



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Waterloo Wellington



**SELF HELP &
PEER SUPPORT**

Understanding Peer Support



Centre for Excellence in Peer Support
November 2017

About Self Help



What is Lived Experience?

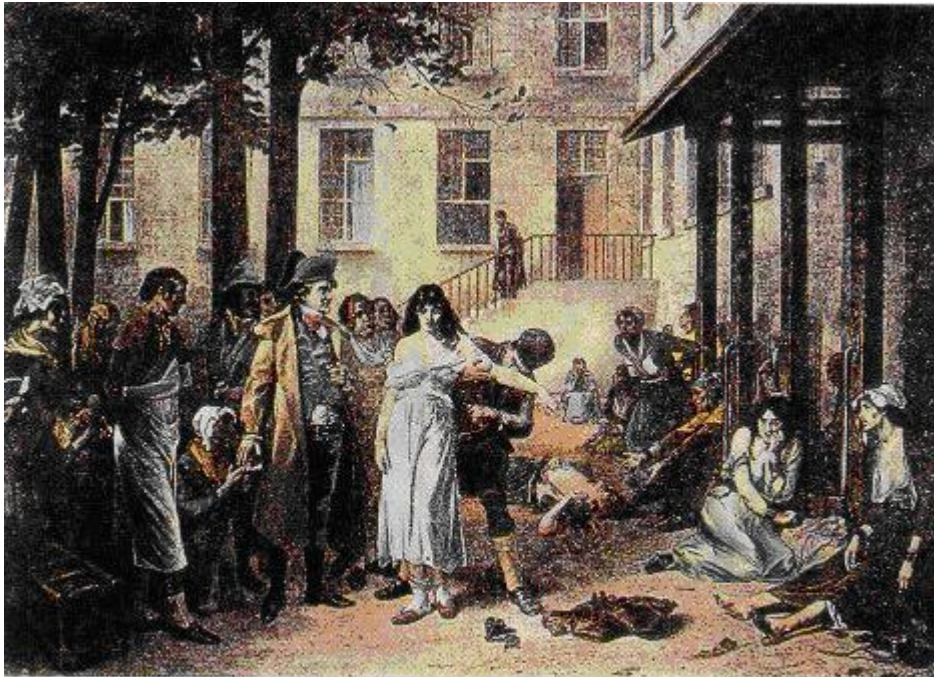




“Peer support is a supportive relationship between people who have a lived experience in common”

(Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013)

Origins of Peer Support



Dr. Philippe Pinel at the Salpêtrière, 1795 by Robert Fleury.
Pinel removing the chains from patients
at the Paris Asylum for insane women.

