

Meta-competences for peer support workers

An ability to balance the various roles of a PSW (for example providing support, promoting people's rights, facilitator, providing interventions)

Attitudes, values and style of interaction

An ability for PSWs to be aware of their own values, and to reflect on the ways that these values might affect (positively and negatively) the people they work with

Engagement and intervention

An ability to judge when it is best to refocus on goals that are seen as personally relevant or manageable/achievable by the person they are supporting, rather than continuing to explore other issues, which could lead to disengagement

An ability to judge when social and cultural barriers to engagement may be relevant and need to be taken into consideration

An ability to judge when to continue focusing on working with difficulties and when to step back, based on the level of engagement with a person

An ability to identify and respond to implicit or explicit indicators that a person is at risk of disengaging from the interaction, for example by:

responding to and openly discussing explicit feedback that expresses concerns about important aspects of the conversation or proposed course of action

responding to implicit feedback that indicates concerns about important aspects of the discussion (for example, feedback through comments, non-verbal behaviour or significant shifts in responsiveness)

identifying when it seems difficult for people to give 'authentic' feedback (that is, responding with what they think the PSW wishes to hear, rather than expressing their own view) and discussing it with them

An ability to balance flexibility and consistency when providing care and support, and delivering interventions

An ability to judge when to offer self-disclosure and to decide what would be helpful to disclose and what should be held back

Support

An ability to match the intensity and timing of support to the person's needs, and to judge whether and when to increase or decrease the level of response

An ability to judge when to offer support to the person or when to foster independence and their ability to self-manage

Ability to respond to feedback

An ability to discuss any feedback from people expressing concerns about the care, support or interventions they receive

An ability to detect and respond to implicit feedback that indicates that a person has concerns about the care, support or interventions they receive (for example, non-verbal behaviours, verbal comments or changes in behaviour or responsiveness)

Ability to focus on self-care

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

An ability for the PSW to judge when they are experiencing unhelpful levels of stress and to prioritise taking appropriate steps to relieve this