

Self-care and support

(See supporting document, Section 6.3)

Ability for PSWs to reflect on their work

Self-care cannot take place in isolation: organisations need to have systems in place that are responsive to an individual's needs and that enable staff to agree on, and implement, appropriate adjustments that accommodate these needs.

This means that PSWs should be able to identify the people they would need to talk to in order to ensure that they receive the right support.

An ability for the PSW to maintain a focus on self-management, self-care and their own health and wellbeing by:

working to their strengths

engaging in strategies such as stress management, using wellness and recovery plans, and seeking support from others when needed

anticipating challenges by responding to, and managing, experiences that trigger upset and/or early warning signs

An ability to identify and manage any barriers to self-management or self-care, or to seek support from others

An ability for the PSW to judge when:

their work is creating unhelpful levels of emotional distress and to put in place appropriate self-care

an ability to consider whether their experience of distress may be linked to social, environmental or personal factors (such as difficulties in their own recovery, or not being ready to start peer work)

work-related stress may impact on their effectiveness, how they behave at work and on other members of the team

they have reached the limits of their responsibility or competence, and when to seek advice, management or supervisory support, or assistance from others

An ability for the PSW to monitor and reflect on personal feelings or challenges that arise as a result of their work and role, for example:

issues arising directly from their work with people they support

conflict within the team, or unhelpful organisational pressures

An ability to monitor and reflect on the impact of any challenges, and so judge when support or supervision is necessary, in order to:

help them maintain their own wellbeing

identify potential solutions

ensure that decisions about the best way forward are taken based on careful reflection (for example, whether to persist, adapt or stop a course of action)

continue working effectively and to maintain everyday activities and responsibilities

Able to make effective use of supervision

(See supporting document, Section 6.3.1)

Supervision is understood differently in different settings. Here, it is defined as an activity that gives PSWs the opportunity to review and reflect on their work with a senior PSW, clinician, or with colleagues in peer supervision. This includes talking about areas that they might experience as difficult or distressing. This definition distinguishes supervision from line management or case management.

An ability to hold in mind that the main purpose of supervision is to:

- support the delivery of peer support in line with its values, principles and focus on the value of lived experience as experiential knowledge
- help PSWs develop their skills in using experiential knowledge and their lived experiences to support people
- offer active support and encouragement to the PSW
- enhance the quality of the care and support provided by PSWs
- share good practice and positive outcomes
- encourage reflection about the impact of the work and peer support role, and where there are negative impacts or challenges, to identify potential solutions to them

Ability to work collaboratively with the supervisor

An ability to work with the supervisor to agree the content and structure of supervision (for example, agreeing the areas that need to be discussed, being clear about the respective roles of supervisor and supervisee, the goals of supervision and any contracts that specify these factors)

An ability to make the supervisor aware of any previous work or experience and identify the PSWs current learning or training needs

An ability for the PSW to:

- engage with the supervisor as an active participant
- present an honest and open account of the work being undertaken, including reflections on the emotional impact of the work
- focus on the issues that seem most important and relevant (aiming to select and concentrate on these)

Ability to engage in self-appraisal and reflection

An ability for the PSW to:

- be open and realistic about their capabilities and to share this self-appraisal with the supervisor
- reflect on and use feedback from the supervisor to further develop the skills for accurate self-appraisal, and to apply self-reflection in future work

Ability to engage in active learning

An ability for the PSW to follow through suggestions regarding relevant reading or additional training made by the supervisor or peers, and to incorporate this learning into their practice

Ability to use supervision to reflect on developing personal and work roles

An ability to use supervision to discuss the personal impact of the work, especially where this reflection is relevant to self-care and to maintaining the likely effectiveness of the work

An ability to use supervision to reflect on the impact of the work in relation to sharing their lived experience and their development as a PSW