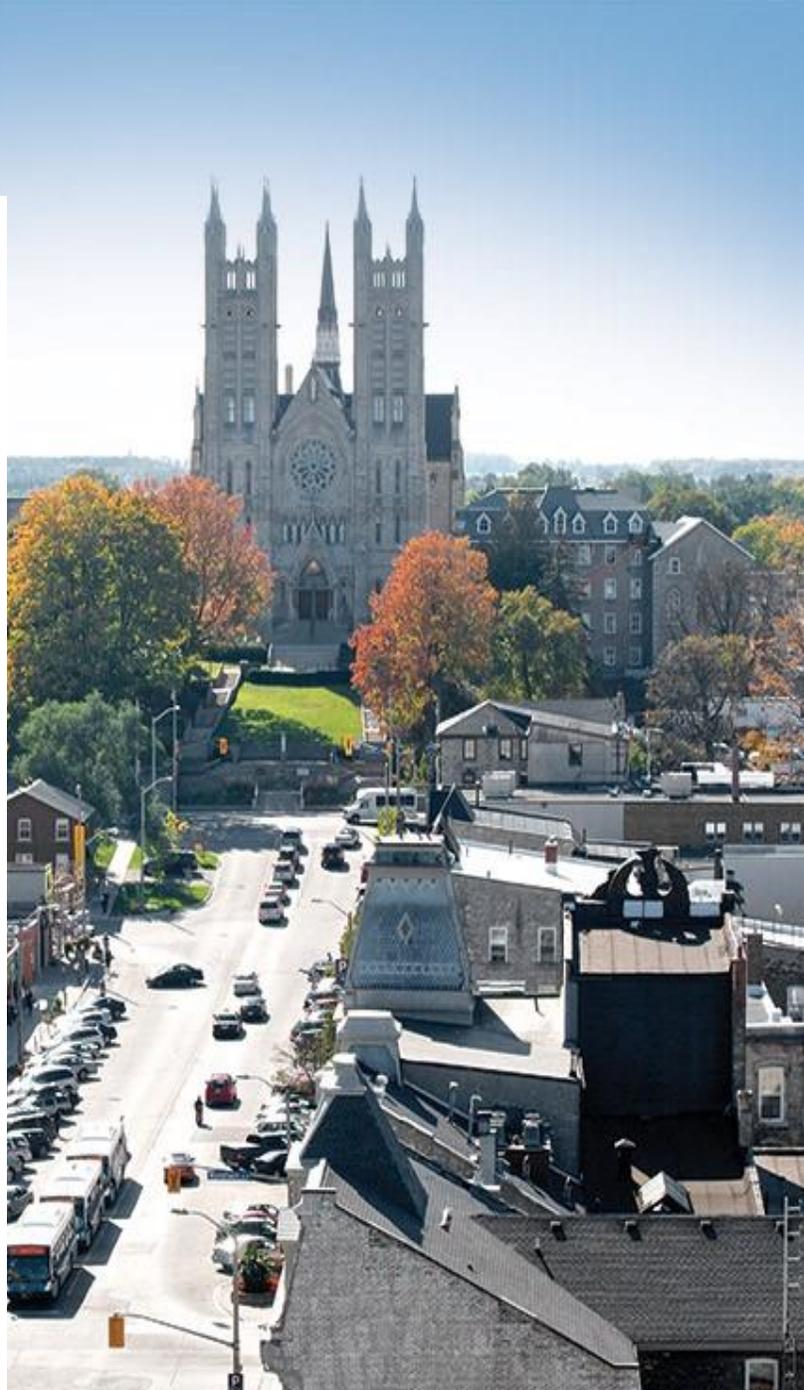


# PEER ONBOARDING RESOURCE

---

A TRAINING GUIDE FOR RECENTLY  
HIRED PEER HARM REDUCTION WORKERS  
Last updated: February 2024



# Peer Onboarding Training Resource

## WHO IS THIS RESOURCE FOR?

This resource was developed to share relevant information and training recommendations for newly hired Peer Supporter/Workers in Guelph who support individuals who are working on their wellness journey. Within this document, there are three modules. They are: **1) Key Topics 2) Relationship Building 3) Supporting Personal Well-Being and Reflection**. Each module has multiple training topics to support peers as they shift into their role.

