Are Peers Prepared?

Evaluating Training Workshops in a University Peer Support Program

By Amy Jean McElwain

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Psychology

in the

Psychology Department

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Capilano University

May 12, 2025

Land Acknowledgement

As a descendant of European settlers on this land, it is with the deepest gratitude and respect that I acknowledge that I completed this study on the traditional and unceded lands of the šxʷməθkʷəy̓əmaʔɬ təməxʷ (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh-ulh Temíx̱w (Squamish), and səl̓ilwətaʔɬ təməxʷ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Acknowledgements

To my advisor and co-coordinator, Dr. Doug Alards-Tomalin, this entire initiative would not be possible without you. Your drive to build a support-based community for students to express themselves and be heard is only one aspect of the care you provide your students. Your unwavering belief in my work as a researcher, student, and human being has been paramount to my successes through my time at Capilano University. Your kindness and support has uplifted me and helped me grow into the scholar I am. Thank you for everything you do.

To Dr. Janet Waters, Dr. Danyael Lutgens, Dr. Louise Cournoyer, and Dr. Justin Wilson, you are the backbone of this project. You have provided your support to this project in so many ways. Your guidance through the workshop process, in planning and through supervision, has been crucial and no words can express my gratitude. Thank you for sharing your wisdom with me, and by extension everyone involved, as it was a guiding light through this entire process.

To the volunteers who gave their time and energy to making this project come to life. Your insight provided this initiative a depth that I could not have created on my own. Thank you for your care, flexibility, and curiosity.

To my beautiful community of support, my family and friends, thank you for your constant support and love. You have been there with me in my best and worst and never stopped believing in me. You have pulled through in every possible way when I needed it. I couldn't imagine having gotten through the last few years without you at my back.

Table of Contents

Abstract **5**

Introduction **6**

A Legacy Project **7**

Scenario-Based Training and the Volunteer Experience **8**

Methodology **11**

Participants and Interviews 11

Reflexive Thematic Analysis 11

Reflexivity 12

What We Found **13**

Themes and Insights 13

More Than Make-Believe: How Actors Bring Realism to Training 13

Self-Trust and Confidence Boosts 15

Workshop Wins 16

Identifying Gaps 17

Bridging the Gap: How Peer Support and Real Life Crossover 19

Future Directions **20**

Reflection **22**

References **24**

Appendix A **27**

Appendix B **36**

Appendix C **38**

Abstract

Peer support is a non-hierarchical, judgement free meeting of two people with shared experiences that is grounded in listening and empathy. The purpose of my study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a scenario-based training workshop for peer support volunteers with the goal of building resources and implementing a Peer Support Program at Capilano University. Volunteers previously attended training workshops covering ethical considerations and active listening. My project was centered around the addition of a scenario-based role-playing workshop meant to equip volunteers with practice providing support or referrals in difficult scenarios with an actor in a controlled environment. Immediately after the scenarios, volunteers received feedback from clinically trained Faculty in Psychology. After the workshop, volunteers were interviewed to examine the effectiveness of scenario-based training in general as well as to provide insight to shape future workshops. It is crucial that the training is thorough and effective, and volunteer feedback provides a level of analysis that can't be obtained from observation alone. Two main takeaways from the study were that the addition of a scenario-based training workshop did increase volunteer confidence and we received insightful feedback on how to structure the workshops in the future.

Note: All volunteers are referred to by the gender neutral 'they/them' to add anonymity to their insights as, due to the small sample size, they could be directly identifiable through the use of personal pronouns.

Introduction

> "*Sometimes all we need is someone who understands our journey, someone who has been through similar experiences. Peer support provides that understanding and empowers us to conquer challenges we never thought possible*."
>
> – Michael Johnson

University students face a multitude of challenges throughout their time at school including academic, social, and financial stressors along with a high prevalence of mental health disorders. Despite this, they are the least likely age demographic to seek help for mental health related issues (Grégoire et al., 2022; Osborn et al., 2022; Suresh et al., 2021). Suresh et al. (2021) suggested this may be due to social stigma, low perceived need, lack of time, and aversion to the hierarchical system of therapy. It's clear that students need support, but not every student is in a position that will allow them to seek out professional counselling, whether the barriers be finances, time, stigma, or otherwise. In an attempt to support students, promote well-being, and help destigmatize mental health, some universities have begun to implement local Peer Support Programs.

Peer support is defined as a non-hierarchical meeting of at least two people, grounded in shared experiences, offering support, encouragement, and a listening ear that offers a level of empathy that is often missing in professional counselling relationships (Meehan et al, 2002). There are a multitude of reasons why peer support is a beneficial addition to universities, including the following:

- Students who interact with peer support workers show improved mental well-being, stress management, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Crisp et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2021; Suresh et al., 2021).

- Students who act as peer support volunteers show improved mental and physical well-being, self-esteem, confidence, and communication skills, as well as it being an excellent learning experience for those pursuing careers in helping professions (Crisp et al., 2020).
- Peer support programs are a complimentary service to counselling and can take pressure off of overburdened counselling services (Maillé et al., 2024; Suresh et al., 2021).

Peer support workers do not provide advice or diagnosis, but are a middle ground between speaking to a friend and attending a professional counselling session, where they offer a non-judgemental, empathetic ear to those who need to be heard and understood. They can also provide resources to students who may be seeking further care from a professional.

Empirical research on peer support in a university setting is limited, but what does exist leans towards the benefits of peer support on university students. Having a safe space to talk about what is on their mind improves the psychological flexibility of students through the authenticity and respect of a person who has had similar experiences (Grégoire et al., 2022; Suresh et al., 2021). Through its reciprocal nature, peer support also benefits the mental health of peer support workers, and offers a chance to improve their confidence through building their communication and organizational skills, while enhancing their well-being (Crisp et al., 2020).

A Legacy Project

To add to the limited available research on peer support, particularly from the view of peer support workers, the current study follows the implementation of a peer support program for students at Capilano University. Implementing a peer support program at Capilano University has been a student-led, and Faculty-supported project evolving since 2022. Initially, our research focused on the benefits of peer support, providing training and implementation goals for establishing the program at Capilano University. Minimum standards for training included a focus on active learning, such as role-play and discussions covering self-awareness, ethical

boundaries, empowerment, and communication skills (Mackenzie, 2023). Training began in fall 2023, in which peer support volunteers were recruited through the university's psychology club "We're PSYCHED!". Volunteers were students who wanted to provide peer support to other students on campus, as well as practice the application of theoretical concepts they had learned in their course work. The student volunteers attended two experiential workshops which focused on active listening, ethical considerations, boundary setting, and volunteer safety through discussions and practice with active listening (Myers, 2024).

Scenario-Based Training and the Volunteer Experience

Despite the non-hierarchical and informal nature of peer support, it is still crucial that volunteers are adequately trained in the skills necessary to safely provide the needed support in a manner that is both structured and professional (Myers, 2024). It was discussed that while the 2023 workshops were invaluable, more experience in the practical application of the skills learned would be beneficial to the volunteers. Therefore, to ensure the peer support volunteers were prepared and confident to deliver peer support in a pilot version of the program, they attended an additional workshop that focused on scenario-based training - in which students considered different, potentially difficult, situations and topics that could arise when delivering peer support - and then practiced a scenario with a trained actor. Following the scenario-based training workshop, volunteers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews in order to provide insight into the effectiveness of the workshop and feedback on future directions of training.

