

THE BENEFITS OF PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

The science supports that peer support is a critical and effective strategy for ongoing health care and sustained behaviour change for people with chronic diseases and other conditions. The benefits can be extended to the community, organizational and societal levels.



CONNECTION AND BELONGING

- In peer support, we understand each other because we've 'been there,' shared similar experiences and can model for each other a willingness to learn and grow.
- Come together with the intention of getting out of 'stuck' places, and building relationships that are respectful
- Improved social competence and social networks; and increased healthy behaviours and perceptions of well-being!¹

IMPROVED MENTAL WELLBEING

- Peer support can reduce anxiety, stress and in some cases depression.
- Research finds that groups empower people through collective emotional and social support.
- Studies found individuals attending groups shared that they had developed more confidence and higher self-esteem regarding their health challenges.



COST-EFFECTIVE AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

- Attending a peer support group costs very little and is often free.
- Groups are able to share resources amongst each other which makes navigating health care a little easier.
- Many groups have guest speakers and activities that help address various needs.

NEW RESOURCES, VIEWS AND NORMS

- By providing a forum for shared experiences and the freedom to speak freely, the group reinforces a sense of normalcy to reactions and experiences shared by one another.
- Participants can experience a transformation of 'world view' that may foster healthier coping strategies¹



SOURCE:

¹Worrall, H., Schweizer, R., Marks, E., Yuan, L., Lloyd, C. & Ramjan, R. (2018). The effectiveness of support groups: a literature review. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 22 (2), 85-93.