

Peer Support

Think about a time when you...

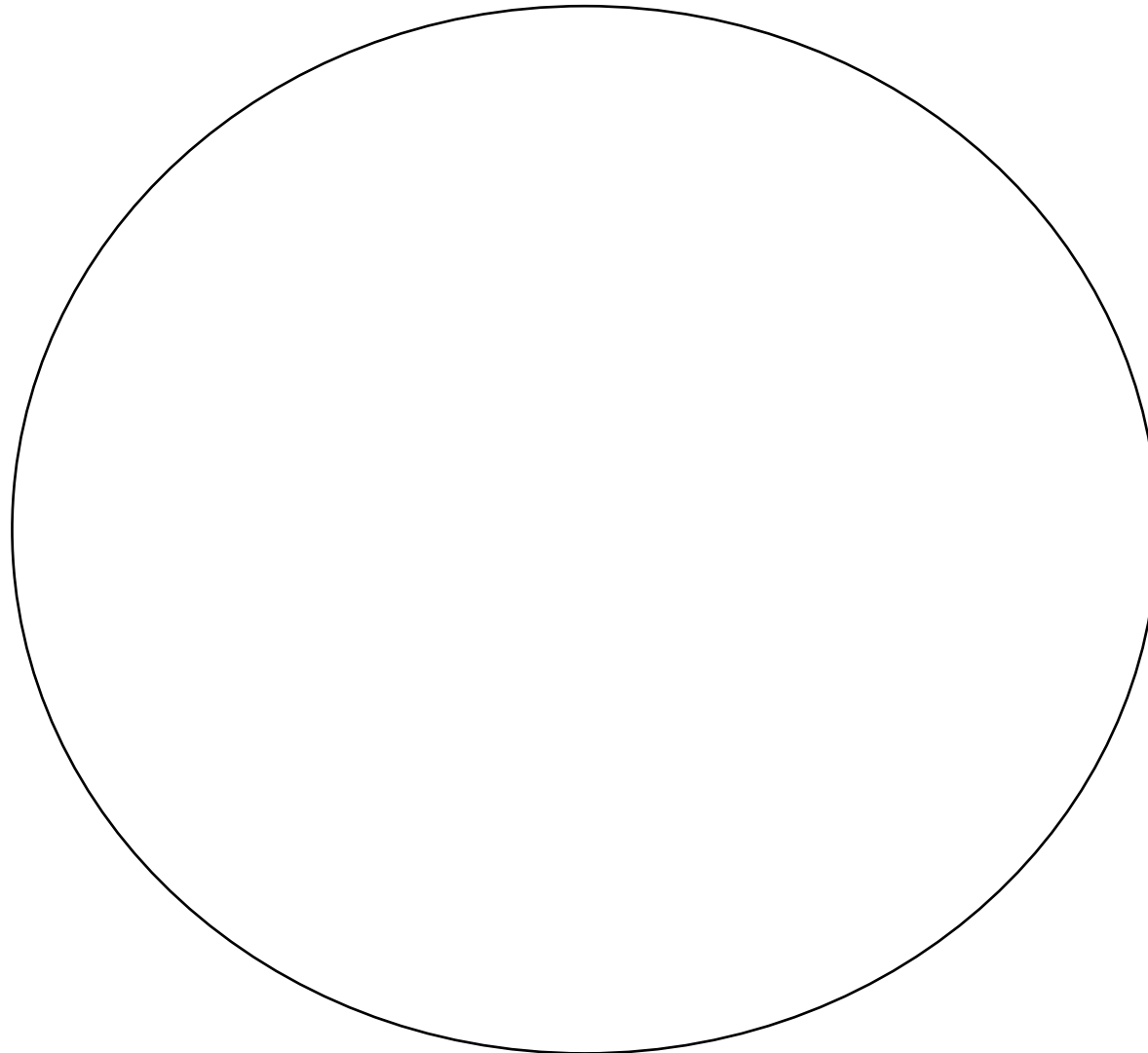
- were included in a community or group. How did it make you feel?
- were excluded from a community or group. How did it make you feel?

