

0761

Peer Support Within Clubhouse: A Grounded Theory Study

Francesca Dominique Coniglio^{1,2}, Nicola Hancock¹, Louise Ellis^{1,3}

¹*Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia,* ²*Pioneer Clubhouse, Sydney, Australia,* ³*Brain and Mind Institute, Sydney, Australia*

Introduction

Peer support has been demonstrated to be an important facilitator of recovery from mental illness. The value of peer support has been largely explored within the contexts of mutual-help groups and consumer-run programs. However, little is known about the value or beneficial outcomes of peer support within the Clubhouse model, a professionally-staffed psychosocial rehabilitation program.

Objectives

This study explores Clubhouse members' experiences of peer support and the positive outcomes they identify from engaging in this phenomenon within a Clubhouse context.

Methods

Grounded theory guided the study design involving 17 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with 10 members of a Clubhouse. Constant comparison and open coding were undertaken to identify underlying concepts of peer support within the Clubhouse context.

Results

A conceptual model of peer support was derived from Clubhouse members' experience. The four levels of peer support that emerged were: Social inclusion and belonging; shared achievement through doing; interdependency; and at the deepest level, intimacy.

Conclusion

Peer support within Clubhouse is a multi-layered construct in terms of the depth and nature of the relationships. This concept of levels or varying degrees of peer support does not appear within the peer support literature. Clubhouse appears to contribute a unique 'tier' within the layered construct of peer support. This tier is based on the sharing of achievement through working together on shared tasks or roles within the work-ordered day structure of a Clubhouse.

Contribution to practice

This study has found that peer support also exists within a professionally-staffed Clubhouse context. It captures the significant role consumers play in the recovery of their peers due to shared experiences, 'expert' knowledge and the care and empathy they have for one another. Staffed mental health programs will benefit from recognising the value of currently under-utilised resource that peer support can provide for their consumers. Findings suggest that a greater priority should be given to developing and structuring programs in a way that maximises opportunity for peer support to occur. Consideration needs to be given to aspects of program delivery that foster each level of peer support identified within the Clubhouse Model of Peer Support and the benefits unique to each level.