Scenario-based training is an approach which uses scenarios to achieve specific learning intentions through engagement, self-discovery of knowledge, and reflective learning (Caltabiano et al, 2018). Learning is more meaningful in this context, as role-playing replicates the chosen scenario in the safety of the classroom, making it a low-risk endeavour (Caltabiano et al., 2018; Oh & Solomon, 2014). Role-playing is an effective form of scenario-based training for teaching interviewing skills, such as exploring issues, asking questions, and how to keep the

conversation moving forward (Caltabiano et al, 2018). It consists of participants taking on specific roles in a simulated scenario with the goal of fulfilling a specific set of learning objectives in order to practice skills and gain insights in a controlled and safe environment (Oh & Solomon, 2014). Role-playing has also shown promise as an efficient and effective way to foster skill development without having to worry about the ethical concerns of direct patient care (Fowles et al., 2022). Additionally, students who completed role-playing scenarios reported feeling more confident in the application of their learned skills than had they only received instruction (Oh & Solomon, 2014). Role-playing can also feel artificial or forced, to avoid that, Oh and Solomon (2014) recommend the use of actors or unfamiliar people to increase the novelty of the experience and prevent volunteers from getting stuck in habits that form when consistently interacting with the same people.

As the previous workshops were held some time before the addition of this experiential workshop, it was important that an aspect of the workshop also reviewed boundaries, confidentiality, dealing with difficult situations, and a review of what it means to be a peer supporter (Bourdon et al., 2023). In order to have time to cover the material, the four volunteers were split into two groups, and two separate training workshops were held. The workshops were supervised by clinically trained faculty members from the Capilano University Psychology Department in order to ensure the training was effective and safe, and to provide feedback to the volunteers. The training began with a discussion based review on the role of a peer support volunteer, confidentiality, and referrals. In order to ease situations where referrals were needed, I created a resource book (Appendix A) highlighting on-campus and off-campus supports, such as counselling, Crisis Centre BC, and more. Having access to a variety of resources in peer support is crucial, as volunteers may be faced with situations that go beyond active listening and require further support. In order to make the role-playing as realistic as possible, an actor was hired and provided with scenarios prior to the workshop. Two scenarios were provided to the actor:

1. a scenario that required a referral; and
2. a scenario that required active listening.

Volunteers met with the actor one at a time, behind a privacy screen, to enact the scenarios. They were reminded beforehand that they were able to stop at any time and were able to choose if they wanted direct supervision (provided by the Faculty members) for immediate feedback or to proceed without supervision and debrief after. Three volunteers preferred supervision with immediate feedback, while one preferred the realism of a private session. Volunteers not engaging in role-playing continued discussion based learning, asking questions, and reviewing tools learned in previous workshops while the role-playing was going on. Training concluded with a final group conversation and a general debrief with the full group.

Our goal is that the experience of practicing these skills in a safe space before launching the pilot program will be an invaluable addition to the previous workshops, ideally improving the confidence of the peer support volunteers.

Measuring the efficacy of the training workshops before the program is launched in full is an important step in the implementation process. To accomplish this goal, volunteers were provided with the opportunity to report on their experiences (for example, what they learned and what they liked or disliked) so that future workshops on peer support can continue to be improved (Caltabiano et al., 2018). Following the scenario-based training workshop, semi-structured interviews were completed with volunteers (n = 3), allowing them to share their authentic experience and provide depth to my own observations. Their feedback was analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA), and the insight gained was used to answer two research questions:

1. "*Was the addition of scenario-based training effective in better preparing student volunteers to provide peer support?*" and
2. *"What is the most effective way to proceed with future workshops?*".

Methodology

Participants and Interviews

The volunteer participants for this study were preselected from an existing group of students who had previously attended two workshops focused on active listening, empathy, confidentiality, and relational ethics. The volunteers were contacted and the scenario-based training workshop was described to them, whereupon they agreed to attend the scenario-based training workshop. It was also clearly expressed that participation in the interviews following the workshop were not mandatory. Volunteers could choose to opt out of the interviews with no negative consequences; they would still be valued members of the peer support volunteer team and be able to participate in the peer support program. Three volunteers consented to be interviewed, completing a consent form (Appendix B) that explained the purpose of the interviews, any unintended consequences of participating, data storage, and analysis method.

Interviews were conducted individually, lasting approximately 30 minutes, and consisted of 11 open ended questions (Appendix C). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to give the volunteer the opportunity to expand their insights in a personally meaningful way, not being fixed in a specific format. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed to be analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) is an inductive, qualitative, approach that involves capturing patterns of meaning across a dataset - by exploring different themes - while acknowledging the researcher's role in subjectivity shaping the findings (Braun et al., 2022). Themes in RTA are generated by the researcher and therefore cannot exist separately from the researcher. The researcher's engagement with the data is mediated by their values, skills, experiences, and training (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Themes emerge from organic and flexible coding that evolve into united meanings and commonalities, interpreted and designed by the researcher (Braun et al., 2022).

Braun and colleagues (2022) described six steps to RTA: *familiarization, coding, initial theme generation, reviewing and developing themes, refining, defining, and naming themes, and producing the report*. While these steps are demonstrated in a linear fashion, it is very rarely completed that way as researchers often circle back to previous steps multiple times to update codes and themes until they are able to finalize the analysis. The flexibility and cyclical nature of RTA is useful for organizing open-ended responses and finding patterns within individual responses. The use of semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis also opens the door for the expression of volunteers' personal, lived experiences. Codes and themes are drawn from their own words and organized based on my personal engagement with the data and understanding of the research questions.

Reflexivity

As an active participant and coordinator for the peer support training workshops, it would be impossible for me to approach data analysis without considering my own experiences and positionality. I am also a member of the Capilano University student body, experiencing many similar stresses and challenges as the students the peer support program is meant to support. Throughout my time in university I have experienced the need for support of this kind and have an intimate understanding of the way in which community and connection can uplift my own sense of agency, compassion, and self-efficacy, which is a personal driving force for me to work on this project. Through my studies in and outside of the university, I have learned to embody many of the communication skills covered in the training workshops. My own observations of the workshops paired with my own training background in empathetic communication, has a profound effect on the way in which I interact with and interpret the data. Through spending time together in the classroom and with the discussion-based nature of the workshops, I have also formed personal relationships with the volunteers in this study. These relationships affect the ways in which I view and analyze the data, finding deeper meaning in the nuances each volunteer provides. My advisor and project co-coordinator offers an additional perspective,

formed through interactions with students, as a faculty member. This reflexive engagement with the data plays a key role in any conclusions formed, as they are represented by my values, experiences, and assumptions.

What We Found

Themes and Insights

As the volunteers had previously attended and shared their insights on the earlier active listening workshops, the interviews focused specifically on the scenario-based training workshop with a discussion on workshop format and experience as a whole at the end, to give them a chance to provide feedback and suggestions for future workshops and training sessions.

