



## What does good peer support look like?

Peer support is a values-based approach to supporting people with similar lived experiences to come together and offer each other mutual help and support. It is often informal and based on shared understanding but can also be offered as structured peer support groups or initiatives.

“Ideal peer support for me would just be folk to talk to and links or suggestions of where we could go for support – just to be given an idea of who we can turn to confidentially.”

– Member of People First (Scotland)’s Equally Safe Group, 2024

### What makes peer support unique?



The Scottish Recovery Network advises that good peer support has these [four essential components](https://scottishrecovery.net/peer-support/what-is-peer-support/) (<https://scottishrecovery.net/peer-support/what-is-peer-support/>) :

- ▶ Shared lived experience which builds trust and empathy
- ▶ A mutual relationship of equals where people walk alongside rather than ‘fix’
- ▶ A supportive relationship based on hope and belief
- ▶ An intentional space where people explore together and work towards recovery



Done well, peer support creates an environment where people can feel safe, understood and accepted by nurturing an atmosphere of non-judgmental support, openness and personal growth.

Whether through one-on-one support or in a group setting, peer support provides a unique opportunity for people to speak openly about their struggles with others who truly understand.

Peer support also plays a crucial role in fostering recovery and wellbeing. By sharing experiences, peers can break down feelings of isolation and stigma which are often barriers to seeking help.

By offering practical advice, support and reminding individuals they are not alone in their journey, peer support can be an empowering part of their recovery.

It may be that your organisation only supports a small number of women with learning disabilities. In these situations, it might be helpful to invite women with learning disabilities to join your own mainstream support groups. The benefit of this is that they can share their experiences and get support from other women who have experienced gender-based violence. The challenge is to ensure that these groups have the capacity to include women with learning disabilities.

Another option would be to signpost them to organisations who offer peer support to women with learning disabilities.

You can find out more about peer support here. (<https://scottishrecovery.net/peer-support/what-is-peer-support/>)

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