



Peer2Peer. Using life experiences as a resource for recovery. Mental health peer support training.

Peer2Peer is a vocational training course. It trains individuals with experiences of mental health problems to become personal assistants to those currently living with mental health difficulties. <http://p2p.intras.es>

Individuals with mental health problems are 3-5 times more likely to be unemployed. Peer2Peer is working to equip these individuals with the necessary skills to facilitate their entry/ re-entry into the workforce as professional peer support workers.

Peer support is an effective model of recovery assistance, which is already in use in the United Kingdom. Peer support working involves the development of mutually beneficial relationships. Personal assistants are employed to use their experiences to positively impact on the lives of others. For recipients of peer support, they are exposed to realistic examples of recovery. Peer support actively reduces the number of hospital admissions.

Eight organisations from Spain, Scotland, Bulgaria, Austria, Holland and Romania are joining forces to implement the peer support training across Europe in October 2014.

Louise Christie
Network Manager (Policy and Development)
Scottish Recovery Network
20th January 2015

First pilot course of mutual support based on Scottish model tested with people with mental illness in 5 EU countries

Peer2Peer is a vocational training course. It enables individuals who have experienced mental health problems to become “peer support workers” to those who are currently living with similar difficulties. <http://p2p.intras.es>

Based on the PDA (Professional Development Award in Mental Health Peer Support) which is being used in Scotland since 2010, a European consortium of 7 organisations from 5 European countries has developed and tested an innovative model of vocational training for peer support workers in the field of mental health. This innovative methodology, which integrates peer support training with psychodrama and video therapy sessions, is considered by the partnership as essential in the process of recovery from mental illness.

The course has been tested with 70 people who has experience in dealing with mental health problems and has provided them with cognitive, social and communication skills while contributing to the establishment of mutual support as an opportunity for employment and professionals' development. The training contents includes dealing with the key concepts of recovery, the societal influences and effect of force and trauma, understanding of peer support, working with effects of labelling, strength-based approaches, self-help and self-management in peer support, effective communication and working with risk, supervision and goal setting, among others.

80% of the participants recruited for the course completed it, which is a very satisfying result considering the challenge to keep motivation and continuity of the target group to attend training courses in general. Other challenging issues were managing sensitive discussions (reflecting on personal experience, understanding the process of change...), teamwork and time limit; nevertheless, interaction was extremely high among participants. A portfolio of evidence has been completed by each participant to the course to facilitate individual assessment.

The methodology is now being improved according to the feedback collected from trainers and participants, and a second pilot course will be implemented in the coming months. The final materials will be ready by the end of summer. In the meantime, more details about the Peer2Peer project are available on the website <http://p2p.intras.es>

Eight organisations from Spain, Scotland, Bulgaria, Austria, Holland and Romania are joining forces to implement the peer support training across Europe thanks to the support of European funding.

Louise Christie
Network Manager (Policy and Development)
Scottish Recovery Network
12th December 2014



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Peer to Peer is more than a training course. It's a chance to understand the change and make it happen.

The second edition of the Peer2Peer training course has already finished in Spain, Austria and Romania after having trained more than 115 people who want to become peer workers.

Peer2Peer is a professional training course, funded by the European Commission, which trains people who have experienced mental health problems so they can use their experience to help others who are in a similar situation. The course enables people to be agents of mutual support (<http://p2p.intras.es>.)

Mutual support is an effective and innovative recovery model currently used in the UK and it is based on the assertion that who knows better about recovery in mental illness, is a person who has already recovered from it, i.e. an expert by experience.

"It's very difficult when you think you understand others, but do not understand yourself, and the search starts almost from scratch" Says one of those attending the course; and that is the essence of the P2P project: to make the search easier with the help of an agent of mutual support, which was first able to understand their own process of change and recovery and is now well prepared to guide others toward overcoming it.

In total during the first and second edition of the course, conducted between October 2014 and January 2015 and between February and May 2015, there have been more than 115 people with mental health problems who have completed the course; all from Spain, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria and the Netherlands.

The course is also aimed at improving access to employment for people with mental health problems as peer workers; these are also our first results: new peer workers who work as paid employees or as volunteers.

Louise Christie
Network Manager (Policy and Development)
Scottish Recovery Network
18th May 2015

Peer Support training course is a success in Europe

Scottish Recovery Network has been working with partners across Europe to share our experience of developing peer support training. As part of our commitment to peer working we worked with the [Scottish Qualifications Authority \(SQA\)](#) to develop [an accredited award and learning materials](#) to further support the training of future peer support workers. This course is now being delivered by five organisations across Scotland and more are interested in getting involved.

This course helped to inform the development of [Peer2Peer](#) which has now completed a second series of pilot courses in Spain, Austria and Romania training people who want to become peer workers. Peer2Peer is a professional training course, funded by the European Commission, which trains people who have lived experienced of mental health problems so they can use their experience to help others who are in a similar situation. The course enables people to be agents of mutual support.

In total during the first and second pilots of the course, conducted between October 2014 and May 2015, more than 115 people with lived experience of mental health problems from Spain, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria and the Netherlands have completed the course.

'Peer to Peer is more than a training course. It's a chance to understand the change and make it happen'

Peer2Peer participant, Andalucía

The feedback has been very positive and the partners are now finalising a course manual which will be freely available online in four languages including English. Louise Christie, Network Manager, Scottish Recovery Network welcomed the success of the courses in Europe; *'the feedback received from our European partners has been very much in line with that of people in Scotland completing the PDA Mental Health Peer Support. We have much to share with and learn from each other and this partnership enables that to happen.'*

There is more information on Peer2Peer including stories from the partners countries on the project [website](#).

Louise Christie
Network Manager (Policy and Development)
Scottish Recovery Network
15th June 2015