



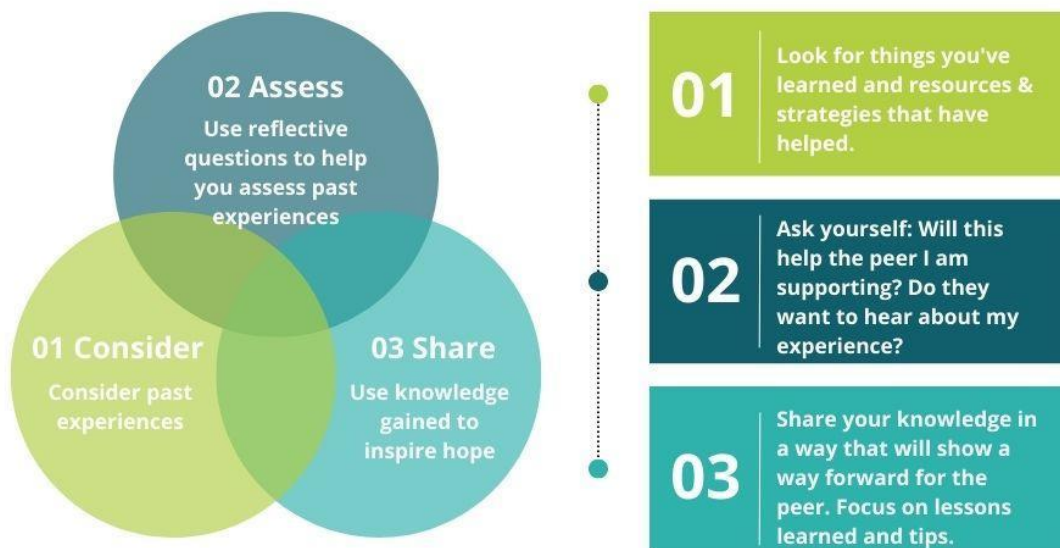
Canadian Mental Health Association
Mental health for all

Sharing experiences in peer support

Drawing from lived and living experiences is a key part of providing peer support. However, not all of our experiences will necessarily help someone else and knowing when and how to share experiences is an important skill to develop.

The following framework can help you consider what and **when** you should share:

Drawing from your experiences



Consider tips:

When considering past experiences or knowledge gained, look for:

- Things that you've learned
- Resources that have been beneficial
- Strategies that have worked for you
- Specific skills that you've applied to your life

Try to **avoid** drawing upon:

- Experiences that might stop someone from trying something
- Experiences that may give off an "anti" vibe - anti mindfulness, anti clinical etc.
- Experiences that don't "teach" - that don't have anything to gain from them
- Things that will come off as "competing" with the peer
- Things that you don't have the authority to speak to
- Detailed descriptions of a negative experience
- Experiences that are still raw and that you haven't processed yet

Assess tips:

The following questions can help you determine if it is appropriate to share your experience:

- Will this help the peer I am supporting?
- Will this inspire hope for this peer?
- Has this peer indicated they are comfortable hearing about my experiences?
- Will sharing this experience deter the peer from seeking support?
- Will sharing my experiences seem as though I am competing with the peer?
- Am I sharing this to benefit myself?

Share tips

After asking permission (always ask first!), share your experiences through:

- Lessons learned
- Impact on you, how it felt, what you gained
- Coping skills, things that helped you stay resourceful

To help you tell the story, see the *LMS Activity: What's your story?*