

Why Utilise the Lived Experience?

Kathy Logie: Peer Support Coordinator, Facilitator, Trainer
WAEDOCS, Hollywood Clinic, CAMHS

Thank you for inviting me to speak ..

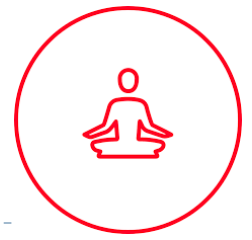
I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that we meet upon today and pay my respects to elders past, present and future.



- ▶ I lived through family violence as a child and developed an eating disorder when I was 12.
- ▶ My treatment was quite damaging and left me very mentally unwell, physically ok but inclined to numb out on alcohol and later, drugs.
- ▶ I did not know who I was and I thought I was worthless
- ▶ I found myself in a DV relationship and pregnant. I still didn't know how to feed myself properly.
- ▶ Eventually I sought therapy and was diagnosed with PTSD. After 10 years (yep!) I was doing much better.
- ▶ I began working with people who had an eating disorder. It was amazing to make some use of my experiences 😊
- ▶ I'm now known as a Peer Worker/Lived Experience Mentor and spend most of my time helping others to upskill in this field as well.



www.2013-uk-eating-disorder-help.com



How did I Recover?

- ▶ Initially yoga and meditation, aromatherapy, ayurveda
- ▶ Lots of time in nature
- ▶ Learnt boundaries and self care (no more bad r'ships)
- ▶ Psychology and anti-depressants
- ▶ Community based women's groups
- ▶ The Body Esteem Program (peer groups for ED's)
- ▶ Gestalt psychotherapy (which I eventually studied)
- ▶ No more food rules!
- ▶ Positive body image and self acceptance
- ▶ Brain healing; affirmations and gratitude
- ▶ *My career* ...it strengthened my recovery and continues to improve my mood and self-belief. It also provides me with ongoing learning and skill development.

Absolutely Essential....

- ▶ Safety:
 - Leave any abusive situations
 - Have somewhere stable to live
- ▶ Work (money =possibilities)
- ▶ Good GP
- ▶ Therapist that can last the distance
- ▶ Validation (justice system or enough empathy)
- ▶ Basic health- sleep, eat, nature
- ▶ Love (people or animals)
- ▶ Creativity/Connection



Isolation is bad for Mental Health



If you want people to feel valued, give them something to work on together 😊



People tend to relate to others that have lived through something similar, especially if they found ways to improve their circumstances.

Supporting people can help someone to feel better about themselves and it also opens up opportunities to share strategies that really make a difference.

Never underestimate the power of the lived experience, one drop can make a huge ripple.

The Power of the Lived Experience

In my work I aim to:

- ❖ Role model a possibility of recovery and life without mental illness
 - ❖ Give hope for the future and inspire people to consider their life goals and family priorities
 - ❖ Empathise, encourage and share practical strategies for overcoming the illness/experience
 - ❖ Inspire the creation and delivery of wonderful support and treatment services
 - ❖ Empower people to use their strengths and knowledge to effect change
 - ❖ Provide a holistic view on mental health experiences
 - ❖ 'Bridge the gap' between treating teams and people seeking help
-





Peer Support Humanises Treatment

Helping people to feel less alone and giving alternate narratives to their inner story

It also reforms the way we think
about mental illness

And hopefully changes the ways in which we deliver services to
those people that need them ...

Benefits of Peer Support

People who receive peer support tend to experience:

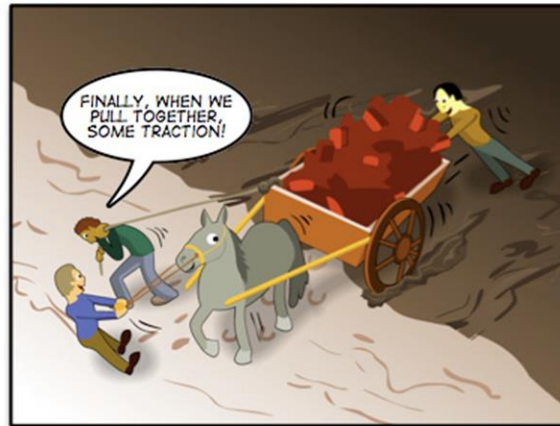
- increased **self-esteem**
- better **decision-making skills**
- improved **social functioning**
- **decreased psychiatric symptoms** (i.e. decreased rates or lengths of hospitalization)
- lower rates of isolation, larger **social networks**, increased **support seeking**
- greater pursuit of **educational goals and employment**

