

## *External Supervision*

### *Specialist Peer Support for Carer Support Workers*



External Supervision offers a neutral space, in which to debrief. It also provides information, clarity, guidance, challenge, insight and validation for you and the work you do.

External Supervision underpins a model for emotional inclusion guided by recovery oriented practices and principles and WH&S obligations. It is designed to support workers who support 'others' to make life changes.

It's a powerful vehicle for deep learning and enhanced wellbeing. The benefits extend beyond the supervisee, their clients and sponsoring organisations and can be life changing.

#### **The benefits of external supervision**

- An opportunity to explore the emotional impact of providing care
- Develop greater awareness and understanding of the caregiving role
- Increase capacity to reflect and link knowledge and practice
- Skill development – increasing confidence
- Better professional relationships
- Mitigate the potentially adverse effects of countertransference, compassion fatigue, and burnout
- Ensure high quality and safe patient care and treatment
- Facilitation of learning and professional development

#### **Support Focus**

- To validate the worker both as a professional and as a person
- To create a safe climate for the worker to look at his or her practice and its impact on them as a person
- Debrief the worker and give them permission to talk about feelings
- To explore in a safe setting issues around discrimination
- To monitor the overall health and emotional functioning of the worker, especially with regard to the effects of stress
- To help the worker reflect on difficulties in colleague relationships
- To assist the worker in resolving conflict
- To identify future challenges and opportunities for the worker
- Support people through change via an effective person-centred approach

#### **The Aim**

*Ensure the safety and wellbeing of Mental Health & AOD Peer Support workers as they respond to individuals, families and carers in their delivery of Care*

**Peer support** is a specific and very skilled job as well as being posited as sitting between the biomedical and psychological models (Bartolo and Sanders, 2008).

**“Peer support** is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful. Peer support is not based on psychiatric models and diagnostic criteria. It is about understanding another’s situation empathically through the shared experience of emotional and psychological pain.”  
(Mead, Hilton, & Curtis, 2001, p. 135)

**Sue Koningen** is a Peer Support Specialist, author, motivational speaker and educationalist. Her work spans over 20 years improving the lives of families and individuals confronted by the many emotional challenges mental ill health and substance use has on families/consumers as they struggle to cope with depression, alcohol or substance use and suicidal ideation.

Sue was thrown into the role of caregiving when her child survived a drug induced suicide pact in 1994. The raw, complex emotional elements of this tragedy shocked her to the core as she realised her perceived skills were not enough to help him in recovery or prevent another attempt. His survival was her top priority.

With little or no training she was expected to take on the role of daily caregiving. It took some time to realise that this challenge was not about being ‘good enough’ - she was already a good person, it was more about being ‘willing enough’ to learn how.

Working with other families from this inside out approach, Sue developed a new **toolbox** of skills and strategies to strengthen family connection and build hope for the future. The magical impact of ‘hope’ and connection were the essential drivers of his recovery and her own.

Sue’s work is a significant catalyst for change and innovation in the parent/carer wellness process as it address the emotionally raw and complex elements of caregiving.

Sue offers **External Supervision** as an opportunity for carer support workers to review their work within a holistic approach to the wellbeing of clients. Confidentiality & privacy assured.

Sessions of 1hr duration are conducted during work hours at a mutually accepted location.

**Professional development training** is also available for delivery on site at your premises. Titled *Working with Challenging Behaviours - Building Positive Relationships*, training can be delivered as a 1 or 2 day workshop or series of 1.5hr sessions.

If you would like further information please contact:

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*Investing in the health and wellbeing of Peer Support Workers encourages the move away from a medical model. The presence and voice of peer workers can increase the understanding and valuing of the knowledge gained through ‘lived experience’ as well as clinical expertise.*