The first question to be answered had to do with the efficacy of scenario-based training and whether role-playing with an actor assisted the volunteer with building confidence in their ability to provide peer support in a real life situation. Two core themes emerged from the analysis: 1) *More Than Make-Believe: How Actors Bring Realism,* and 2) *Self-Trust and Confidence Boosts.* As this is an ever growing project, it was also important to discuss the future of volunteer training workshops. It is imperative that training is not only effective, but also standardized. Two core themes emerged from the data that provided insight for future workshop planning: 1) *Workshop Wins* and 2) *Identifying Gaps.* An unexpected final theme emerged from the data that encompasses how peer support training can also be applied to real life and the ways in which peer support can be beneficial to all: *Bridging the Gap: How Peer Support and Real Life Crossover.* The experiences of the three volunteers interviewed brought a new level of depth to my personal observations and gave key insights on how to move forward.

More Than Make-Believe: How Actors Bring Realism to Training

An important aspect of the scenario-based training involved running realistic scenarios with a hired actor who prepared characters and background for different pre-planned situations. This aspect was the factor that made my training workshop different from the previous ones, where volunteers only had chances to practice active listening with each other. Adding an actor,

who was unknown to the volunteers, added a level of realism to the training, and volunteers expressed that the scenarios were elevated with the actor's involvement. A large portion of the feedback from volunteers was centered around the involvement of the actor, stating that the actor was flexible and responsive, made realistic and layered choices, and embodied the scenarios.

Regarding whether working with the actor compared to practicing with fellow volunteers, one volunteer responded that:

> "*an actor always brings a perspective that peers and colleagues may not have, necessarily … anytime that an actor makes a choice, it's very much like what a real person would make. A real person does not necessarily know about active listening or, you know, all the theory that is behind peer supporting. It's pretty much, it's always good to have an opinion other than someone that knows psychology*"

Practicing active listening skills with peers who have undergone the same training as the volunteers was helpful, but only to an extent. Working with someone who was not well versed on the topic of peer support, made the interactions feel more authentic and fluid.

> "*We didn't have to think about how to make it feel authentic, because she knew the scenarios … [it] made the sole purpose practicing those peer support techniques that we had talked about, rather than trying to, how to word it, how to make the role play authentic*"

Having an actor embody the character in the scenario added a level of realism that could not be easily captured in role-playing with peers, however, there was also a level of safety provided in

knowing it was prefabricated. Volunteers were able to experiment and apply the skills they learned in previous workshops, stop and ask questions, and receive feedback.

> "*...you can ask for help, you can stop. There's no, you know, this is a safe environment. You can leave at any time. That was really comforting. And it felt very safe. Everyone in the room felt safe*"

The feedback received about role-playing with an actor was extremely positive, and volunteers felt safe being able to work through realistic scenarios, knowing that there was no risk of harm to themselves or others.

Self-Trust and Confidence Boosts

All participants acknowledged a boost in their confidence when comparing levels before the workshop versus after. There was a mutual agreement that it was likely they would never feel 100% confident in a real-life situation due to its lack of predictability, but that practicing with an actor and receiving feedback from professionals helped them to realize they could trust themselves to know what to do. One volunteer reflected on their confidence by stating, "*The more practice I do, the better it's going to become, but active listening is there and empathy is there*". They were able to apply the skills learned in the workshops to the role-playing scenarios provided, knowing they could rely on their knowledge, they just needed more experience with the practical application of it. Another volunteer acknowledged that they would never be entirely prepared, "*I think part of it is always like you … you'll never feel fully ready*" but at the same time expressed that the training helped them realize that, "I… *know what's going on and… I can trust myself*". The general consensus was that even though there is always self-doubt and room for improvement, the workshop increased confidence in their ability to deliver peer support to students in need. One volunteer summed it up perfectly:

> "*So I think just being exposed more to all the different ways that someone might approach difficult feelings has been really beneficial and also growing my own confidence in providing peer support, being in a counseling kind of environment, being present for someone, being a good active listener. I think, I never thought that I was terrible at any of those things, but again, that kind of devil on your shoulder gets in your head and starts telling you all the ways you're not up to snuff. And so it was nice to have positive feedback from people that I trust and have confidence in*"

Workshop Wins

While the addition of a role-playing actor to the workshop format was beneficial to the workshop structure as a whole, there are other considerations for planning future training sessions. Volunteers also spoke on the benefits of discussions held before role-playing, supervision from clinically trained professionals, and hearing multiple perspectives. In general, the workshop was received well with one volunteer expressing:

> "*And then it just was such a, the whole time consistently throughout every workshop has been a warm, welcoming environment, communicative. Everything's been, boundaries have been expressed clearly. What we have the right to say and not say has been expressed clearly. I've learned a bunch"*

Workshops were structured to begin with a general discussion before breaking into role-playing. The discussion covered the rules of role-playing, with an emphasis on the ability to pause or stop entirely if feelings of discomfort manifested. This was followed by a review of peer support theory, active listening, and confidentiality. Volunteers found the discussion applicable and helpful before participating in role-playing. In the interviews, volunteers clearly expressed the benefit of the discussions with one volunteer stating, "*Everything felt clearly laid out. I was*

very clear of the rights that I had to withdraw consent or leave if I needed to". Another volunteer found it calmed their anxiety about the prospect of doing scenarios with an actor:

> "*I found it was really helpful because I was anxious about role playing and stuff but, I found it helped me feel less anxious about it just because I was like 'oh I actually kind of do know what I'm talking about*"

Volunteers also found that the insights shared by the workshop supervisors, in discussions and as feedback, were extremely helpful, and they appreciated hearing different perspectives, from both the supervisors and each other, on how to navigate potential peer support situations. This was conveyed in the following quote: "*I like them a lot because a lot of the teachers draw from their own personal experience. And to hear from a professional is always the best possible case*". Another felt it was extremely valuable to hear multiple perspectives on the same idea to help learn different approaches to a similar problem or idea:

> *"... everyone still had their own take on like, this is how I approach things in an empathetic manner. This is how I find it easiest to actively listen and show that I'm validating what is being said to me. And I think it was cool in that way to see different sides of your own beliefs … they're different perspectives, but communicating similar values and overarching ideas. And so I think what it was was kind of, okay, we get this overarching, bolded idea in our heads*"

The ability to learn from multiple perspectives provided depth to the workshop and volunteers were able to learn not only from the workshop supervisors, but also from each other.

Identifying Gaps

Despite the positive feedback from volunteers, it is also crucial to acknowledge that there is room for improving the workshops. Finding means to improve the training was one of the goals of this study and the insights provided by the volunteers assisted in identifying potential training gaps.