## WHAT IS A HARM REDUCTION PEER?

A Harm Reduction Peer is someone who (1) has lived and/or living experience with a mental health, substance use, addiction and/or a trauma issue, (2) is able to draw from their unique skill sets derived from their lived and/or living experience, (3) engages in mutually supportive relationships with people struggling with similar issues and (4) may have received specialized training in the area of peer support. Many peer support workers experience intersectionality and may also have lived experience of homelessness and/or poverty.

*Adapted from: Cusick, J. (June 2021). Peer Support Services in BC: An Overview. B.C. Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions*

## SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

- Within this document there are 16 topics related to your role as Peer. Under each topic you will find links to 3-4 resources that provide more information to learn more about these topics.
- It might be helpful to develop a plan and prioritize which topic areas are of interest & importance in your role.
- It is recommended that you go through these topics in the first 3-6 months in your role.
- Most of the resources are links to webpages. If you require support to access a computer to view the links, please reach out to your supervisor.
- Some of these topics can be challenging. You might want to take breaks or check in with your team if there is content that is challenging, or if you have questions.
- Employers can use this resource to inform their onboarding practices with paid Peers within their agency.

## IN PERSON TRAININGS AND RESOURCES

Opportunities and contact information for coordinating in-person trainings are noted within the resource. Harm Reduction Peers who have recently been hired within organizations in Guelph will also be invited to take part in an in-person discussion within the first 6 months of employment. This is hosted by the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy, and is intended to provide newly hired Peers an opportunity to:

- Meet other Peers within Guelph and learn about resources in Guelph.
- Share what they have learned in the first months of their employment.
- Provide input and suggestions on ways in which this resource can be improved.

For more information, reach out to the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy at [jhopkins@guelphchc.ca](mailto:jhopkins@guelphchc.ca)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This resource was researched and developed by Lara Haines-Love, Project Coordinator with the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy.

An Advisory Committee of Peers with lived experience from agencies across Guelph guided the development of this project. Thank you to the members of the Advisory Committee for sharing your time and expertise in the practice of Peer support to inform this project.

Peer Workers provide support for many community members in Guelph experiencing structural inequities. The Wellington Guelph Drug strategy is grateful for your commitment, skill, and expertise to make our community a more welcoming and inclusive place for people who use substances.

Funding for the Peer Onboarding Training Resource was generously provided by the City of Guelph through the 2023 Community Grant.



---

***Note: This is intended to be a 'living document' and will be updated as needed. The links & resources within the Peer Onboarding Resource are subject to change. If you have suggestions on ways in which to revise or improve this document, please reach out to [jhopkins@guelphchc.ca](mailto:jhopkins@guelphchc.ca)***

***The most recent version can be found on the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy Website:  
[www.wgstrategy.com](http://www.wgstrategy.com)***

---

## Table of Contents

### MODULE 1: KEY TOPICS

- Overview of Peer Support Page 5
- Trauma Informed Care Page 6
- Substance Use 101 Page 7
- Harm Reduction 101 Page 8
- Drug Poisoning (Overdoses) Page 9
- Words Matter: Using non-stigmatizing language & gender identity pronouns Page 10
- Stigma and Discrimination Page 11
- Social Determinants of Health Page 12
- Mental Health & Crisis Intervention Page 12

### MODULE 2: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Connecting and Communication Skills Page 13
- Self-Determination Page 14
- Peer Support and Indigenous Peoples Page 15

### MODULE 3: SUPPORTING PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND SELF-REFLECTION

- Boundaries Page 16
- Building Personal Resilience Page 17
- Unpacking our Assumptions and Biases Page 18

## Topic #1: Overview of Peer Support

When starting out as a Peer Support Worker, it can be difficult to understand exactly what your role is and where you fit into an organization. You might also be providing Peer support within a clinical team. This can be challenging as not all members of a team understand the role of a Peer Support Worker. Additionally, to understand what Peer support is, it can also be helpful to understand where it came from. The resources in this section will help you understand the following:

- What is a Peer?
- The history of the Peer movement.
- How Peer support differs from other roles in the system
- Learning how to work within an interdisciplinary/clinical team
- Peer Support Canada's Code of Conduct

- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers and people employing Peers across Canada. The following link will take you to what is a Peer, what is Peer support, and the scope of Peer support (lessons 5,6, and 11).

