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## What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is a naturally occurring, mutually beneficial support process, where people who share a common experience meet as equals, sharing skills, strengths and hope and learning from each other how to cope, thrive and flourish

Formalized Peer support begins when persons with lived experience, who have received specialized training, assume unique, designated roles within the mental health system, to support an individual's expressed wishes.

Specialized peer support training is peer developed and delivered, endorsed by Consumer/Survivor Initiatives\*, Peer Support Organizations and Patient Councils, and is rooted in principles of recovery, hope and individual empowerment.

(\*Consumer Survivor Initiatives and Peer Support Organizations are community-based, self-help organizations run by and for consumer/survivors.)

OUR GOAL IS TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE COPING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS



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The Peer Support Navigators are made possible through a partnership between Sault Area Hospital and Canadian Mental Health Association, Sault Ste. Marie Branch Algoma Consumer/Survivor Initiative



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*Sault Area Hospital  
and  
Canadian Mental  
Health Association*

## PEER SUPPORT NAVIGATOR



**PROVIDED AT**  
**Sault Area Hospital**  
**Emergency Department**

# Peer Support Navigator and Sault Area Hospital (SAH) Emergency Department

## PEER SUPPORT NAVIGATOR

The Peer Support Navigator (PSN) is a trained peer support specialist having acquired experience in mental health and addiction services. The PSN will provide information, support and assistance to individuals as they enter and leave the hospital setting. The PSN will act as a resource to the Crisis intervention Team at the Sault Area Hospital. They shall work with identified individuals by providing peer support, linkages to community services and will assist these citizens in navigating through the emergency department in a smooth and effective manner. The PSN is a member of a multi-disciplinary team providing support through a “shared care model”.



*The PSN will not provide medical advice, medical assistance or therapeutic counseling.*

The role of the Peer Support Navigator has two areas of focus:

### **To assist individuals in the navigation of mental health and/or addiction services**

For many individuals, accessing services within the mental health and addiction system can be overwhelming and challenging. Knowledge and understanding of the system and its services can reduce stress and anxiety experienced by many individuals.

The PSN will assist individuals with:

- Mental health processes (e.g. what to expect)
- Access to services within the community

### **PEER SUPPORT**

A key component of Peer Support is that people begin to feel they are no longer alone in their journey. Research has demonstrated that peer support is a vital element of recovery that enables the recovery process to occur. An opportunity to talk and connect with someone who has been in similar circumstances creates a sense of belonging and understanding. Peer support and professional service providers can complement the journey of one’s recovery. Peer support can be provided in a “one to one” setting or in a “peer support group” approach.

Peer Support will focus on:

- Introducing a ‘Recovery Support Plan’ and/or a ‘Recovery Crisis Plan’
- Discussion of recovery values and principles
- Facilitate peer conversation
- Strengths and wellness
- Support communication with others

### **Changing Lives with Those Experiencing a Mental Health Issue**

Peer support services offered by the Algonoma Consumer/Survivor Network includes, but is not limited to:

**Self Help Groups** provide opportunities to learn techniques in areas of personal development, enabling a person to recover their identity and begin to experience life beyond their mental health issues. This can include resources, tools and materials assisting persons in a self directed manner while identifying and developing strategies to take an active role in their own personal growth.

**One to One Formalized Peer Support** is available for individuals that want to meet with another individual who has a lived experience with mental health and/or addictions.

**Peer Support Groups** offer individuals support within a group setting, bringing together other peers with similar or shared experiences.

**Advocacy** is available to individuals and/or family members in areas such as housing, income supports, employment, treatment, legal issues and many more.

**Educational Seminars** are conducted from time to time with invited guest speakers to explore different aspects of recovery, mental health awareness, and community

For further information please contact  
Access—Information & Referral  
705-759-5989