Improving mental health through peer support

Evaluating the Side by Side peer support Programme
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About the McPin Foundation

What we do:

• Guidance and expert support on public and patient involvement in mental health research
• Collaborative research studies in partnership with organisations interested in user focused mental health research
• Evaluations and support for organisations to strengthen the evidence-base for different forms of mental health support
• Campaign and policy work to raise the profile of mental health research and improve access to evidence based information
Overview of presentation

1. Introduce the side by side programme
2. Overview of scope of evaluation
3. Qualitative strand of evaluation
   1. Peer researcher approach
   2. Principles and values consultation
   3. Capacity building
   4. Working with commissioners
4. Next steps
An overview of Side by Side

AIMS

• To increase peer support market through networking, coaching, mentoring.

• Increase delivery of peer support with strategic partners

• Influence commissioning of community based peer support

• Raise awareness of peer support value
Structure of side by side

• 9 regional hubs led by local minds
• Act as a central point for information sharing, networking and support
• 3 strategic partners – MIND, Depression Alliance, and Bipolar UK
• Small grants made to a range of smaller local groups and projects
4 strands to the evaluation:

1. Strand 1 – Assessing the effectiveness of peer support

2. Strand 2 – Conceptualising the principles and values of peer support

3. Strand 3 – Economic evaluation

4. Strand 4 – Working with commissioners
Side by Side: Scope of Evaluation

3 evaluation partners:

• St Georges University of London – Strand 1
• The McPin Foundation – Strand 2 and 4
• London School of Economics – Strand 3
Side by Side: Scope of Evaluation

- Involvement of peer researchers:
  - 5 researchers on the project have:
    - Lived experience of mental health difficulties
    - Lived experience of involvement in some form of peer support
Side by Side: Scope of Evaluation

• **Rationale for using a peer researcher approach:**
  • Possible that research produced is more directly relevant to the lives of people impacted
  • Participants may feel more comfortable talking with a peer – may lead to better quality data
  • Interpretation of nuances in data more likely from a lived experience perspective
  • Reduction of the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee
  • Contributes to ethical conduct of the research
Principles and Values of peer support

Reflexivity in peer research

• A peer’s personal lived experience of disability is not representative of all experience of disability

• Constant checking back to the content of the data during the analysis process
Principles and Values of peer support

Aims of strand 2 of the evaluation;

• Identify core principles and values that work across different models

• Create a ‘reflection toolkit’ for peers and commissioners

• Create a Theory of Change around the capacity building work of side by side
Identify a set of peer support principles and values

Interviews
With programme managers and hub leaders
In depth descriptions

Events
With peers
Rating and group discussions - consensus, and disagreement

Survey
Anyone giving or receiving peer support
1. Describe core characteristic of peer support
2. What is NOT peer support?
3. Sum up peer support in three words
Toolkit indicators

Universal Characteristics

Values of Peer Support

Principles of Peer Support

Inclusive
Empathy
Equality
Valuing Experience
Being Human

Shared Lived Experience
Mutuality
Purpose

Peer ownership
Feeling Safe
Flexibility
Active Sharing
Support
Principles and values – next steps

Testing the principles and values;

- Interviews conducted with 60 Side by Side peers
- Compare the principles and values with the experiences of the peers
- Refine our principles and values
- Write ‘reflection toolkit’ around the finalised version
Capacity building

• Core activity of the side by side programme was to ‘Build Capacity’
  • Make more peer support available across the UK
  • Increase awareness of the benefits of peer support among commissioners
  • Develop the evidence base
Evaluating Capacity Building

- Developing a Theory of Change
- Most projects or organisations have a desired outcome or change in mind when they begin
  - TOC is a way of mapping;
    - Resources available to project
    - Things that need to happen to get to that change
    - Factors that may be helpful
    - Factors that may be challenging
What goes into a Theory of Change?

Resources → Preconditions / facilitators / barriers → Activities → Intermediate outcomes → Impact

Wider context

What things need to be available to you to do want you’ve planned?

What needs to be in place to make it possible for people to engage in these activities?

What are you going to do to make these impacts?

What impacts do you expect/want to have on people in the short-term?

What do you want to change about the world?
Building our Theory of Change

- Qualitative approach;
  - Representatives from all 9 regional hubs (DONE)
  - Key individuals at National Mind (DONE)
  - Draft theory of change
## Theory of change

### Example - Side by Side

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Pre-conditions Enablers (facilitating factors)</th>
<th>Preconditions Barriers (challenging factors)</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcomes (change you want to see)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Mind</td>
<td>Existing network of people with expertise</td>
<td>Funding in vol. sector as a whole</td>
<td>Hub events</td>
<td>More peer support across UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Partners</td>
<td>Belief in value of peer support</td>
<td>Short term nature</td>
<td>Expert on call</td>
<td>More funded projects</td>
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<td>Hubs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part time employment</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Better long term sustainability of projects</td>
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<td>Existing peer projects</td>
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<td>Activities of individual projects</td>
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<td>Lottery funding</td>
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Building our Theory of Change

• Next steps:
  • 9 peer support group leads who have engaged well with the capacity building work
  • 9 peer support group leads who have not engaged well with the capacity building work
• Use draft theory of change to structure interview schedule
• Test how some of the TOC compares to the experience of recipient groups
Final comments

• Evaluation is still a work in progress
• Just beginning data analysis on the principles and values interviews
• Continuing analysis on the capacity building work
• Yet to draft the final principles and values framework, reflection toolkit and Theory of Change
Any questions?