**Link:** [https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/employers\\_guide/index.html#/lessons/frqNKsmvz9zx\\_PwTcuREE-HgVOW-WIij](https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/employers_guide/index.html#/lessons/frqNKsmvz9zx_PwTcuREE-HgVOW-WIij)

- 2) Peer Support does not have a one size fits all definition. In addition to the definition in the introduction to this manual, Peer Connect B.C. provides another definition for your consideration. Module 2 also provides a basic history of Peer support.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/2-peer-support/index.html#/lessons/KpJ5u2O2qkeQzpVO1jZnPTjt-o2VSdla>

- 3) **Online resource description:** Pat Deegan is an American psychologist, researcher, and Peer in the area of mental health. She is internationally known for her webinars on Peer support. This article written by Pat explains in chart-form the difference between the Peer perspective and the clinical perspective.

**Link:** <https://www.commongroundprogram.com/blog/peer-specialists-are-not-clinicians>

- 4) **Online resource description:** This link will take you to Peer Support Canada's Code of Conduct. It is important to note that this Code of Conduct is not the only set of guidelines for Peer support. This is just one example.

**Link:** [https://peersupportcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Peer\\_Support\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct-ENG.pdf](https://peersupportcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Peer_Support_Code_of_Conduct-ENG.pdf)

### Connecting with Other Peers:

Peer work can be challenging, and many people find it helpful to connect with other Peers in the community to assist with challenges in their role or workplace. Some options in the community include:

- CMHAWW offers a Community of Practice for Peers to connect. For more information, visit the [Centre for Excellence in Peer Support](#) or contact Denise Watterson at: [dwatterson@cmhaww.ca](mailto:d watterson@cmhaww.ca)
- The Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy has a Peer Advisory Committee, where Peers can provide their perspectives on issues, projects and events in the community. For more information, reach out to Jean Hopkins at [jhopkins@guelphchc.ca](mailto:jhopkins@guelphchc.ca)
- Some agencies also have in-house, organizational groups for Peers to support one another. You can inquire with your supervisor if there is one that exists in your organization.

## Topic #2: Trauma-Informed Care

Many of the people Peers work with will have experienced trauma in their lives thus it is important for Peers to work from a trauma-informed lens to prevent re-traumatization and to gain understanding about where a person might be coming from. In the resources below, you will learn about what trauma is, its effects on the nervous system, and how to incorporate a trauma-informed approach into Peer support.

- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module 8 explains the different kinds of trauma (emotional, psychological, systemic, etc.), what trauma informed care is and is not, and the impact trauma can have on health. It is an interactive module with reflection questions to foster understanding.  
**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/8-healing/index.html#/>
- 2) **Online resource description:** This 50-minute presentation by Keely Phillips from the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington explains what trauma is and trauma-informed care within the area of Peer Support. She uses diagrams to explain concepts and has helpful practice scenarios at the end.  
**Link:** <https://vimeo.com/432935662>
- 3) **Online resource description:** This resource from CATIE discusses trauma informed practice and introduces the four main principles of trauma informed care in an interactive manner.  
**Link:** <https://elearning.catie.ca/HRT00LKIT/unit4/content/#/lessons/hUCuWvKR62xNoauFfgsw7jWXvoHA3JBv>
- 4) **Online resource description:** This comprehensive document from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use discusses trauma informed care specifically in the area of substance use.  
**Link:** <https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/CCSA-Trauma-informed-Care-Toolkit-2014-en.pdf>

## Topic #3: Substance Use 101

Substance use comes with many layers of complexity. People use a variety of different substances for a wide range of reasons. Substance use is different for everyone and can be viewed on a spectrum with varying stages of benefits and harms. Understanding the types of substances people use can help you meet people where they are at and foster conversations about harm reduction. The resources below will cover the following:

- Why people use substances (wide range of reasons & circumstances)
- Spectrum of substance use (i.e. recreational vs dependence)
- Categories and effects of different substances
- Factors that affect how a person experiences a drug

**1) Online resource description:** This resource contains what is known as the Drug Wheel. The Drug Wheel shows the different categories of substances and the effects they have on the mind and body.  
**Link:**[https://elearning.catie.ca/HRTOOLKIT/unit3/content/#/lessons/LgwQptQ\\_0kZsrjaNUbAnTlqMEh3n6DUC](https://elearning.catie.ca/HRTOOLKIT/unit3/content/#/lessons/LgwQptQ_0kZsrjaNUbAnTlqMEh3n6DUC)