One of the most commonly discussed barriers was that they felt as though a mediating workshop was needed between learning the theory of peer support and active listening before moving into role-playing. All of the volunteers expressed a desire for a workshop that focused on responding to prefabricated scenarios in a discussion format before actually completing a role-playing activity with an actor. For example:

> *"I would probably say if I can see some more examples, like more examples and more, how can I say it, like a little bit of stop frame and hear the opinion of how would a professional phrase what they're trying to say*"

> "*... and go over those scenarios and go over 'okay like let's talk about what you would do in this situation', or 'what should we do in this situation.' So then…if we're in small little groups we can go over…a bunch of different scenarios and talk about what you should, what you could do, what you shouldn't do, and all that stuff. I think that would be helpful … really helpful to have sort of a session like that, a small group session where there are pre-written scenarios again but… not with actors or anything just on a piece of paper, being like 'if someone came to you blah blah blah what would you do' and then you can… discuss*"

Tying in with the amount of enthusiasm that came from hearing different perspectives on the theories of peer support and active listening, the volunteers were keen to discuss meaningful

ways to approach potential peer support scenarios. Having an additional workshop focused on reading through prefabricated scenarios, followed by a shared discussion, would allow volunteers to see new "*interplays of perspectives*", as described by one volunteer.

The volunteers also expressed a desire for more time to have been spent on the topics of opening and closing the conversations, setting boundaries, and how to express an inability to support. It was enthusiastically agreed by one volunteer that "*it would be helpful to have a focused discussion about how to start conversations and end conversations*". While volunteers were provided with resources to enable them to refer students to further avenues of support, it was felt that there wasn't enough practice doing so, with one volunteer stating they felt nervous about the ideal of giving a referral, "*I think like there's some situations where I just, I'm nervous if I just don't know how to support this person … I think maybe I wish we worked on that a little bit more*". These gaps could easily be filled by instituting an additional workshop, such as the one described above, where volunteers practice identifying how to respond to prefabricated situations in the form of a more targeted discussion, before role-playing with an actor.

Bridging the Gap: How Peer Support and Real Life Crossover

Training as a peer support volunteer not only prepares volunteers for providing support to peers, but the skills learned have an undeniable impact on the ways in which they interacted with people outside of the program.

> "*I feel like the training to be a peer supporter kind of prepares you to pretty much support everyone you encounter, whether you realize it or not … it gives you preparation for many possible scenarios that can happen in life*"

There is real life application of the skills learned in training workshops that can elevate interactions in personal and professional settings. Volunteers can use the listening and empathy skills learned to communicate without judgment and with compassion. It was mentioned that "*so*

much of my learning in that domain has helped me be more empathetic, helped me understand different communication styles".

One of the tenets of peer support is shared humanity. There is an acknowledgement that even though one party has undertaken training, there is no expressed hierarchy or power dynamic. It is just two people, sitting together, being human and having a conversation. Instead of getting into their head and feeling like they've done something wrong if they "misspeak," it's okay to say, "*I'm human, this is what happened".* Expressing common humanity and the difficulties that come with it can deepen relationships, in and out of peer support. Feeling heard and understood is an empowering experience that is applicable in both peer support and interpersonal relationships.

> "*I feel like peer supporting is something that maybe we do a little bit on an unconscious level, but then we're seeing a bit more of what's the theory behind it, what's the practice behind it, and I think it was a really good experience"*
>
> - Volunteer quote summarizing the workshop experience

Future Directions

The scenario-based training workshops provided volunteers with a realistic, but safe, setting to apply active listening skills. Volunteers were enthusiastic about the addition of an actor to work with, as it elevated the learning experience while still allowing them to experiment and ask questions. The ability to practice these skills in a realistic, but safe environment, boosted their confidence and allowed them to make personal discoveries. The insight shared with me from volunteers, paired with my own observations, supports the need to install scenario-based training as a permanent part of the training workshops held for peer support volunteers going forward.

While it is clear that many things about the workshop were beneficial, there is always room to grow. With this in mind, I've taken feedback from the volunteers to develop a new training stratagem. First and foremost, training will take place over a short period of time and will involve four training workshops. The structure proposed is as seen below:

1) **Workshops 1 and 2:** The first two workshops will be reflective of what volunteers learned in the earliest training workshops. They will be lecture-style training sessions that cover:
   A. What peer support is and is not
   B. Empathy and active listening
   C. Relational ethics
   D. Confidentiality and its limits
   E. Boundary setting
   F. Referrals
   G. Opening and closing conversations

   The second workshop would end with volunteers taking turns to practice the skills covered with one another as a first form of applied practice.
2) **Workshop 3:** The third workshop would fill the gap that volunteers of this study felt was lacking in training. It would be a discussion based workshop, where volunteers can learn from supervisor wisdom as well as from each other. Short, prefabricated scenarios would be provided that cover a variety of potential reasons students may attend a peer support session. Some scenarios would require the use of active listening skills, whereas others would require practice providing referrals to future support. Scenarios would be read, followed by a discussion of what appropriate responses to the student could be. Through these discussions, volunteers could practice expressing boundaries, opening and closing conversations, responding in an empathetic way, how to formulate referral responses, and other skills covered in the first two workshops. The ability to discuss with

one another and with workshop supervisors will give volunteers new perspectives on how different scenarios could be approached in different ways.

3) **Workshop 4:** The fourth workshop would be an immersive scenario-based training workshop, where volunteers practice the skills they've learned with an actor who has been provided with scenarios in advance. The elevated realism of working with an actor will give the volunteers a chance to apply the skills they worked on over the previous three sessions in a practical and realistic way. It is important for volunteers to have an opportunity to provide support in a safe, controlled environment where there is no risk of harm. Role-playing provides that experience, and allows volunteers to ask questions and receive feedback.

Reflection

Peer support is an invaluable resource for students who are dealing with any kind of struggle but don't know how to reach out for help, or who to go to. It's not quite being a friend but it also does not have the same power dynamic as going to a counsellor. It is a place inbetween, where students can be heard and understood by peers with similar lived experiences. Peer support offers connection, humanity, and a space free of judgement - something that is widely needed in post-secondary academic environments - which can reinforce ideals of competitiveness and isolation over that of care and community (Becker et al., 2021). One volunteer, when talking about a need for peer support, stated: *"... this is something that I feel like I would love to have as a student who didn't maybe feel comfortable going to counseling services or something like that and wanting to help in that way".* It is extremely beneficial, for volunteers and people in need of support, and the implementation of a peer support program at Capilano University would be a complementary addition to the existing professional counselling services.

An important aspect of peer support is making referrals to a wide variety of services, not only counselling services. Each volunteer received a copy of the resource book found in

Appendix A that highlights a variety of support systems, both internal and external, that students can be referred to. Peer supporters are not counsellors, they do not problem solve or diagnose, but they can offer an empathetic ear and help students find the resources they need to thrive.

Building community involves creating safe and welcoming spaces for students to meet. A peer support program at Capilano University could, and will, be one of those unique spaces. Sometimes what someone needs is for a person to listen to them and, by extension, make them feel less alone. Humans have a need to belong that when satisfied leads to positive effects on well-being, and that relationship is circular (Vella-Brodrick et al., 2023). As well-being improves, people gain stronger feelings of agency and social capacity. The empowerment that comes with connection, and being heard and understood can lead to a student body that thrives.

