

The Competence Framework for Mental Health Peer Support Workers



Part 3: Curriculum

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Relationship between the curriculum and the competence framework

Competences outlined in this document are detailed in The Competence Framework for Mental Health Peer Support Workers – Part 2: Full Listing of the Competences, available online and as a PDF at: www.ucl.ac.uk/core/competenceframeworks.

The curriculum (Part 3) is closely mapped to the competence framework (Part 2), which provides a more detailed account of the knowledge and skills associated with models of peer support, and which is accompanied by a supporting document (Part 1), which is intended to be read before Part 2. Some of the competences in this document have a space above or below them, to group areas of knowledge together where relevant.

Outline structure of the curriculum

The curriculum is laid out in five sections, each containing a number of units. The first section sets out areas of knowledge relevant to peer support; the second identifies the core relational skills that lie at the heart of the peer support worker role. The third focuses on working in partnership and contains two areas: supporting people as a peer support worker and working with teams to promote people's rights. The fourth addresses self-care and support. The final section sets out some optional skills that involve using psychological approaches to support personal recovery.

Peer support workers would not be expected to undertake training in all the areas listed in this section, but may build up (and so extend) their skills over time.

Section 1: Underpinning understanding and knowledge

UNIT 1.1	Understanding the values of peer support and the principles that underpin its implementation
UNIT 1.2	Knowledge of mental health and associated issues
UNIT 1.3	Knowledge of trauma-informed care
UNIT 1.4	Knowledge of local services and sources of mental health care
UNIT 1.5	Knowledge of professional, legal and ethical frameworks
UNIT 1.6	Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and information sharing
UNIT 1.7	Knowledge of safeguarding procedures
UNIT 1.8	Knowledge of self-harm and suicide prevention, and procedures for maintaining safety

Section 2: Core relational skills

UNIT 2.1	Understanding recovery-focused approaches
UNIT 2.2	Ability to draw on and share lived experience
UNIT 2.3	Ability to develop and maintain a mutual and reciprocal peer relationship
UNIT 2.4	Ability to engage and support families and carers
UNIT 2.5	Ability to use active listening and communication skills in a peer relationship
UNIT 2.6	Ability to work with difference

Section 3: Working in partnership

Supporting people as a peer support worker	UNIT 3.1	Ability to support personal recovery
	UNIT 3.2	Ability to help people engage in activities that are meaningful to them
	UNIT 3.3	Ability to help people develop coping and problem-solving skills
	UNIT 3.4	Ability to collaboratively discuss care and support options
	UNIT 3.5	Ability to contribute to co-production of individual care and recovery plans
	UNIT 3.6	Ability to facilitate access to care and sources of support
	UNIT 3.7	Ability to support transitions in care
Working with teams and promoting people's rights	UNIT 3.8	Ability to work as part of a team
	UNIT 3.9	Ability to work with other organisations and services
	UNIT 3.10	Ability to offer a personalised recovery-oriented perspective
	UNIT 3.11	An ability to promote the rights of people being supported

Section 4: Self-care and support

UNIT 4.1	Ability to monitor and respond to the need for self-care
UNIT 4.2	Ability to make effective use of supervision

Section 5: Optional skills – using psychological approaches to support personal recovery

UNIT 5.1	Ability to help people make use of psychological approaches to support their recovery
UNIT 5.2	Ability to work with people in groups
UNIT 5.3	Ability to support people's use of digital interventions

Overarching aims and objectives

Aims

To convey an understanding of the values and principles that are embodied in peer support, and the ways that these are implemented in practice.

To enable peer support workers to offer effective and values-driven support, by providing:

- background knowledge about the services and contexts in which peer support is offered
- practical and detailed skills training that helps peer support workers engage effectively with people
- skills training that enables peer support workers to offer specific forms of intervention and support.

Objectives

At the end of the course, peer support workers will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the values and principles that underpin peer support, and that provide a rationale for peer support
- reflect on their own values and attitudes and the implications these have for engagement in peer support
- demonstrate knowledge of the application of professional practice and associated skills and the ways in which these assure practice that is ethically sound
- demonstrate effective communication skills with people with whom they are engaged
- demonstrate effective communication skills with members of mental health teams and other relevant agencies
- demonstrate a capacity to engage people who are being supported with the peer support process
- manage challenges arising in the implementation of peer support
- demonstrate self-direction and self-care in tackling and solving problems that may arise when offering peer support
- demonstrate an ability to adapt peer support to the needs of each individual person, and assure equitable access for people from diverse cultures and with different values.