**2) Online resource description:** This resource from CATIE has a short video that explains the many reasons why people use substances. Below the video is an interactive chart that allows you to either read or listen to the four factors that influence substance use. Lastly, there are some reflection questions at the bottom that can help solidify understanding.  
**Link:**<https://elearning.catie.ca/HRTOOLKIT/unit1/content/#/lessons/yIFwMTtt26T1caTtCtR8Tll1rrzlrvg8>

**3) Online resource description:** This resource has an interactive infographic about the spectrum of substance use. You can choose to listen to or read the content.  
**Link:**<https://elearning.catie.ca/HRTOOLKIT/unit1/content/#/lessons/tT1Sw7oJODcCpOL7mzrhLSxcGjcmbrp0>

**4) Online resource description:** This module explains the different factors that influence how a person experiences drugs: dose, routes of administration, individual, and environmental factors  
**Link:**<https://elearning.catie.ca/HRTOOLKIT/unit3/content/#/lessons/Pd1Jc0JFLCYhSlgJp2y7i1mEAGbpurjg>

### In-Person Training Options

Some substance use organizations in the community can offer in-person trainings on the topics in this resource. If you are interested in in-person training options, contact the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy to coordinate, or speak with your supervisor.

## Topic #4: Harm Reduction 101

Harm reduction is now a well-accepted public health approach. It helps to minimize the harms associated with many activities, including substance use. It empowers people who use substances to live safely and with dignity. It is about meeting people where they are at.

As a Peer in the substance use realm, you will likely be working with an organization where harm reduction is fully embraced, and this will likely be a big part of working with individuals accessing services. Because of this, it is important to learn about the different type of harm reduction services (needle exchanges, safer supply programs, Consumption and Treatment Services, Opioid Agonist Therapy programs, etc.) that exist in the Guelph. Your organization should have a list of resources available or reach out to the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy for more information. In these resources, you will learn about the following:

- Different harm reduction supplies for drug use and how they are used
- Best practices for safer injecting, snorting, smoking, etc.
- How we use harm reduction in our everyday lives (for example, seatbelts & helmets)
- Principles of Harm Reduction i.e. meeting people where they are at
- What is “recovery” from a harm reduction lens?

- 1) **Online resource description:** In a series of three videos, this resource from CATIE shows how to inject, snort, and smoke drugs in a safer way.

**Link:** <http://educatie.ca/elearning/HRTOOLKIT/unit3/content/#/lessons/dCqHMhHK6OKGb-FWa5N9RexZEDiku3A>

- 2) **Online resource description:** This resource from the Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Network explains about the different harm reduction supplies for drug use and how to use it and how to have conversations with people about techniques for safer use.

**Link:** <https://ohrdp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/OHR-Connecting-FullGuide-English-WEB.pdf>

- 3) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module 11 of this resource looks at the fundamentals of harm reduction and how “recovery” does not necessarily mean abstinence.

**Link:** [https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/11-supporting-2/index.html#/lessons/zG7PZ7Sv420Z\\_kmZgLvBJ8DYqGlrPs](https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/11-supporting-2/index.html#/lessons/zG7PZ7Sv420Z_kmZgLvBJ8DYqGlrPs)

- 4) **Online resource description:** This resource from CATIE contains a 6 minute video about the fundamentals of harm reduction and delves in harm reduction principles.

**Link:** <http://educatie.ca/elearning/HRTOOLKIT/unit2/content/#/lessons/WSXAALVvtDcm50wzKXcPbvXWBmK8YNbT>

## Topic #5: Drug Poisoning (Overdose)

Knowing what to do in the event of a drug poisoning (also known as overdose) can be the difference between life and death. Responding to a drug poisoning is a critical skill when working with people who use substances. The resources below will help you learn the following:

- Signs of an opioid overdose/drug poisoning
- Naloxone – how it works, types, how to use it
- Signs of a stimulant overdose and what to do
- Good Samaritan Drug OD Act

**1) Online resource description:** This is an instructional video from the Ontario Harm Reduction Network. It shows what signs to look for in a person experiencing a drug poisoning from opioids. It also demonstrates how to use both injectable and nasal naloxone. *(The video is located about halfway down the page.)*

