

The world of peers' engagement in care

How to find our way around?

Healthcare systems are increasingly interested in engaging peers, in Quebec, as elsewhere.

Peers are people with significant life experiences, mobilizing their knowledge for the purpose of accompaniment and support.

Today, a wide range of words are used to name them: peer support, peer helper, navigator, street worker, community health worker or self-help groups.

How do we find our way around such terms? What differentiates them? And why use one rather than another?



Here's a "road map" to find our way around.

Is the support

informal?

offered formal or



Build relationships Establish trusting, authentic and reciprocal relationships

Provide emotional support Listening without judgment, highlighting individuals' strengths, empowering

Navigate services Bridge to resources, offer administrative support, go to appointments

Promote health Inform about disease and treatments. provide tips to care for ones' self

Advocate Raise awareness about inequalities, educate on one's rights

> Peers' engagement, in the community is not a new practice!

Peer-led support groups

Since the 18th century, peers have been mobilizing to help each other and defend their rights, in Europe and North America, in the fields of mental health, addiction and poverty.

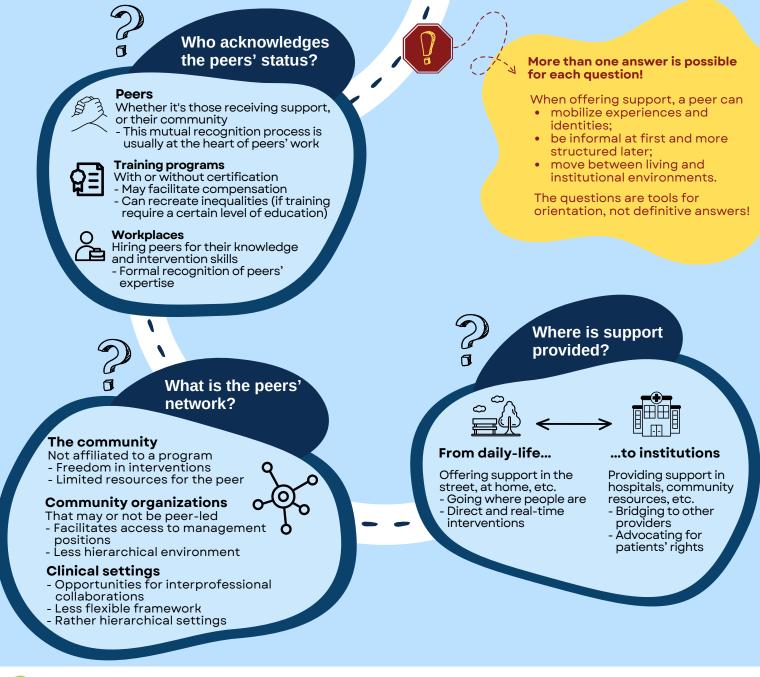


Citizen mobilization in care

At the beginning of the 20th century, notably in Asia, citizens were mobilized to screen for disease and provide care or medicines.

Engaging peers to navigate services

In 1990, in Harlem, New York, black women were hired to help reduce the barriers their community experienced in breast cancer screening and care.



Informal

- Spontaneous, self-
- help support Flexible, without
 - a formalized frame
- Possible pressure on
- one's social networks

Intentional support, more or less formalized - Offered within a framework, or a

Formal

program May create unequal relations between peers

On what basis do peers connect?



Lived experience

Having lived through hardships, such as homelessness or illness Supports mutual understanding

Shared identities



Sharing social identities, such as gender gender, age or ethnicity - Facilitates trust and recognition



Embedded in the community

Being part of a local community or neighborhood - Provides an intimate outlook on local needs

Canada Research Chair in Partnership with Patients and Communities



This roadmap is the result of knowledge synthesis of international scientific literature, carried out with peers, researchers and practitioners.

To find out more about the project, please consult our article :

Engaging with peers to integrate community care: Knowledge synthesis and conceptual map, co-authored by Andreea-Catalina Panaite, Odile-Anne Desroches Émilie Warren, Ghislaine Rouly, Geneviève Castonguay, Antoine Boivin and published in the journal Health Expectations in 2024 (https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.14034).

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