Learning and teaching strategy

The specific learning and teaching strategy will be decided by the training provider. An overarching teaching strategy would usually link learning within teaching days and supervised practice, and include:

- an emphasis on experiential and skills-based workshops providing students with a strong foundation in the ethos and practice of peer support
- skills-based competences developed through experiential work and role play
- use of clinical vignettes and scenario-based learning
- self-directed study to include general and specific reading, plus reference to online resources.

It is strongly recommended that appropriate supervision with individuals with specific experience of peer support work is integrated with training.

Usual structure of training

Training is expected to be spread across several days (to facilitate learning between teaching sessions, and to help services to release staff to attend).

Assessment of competence/training evaluation

Specific details of formative and summative assessments of learning and clinical competence will be for training providers to identify, in part depending on whether and how credits for the programme will be assigned. However, it is assumed that supervision of peer support workers will include direct observation of their practice, in turn affording competence-based feedback, with local arrangements in place to manage any areas of significant concern.

Curriculum for peer support workers

Section 1: Underpinning understanding and knowledge for peer support workers

UNIT 1.1: Understanding the values of peer support and the principles that underpin its implementation

Aims: To help peer support workers reflect on the beliefs, values and attitudes associated with peer support, the principles on which peer support is built, and the relevance and value of their own experience

Competences covered in this unit:

Ability to understand the values that underpin peer support and how they shape the ways in which peer support workers work with and support people

Ability to understand that the peer support role is rooted in the development of an equal and trusting relationship, characterised by mutuality, reciprocity and respect

Ability to draw on knowledge that peer support is recovery-focused, strengths-based and non-directive

Ability to draw on experiential knowledge of the principles on which peer support is based:

- building safe and trusting relationships based on sharing lived experience of mental health difficulties and services
- respecting the diversity of each person's experience, and their particular background or cultural context
- ensuring that relationships are built on the values of mutuality and reciprocity
- recognising and placing value on peers' personal experiential knowledge
- enabling people who are supported to exercise choice, to make use of their own strengths, skills and strategies, and to build connections with their families, friends, support networks and wider communities
- working progressively to help people learn from their experience, and working inclusively by understanding the meaning of the person's experience within the communities they belong to, and helping them to become (re)integrated into them

UNIT 1.2: Knowledge of mental health and associated issues

Aims: To help peer support workers gain a working knowledge of the ways in which mental health issues can present, of barriers to help-seeking, of links between mental health and physical health, and a critical understanding of the ways in which mental health issues are understood by professional staff

Competences covered in this unit:

Ability to draw on a working knowledge of:

- the range of mental health difficulties in people with whom peer support workers will be working

- mental health diagnoses (with the aim of understanding how diagnosis is used within the mental health system, and of supporting people [who wish to do so] to understand their diagnosis and its meaning for them)
- the ways in which people experiencing a mental health crisis may present
- the impact and effects of trauma and of social disadvantage on a person's mental health
- the importance of families, carers and social networks in relation to mental health difficulties

Ability to draw on knowledge of factors that promote wellbeing and emotional strength

Ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which mental health difficulties can affect functioning and individual development

Ability to draw on knowledge that people with mental health difficulties are more vulnerable to a range of physical health conditions

Ability to draw on knowledge that physical illnesses (especially long-term conditions) are a significant risk factor for mental health difficulties, particularly anxiety and depression

Ability to draw on a working knowledge of the psychological, social and pharmacological interventions usually offered to people with mental health difficulties

Ability to draw on a working knowledge of the potential physical, psychological or emotional side effects of medications and other treatments prescribed for mental health difficulties

Ability to draw on knowledge that fear (and sometimes experience) of stigma and discrimination can prevent people from seeking mental health care

UNIT 1.3: Knowledge of trauma-informed care

Aims: To help peer support workers understand the principles of trauma-informed care

Competences covered in this unit:

Knowledge that the experience of trauma is part of the life story of many people with mental health problems

Knowledge that people can be re-traumatised by negative experiences of services, and the impact of this on their ability or motivation to connect with and use services

Knowledge that trauma-informed care involves ensuring that people who use services can feel that:

- their physical and emotional safety is being addressed
- they have choice and control over their treatment
- they are part of collaborative care (that decisions about their care are made jointly)

- providers of care are trustworthy
- each contact validates and affirms them as individuals, and so empowers them

Knowledge that trauma-informed care involves developing and maintaining a relationship that helps people to feel safe telling their story

UNIT 1.4: Knowledge of local services, and sources of mental health care

Aims: To help peer support workers understand the provision of relevant local services

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of the local statutory and non-statutory mental health systems, services and resources (including their remit and any exclusion criteria they apply that might restrict access)

Ability to draw on knowledge of the relationships between the mental health team the peer support worker is employed in and other statutory and non-statutory services in the local community

UNIT 1.5: Knowledge of professional, legal and ethical frameworks

Aims: To help peer support workers understand professional, ethical and legal frameworks that apply to all individuals working in a health context

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of the local codes of ethics and conduct that apply to all professionals in the service, and the ways in which these are implemented in relation to:

- capacity and consent
- confidentiality
- information sharing
- data protection

Ability to maintain appropriate boundaries

Ability for peer support workers to recognise and work within the limits of their qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience

Ability to maintain and update skills and knowledge through participation in continuing learning and development

UNIT 1.6: Knowledge of, and ability to work with, issues of confidentiality, consent and information sharing

Aims: To help peer support workers understand the principles underpinning confidentiality, consent and information sharing, and the ways in which these issues are managed in practice

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of local policies on confidentiality and information sharing, and the ways these are applied when working within and between teams or organisations

Informed consent

Ability to give people being supported the information they need to decide whether to proceed with meetings with a peer support worker

Ability to draw on knowledge that individuals have a right to withdraw or limit consent at any time

Confidentiality and information sharing

Ability to draw on knowledge that a duty of confidentiality is owed to the person to whom the information relates, as well as any individuals who have provided relevant information on the understanding it is to be kept confidential

Ability to ensure that a person's information is treated as confidential and used only for the purpose for which it was provided

Ability to discuss issues of confidentiality with a person in relation to sharing information across organisations and services

Ability to draw on knowledge that confidentiality is breached where the sharing of confidential information is not authorised by the person who provided it or to whom it relates

Ability to draw on knowledge of circumstances that make it appropriate to breach confidentiality, particularly when withholding information could:

- place the person, or family members or carers, the peer support worker, other mental health professionals or members of the public, at risk of significant harm
- prejudice the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime
- lead to an unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to others

Ability to draw on knowledge that safeguarding needs usually take precedence over issues of consent and confidentiality

Sharing information

Ability to ensure that when decisions are made to share information that this is done so in line with local policies

UNIT 1.7: Knowledge of safeguarding procedures

Aims: To help peer support workers understand safeguarding procedures

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of local and national safeguarding policies

Ability to draw on knowledge that safeguarding concerns can arise across the lifespan, from infancy through to old age

Ability to draw on knowledge of the types of abuse and neglect that could trigger a safeguarding concern

Ability to identify signs or indicators that could flag the need to institute safeguarding procedures

UNIT 1.8: Knowledge of self-harm and suicide prevention, and procedures for maintaining safety

Aims: To help peer support workers recognise and respond to suicidal behaviour and self-harm

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of the factors that contribute to and increase the risk of self-harm, self-neglect and harm to others

Ability to recognise and respond to expressions of distress and self-harm, and to acknowledge and discuss these feelings with the person in an open and non-judgemental way

Where there is evidence that a person may present a significant risk of harm to themselves or others, an ability to respond to this in a timely manner by:

- drawing on knowledge of local policies and procedures for responding to risk, maintaining safety and safeguarding (specifically, the risk of harm to self or risk to others)
- determining whether there are any immediately applicable strategies that may be helpful
- discussing, explaining and agreeing on the next steps with the person

Ability to judge when it is in the best interests of the person to disclose information, holding in mind:

- that disclosure is appropriate if it prevents serious harm to a person
- the immediacy of any risk (for example, where there is clear evidence of suicidal intent, such as a plan)

Ability to draw on knowledge that it is appropriate to breach confidentiality when withholding information could place a person at risk of significant harm

Section 2: Communication and engagement skills

UNIT 2.1: Understanding recovery-focused approaches

Aims: To help peer support workers to understand recovery-focused approaches, and to draw on their lived experience to aid this