**Link:** <https://ohrn.org/naloxone/>

**2) Online resource description:** This ~10 min video from the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition has Peers describing the signs of a stimulant poisoning/overdose and what you can do in that situation. *(The short discussion about laws that pertain to North Carolina can be disregarded.)*

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cScm8A76JLc>

**3) Online resource description:** Peer Connect BC training modules were created by Peers for Peers. This module (module 11, lesson 13) explains Canada's Good Samaritan Drug Act.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/11-supporting-2/index.html#/lessons/KJO0ja-FZGUY8Hu-8yi6t5Q4prR20DT7>

---

## Topic #6: Words Matter - Using non-stigmatizing language & gender identity pronouns

This module focuses on the use of non-stigmatizing language and gender identity pronouns. Many people who use substances and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> community are subject to all forms of stigma leading to feelings of rejection and isolation. Learning to use person-centred language and appropriate gender identity language is essential to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment in our workplaces.

- 1) Online resource description:** Pages 5-7 of this document contain a comprehensive list of person-centred, non-stigmatizing language related to substance use and people who use substances. You may want to print the chart for easy access.  
**Link:** <https://www.in.gov/recovery/files/Stigma-AddictionLanguageGuide-v3.pdf>
- 2) Online resource description:** This ~15min video is a TEDx Talk on the importance of gender pronouns and why they matter. It provides some excellent tips on how to be mindful of language and how to use gender neutral language. It's based on interviews with gender diverse people.  
**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsHXyGiCk6g>
- 3) Online resource description:** This resource is an interactive module on gender identity pronouns. It contains definitions of some common terms related to gender identity. It also explains the importance of using proper pronouns, the discrimination members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community faces in the health care sector, and what to do if you forget to use a person's preferred pronoun.  
**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/9-social-determinants/index.html#/lessons/lv6mN92ZOTdTnQhMiH8VtYP21sOWGKjO>
- 4) Online resource description:** This resource is a really comprehensive glossary of terms that pertain to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.  
**Link:** <https://pflag.org/glossary/>

### MODULE 1: KEY TOPICS

---

<sup>1</sup> This refers to people who identify as 2 Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, or additional identities.

## Topic #7: Stigma and Discrimination

Stigma and discrimination can have far reaching and powerful consequences on people who use drugs. It is important to learn the roots and impacts of stigma and discrimination to understand what individuals might be going through. These resources will cover:

- What is stigma and discrimination?
- Stigma in primary care
- How current drug policies (criminalization) contribute to stigma and discrimination
- Effects on substance users

- 1) **Online resource description:** This short ~3 minute video from the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition discusses the definition of stigma, the effects of stigma in the health care system on people who use substances, and some basic ways to combat stigma.

**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha4yeOF6XNQ&t=10s>

- 2) **Online resource description:** This resource from CATIE (sections 9 through 11) discusses the different types of stigma and discrimination and ways to combat stigma and discrimination at different levels. There are videos, interactive photos (where you can read or listen to the information), and reflection questions to help understanding.

**Link:** <https://elearning.catie.ca/HRT00LKIT/unit1/content/#/lessons/UfAc3M746-pPfBybXMf25ilqpT2sg97R>

- 3) **Online resource description:** This one-minute video from CATIE describes the effects of criminalization on people who use substances.

**Link:** [https://elearning.catie.ca/HRT00LKIT/unit1/content/#/lessons/WbitmxFjXv54GP\\_U5QrBc1OarizLJwEb](https://elearning.catie.ca/HRT00LKIT/unit1/content/#/lessons/WbitmxFjXv54GP_U5QrBc1OarizLJwEb)

- 4) **Online resource description:** This article written by Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Use explains how criminalization of drug use negatively affects people who use substances and increases stigma.

**Link:** <https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/03/punishing-drug-use-heightens-the-stigma-of-addiction/>

---

## Topic #8: Social Determinants of Health

There are many factors and circumstances beyond a person's control that impacts their health and safety. The more Peer support workers understand these factors, the more we can advocate for people and help them people self-advocate. In this resource, you will learn:

- What are the social determinants of health?
- What is intersectionality?
- What is systemic racism?

- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. In module 9, the above topics are covered in an interactive manner along with reflection questions to help aid with understanding.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/9-social-determinants/index.html#/>

## Topic #9: Mental Health & Crisis Intervention

You may be the first point of contact for a person who is in crisis and struggling with their mental health. It is important that you learn your organization's policies for what to do in urgent crisis situations. There are also trainings that exist that can be useful, such as [Mental Health First Aid](#), [Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training \(ASIST\)](#), and other non-violent de-escalation trainings. Ask your supervisor about accessing these trainings.