Building a peer support program that works for the students who use it will require continual evaluation and development. Insight and feedback from the volunteers and students who attend peer support sessions need to be considered when implementing the program permanently at Capilano University. Providing effective and safe support to students in need is the primary goal of peer support, and we will continue to adjust as needed in order to provide that. Every new program experiences growing pains and setbacks, it’s all part of the process. After all, we’re only human.

References

Becker, J. C., Hartwich, L., & Haslam, S. A. (2021). Neoliberalism can reduce well-being by promoting a sense of social disconnection, competition, and loneliness. British Journal of Social Psychology, 60(3), 947-965.

Bourdon, L., Tranchant, C. C., Doucet, D., Corriveau, H., & Plourde, V. (2023). Development of a community-based training for peer support workers in youth mental health settings: An exploratory pilot study. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth/Le Journal Canadien de Famille et de La Jeunesse*, *15*(3), 130–156. https://doi.org/10.29173/cjfy29956

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). Can I use TA? should I use TA? should I not use TA? comparing reflexive thematic analysis and other pattern-based qualitative analytic approaches. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, *21*(1), 37–47. https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12360

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., Davey, L., & Jenkinson, E. (2022). Chapter 2: Doing reflexive thematic analysis. In *Supporting research in counselling and psychotherapy* (pp. 19–38). essay, Springer Nature Switzerland.

Byrne, D. (2021). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, *56*(3), 1391–1412. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y

Caltabiano, M., Errington, E., Ireland, L., Sorin, R., & Nickson, A. (2018). The potential of role-play in undergraduate psychology training. *Asian Journal of University Education*, *14*(1), 1–14.

Crisp, D. A., Rickwood, D., Martin, B., & Byrom, N. (2020). Implementing a peer support program for improving university student wellbeing: The experience of program facilitators.

Australian Journal of Education, *64(2),* 113-126. https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944120910498

Fowles, T. R., Moore, C. M., Alpert, E., Beveridge, R. M., & Carlsen, A. (2023). Using simulated patients to train interpersonal skills with clinical psychology doctoral students. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, *17*(1), 81–88. https://doi.org/10.1037/tep0000396

Grégoire, S., Beaulieu, F., Lachance, L., Bouffard, T., Vezeau, C., & Perreault, M. (2022). An online peer support program to improve mental health among university students: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American College Health*, *72*(7), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2099224

Mackenzie, M. (2023). *Peer support for students: An action research project on the steps to establishing a peer support program on a university campus*

Maillé, S., Beaulieu, F., Lachance, L., & Grégoire, S. (2024). Barriers and facilitators to the implementation of a peer support intervention in universities. *Journal of College Student Mental Health*, 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/28367138.2024.2325437

Meehan, T., Bergen, H., Coveney, C., & Thornton, R. (2002). Development and evaluation of a training program in peer support for former consumers. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, *11*(1), 34–39. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-0979.2002.00223.x

Myers, Z.-O. (2024). *Lean on me: Establishing a grassroots peer support program on campus and the meaning volunteers experienced – A community approach*. https://doi.org/10.26073/capu:6574

Oh, H., & Solomon, P. (2014). Role-playing as a tool for hiring, training, and supervising peer providers. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, *41*(2), 216–229. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11414-013-9350-2

Osborn, T. G., Town, R., Ellis, R., Buckman, J. E. J., Saunders, R., & Fonagy, P. (2022). Implementing peer support in higher education: A feasibility study. *SSM - Mental Health*, *2*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2022.100175

Pointon-Haas, J., Waqar, L., Upsher, R., Foster, J., Byrom, N., & Oates, J. (2023). A systematic review of peer support interventions for student mental health and well-being in higher education. *BJPsych Open*, *10*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2023.603

Reis, A., Mortimer, T., Rutherford, E., Sperandei, S., & Saheb, R. (2021a). Students as leaders in supporting campus well-being: Peer-to-peer health promotion in higher education. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, *33*(1), 106–116. https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.495

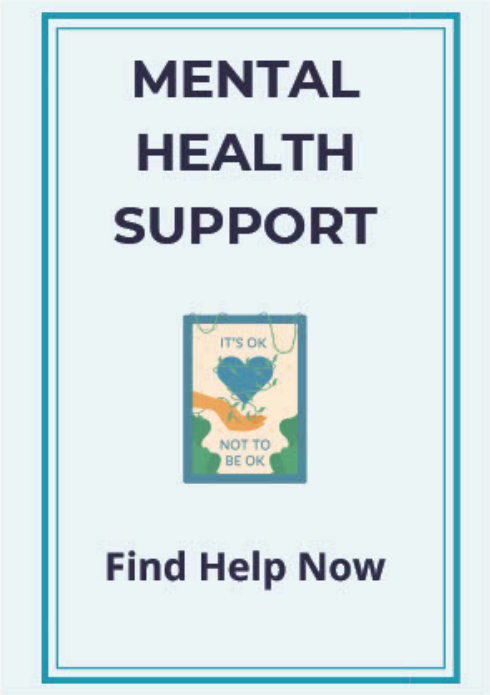
Shalaby, R. A., & Agyapong, V. I. (2020). Peer support in mental health: Literature review. *JMIR Mental Health*, *7*(6), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.2196/15572

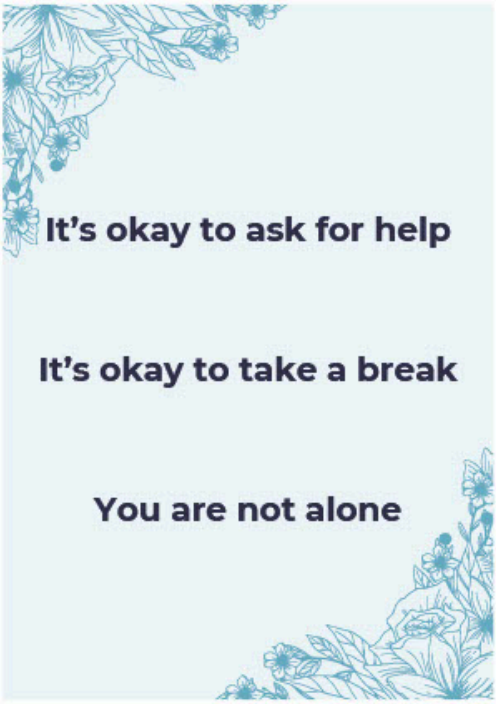
Suresh, R., Karkossa, Z., Richard, J., & Karia, M. (2021). Program evaluation of a student-led Peer Support Service at a Canadian University. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, *15*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-021-00479-7

Vella-Brodrick, D., Joshanloo, M., & Slemp, G. R. (2023). Longitudinal relationships between social connection, agency, and emotional well-being: A 13-year study. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *18*(6), 883–893. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2022.2131609

Appendix A

Resource Book for Volunteers





Student Affairs

An all encompassing department at CapU that is there to support student health, wellness, and success

Your Early Support (YES) Program

EARLYSUPPORT@CAPILANOU.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:
Students with academic and personal challenges

WHAT THEY DO:
Help students facing ANY challenge (food security, accommodation, mental health, need learning supports, etc) directly or by putting them in contact with appropriate resources

CAPU SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORTS

If you have experiencd any form of sexual violence and are seeking on campus and community based support options, financial resource supports, supported referrals, or a liason. They also provide information about formally reporting incidents. It is NOT mandatory to file a report if you contact their ofice.