Competences covered in this unit

Ability for peer support workers to draw on their lived experience and knowledge of recovery-focused approaches, personal recovery and processes of self-determination

Ability to draw on knowledge of the distinction between personal recovery and clinical recovery

Ability to draw on the key principles of personal recovery-focused approaches, namely that:

- recovery is self-defined by the person experiencing a mental health difficulty
- what recovery looks like will vary from person to person and that:
 - recovery is about living a meaningful, satisfying and purposeful life
 - recovery is unique to each person
- there is a focus on people's strengths and on helping them to foster hope and optimism, and to:
 - identify, define and work towards the life they want to live, and towards having a sense of autonomy over their life
 - build the skills and strengths to manage challenges and setbacks
 - build their sense of self-esteem and develop a positive identity
 - support their ability to meet challenges in life through self-development and self-management
- social inclusion is usually an important feature of recovery
- recovery is a progressive process that takes place over time, and will include learning from setbacks

Ability to draw on knowledge of factors that can affect a person's recovery (for example, societal factors, familial relationships, traumatic experiences and environmental influences)

Ability to understand the importance of helping people to become active participants in their own care

UNIT 2.2: Ability to draw on and share lived experience

Aims: To give peer support workers an understanding of issues related to drawing on, and sharing, their lived experience

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on and share lived experience of mental health and life experiences, as a core role of a peer support worker

Ability to draw on knowledge of the benefits, and risks, of sharing lived experience through self-disclosure, and to consider whether sharing lived experience:

- is appropriately timed
- is relevant and appropriate to the other person's experience
- matches the intensity and challenge and meaning of the person's experience
- retains a focus on the person's needs, aims and goals

Ability to ensure that the main aim of sharing is to help the person, rather than being an opportunity for the peer support worker to gain relief or support for themselves

Ability for the peer support worker to judge whether:

- they are comfortable with others knowing about the information they are sharing
- they have resolved the issues that they are sharing

Ability for peer support workers to safely share their personal experience in a way that supports, empowers and brings hope

Ability for peer support workers to step back from their own experience and reflect on how this may be different to the experience of others

Ability to share specific experiences without indicating that these should be taken as solutions to the person's problems

UNIT 2.3: Ability to develop and maintain a mutual and reciprocal peer relationship

Aims: To give peer support workers an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with building mutual and reciprocal peer relationships

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of factors that can make for a positive peer relationship, and factors that can have a negative effect on the peer relationship

Ability to build trust, develop rapport and be respectful

Ability to demonstrate warmth, sensitivity, genuine concern, and provide encouragement and support

Ability to listen and respond to the person's concerns in a manner that is non-judgemental, supportive and sensitive, and that conveys an accepting attitude when they describe their experiences and beliefs

Ability to accept as valid the person's experiences and concerns, and help them discuss these

Ability to help the person being supported express any concerns or doubts they have about the intervention they are receiving

Ability to establish the boundaries and purpose of the peer relationship in the initial meeting, including discussing the limits to confidentiality and information sharing

Ability to understand how the person being supported understands themselves, their experience and the world around them, paying attention to any cultural, spiritual or personal beliefs that are particularly important to the person

Ability to see and understand the other person's perspective and to express this understanding through interactions with them

Ability to establish the person's point of view by having an open and non-judgemental discussion and accepting their experiences as valid

Ability to recognise when there are strains in the peer relationship and address these

Ability to determine a person's readiness to explore options or attempt something new, in a manner that builds on their strengths and promotes self-determination

Ability to draw on knowledge of the potential barriers to engagement and the ability to actively work with the person being supported or with colleagues to address these

Ability to be open to the possibility of meeting in locations that are not associated with mental health services if this is what the person prefers

Ability to balance flexibility in the meeting location with the need to maintain personal safety

Ability to prepare the person being supported for an ending of the peer support work or relationship

UNIT 2.4: Ability to engage and support families and carers

Aims: To give peer support workers an understanding of the ways in which families and carers can be supported

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of the significance of families, carers or a person's wider social or community network in planning and providing care and support

Ability to draw on knowledge of the impact that caring for a person with mental health needs can have on families and carers

Ability to engage the person's family or carer (when appropriate) to help them:

- support the person
- ask questions when they are uncertain or confused

- look after their own mental health and wellbeing

Ability to help families and carers access organisations and services that offer information, advice or support relevant to their needs

