



## Peer Support

**Ko te whakaora, he hīkoi whakāmarama Māna anō tōna ake ara whakaora e whakarau.**

A journey of discovery where an individual leads their own unique process of moving forwards.

Peer Support is not like clinical support, nor is it just like being friends. Peer Support helps people to understand each other because they've 'been there', shared similar experiences, and can model for each other a willingness to learn and grow. In Peer Support, people come together with the intention of changing unhelpful patterns and getting out of 'stuck' places. It can help to build relationships that are respectful, mutually responsible, and potentially transformative, while feeling safe and accepting.

Intentional and purposeful relationships allow us to review our current position, helping both parties to learn and grow. They encourage us to understand, and evaluate, our experiences. Promoting a *'trauma-informed'* way of relating to ourselves, Peer Support pushes us to move towards. It focuses on what and where we want to be, rather than focussing on what we need to stop doing.

### How do we work?

- Following a referral, a Peer Supporter will meet regularly with the person (or talk over the phone) to assist, exploring their vision and the barriers that are stopping them from moving towards it.
- Generally, we will provide peer support for a person for 6 months, although this can be extended if required.
- Peer Support workers build trusting relationships where people can feel safe to share, learn, grow, and take risks.

### Peer Support Workers

Comcare Peer Supporters have had personal experience of mental illness and/or addiction. They are well trained and supported, receiving both individual and group supervision. Peer Support training assists people examine their past and current experiences, their potential strengths and vulnerabilities. They are trauma-informed, and trained in communication, boundary setting, resilience development, and self-care. Based on the principle *'to understand, you must first experience'*, Peer Support provides a supportive culture, during initial training, on-going training, and at supervision groups.

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