## MODULE 2: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

### Topic #10: Connecting and Communication Skills

Communicating and connecting with individuals effectively is a cornerstone of peer support. In this section, you will learn about some of the important topics to discuss when you begin a peer support relationship with an individual. This includes motivational interviewing, which is a useful skill to be able to draw on when connecting with individuals. You will also learn how to listen to understand, also called empathetic listening.

- 1) Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module 7, lessons 7 through 10 focus on topics of conversation that are important at the beginning of a peer support relationship. They also cover empathetic listening, intentional communication, and how to authentically communicate. This module is interactive and includes reflection questions to aid in understanding.  
**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/7-connection-communication/index.html#/lessons/9BMUfolm0lnE1osMNTDeLr6lNY4YdZ4p>
- 2) Online resource description:** This toolkit from The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support explains what empathy is with examples and the empathetic communication loop. Towards the end of the document, there are reflection questions and examples of communication “encouragers” and “discouragers” which are very practical. This is a slightly dense document so pull what you need to or what you find most interesting from it.  
**Link:** <https://supporthouse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Empathetic-Communication-Toolkit.pdf>
- 3) Online resource description:** In this video (~20 minutes), Bill Matulich, an expert in motivational interviewing training, gives an overview of what motivational interviewing is and how to use it.  
**Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3MCJZ7OGRk>

## Topic #11: Self-Determination

Supporting the other person's self-determination is one of the main principles of Peer support. Peer support involves respecting autonomy and agency and helping others to discover their own strengths and resources. In order to encourage this, we must avoid imposing our own opinions or solutions on the other person. Giving advice is not the main purpose of Peer support and sometimes this is difficult to navigate. In order to foster self-determination, creating a safe space for people to engage is integral.

In this module, you will learn about the following:

- What is self-determination?
- Why is it important to facilitate?
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
- Basics of Ryan & Deci's Self-determination Theory (& examples of competence, autonomy, relatedness)
- How to avoid giving advice
- What to do when directly asked for advice
- The value of creating a safe space

- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. This interactive module (# 4, lessons 12 and 13) discuss how to avoid giving advice in Peer support. They also provide scenarios to learn what to do when directly asked for advice. Lastly, the importance of creating a safe space is explained.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/4-self-determination/index.html#/lessons/KnrSFxM67Ztc9S4ukPJB198ut17-1NMD>

- 2) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module #4 is an interactive module that discusses the topics listed above.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/4-self-determination/index.html#/lessons/KAdcByUUOuRG4gJnmLDQG9-OIMgzhEn>

## Topic #13: Peer Support and Indigenous Peoples

Being aware of cultural difference and the impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples in Canada is an important component of Peer work. These resources answer the following questions:

- What is cultural safety?
  - What is cultural humility?
  - What is intergenerational trauma?
- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module 5 explains cultural humility, cultural appropriation, and the impact of colonization on Indigenous People. This module is interactive.  
**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/5-cultural-humility/index.html#/>
  - 2) **Online resource description:** This 10-minute video from the First National Health Authority discussed cultural humility and safety from the lens of Indigenous Peoples.  
**Link:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76eJ3\\_MmgYs&t=116s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76eJ3_MmgYs&t=116s)
  - 3) **Online resource description:** This resource from CATIE explains harm reduction for Indigenous Peoples and how it is different from other forms of harm reduction.  
**Link:** [http://educatie.ca/elearning/HRT00LKIT/unit2/content/#/lessons/ygYbPkIA69z6YdTTi9W1AMXHxz\\_rTahl](http://educatie.ca/elearning/HRT00LKIT/unit2/content/#/lessons/ygYbPkIA69z6YdTTi9W1AMXHxz_rTahl)

## MODULE 3: SUPPORTING PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND SELF-REFLECTION

### Topic #14: Boundaries

Boundaries can be difficult to navigate, especially in a profession where relationships are based on mutuality. Unlike clinicians, Peers often share personal feelings and experiences with persons accessing services and may have similar backgrounds and challenges. This can create a strong bond, but also a risk of role confusion, blurred lines, and over identification. Further, Peers may encounter persons who access services in other settings, which can complicate boundaries. It is important that Peers are aware of and respect boundaries of these individuals, as well as their own. In these resources, you will learn about the following:

- Purpose of boundaries
- Boundaries and ethics (fluid vs. rigid)
- Creating clearly defined boundaries
- Knowing your role and organizational policies
- Co-creating boundaries & pre-existing relationships (i.e. what topics are ok to discuss, communication forms that are ok, etc.)
- Acknowledging potential power differentials
- Use of social media
- Confidentiality

- 1) **Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. *Module 6: Understanding Boundaries* takes you through some of the above topics interactively and by using reflection questions.