Email: **disclosures@capilanou.ca**

Follow the QR code for more information on disclosures and reporting

Kéxwusm-áyakn Student Centre

"A Place to Meet"

A safe space and supportive space for Indigenous Students at CapU

WHERE IT IS:
Library Building, LB196

WHAT THEY DO:
Provide a place to relax and study
Meet new people
Find support and resources
Contact with in-residence Elders

Capilano Students Union

WWW.CSU.BC.CA/

An independent society dedicated to enriching student experience through advocacy, commuity building, and services

Organize Events and Services such as:
- Student Health Plan
- Student Clubs
- Resources
- Pop-Up Produce

Empower Me

WWW.STUDENTCARE.CA/RTE/EN/IHAVEAPLAN_CAPILANOUNIVERSITYCSU_EMPOWERME_EMPOWERME

A 24/7 confidential service where students can access counselling support, coaching, information, and referrals

Available through the CSU Health and Dental Plan

Requires downloading an app

CSU Student Rights Office

WWW.CSU.BC.CA/STUDENT-RIGHTS-OFFICE/

A CSU service for support and understanding CapU's policies and procedures.

Support can include:
- Disputes with administration or faculty
- Academic conflicts
- Allegations of cheating or plagarism
- Instructor Complaints
- Student conduct

CSU Student Clubs

WWW.CSU.BC.CA/CLUBS/

Join or start a club! Clubs bring together like-minded people and build social support and community

Some examples of clubs include:
- Anime Club
- Outdoors Club
- Prank Club
- Tabletop Role-Playing Club
- We're PSYCHED!

Student Health Plan Highlights

WWW.CSU.BC.CA/HEALTH-DENTAL-PLAN

WHO IT'S FOR:
Most full-time students attending Capilano University

WHAT IT INCLUDES:
- Physical health
- Mental health & wellness
- Vision
- Dental
- Travel Coverage

Student Services

WWW.CAPILANOU.CA/STUDENT-SERVICES

WHO IT'S FOR:

All CapU students

WHAT THEY DO:

On campus an virtual resources and support for students including:

- Academic Advising
- Indigenous Services
- Accessibility Services
- Disability Funding
- Career Services
- Health Services
- Learning Supports
- Tutoring
- On-Campus Housing

Accessibility Services

WWW.CAPILANOU.CA/STUDENT-SERVICES/ACCESSIBILITY-SERVICES/

WHAT THEY DO:

Coordinate academic accommodations for students

Accommodation is granted when a persormance barrier occurs between the academic environment and the impact of a disability

NORTH SHORE PEER ASSISTED CARE TEAM

WWW.NORTHWESTVANCOUVER.CMHA.BC.CA/PROGRAMS-AND-SERVICES/PEER-ASSISTED-CARE-TEAM/

WHO IT'S FOR:

Any person 13+ who is in distress, or if someone you care about is in distress, on the North Shore

WHAT THEY DO:

Mobile crisis intervention service

Can come to people experiencing a mental health crisis or be reached via phone and text

Non-police based response service

Offer support, listen without judgement, crisis counselling and de-escalation, accompany you to emergency services, and connect to appropriate resources

PHONE LINES:

Monday-Sunday: 8AM - 12AM

Call: 1-888-261-7227

Text: 778-839-1831

Email: pact@cmhanorthshore.ca

HERE2TALK

WWW.HERE2TALK.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

All students currently registered in a BC post-secondary institution

WHAT THEY DO:

Connects students with free, confidential mental health support

Counsellors can help address concerns such as:

- Relational tensions
- Feelings of isolation, lonliness, depression
- Stress and anxiety
- Academic frustrations
- School-life Balance
- Communication Skills
- Adapting

Community referrals

PHONE LINES: 24/7

Canada Wide Toll-Free: 1-877-857-3397

Canada Wide Direct: 604-642-5212

International: +1-604-642-5212 (charges may apply)

2-1-1

WWW.BC.211.CA

WHAT THEY DO:

A confidential service that connects people to helpful and vital resources in their community

Connects you to non-emergency community programs and social services

Services include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency shelter
- Outreach workers
- Counselling services
- Addiction services
- Financial assistance services
- Food and basic needs services
- Youth services

LIVE CHAT: 24/7

PHONE LINE: 24/7

CALL OR TEXT: 2-1-1

CRISIS CENTRE BC

WWW.CRISISCENTRE.BC.CA

If you are having a mental health crisis they provide a compassionate listening ear. It is a safe space for your thoughts and emotions, no matter what they are.

WHO IT'S FOR:

Any person who is dealing with a mental health crisis

PHONE HOTLINES: 24/7

BC MENTAL HEALTH & CRISIS RESPONSE:
310-6789

VANCOUVER COASTAL REGIONAL DISTRESS LINE:
604-872-3311

BC SUICIDE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION LINE:
1-800-SUICIDE / 1-800-784-2433

ONLINE YOUTH CHAT:

NOON- 1 AM

WWW.YOUTHINBC.COM

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT SUPPORT

Kids Help Phone

WWW.KIDSHELPPHONE.CA 1-800-668-6868

WHO IT'S FOR:
Youth aged 5-25

Text: 686868

Hotline: 1-800-668-6868

Online Chat:

WHAT THEY DO:
Non-judgmental support and referrals over the phone

Provide tips and information

Skill building

Counselling

Provide resources

Easy to navigate website

BounceBack

WWW.BOUNCEBACKBC.CA 1-866-639-0522

WHO IT'S FOR:
Anyone looking to build skills to improve mental health

WHAT THEY DO:
Free Skill-Building Program

Learn tools to manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry

Online or over the phone

Online mental health check-in

Directions Youth Services

WWW.DIRECTIONSYOUTHSERVICES.CA 604 633 1472

WHO IT'S FOR:
Youth aged 13-24 & couchsurfing, don't have a steady place to stay, or are homeless

WHAT THEY DO:
Drop-in centre

Shelter

Safehouse

Food program

Youth employment program

Outreach

Connection to healthcare & counselling resources

Foundry Centre

WWW.FOUNDRYBC.CA 1-833-308-6379

WHO IT'S FOR:
Youth ages 12-24
Caregivers

Download the app:
www.foundrybc.ca/virtual

WHAT THEY DO:
Virtual counselling

Youth and family peer support

Groups and workshops

Physical and sexual healthcare services

Employment and education support

SUICIDE PREVENTION LINE

WWW.988.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

Any person having suicidal ideation, who is unsure if they need help, or anyone worried about someone else

WHAT THEY DO:

24/7 Compassionate Support

Exploration of ways to create safety when things are overwhelming

No problem is too difficult

Service in French and English

If your safety is at risk call 9-1-1 right away!

