

## What is Peer Support

Peer Support is a structured relationship where a trained worker or volunteer, who has gone through a process of recovery, assists other people with mental health issues to identify and achieve life goals as part of their own recovery process.

Peer Supporters provide mentorship, emotional support, problem solving, goal setting, crisis risk assessment, and referrals to other community supports.

Peer Supporters promote empowerment and self-determination through non-judgmental listening and person-centred goal setting.

At MHRC we have many forms of Peer Support. It may include an ongoing one-on-one match or we also have both phone-in and drop-in support.

Some people just come in to chat or play a game of cards with someone. Others call in when they are having a bad day or feeling like they “can’t go on”. A lot of the time

people call looking for help with a specific situation such as finding housing or dealing with government agencies.

Details inside.



## How to Get Peer Support

Call 905-545-2525

If you are interested in Peer Support Training

Drop in at  
20 Jackson St. W. # 206

Let the person at the front desk know you need peer support



If you are interested in Peer Support Training contact the Coordinator

20 Jackson St. W. Suite 206  
Hamilton, ON L8N 1J6

Phone: 905-545-2525

Fax: 905-545-0211

E-mail: [mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca](mailto:mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca)

## Peer Support

Mental Health Rights Coalition

*Our mission is to encourage, enable and empower the voice of consumers in the mental health system*



Reduce Stigma  
Reduce Isolation  
Increase Accessibility  
Support Re-Integration  
Promote Participation

MHRC is a Consumer/Survivor Initiative; we are run by and for consumers of the mental health system.

[www.mentalhealthrights.ca](http://www.mentalhealthrights.ca)

# Activities, Programs and Services

## Peer Support May Help

### those who ...

- Are in crisis
- Need support to work through difficult feelings and thoughts
- Want to connect with other agencies and supports which may also be able to help
- Are dealing with personal issues such as shelter, housing, food, hygiene, recreation
- Need help to find ways to socialize

## How Does It Work

### One-on-One matches are

**available.** The person requesting a match will be matched with a trained Peer Support Worker. They will meet at the Coalition for a few times and then may find outside activities of mutual interest where they can talk and have some fun at the same time.

This form of peer support is designed to help those who have been hospitalized or who may be lonely to find friendship and support while they learn to better integrate into the community.

## Call or Walk In Peer Support

Any mental health consumer who is in crisis or may just need a supportive listener may use this service by calling or coming in to the Coalition.

## Who Uses Peer Support

Anyone working toward recovery and in need of a supportive and empathetic listener.

People of all races, cultures, beliefs, genders and sexuality are welcome at MHRC.

## How to Access Peer Support

Consumers may refer themselves for peer support at MHRC. There are no waiting lists. Referrals may also be made by hospitals or other medical and clinical supports but must be approved by the consumer being served. Peer support is not clinical. MHRC does not keep clinical records and will not account for members time in peer support for any legal or clinical requirement.

## Membership is not required for

**Peer Support** however membership at MHRC is free of charge for self disclosed consumers of the mental health system over the age of 18. We encourage all consumers who use any of our service to become members and enjoy all of the benefits.

**Drop in Hours**

**Weekdays from 11 to 4**

## Peer Support Training

A ten week peer support training course is offered 2-3 times per year, to consumer members who are ready to help others. After training and a twelve hour job shadowing practicum, successful volunteers are ready to be matched with a peer

Peer Support skills are transferable to many other working environments. Training offers an opportunity for skill development and personal growth in a safe environment with a small group of peers.

## Beginnings

The peer support program began as “The Connections” program in the late 1990’s. It was part of a study project called “Therapeutic Relationships: From Hospital to Community”, which measured quality of life outcomes. MHRC continues to work closely with the researchers and other consumer organizations who were involved in that study.

After the original study was completed MHRC, and many other CSI’s who had been involved, decided to continue with the work even though we have no direct funding for the work. Benefits to consumers and to the general improvement of mental health services positively impacted and participants continue to advocate for core funding for this important work.

All staff, Board Members, and drop-in members of MRC are Consumer/Survivors; all coordinators and the Executive Director are trained in Peer Support.

**For more information please visit:**

[www.mentalhealthrights.ca](http://www.mentalhealthrights.ca)