Ability to provide support or information to families and carers to help them navigate the systems, policies, processes or legal structures that may affect them

UNIT 2.5: Ability to use active listening and communication skills in a peer relationship

Aims: To give peer support workers an understanding of knowledge and skills associated with effective communication

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge that communication skills will help peer support workers gain an accurate sense of the concerns, needs and strengths of the person they support

Ability for the peer support worker to show that they are paying attention to the person being supported

Ability to listen attentively to the person

Ability to help the person expand on or explore relevant issues

Ability to ask both 'closed' and 'open' questions

Ability to judge when questioning is being experienced as helpful and when less so

Ability to listen to the person with empathy

Ability to maintain an awareness of one's own perspective or frame of reference in order not to inadvertently impose it

Ability to convey a basic and empathic understanding of what has been said or conveyed

Ability to check the person's understanding by asking them to summarise the discussion and any decisions that may have been agreed

Ability to ask the person whether all the issues that they wished to raise have been discussed

Ability to remain composed and continue to communicate sensitively with people experiencing distress

Ability to attend to indications that the person is finding topics distressing, or hard to discuss

Overcoming barriers to communication

Ability to draw on knowledge that where verbal communication is challenging for a person, other forms of communication may be an effective and appropriate alternative

Ability to identify practical barriers to communication and to identify ways to minimise their impact

Ability to address any difficulties a person has communicating or expressing themselves by making appropriate adjustments

To gain an accurate sense of the person's account, an ability for the peer support worker to be aware of (and avoid) any 'filters' they may find themselves imposing

UNIT 2.6: Ability to work with difference

Aims: To help peer support workers understand the issues relating to working with difference

Competences covered in this unit

Knowledge of the significance for practice of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles

Ability to draw on knowledge that the demographic groups included in discussion of 'different' beliefs, practices or lifestyles are usually those that are potentially subject to disadvantage and/or discrimination

Ability to draw on knowledge that because people will often be a member of, or identify with, more than one 'group', the implications of different combinations of identity and lifestyle factors need to be held in mind

Ability to maintain an awareness of the potential significance for practice of social and cultural variation across a range of domains

Knowledge of social and cultural factors that may have an impact on access to support

Ability to draw on knowledge of social and cultural issues that commonly restrict or reduce access to support

Ability to draw on knowledge of the potential impact of social inequalities and exclusion on the development of mental health difficulties, and on access to, and experience of, mental health services, resources, support and opportunities

Ability to draw on knowledge of the impact of factors such as socioeconomic disadvantage or disability on practical arrangements that influence attendance and engagement

Communicating respect for a person and their family or carers

Where people from a specific sociodemographic group are regularly seen within a service, an ability to draw on knowledge of relevant beliefs, practices and lifestyles

Ability to identify protective factors that are provided through membership of a specific sociodemographic group

Gaining an understanding of the experience of specific beliefs, practices and lifestyles

Ability to work collaboratively with people to develop an understanding of their culture and world view, and the implications of any culturally specific customs or expectations for the ways in which problems are described and presented

Ability to take an active interest in a person's social and cultural background, and to demonstrate a willingness to learn about their sociocultural perspectives and world view (for the purpose of engaging with them)

Demonstrating awareness of the influence of the peer support worker's own background

Ability for peer support workers of all backgrounds to draw on an awareness of their own group membership and values and how these may influence their perceptions of the person being supported

Section 3: Working in partnership

Supporting people as a peer support worker

UNIT 3.1: Ability to support personal recovery

Aims: To help peer support workers gain knowledge regarding personal recovery, and skills relevant to helping people achieve this

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to support people in their personal recovery by helping them to:

- define what personal recovery means and looks like to them
- (re)gain a sense of autonomy and choice over decisions that impact on their lives
- identify their strengths, values and aspirations
- make sense of their experience of mental health (and the impact of cultural beliefs and interpretations on the ways they understand their experiences)
- engage in actions that can lead to personal growth and development
- develop a positive expectation of the future by promoting belief in the possibility of recovery
- (re)build their sense of identity outside of mental health services
- develop and maintain positive relationships

Ability to help people identify and prioritise their own personal goals for recovery, by helping them to:

- identify goals that enable them to engage with their community
- identify resources that will help them achieve their goals
- identify their hopes, strengths, accomplishments and challenges in order to achieve their goals
- celebrate successes as they move towards achieving personal goals

Ability to support people to develop the skills to manage difficult situations, setbacks or challenges that may affect their recovery

Ability to support the person to make their own decisions and empower them to exert more autonomy over their life

Ability to help people develop self-determination and self-management skills

Ability to explore with the person how to create a self-care plan

Ability to support people to identify and choose the relevant support, networks, services or resources required to achieve their goals

UNIT 3.2: Ability to help people engage in activities that are meaningful to them

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping people engage in meaningful activities

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge that, for many people, engaging in activities that have meaning and purpose can help their recovery

Ability to help people identify activities that are meaningful to them

Ability to help people to identify (and problem-solve) issues or concerns that make it difficult for them to access and engage in meaningful activities

UNIT 3.3: Ability to help people develop coping and problem-solving skills

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping people develop coping and problem-solving skills

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to work with the person being supported to:

- discuss their coping strategies and identify the external resources available to them
- identify (and reinforce the value of) existing coping strategies that the person feels work well
- identify when (and discuss why) coping strategies they use do not work well
- identify different coping strategies that may be more effective
- consider how to implement skills and strategies that may be more effective ways of coping with difficult situations
- identify any potential barriers to implementing new coping strategies

Ability to support people to develop the skills to reflect on and review their coping strategies over time

Ability to explain the rationale for problem solving

Ability to help the person select problems, on the basis that these are relevant for them and are ones for which achievable goals can be set

Ability to help the person specify the problem(s), and break down larger problems into smaller (more manageable) parts

Ability to identify achievable goals with the person, bearing in mind their resources and likely obstacles

An ability to help the person:

- generate ('brainstorm') possible solutions
- select a preferred solution
- plan and implement preferred solutions
- evaluate the outcome of implementation, whether positive or negative

- test beliefs or assumptions that might get in the way of problem solving

Ability for the peer support worker to maintain a focus on encouraging the person to arrive at their own solutions

UNIT 3.4: Ability to collaboratively discuss care and support options

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping people consider care and support options

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to engage a person in a collaborative discussion of the care and support options open to them

Ability to convey information about care and support options in a manner that:

- is tailored to the person's capacities, context and circumstances
- helps the person raise and discuss queries or concerns
- ensures that the person has a clear understanding of the care and support options open to them

Ability to judge when the person's agreement to pursue an intervention is based on a collaborative and active choice

Ability to explore with the person how they might discuss with a health professional issues or concerns they have regarding treatment or intervention options

UNIT 3.5: Ability to contribute to co-production of individual care and recovery plans

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping peer support workers contribute to individual care and recovery plans

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to support people collaboratively to participate in the development of their care or personal recovery or wellbeing plans

Ability to discuss a person's care or recovery plan with them, including any goals or objectives that would benefit from input from the peer support worker

Ability to help people develop an advance directive or statement, where appropriate

UNIT 3.6: Ability to facilitate access to care and sources of support

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping access care and sources of support

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of available sources of support

Ability to ensure that information about these sources of support is up to date and accurately characterises the nature of support on offer

Ability to draw on knowledge of social interventions, activities or programmes within local communities and to help people access and engage in them

Ability to identify organisations and services that are accessible to a person

Ability to convey information about organisations and services, to help the person make informed choices about the options they wish to pursue

Ability to help the person consider the type of support that matches their needs and situation

Ability to discuss with a person the reach, responsibilities and limits of organisations and services, to identify those that are both suited to their needs and acceptable to them

Ability to facilitate access to a service through administrative or practical help

Ability to draw on knowledge of the potential challenges that people may face when trying to access mental health services, and to help people problem-solve to address these challenges

Ability to draw on knowledge regarding the aims of signposting

Ability to pass on contact information in a way that makes it likely to be remembered and used

Ability to establish that a person is willing and able to access the organisation, service or support

Ability to follow up with the person to see whether they have accessed the organisation, service, group, activity or programme, or whether they need a different type or level of support

UNIT 3.7: Ability to support transitions in care

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to supporting transitions in care

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge that transitions in care (within and across organisations) can be distressing, and may be times of greater risk for the person

Ability to draw on knowledge of circumstances that may trigger transitions in care

Ability to support the person during the transition or transfer of care

Ability to discuss a person's feelings about the transition, and to work with them to:

- identify and overcome barriers that make it less likely that they will stay in contact with the new service
- discuss their concerns and feelings
- identify issues that may make a transition or transfer of care problematic

Ability to draw on knowledge that people may require additional support and preparation to successfully navigate transitions or transfers of care

Ability to help the person to develop skills in independence, assertiveness and self-advocacy

Ability to provide continuity of support during a transition

Ability to discuss concerns that a transition is not going well with an appropriate colleague or supervisor

Working with teams and promoting people's rights

UNIT 3.8: Ability to work as part of a team

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping peer support workers work as part of a team

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of the team's shared goals, values, culture and practice

Ability to draw on knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other team members

Ability to work as part of the service or organisation while retaining the perspective and ethos of peer support

Ability to work effectively with colleagues to:

- enhance existing services and the care and support on offer
- identify and resolve potential conflict or disagreement regarding the support or care provided to a person
- improve their knowledge and understanding of the peer support worker role, how they fit within the team, and the values and principles underpinning peer support

Ability to consider how best to respond to team dynamics that may challenge effective working within the team

Ability to draw on basic conflict resolution strategies to help resolve difficult team dynamics

Ability to raise concerns about unsafe staff practice by following the service's policies and procedures

Ability to communicate effectively with the team (both verbally and in writing) about the support they are currently providing to people

Ability to draw on knowledge that a concurrent record of progress for each person being supported should be entered into the person's clinical record (usually after each contact), in line with the requirements of the local service, to:

- document progress
- communicate important information to other members of the team

Ability to ensure that records are maintained after each contact with the person being supported (or where relevant, with professionals connected to them)

Ability to write a concurrent record of progress

Ability to discuss challenges to team communication (for example, with a colleague or supervisor) and to consider how these can be best managed

UNIT 3.9: Ability to work with other organisations and services

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping peer support workers work with other organisations and services

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge that collaborating with other organisations or services will directly benefit the person's care and wellbeing

Ability to identify and connect with organisations or services that are already involved with a person, or their family members or carers (where appropriate)

Ability to identify the roles and responsibilities of other organisations and services in relation to the range of care and support a person receives

Ability to contribute to meetings with other organisations or services to support the planning and coordination of a person's care

Ability to recognise challenges when working with other organisations and services, and to work with colleagues, a supervisor or team leader to plan how these can be managed

Ability to recognise when it is appropriate to share information with other organisations or services

Ability to maintain effective communication with professionals in other organisations when it is relevant to the person's care and support

Ability to identify potential barriers to effective communication and, where possible, to develop strategies to overcome these

UNIT 3.10: Ability to offer a personalised recovery-oriented perspective

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping peer support workers offer a recovery-oriented perspective

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to offer a recovery-oriented and person-centred perspective, for example working with staff to:

- discuss (and possibly challenge or improve) their attitudes and perceptions about mental health
- improve their awareness of the importance of treating people with dignity, respect, kindness and consideration
- improve their understanding of recovery-focused approaches (including the difference between personal recovery, clinical recovery and service-defined recovery)
- understand the importance of people defining, owning and leading their own personal recovery (rather than having recovery defined for them by professionals or the service)
- understand the importance of co-production (involving people with lived experience of mental health difficulties in planning, developing, delivering and evaluating services), social inclusion and equality
- explore ways to work in a recovery-oriented way with people

- help them understand the peer support worker's role and remit

Ability to help mental health professionals, organisations or services to be well-informed about the perspectives and concerns of people being supported

Ability to support co-production in service development and evaluation, and to work with services to co-produce and co-deliver staff training

Ability to work with staff to make reasonable adjustments and ensure that environments are culturally sensitive and free from discrimination

UNIT 3.11: Ability to promote the rights of people being supported

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping peer support workers promote the rights of people being supported

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of an individual's right to control their health and wellbeing

Ability for the peer support worker to help people:

- navigate the systems with which they are in contact
- understand the policies, processes or legal structures that might affect them
- be aware of their rights in the mental health care system
- understand the choices and options they may have over the care they receive

Ability for the peer support worker to amplify the voice of the person they are supporting

Ability to help people raise and discuss questions and concerns about their care with relevant professionals

Ability to help people plan (and rehearse) how they could raise concerns about their care (for example, with whom and in what settings)