HOW TO CONTACT THEM:

NATIONAL SUICIDE CRISIS PREVENTION LINE:

Call or Text 9-8-8

BC SUICIDE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION LINE:

1-800-784-2433

IF YOU ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING:

Canada Video Relay Service:
https://srvcanadavrs.ca/en/9-1-1-and-9-8-8/

Teletypewriter and Internet Protocol Relay Services:
Call 9-8-8, then dial 7-1-1

Text 9-8-8

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

VictimLink BC

WWW.VICTIMLINKBC.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

Victims of trauma, abuse, or any other crime

WHAT THEY DO:

Emotional support for victims of crimes

Direct people to the service that fits their needs and provide resources

Information about criminal justice system and government resources

Information about transition houses, counselling resources, and community based victim services

Toll-free and confidential

Availble in 240 languages

CALL OR TEXT: 24/7

1-800-563-0808

EMAIL:

211-victimlinkbc@uwbc.ca

Salal Sexual Violence Support Centre

WWW.SALALSVSC.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

Survivors of sexualized violence who are of marginalized genders: women, trans, nonbinary, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse

WHAT THEY DO:

Offer a variety of support services such as:

- emergency crisis support
- hospital accompniament
- criminal legal system support
- Elder support
- individual counselling
- support circles
- workshops

Free and confidential

PHONE LINES: 24/7

Canada Wide Toll-Free: 1-877-392-7583
Lower Mainland: 604-255-6344

TEXT AND ONLINE CHAT:

604-245-2425
Monday - Friday: 9am-1am
Saturday: 9am-5pm
Sunday: 9am-11pm

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Drug Rehab Services

WWW.DRUGREHAB.CA

WHAT THEY DO:

An all encompassing resource that aims to educate and connect people to treatment and other needed resources

Directory of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services

Confidential phone line manned by rehab specialists who will discuss your needs and refer you to the most appropriate resource

1-877-254-3348
Monday - Friday: 9:00AM - 4:00PM
Sunday: All Day
Outside these hours call will be answered by a specialist from "Together We Can"

Alcohol & Drug Information & Referral Service

1-800-663-1441
604-660-9382
211-help@uwbc.ca

WHAT THEY DO:

24/7 Helpline that provides information and referrals to detox, counselling, treatment programs, recovery homes, and support groups

Offer education and prevention resources

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse an Addition

WWW.CCSA.CA

WHAT THEY DO:

Resources, tool-kits, news, and services relating to subsance abuse

Match people with services that fit their needs

1-877-254-3348
613-235-4048

NATIONAL EATING DISORDER INFORMATION CENTRE

WWW.NEDIC.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

Any person who is affected by an eating disorder or who is worried about someone else

WHAT THEY DO:

Provide support and explore options

Help connect with resources

Provide information on support groups and services providers

NEDIC Helpline: 1-800-633-4220

Monday to Thursday: 9:00-9:00 EST
Friday: 9:00-5:00 EST
Saturday & Sunday: 12:00-5:00 EST

ADDITIONAL EATING DISORDER RESOURCES

Find a Mental Health Provider with an Eating Disorder Specialty:
www.nedic.ca/find-a-provider

Peer Support, Counselling, & Programs for Individuals Affected by an Eating Disorder:
www.lookingglassbc.com

Kelty Mental Health (BC Children's Hospital):
www.keltyeatingdisorders.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):
www.bc.cmha.ca/documents/eating-disorders-3

GENDER AFFIRMING CARE

TransCareBC

WWW.TRANSCAREBC.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:

Any trans, Two-Spirit, or non-Binary person

Any person who is worried about a trans, Two-Spirit, or non-Binary person

Clinicians

THEY PROVIDE INFORMATION ON:

Finding a doctor, counsellor, or peer support

How to get care, understand referrals, and navigate the BC Health System

Hormone therapy and gender affirming surgery

Changing your name or updating your ID

How to support loved ones

TransLifeline
WWW.TRANSLIFELINE.ORG

WHO IT'S FOR:
- Trans people
- People who are questioning
- Any person who wants to support a trans or questioning loved one

WHAT THEY DO:
- Peer support run by trans people for trans and questioning peers
- Can call for any reason; YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE IN CRISIS
- Support and non-judgement for any situation
- No non-consensual calling of emergency services

1-877-330-6366 10:00AM-6:00PM PST

QMUNITY
WWW.QMUNITY.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:
- Queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people
- Parents of queer, trans, and Two-Spirit people

WHAT THEY DO:
- Youth drop-ins
- Low cost counselling
- Information and referrals
- Gender supportive clothing program
- Information and groups for parents

BIPOC SERVICES

Black Youth Helpline
WWW.BLACKYOUTH.CA
1-833-294-8650

WHO IT'S FOR:
All youth, with a focus on the needs of Black youth

WHAT THEY DO:
- Promote access to professional, culturally appropriate resources for youth, families, and schools
- Helpline is a point of contact to professional services
- Aim to prevent social, emotional, and psychological breakdown in the youth population
- Parent and family support
- Service in English, French, and other languages upon request

Vancouver Black Therapy & Advocacy Foundation
WWW.VANCOUVERBLACKTHERAPYFOUNDATION.COM

WHO IT'S FOR:
Black Individuals, prioritizing low-income, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ people

WHAT THEY DO:
Offer free and low-cost counselling services as well as patient for navigating the mental health system

Watari Support Services
WWW.WATARI.CA 604-254-6995

WHO IT'S FOR:
Under-represented and under-served communities, including children, youth, and families

WHAT THEY DO:
- Offer multi-cultural counselling services
- Latin American outreach
- Migrant 2 Migrant community programming
- Child and youth outreach and programming

CULTURALLY SAFE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES

Hope for Wellness HelpLine
WWW.HOPEFORWELLNESS.CA

WHO IT'S FOR:
All Indigenous people across Canada

WHAT THEY DO:
- Experienced and culturally competent, trauma-informed counselors
- Discuss distress, challenges or issues of any size
- Provide Help finding other wellness supports
- Service in English, French, Cree, Ojibway (Anishinaabemowin), and Inuktitut

ONLINE CHAT
hopeforwellness.ca

24/7 HELPLINE
1-855-242-3310

First Nations Health Authority

WWW.FNHA.CA

WHAT THEY DO:

Plan, design, manage, and fund the delivery of First Nations health programs across BC

Information about wellness services and community programs

Resources for physical and mental health

YOUTH SPECIFIC RESOURCES:

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS SOCIETY (IRSSS)
IRSSS helps support youth throughout the province who are dealing with trauma and seeking support in their healing.
1-800-721-0066 | reception@irsss.ca

FOUNDRY BC
Provides young people with health and wellness resources, services, supports across BC
1-833-308-6379 | info@foundrybc.ca

TSOW-TUN LE LUM
Provides confidential outreach services, such as counselling and cultural support.
1-888-403-3123 | info@tsowtunlelum.org

FIRST NATIONS VIRTUAL DOCTOR OF THE DAY
Enables First Nations people in BC with limited or no access to their own doctors to make virtual appointments.
1-855-344-3800

KUU-US CRISIS LINE SOCIETY
24/7 First Nations and Indigenous specific crisis line, toll free from anywhere in BC, specifically for children and youth.
250-723-2040