Linselle
October 1987
Volume 7 Number 1
\$3.00

phoenix
Rising
THE VOICE OF THE PSYCHIATRIZED

HOUSING OPTIONS

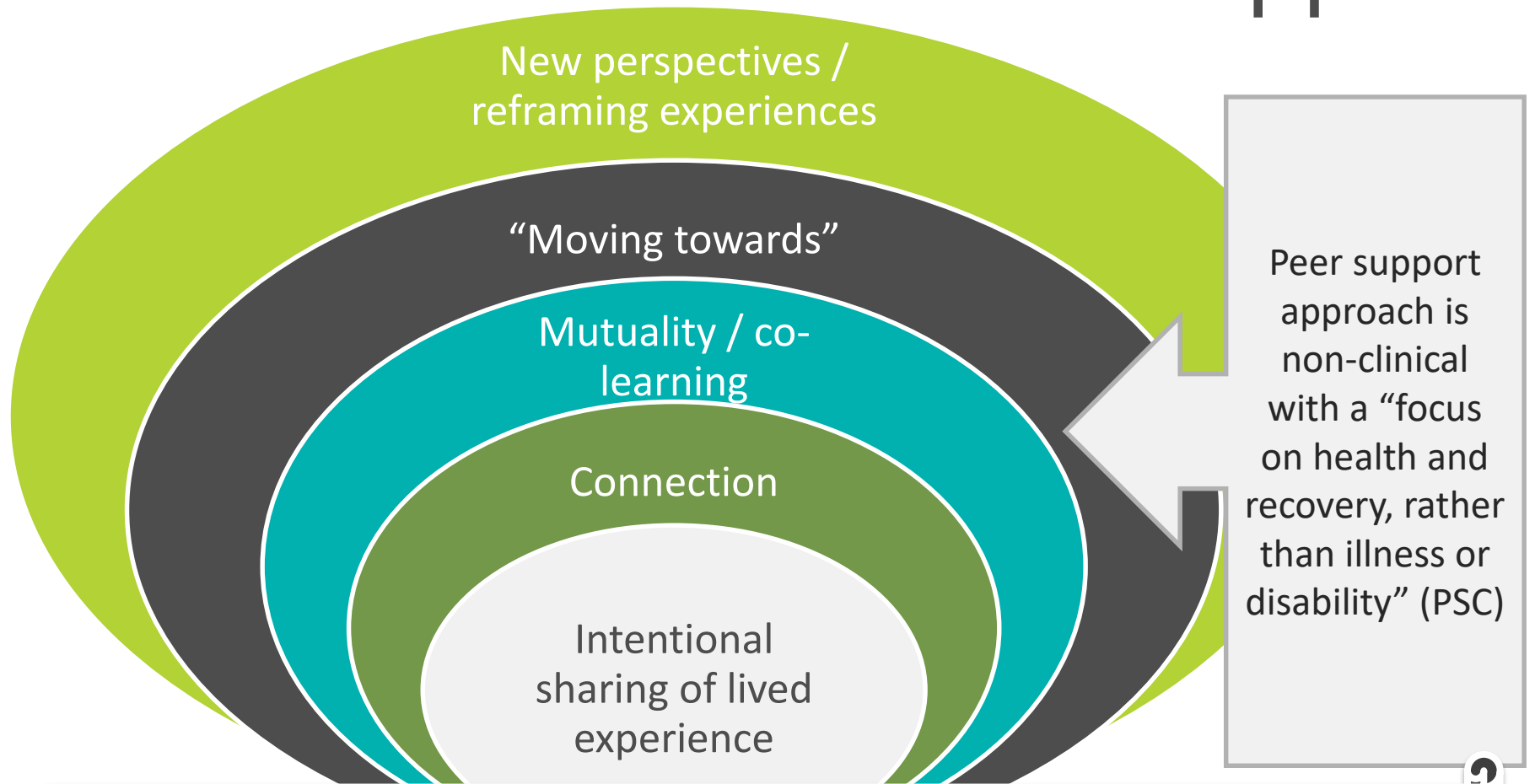
ROOMERS DEMAND RIGHTS

Getting Walter Out of Queen Street

Channon Court: A Boarding House Renewed

At Last, Protection for Roomers

Core Elements of Peer Support



Grounded in recovery values of hope, meaningful choice, empowerment, self-determination, inclusion. And "belief that each individual has knowledge of what is best for them and a desire for recovery" (PSC).

Who Are Peer Supporters?



Peer supporters have actively encountered a mental health and/or substance use issue and intentionally share their lived experience and recovery journey as part of their role as a volunteer or staff person.



Through peer support, peer staff provide a different type of support, based in lived experience knowledge — providing connection and nurturing the hope necessary for recovery.



Why is Peer Support Unique?

Why do peer support and peer provided services lead to different outcomes than traditional mental health services?

“Over 85% of people supported reported that the support provided by the Peer Navigator was different from the support provided by other healthcare providers”

Peer support is unique because of lived experience. Lived experience is both personal and collective

Collective Lived Experiences

Historical Experiences

- Forced / coerced treatment
- Institutionalization
- No hope for recovery
- Plus all the current issues....

