

# dialog : conversations with peer workers

## 2015 Peer Work Conference Feedback Summary

On 10 & 11 November 2015, with the funding support of Mental Health Australia and Brook RED, the dialog:conversations with peer workers conference was held in Brisbane. The goals of the conference were to:

- promote & raise the profile of peer workers;
- showcase best practice & differing approaches;
- develop new skills & strategies for peer workers; and
- to support & establish connections between peer workers.

The content and structure of the conference was determined in consultation with the input of 37 peer workers from across Australia and included a survey completed by 23 peer workers. A total of 120 individuals from across Australia who identified that they use of their lived-experience of recovery actively in their work attended the event.

Feedback forms for the event were designed to capture:

- general impressions of the event;
- ratings of particular sessions; and
- what types of things should be considered if a similar event were to be held again.

Thank you so much to everyone who attended and to those who took the time to share their insights with us. People were incredibly generous with comments and insight. Collated and abridged feedback from open response questions and average scores for scaled questions are presented below; feedback from all questions focussed on similar themes and it was decided to present this feedback in these themes rather than as responses to particular questions. Questions as stated on the feedback forms were:

1. Tell us what you thought of today. It could be what you liked most, what worked or didn't work, or whatever you think we ought to know.
2. If we do this again, what should we focus on?
3. Is there anything else that you would like us to know (including what you think we could do better in future)?

# dialog : conversations with peer workers

## Feedback Summary

### **A number of people gave positive feedback telling us that they:**

- Found the conference thought-provoking, inspiring, and enlightening;
- Enjoyed meeting other peer workers and connecting with broader peer worker community, sharing stories, and networking;
- Enjoyed hearing the amazing and diverse speakers who presented at the event;
- Appreciated the opportunity to learn about other peer programs and projects (locally, across Australia, and overseas);
- Enjoyed the DISC and Frames of Reference sessions that were part of the Cert IV Taster session;
- Loved the opportunity to do some group work;
- Liked the activities that were structured to allow interaction most;
- They very much enjoyed the conference;
- Hope another conference is held;
- The balance of presentations with opportunities to connect was good;
- Future events should build from the conversations this year;
- Brook RED did a great job organising, planning, and hosting the conference;
- Enjoyed that a number of serious issues in peer work were discussed in an accepting, inquisitive, and professional way; and
- Would like to attend similar events in future.

### **Suggestions for focus in the future were to explore/include/consider:**

#### **Structure**

- Providing more/longer breaks;
- Keeping to times on the agenda;
- Allowing speakers longer times to present;
- Providing handout material to support presentations;
- Including some music, art, energizers, or mindfulness activities;
- Adding an extra day to the event so that there would be enough time for content and connecting with peers;
- Mixing up the delivery to accommodate differing learning styles (such as having a DVD to watch or using more visuals);
- Allowing for more comments from the floor
- Have more group/networking/interactive activities/sessions; and
- Allowing attendees to attend all workshops instead of having to select 2 of 4.

# dialog : conversations with peer workers

## Content

- More about peer run organizations;
- Positive stories about the impact of peer support work;
- Peer worker ethics, values, and standards of practice;
- Ways to incorporate peer work practice in acute and marginalised populations;
- Frameworks for practice;
- Addressing stigma and recovery;
- Building a National peak body for peer work;
- Career options/progression/opportunities for peer workers;
- Challenges, innovations, research, and development in peer work;
- Professional development and supervision for peer workers;
- Inspirational speakers;
- Practical skills such as managing conflict, setting boundaries, and self care;
- Collaboration;
- More carer perspectives;
- How to use our stories most effectively and persuasively explain peer work to others;
- Building an evidence base;
- Risks that come with peer work (to peer workers, peers being supported, et cetera)
- Indigenous perspectives;
- More training-based sessions (such as the Cert IV taster sessions);
- Peer roles within clinical settings and mainstream mental health services; and
- How policy interacts with peer work (for example, the NDIS); and
- Establishing a contact list of peer workers.

## Venue and catering

- A number of people would like to see more and free parking made available; and
- There was a request for better signage for meals and increased snack and beverage options.

# dialog : conversations with peer workers

Scaled questions were rated on a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 indicating and answer of strong disagreement and 5 indicating an answer of strong agreement.

## Day One – 57 attendees provided feedback

### Snapshots of Practice Panel

*The panel format gave me a sense of some of the different types of peer work going on around Australia.* 4.16

*The panel was a good way to learn about a number of projects in a short time.* 4.22

### Peer Champions / Peer Foundations Taster Sessions

*I enjoyed the 'Understanding Frames' session.* 4.46

*I enjoyed the 'DISC' session.* 4.30

*I would be keen to be part of more of these type of sessions in future.* 4.48

*Having attended these sessions will support me to be a better peer worker.* 4.40

### Logistics

*The venue easy to access.* 4.09

*The food was good.* 4.61

*Start and finish times were convenient.* 4.52

*I was treated with dignity and respect.* 4.83

### Overall impressions

*The day was well organised.* 4.53

*Topics were relevant to me.* 4.42

*I learned new things.* 4.32

*I feel inspired.* 4.39

*I would suggest dialog to othes.* 4.46

*I would come to another dialog conference.* 4.74

*I feel more excited about peer work than ever!* 4.47

# dialog : conversations with peer workers

## Day Two – 50 attendees provided feedback

### Certificate IV Taster Workshops

#### Demystifying Peer Work

<i>I learned new things/ thought in new ways.</i>	3.90
<i>It will help me be a better peer worker.</i>	3.87
<i>I would recommend this session to others.</i>	4.07

#### Speed Connecting

<i>I learned new things/ thought in new ways.</i>	3.92
<i>It will help me be a better peer worker.</i>	3.99
<i>I would recommend this session to others.</i>	4.24

#### Maintaining Peer Values

<i>I learned new things/ thought in new ways.</i>	4.57
<i>It will help me be a better peer worker.</i>	4.50
<i>I would recommend this session to others.</i>	4.63

#### Exploring Codes of Ethics

<i>I learned new things/ thought in new ways.</i>	4.34
<i>It will help me be a better peer worker.</i>	4.16
<i>I would recommend this session to others.</i>	4.42

### Logistics

<i>The venue easy to access.</i>	4.42
<i>The food was good.</i>	4.50
<i>Start and finish times were convenient.</i>	4.60
<i>I was treated with dignity and respect.</i>	4.91

### Overall impressions

<i>The day was well organised.</i>	4.68
<i>Topics were relevant to me.</i>	4.50
<i>I learned new things.</i>	4.41
<i>I feel inspired.</i>	4.55
<i>I would suggest dialog to others.</i>	4.62
<i>I would come to another dialog conference.</i>	4.69
<i>I feel more excited about peer work than ever!</i>	4.43