Ability to speak on a person's behalf to promote their needs, aims and rights in situations such as treatment team meetings, with organisations and services, and with family members

Ability to work with people being supported to address problems with, or barriers to, accessing organisations and services, or infringement of their rights

Ability to listen to a person's complaints or concerns about their care or treatment and respond in a prompt, open and constructive way

Section 4: Self-care and support

UNIT 4.1: Ability to monitor and respond to the need for self-care

Aims: To give peer support workers an understanding of issues related to self-care

Competences covered in this unit

Ability for the peer support worker to maintain a focus on self-care and their own health and wellbeing

Ability to identify and manage any barriers to self-care, or to seek support from others

Ability for the peer support worker to judge:

- when their work is creating excessive emotional demands and to put in place appropriate levels of self-care
- when their own stressors or triggers may be resulting in unhelpful attitudes or behaviours
- when they have reached the limits of their responsibility or competence, and when to seek advice, management or supervisory support, or assistance from others

Ability for the peer support worker to monitor and reflect on the personal feelings or challenges that arise as a result of their work and role

Ability to monitor and reflect on the impact of any challenges and so judge when support or supervision is necessary

UNIT 4.2: Ability to make effective use of supervision

Aims: To help peer support workers understand the role of supervision, and the role they play in making this effective

Competences covered in this unit

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

- support the delivery of peer support in line with its values and principles
- enhance the quality of the care and support provided by peer support workers
- offer active support and encouragement to the peer support worker
- 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 these

Ability to work with the supervisor to agree the parameters of supervision

Ability for the peer support worker to:

- make the supervisor aware of any previous work or experience and identify current learning or training needs

- present an honest and open account of the work being undertaken, including reflections on the emotional impact of the work
- engage with the supervisor as an active participant
- discuss their work with the supervisor in a focused manner

Ability for the peer support worker to:

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

Ability to follow through suggestions regarding relevant reading or additional training made by the supervisor, and to incorporate this learning into practice

Ability to use supervision to discuss the personal impact of the work

Ability to use supervision to reflect on the impact of the work in relation to development as a peer support worker

Section 5: Optional skills – using psychological approaches to support personal recovery

UNIT 5.1: Ability to help people make use of psychological approaches to support their recovery

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping people make use of psychological approaches to support their recovery

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to maintain the core experiential, relational and nondirective role of the peer support worker while supporting people to make use of psychological approaches to support their recovery

Ability to identify the approaches that may be helpful to a person

Ability to explain the rationale for an approach and to answer any questions or concerns that the person has

Ability to work with the person to monitor and review the utility of the approach being used and, if indicated, to adapt, change or stop the work

Ability to work with the person to problem-solve any difficulties the person may experience with making use of the approach

Ability to respond to, and discuss with the person, any feedback regarding the approach

Ability to support people who are experiencing a mental health crisis, by:

- drawing on lived experience to inform the support being offered, and keeping in mind the person and their values
- using active listening skills to provide a sense of safety and reassurance
- working with others to find or create safe spaces for the person
- using knowledge of local resources, services and support to connect or signpost people to the appropriate service

Ability to help people who are experiencing, or have experienced a mental health crisis to carry out, develop or update crisis plans alongside the services providing care

UNIT 5.2: Ability to work with people in groups

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to working with people in groups

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on lived experience when working with colleagues to plan the basic structure and content of a group

Ability to contribute to establishing an environment that is physically and emotionally safe

Ability to help all participants to feel comfortable, so they can contribute and participate

Ability to explore and address any barriers to participation in the group

Ability to engage with group members and build a positive relationship with each individual

Ability to monitor and manage group dynamics

Ability to match the content and pacing of sessions to the needs and views of group members

Ability to explore and address any barriers to participation in the group

Ability to promote and encourage regular attendance, while not stigmatising those who fail to attend sessions

UNIT 5.3: Ability to support people's use of digital interventions

Aims: To identify knowledge and skills relevant to helping people engage with and use digital interventions

Competences covered in this unit

Ability to draw on knowledge of digital interventions that people with mental health needs can use to support themselves

Ability to draw on knowledge of the various formats that can be used to access digital interventions

Ability to support people to use digital interventions to improve their mental wellbeing, self-help and self-management

Ability to work with the person to evaluate the relevance, usefulness or effectiveness of the digital intervention