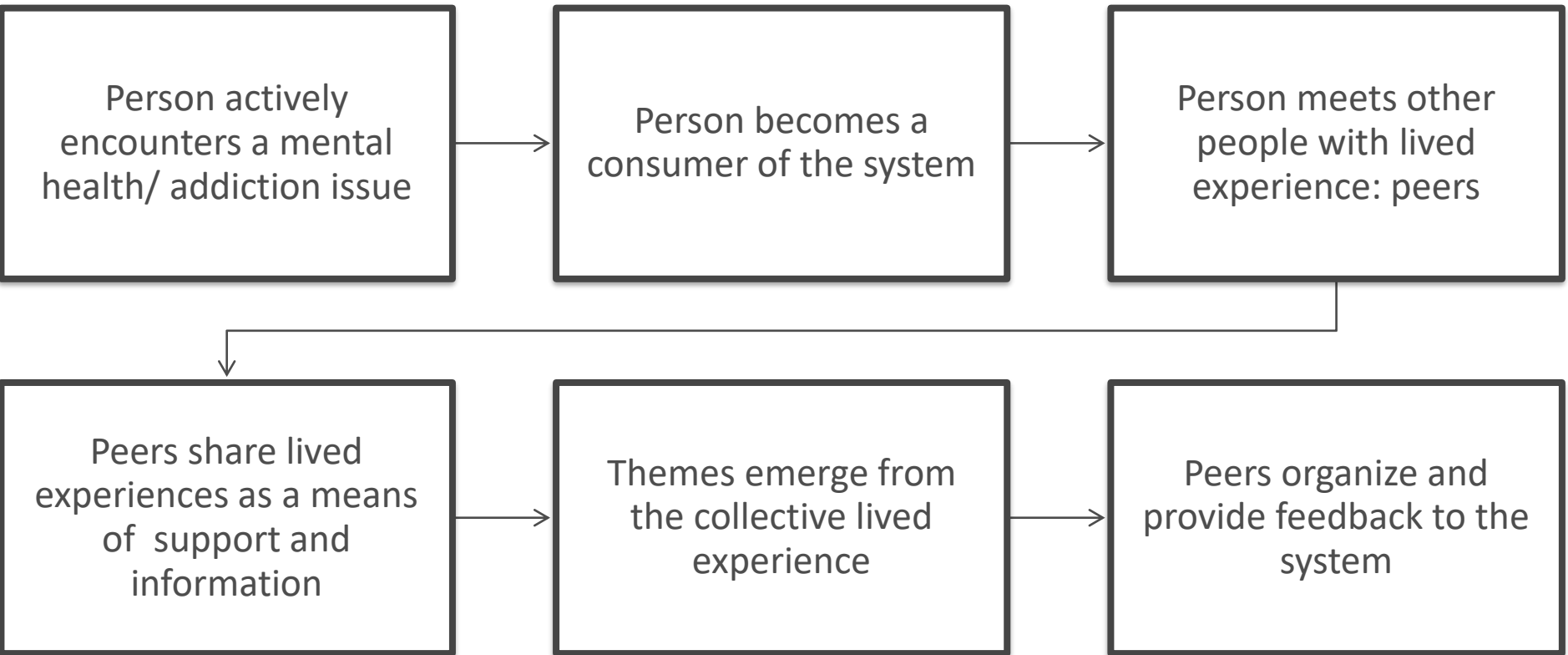
Derived from personal and collective lived experience, peer workers help with these issues by offering:

- Understanding
- Coping strategies
- Ways of reframing
- System navigation
- Advocacy

Current Experiences

- Trauma
- Lack of hope and compassion
- Stigma
- Difficulty finding and accessing help
- Poverty, unemployment, and inadequate housing
- Wait times / limited choices
- Medication and side effects
- Marginalization of certain groups and culturally unsafe practices
- Criminalization of mental illness amongst certain populations

Collective Lived Experience



Peer workers address questions about recovery using lived experience knowledge

What does it mean if I get sick again? Does that mean I am doing something wrong?

