice hosted by LEWP.

**Peer Practitioner is the term used to refer to someone who is recruited into a specific service delivery role where lived experience expertise is required.*

*** Lived Experience Workforce refers to people within Sonder who are recruited in roles specifically because of their lived experience expertise. This includes both service delivery and non-service delivery roles.*

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Sonder