

# **A Lived Experience:**

## **Reflections on establishing a new AOD Peer Support project**

By Vanessa Stasiw

**CHANGE  
IS GOOD.**

**You go  
first!**

Cyrenian House acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Noongar Whadjuk people. We pay our respects to the local elders and leaders - past, present and emerging.

# **Program background**

**What worked well?**

**What could have worked better?**

**What is evolving?**

## Program background

- Value and harness ‘expertise by experience’;
- Long history of promoting peer support in the AOD sector;
- Consumer feedback;
- Consumer Participation Policy;
- Strengths-based, person-centred treatment approach;
- Enhance social connectivity.

# Peer Support Worker training



## Peer Support Worker activities:

- Co-design, co-production and facilitation of a new weekly Peer Support Recovery Group;
- Co-facilitation and support of residential consumers in pre-treatment groups;
- Social activity support



## Peer Support Worker activities...cont.:

- Support for residents at the Saranna program;
- Developing assertive follow-up support calls for TC residents;
- Activities will continue to evolve



## What worked well?

- Champions of Peer Support;
- Research;
- Co-design and co-production with consumers;
- Recruitment, training & supervision.

## What could have worked better?

- **Agency co-production & training for Peer Workforce readiness**

“It is arguable that, by definition, the development of peer roles will disrupt business as usual in the AOD and mental health systems.”

## What is evolving?:

- CONTEXT
- CLARITY OF PURPOSE
- RESOURCES & SYSTEMS  
STRUCTURES

### **Peer Support Workers...**

*"The PSP program has given me purpose and affirmed that I am on the right track in my life journey."*

*"Cyrenian has helped restore a sense of pride I never thought I'd get back! The importance and understanding of the value of the lived experience and recovery not only for ourselves, but for the hope we can bring others is so inspiring."*

### **Consumer:**

*"I receive positive connection with others and the feeling of genuine care and concern."*

*"I receive confidence, reassurance and a reminder that I am on the right track."*

### **Quote from staff:**

*"The growth from consumer to Peer Support Worker following the training has been an amazing asset. The worker's ability to utilise boundaries and assertive communication has been so valuable both for our residents and other staff. The role-modelling of recovery is so very beneficial."*

- *Thank you* to the Peer Support Workers, Consumer Advisory Group members and staff who participated in the development of this program.



CYRENIAN HOUSE  
PEER SUPPORT PLUS PROGRAM