But what if I still experience symptoms or relapse?

What if I never get better?

But I don't want to return to who I was before, this experience has changed me.

Will I need to be on medication forever?

I am scared of getting better. I have been sick for so long that sick is who I am.

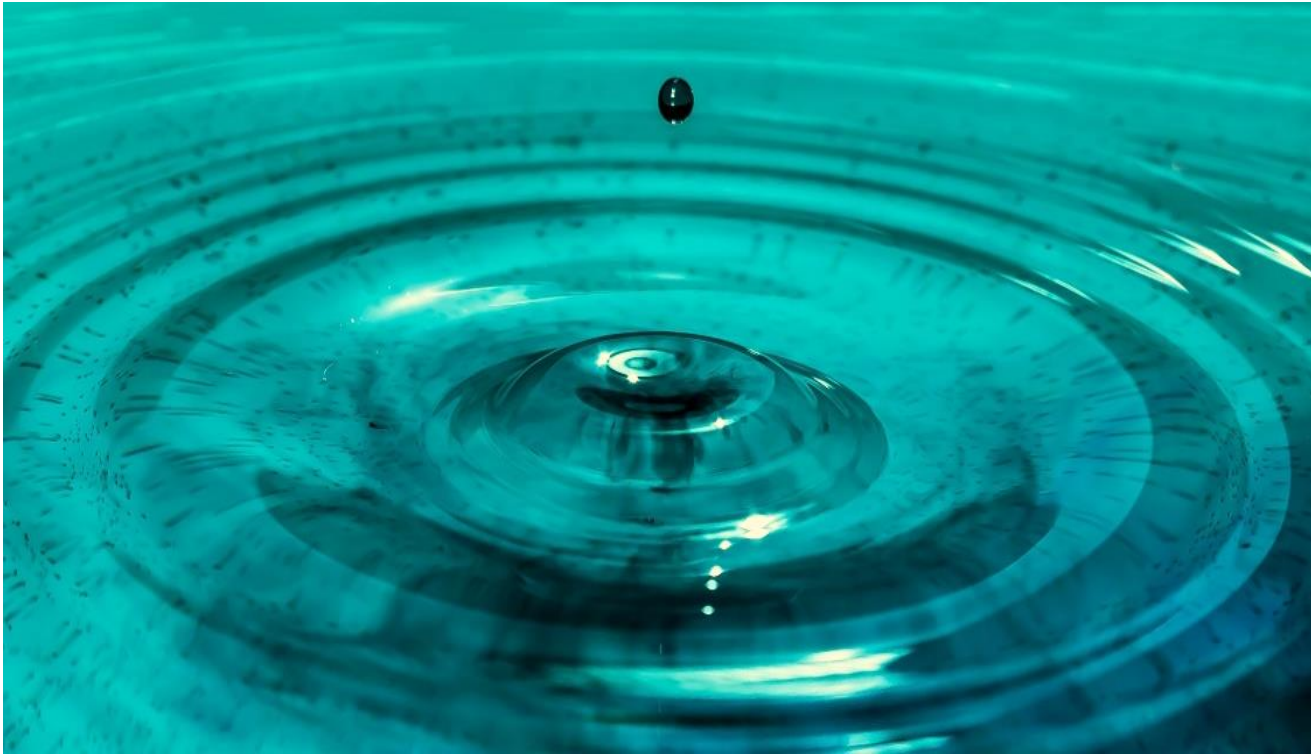
What Peer Support Looks Like

Peer Support is...	Peer Support is not...
Thoughtful sharing of relevant lived experience	Telling ones story over and over again
Walking beside someone in their recovery	Therapy or case management
Sharing coping strategies	Giving advice
A relationship built on trust and mutuality	Using clinical terms or other language that can disconnect

“

If it is a role that you could do without lived experience of mental health issues, it cannot be peer support” (Beales & Wilson, 2014)

Peer Support as Disruptive Innovation



Whose knowledge is valued?

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