NEWCOMER SERVICES

Immigrant Services Society of BC

WWW.ISSBC.ORG 604-684-2561

WHO IT'S FOR:

All newcomers to British Columbia

WHAT THEY DO:

Services, support, courses, and programs
Settlement support in over 40 languages
Newcomer youth hub
Mental health resources
Employment services
English language learning
Support groups, workshops

DIVERSEcity

WWW.DCRS.CA 604-597-0205

WHO IT'S FOR:

Immigrants
Temporary workers
Refugees
Diverse communities

WHAT THEY DO:

Employment services
English learning
Help finding housing
Help navigating government services
Citizenship test preparation events & workshops
Events & workshops to learn about elections
And more

CHIMO COMMUNITY SERVICES

WWW.CHIMOSERVICES.COM
604-279-7077

WHO IT'S FOR:

Newcomers to Canada
People who are in crisis
People in need of counselling services
People who need access to housing

WHAT THEY DO:

Crisis lines
Nova Transition House
Counselling and crisis counselling
Outreach and advocacy
Housing program
Homeless prevention program
Access to justice programs
Newcomer settlement service
Community engagement

HOW TO CONTACT THEM:

CHIMO CRISIS LINE & LIVE CHAT
Confidential and non-judgmental support from professionally trained volunteers for anyone in crisis, feeling stressed, or just needing someone to talk to

24/7 CRISIS LINE
604-279-7070

ONLINE CHAT
THURSDAY - SATURDAY
4 PM - 10 PM

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HERE TO HELP
Educational information, resources, screening, activities, and workbooks
WWW.HERETOHELP.BC.CA

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
Mental health information and resources
WWW.CMHA.CA

KELTY MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE CENTRE
Information and resources specifically for youth and families
WWW.KELTYMENTALHEALTH.CA

HEALTH LINK BC
Direction to registered nurse, registered dietitian, qualified exercise professional, or pharmacist
PHONE 8-1-1

IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 9-1-1

Appendix B

Consent Form

CAPILANO UNIVERSITY

The Experiences of Peer-Support Volunteers in an Experiential Training Workshop

Principal Investigator	**Faculty Supervisor**
Amy Jean McElwain	Douglas Alards-Tomalin
Bachelor of Psychology with Honours	Department of Psychology
Capilano University	Capilano University
amymcelwain@my.capilanou.ca	douglasalardstomalin@capilanou.ca

Purpose

I am a student in the Bachelor of Psychology Honours Program at Capilano University. My research, entitled "*The Experiences of Peer-Support Volunteers in an Experiential Training Workshop*" aims to train student volunteers as peer support workers to benefit the mental health of students at Capilano University. My hope is that my research will contribute to improving mental health, communication skills, and the growth of community for students at Capilano University and beyond.

Description

I would like to ask if you would be willing to participate in volunteering for this study. If you agree to volunteer, you will be participating in this study for the months of November 2024 - February 2025 (a total of 3-4 hours in that span). This will include participating in one training workshop, followed by an interview. Following the interviews there will be 2 weeks in which volunteers can review their initial transcripts (up till Mid-March 2025). Throughout the process of the interviews, you will be asked questions concerning your own personal experiences while attending the peer-support workshop. With your permission the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed to text. The training workshop will consist of one 1.5-2 hour session, and the interview will be approximately 1 hour (following the second workshop), with optional time provided to edit/view the transcript being made available.

Use of Research Information

The results of this study will be presented in a thesis required for completion for my degree and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in academic journals.

Risk of Harm

Depending on how impactful this program is for you, there is risk that you may become triggered and/or overwhelmed from workshop topics and interview questions. As strategies to manage certain risks, access to Capilano University's Counselling Services are available upon request, and have been made aware of the study. As well as this, you can always contact the principal investigator (Amy Jean) for further support regarding your experiences. Additionally, the interview would be audio recorded, typed, and will be reported on in the study. You will be provided a copy of the transcript and invited to make changes to the transcript if you wish (e.g., if you would like to withdraw a particular statement you made

during an interview). It's important you know that, unless given consent, quotes/comments will be attributed anonymously to a "*Capilano University Student*" in the final publications of the research. Despite that there is a risk to your identity being directly identifiable on the basis of your responses, which is why you'll have the opportunity to later omit/change them before they are presented. It's important that you understand this risk as in some circumstances, it could be a risk of harm.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be deleted from the study and destroyed. If you would like to review and make changes to the transcript of the interview, you will have a 2-month window to do so after interviews (January 2025). If you choose to withdraw from the study, you may do so without explanation up until the submission of the final thesis in early April 2025.

Management of Research Information/Data

All data and information derived from the interview will be stored on a password-protected computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked drawer in my home. Data will be deleted and paper records shredded at the end of the project, approximately March 2024. Audio recordings will be transcribed using an internet-based service - TurboScribe - located in the USA. TurboScribe transcripts are encrypted using HTTP/SSL connections and AES-256 encryption algorithms. Only I have access to the files, they do not go through third-party services, and transcriptions are not used to train AI.

Consent and Conditions of Consent

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

I consent to the interview being audio recorded.	☐ *Yes*	☐ *No*
I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research.	☐ *Yes*	☐ *No*
I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.	☐ *Yes*	☐ *No*

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

Commitment of Principal Investigator

I, Amy Jean, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

I would like to receive a copy of the results after the study has been completed:

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the Capilano University Research Ethics Board at reb@capilanou.ca.

Appendix C

Interview Script

Preamble:

Hi [*insert participants name*], thanks for coming today. Your feedback about the scenario-based training workshop is crucial for us to evaluate whether it was an effective addition to the training you previously attended. Before we begin, I want to remind you that you can withdraw from participating at any point in my study, up until I submit my thesis in late March this year. Even today, during this interview, you are able to take a break or stop entirely with no consequences. Withdrawing from the research will not affect your ability to participate in the Peer Support Program. I also want to remind you that I will be recording the interview and transcribing it for analysis.

Do you have any questions about the research or interview process before we begin?

The questions focus on the workshop we just completed but there will also be space to share your experience through the whole process!

1. How was your overall experience in participating in the workshop?

2. How do you feel about the addition of an actor to role play with, compared to role playing with fellow volunteers?
    a. Do you wish there had been more or less role-playing scenarios?

3. How would you rate your confidence levels in having one-on-one sessions before and after the training (1-5: 1 = none, 5 = very confident)?

4. We had previously worked on active listening and empathy, when doing the role play were you able to apply those skills to the scenario? If not, what can we do to improve your confidence in using those tools?
    a. What were any new skills or tools you learned during the role-playing training workshop?

5. Do you feel prepared to provide peer support to students?

6. Are you comfortable referring students to counselling or other forms of support if necessary?

7. How applicable did you find the pre-roleplay discussions to becoming a peer support volunteer?

8. What was the personal value for you in participating, are these skills you would foresee using in other situations?

9. Were there any challenges with the experience? For example, any feelings of stress/distress, or anything else you found challenging?
    a. What can we do to better support challenges and distress in the workshops?

10. Is there anything in the format of the workshop that you would change?

11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in the workshop or your experience throughout the entire process?