



**COME
TOGETHER,
CANADA.**

**Stronger connections,
better mental health.**



STRENGTHENING CONNECTION, WELL-BEING, AND SUPPORT AT WORK

WHAT IS WORKPLACE PEER SUPPORT?

Workplace peer support brings employees together to support one another using their lived and/or shared experiences. It helps people navigate challenges, build connection, and strengthen well-being at work.

Peer support at work is based on mutual support, trust, and respect, and provides something different than what managers or traditional health-care providers can offer. It's not about "fixing" problems. It's about being there for someone when you've been there yourself. The focus of peer support is on listening, understanding, and connection, not giving advice or being directive.

Here are answers to common questions about bringing peer support into your workplace.

WHY DOES PEER SUPPORT MATTER IN THE WORKPLACE?

Workplaces are increasingly recognizing that connection is essential to mental health and to improving how organizations function. Peer support programs at work help:

- Strengthen social connection and belonging

- Create safe, non-judgmental spaces for conversation
- Support employees navigating stress, burnout, or life challenges
- Complement existing supports (e.g., HR, EAP, leadership)
- Contribute to a more inclusive and psychologically safe workplace culture
- Help an organization align with the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

HOW IS PEER SUPPORT LINKED TO SOCIAL CONNECTION?

This Mental Health Week, CMHA is urging us to **Come Together, Canada** because stronger social connections mean better mental health, at work, at home and in our communities. Peer support brings social connection to life by creating meaningful relationships where people feel understood and supported. Introducing peer support at work can help build human connection, which in turn can have huge benefits for people and their organizations. For more on the benefits of connection at work, see [the workplace toolkit](#).

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A WORKPLACE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM?

Take the time to implement your peer support program right.

- **Train peer supporters:** Employees are trained to provide safe, respectful, and supportive conversations.
- **Provide ongoing supervision:** Peer supporters receive regular guidance, check-ins, and support from someone familiar with the practice of peer support to navigate their role safely and sustainably.
- **Offer opportunities to connect:** Peer supporters have opportunities for shared learning and support.
- **Ensure boundaries and roles are clear:** Peer supporters are not managers or therapists; they offer support, not treatment.
- **Make it voluntary and confidential:** Participation should be optional, and confidentiality and ethical guidelines are essential.
- **Ensure the organization supports it:** The program is backed by leadership, with time, resources, and clear guidelines in place.
- **Integrate it with existing supports:** Peer support should be integrated with existing supports, without replacing them. Peer supporters can help

connect colleagues to other supports if needed (e.g., EAP, benefits, community services).

- **Partner with community organizations:** Use the opportunity to partner with community-based organizations that have expertise in peer support, like many CMHA branches. [Find your local CMHA.](#)

MY WORKPLACE HAS AN EAP, SO WHY DO WE NEED PEER SUPPORT?

Peer support offers an accessible, everyday layer of support within the workplace, often before challenges reach a point where formal services like EFAP/EAP are needed. Through regular or impromptu touchpoints, colleagues can connect with someone who understands the realities of their work environment, organizational culture, and shared pressures. This kind of support can help people feel heard sooner, process challenges in real time, and reduce isolation, making it easier to deal with stress and seek additional supports when they are needed.

IS THERE ASSISTANCE FOR BUILDING MY WORKPLACE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM?

Peer Support Canada offers consulting support to help organizations design, implement, and strengthen workplace peer support programs. Learn more: www.peersupportcanada.ca/consultation-services/