DEVELOPMENT OF CALD FOCUSED HIV PEER SUPPORT MODEL IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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Background

Peer work is non-clinical, therapeutic work focused on supporting client recovery which requires an appropriate model to respond to the unique needs and circumstances of each client. A discussion document developed by Relationships Australia SA (RASA) demonstrated the effectiveness of peer support and the importance of people drawing upon their own lived experience as a way of empowerment.

There is currently no HIV peer support model for people from CALD backgrounds in Australia. HIV adds to the level of vulnerability people already experience; as a result, efforts to recruit peers have been unsuccessful in South Australia. In response to this, RASA initiated the development of a CALD focused peer support model

Methods

Consultations were conducted with different stakeholders to discuss the barriers and way forward to create a peer support structure. This involved people living with HIV (PLHIV) in South Australia, two HIV positive speakers from interstate and Blood Borne Virus Services (PEACE and MOSAIC), A draft model was developed based on the recommendations and feedback received through the consultation. The draft model was trialled and improvement made based on the practical outcome. The final draft will continue to be improved as needed through monitoring and evaluation.

Results

A model has been developed which will be a living document. PLHIV are already contributing to the current practice. Currently three people are contributing to the peer model in South Australia. One of these three completed the Leadership training at the Positive Leadership Development Institute (PLDI).

Conclusion

This document highlights the development of a peer support model and the importance of involving people with lived experiences. Every client of the service is a peer contributor .

PEER Support Model (Pathways)

Engagement

Develop and implement care and treatment plan, including:
1. Intake and assessment – incorporate Health Literacy Assessment Tools
2. Information and support services – incorporating counselling, case work and advocacy
3. Exploring getting an experience through group work and peer support (e.g. women's lounge)

Creating supportive environment through the System (HIV related services) and close family and friends

Getting Involved

Support the client to be involved in peer support programs includes:
1. Address expectation and risk management associated with privacy and confidentiality when attending peer support programs
2. Ongoing reflection on how peer support program is of benefit
3. Explore possibilities of becoming a peer supporter or positive speaker

Unpack self stigma and create supportive environment within the community

Empowerment

Build the capacity of the potential peer supporter, by
1. Self recognising factors associated with self stigma and ways of addressing them
2. Accessing training and leadership courses
3. Using strengths based approach to identify possible roles of the peer
4. Building connection with other positive speakers and advocates

• Mainstream and CALD supportive networks are available
• Taking control of disclosure

Self Discovery

Create opportunities for potential peers to experience the role of contribution and influence, by
1. Strengthening the connection with other people living with HIV Accessing training and leadership courses
2. Start disclosing HIV status to selected people and reflect on experience
3. Providing training on how to tell the story
4. Exploring the role that the peer has before assigning to the role

• Mainstream and CALD supportive networks are available
• Access to professional development

Self Control

Provide support for peers to develop and achieve their own goals of becoming a peer educator/leaders by:
1. Improving access to relevant training and professional development
2. Creating opportunities for peers to practice the role of their choice
3. Reflecting and monitoring the work on a regular basis

• Highlight the influence and contribution they make
• Self care