**Link:** <https://peerconnectbc.ca/lessons/understanding-boundaries/>

- 2) **Online resource description:** This document from The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support navigates some of the above topics and also gives conversation prompts and tools for having challenging boundary conversations with people you are supporting. Appendix A (pg 22) contains a useful worksheet to help you determine and establish your boundaries.

**Link:** <https://supporthouse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Ethically-Navigating-Boundaries-with-People-Engaging-in-Services.pdf>

## Topic #15: Building Personal Resilience

Working as Peers in the substance use realm can be difficult. We might hear traumatic stories and/or do a great deal of active listening which can be tiring. We may also find ourselves triggered or stressed by situations we encounter while working. It is important to be aware of, understand, and prepare for these situations in order to prevent harm to ourselves and potentially find ourselves unable to work. In this resource, you will learn about the following:

- What is vicarious trauma?
- What is burn-out?
- How to practice self-compassion

- 1) **Online resource description:** This infographic titled *Self-care for Peers Working in an Overdose Response Setting* has some basic reminders and examples of activities we can do to help prevent burn out. (Note: It was created for Peers working in British Columbia so the resource footnotes may not apply to Peers in Guelph).  
**Link:** <https://supporthouse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Supporting-our-Wellness-in-the-Workplace.pdf>
- 2) **Online resource description:** Vikki Reynolds is an internationally known speaker, professor, and activist who works within an anti-oppression and social justice framework. In this 10-minute video, she explains how to resist burn-out and vicarious trauma when working in harm reduction.  
**Link:** <https://vimeo.com/269392830>
- 3) **Online resource description:** This document from The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support explains the signs of burn out and has a useful chart explaining specific self-care strategies for specific workplace stressors. At the end, there is a worksheet that can help you stay in tune with yourself and help monitor for burn out.  
**Link:** <https://supporthouse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Supporting-our-Wellness-in-the-Workplace.pdf>
- 4) **Online resource description:** Kristen Neff is the world's leading researcher on self-compassion. In the first video below she talks about the three components of self compassion. In the second video, she talks about overcoming the objections in your mind to self compassion. (If you find yourself more interested in self compassion, her book titled *Self-Compassion* has been highly recommended)  
**Link:** Video 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11U0h0DPu7k>  
**Link:** Video 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFhcNPjIMjc&t=37s>
- 5) **Online resource description:** This webpage from the BC Post-Secondary Peer Support Training Program provides an overview on self compassion as well as some reflection questions.  
**Link:** <https://opentextbc.ca/peersupport/chapter/self-compassion-an-overview/>

---

## Topic #16: Unpacking our Assumptions and Biases

By recognizing and acknowledging our biases, we can become more self-aware and monitor our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. It is important for Peers to understand our own viewpoints, especially when engaging with others, in order to remain equitably minded ensuring support is provided in a respectful, balanced, and non-judgemental way. These resources are helpful to learn about how to become aware of our biases.

- 1) Online resource description:** Peer Connect B.C. is a Peer-led organization that created training modules for Peers across Canada. Module 3, lessons 14 and 15, explain perceptual awareness, how to notice our biases, and include reflection questions.  
**Link:** [https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/3-categories/index.html#/lessons/uYkKuwWMiOaq-4Vi3AYR9C5\\_DK2sTby7](https://peerconnectbc.ca/courses/3-categories/index.html#/lessons/uYkKuwWMiOaq-4Vi3AYR9C5_DK2sTby7)
- 2) Online resource description:** This document contains an *Examining Bias Toolkit* created by The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support. This toolkit explains what bias is and helps you work through how to identify biases that you may have. It provides exercises to help you challenge your automatic perceptions.  
**Link:** <https://supporthouse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Peer-Support-Examining-Bias-Toolkit-1.pdf>