(Davidson et al, 1999; Humphreys & Rappaport, 1994; Froland et al, 2000, cited in Leung et al, 2002).





www.fridayreflections.com



Friday Reflections by J. Cook, © Analisa Enterprises, LLC

Let's find ways to work alongside people who have been through adversity...

Empower them, trust them, employ them, consult with them.

Local initiatives will be better off and the community will be strengthened.

It's a strengths based approach with functional recovery at it's centre.



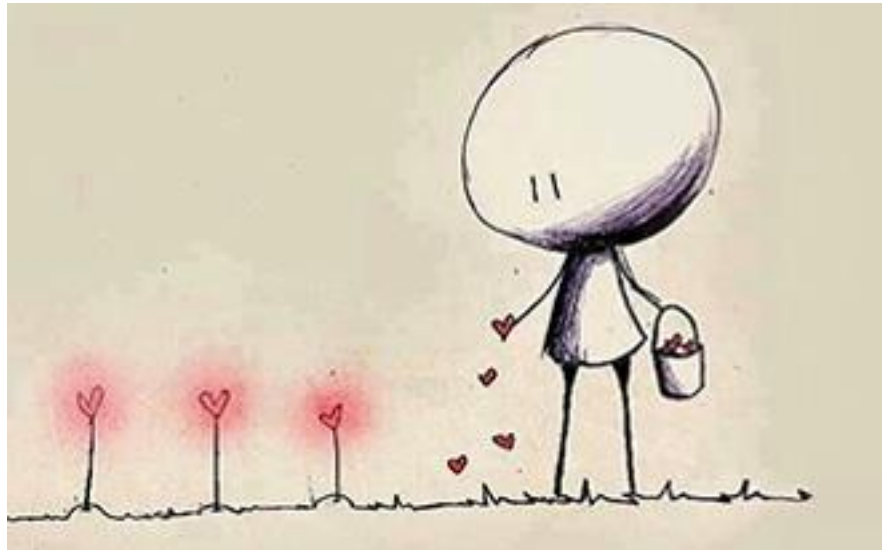
Collaboration = Better Outcomes

- ▶ An organisation planning to include peer support must embody a non-stigmatising attitude to mental illness and a belief that personal recovery, as defined by the individual, is a goal of treatment, regardless of diagnosis.
- ▶ Best outcomes are achieved when all members of staff understand the purpose of having peer workers on the team and design collaborative ways to best utilise the lived experience expertise. When this is carried out successfully, the advantages to consumers and/or carers of contact with a peer support worker include the following:
 - ▶ Greater engagement with treatment team and protocols
 - ▶ Increased hope and optimism
 - ▶ Reduced anxiety and potential for traumatisation



*'know when you are not coping
and know what to do about it'*

-Carolyn Costin



How do I cope?

WHAT IS SELF-COMPASSION?



Mindfulness

Self-compassion involves recognising when we're stressed or struggling without being judgmental or over-reacting.



Self-Kindness

Being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we're having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical.



Connectedness

Remembering that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. We are not alone!

- Dr Josie Geller

Adolescents are our future.



I'm extremely passionate about validating the difficult experiences of a teenager as they are far less able to be autonomous than adults but can still live with extreme stress.

I urge Local Governments to really provide plenty of safe places for them to go for support, they don't do well if hospitalised and often need some of the basics addressed rather than a diagnosis that stays with them forever...

Participation can help them to find their purpose and make sense of their challenges. It improves self esteem and often leads to better self care.

my message to them is always:

Make your unique mark on the world! We need you...





Thank you so much for listening 😊

Questions?