



Tilda Goldberg Centre



Embedding Public and Expert by Experience Researchers (PEERs) in Substance Misuse and Ageing Research Team (SMART)

by Moe Dutton
(PEER Researcher, SMART)

Why be a PEER researcher? The benefits of PEER involvement

“I always wanted to see the “Bigger Picture” with regards to recovery at all levels. By this I mean I wanted to be in a position where I could be part of forming/shaping the future in substance misuse of alcohol, with regards to treatment, attitudes and perceptions. This (PEER research) provides me with that opportunity.”

The PEER Role

- Developing new research questions
- Leading research – lead applicant/PI on a grant proposal
- Co-researchers – conducting, analysing and interpreting qualitative interviews/focus groups with peers
- Consultants - give feedback on draft documents (e.g. research briefs, grant applications, research reports, literature for research participants)
- Advisors – members of project advisory groups
- Dissemination – co-presenting at conferences
- Sitting on interview panels for the recruitment of new researchers
- Contributing to strategy decisions

Training/Supervision

- PEERs have no previous experience of research
- Training manuals e.g. beginners guide to conducting qualitative interviews, managing research studies etc.
- Practical sessions delivered alongside each manual
- Monthly team conference calls
- Regular supervision with experienced researcher

Why have embedded PEERs?

- Traditional researchers and PEERs learn from each other
- Helps identify and focus on issues of importance to research population
- Assists in understanding some of the perspectives of research population
- PEERs have an instant rapport with research participants
- Increases credibility and quality of research
- Valued by stakeholders