"Any one of us could be affected by an unexpected life event or illness where peer support will be vital to our recovery and wellbeing"



Peer Support pie chart

Divide this pie into pieces to represent what peer support means to you.



in a recovery context

- Recovery focuses on people recovering a quality of life in their community while striving to achieve their full potential.
- Peer support is rooted in the knowledge that “hope is the starting point from which a journey of recovery must begin.”
- Peer support can help to increase feelings of belonging and reduce isolation.
- Meeting and talking with people with shared experiences helps to identify tips and strategies for managing our mental health, encouraging participants to focus on their strengths and draw on their own experience to help others.

Features of group work



UNIVERSALITY



HOPE



INFORMATION



**GROUP
COHESIVENESS**



CATHARSIS



SOCIALIZATION



ALTRUISM



**INTERPERSONAL
LEARNING**



**EXISTENTIAL
FACTORS**



**CORRECTIVE
RECAPITULATION
OF THE PRIMARY
FAMILY GROUP**



**IMITATIVE
BEHAVIOR**

(Yalom)

Features of group work

Factors	Definition
Universality	Feelings of having problems similar to others, not alone. Validates experiences.
Instillation of Hope	Members at different stages of development or recovery. Shows that recovery is possible.
Imparting Information	Guidance or advice provided by group members.
Group Cohesiveness	Feelings of trust, acceptance and belonging within the group.
Catharsis	Opportunity to tell your story/for expression/release strong feelings.
Socialisation	Developing social skills – learning new ways to talk about feelings, observations and concerns.
Altruism	Opportunity to rise out of oneself and help somebody else, the feeling of usefulness.
Interpersonal Learning	Receiving feedback from others and experimenting with new ways of relating.
Existential Factors	Recognition of the basic features of existence through sharing with others.
Corrective recapitulation of the primary family group	Gain understanding of the impact of upbringing on personality and patterns of relating.
Imitative Behaviour	Observing and imitating others. Modelling good behaviours.



Benefits

- Meeting with people who speak your language
- Learning from people who have been where you are
- Sharing your experiences with others
- Learning about yourself
- No judgement
- Boosting self-esteem/self-worth
- Social skills
- Hope and support
- Sense of humour
- Cooperation
- Helping yourself by helping others

- Belonging is a natural human need.
- It relies on both conformity and individuality.
- Through belonging we develop new understandings of ourselves and the world around us.
- Our sense of identity is stronger when we belong.

Consider the following questions:

- What does it mean to belong?
- What is community?
- In what communities do you have membership?

A bit about “Connection” and “Belonging” from Brene Brown’s book The Gift of Imperfection. One of the major themes in Brene’s work revolves around the difference between “Belonging” versus “Fitting In”. Often mistaken as synonyms, these two terms have very different meanings, as well as very different impacts on your life.

- **Fitting in** is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be to be accepted. For example, think of a chameleon.
- **Belonging**, on the other hand, doesn’t require us to CHANGE who we are. It requires us to BE who we are. Belonging is the innate human desire to have close, caring and intimate relationships with other people and to be part of something larger than us.

Because this yearning is so primal, we often try to acquire it by fitting in and by seeking approval. These strategies are not only hollow substitutes for belonging, but often barriers to it. Because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our own level of self-acceptance; imperfections, flaws and all.

1. Attention
2. Acceptance
3. Appreciation
4. Affection
5. Allowing

Attention from others leads to self-respect. **Acceptance** engenders a sense of being inherently a good person. **Appreciation** generates a sense of self-worth. **Affection** makes us feel lovable. **Allowing** gives us the freedom to pursue our own deepest needs, values, and wishes.

Consider the following questions:

- What have you learned about yourself and your recovery that could inspire others working on their recovery if you share the information?
- What types of support have you developed and used?
- How could you communicate your recovery story to others?

Embracing-our-vulnerability

Share-the-burdens
 All-winners
 Inspire Help Trust
 Empowerment Empathy
 More-hope Fun Hope
 Empower-someone Support
 Compassion Listener
 More-fun
 Love-yourself-love-somebody
 Relatable Recovery
 Boundaries



A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.

Brene Brown



Advice From A Tree

- Stand Tall And Proud
- Go Out On A Limb
- Remember Your Roots
- Drink Plenty of Water
- Be Content with Your Natural Beauty
- Enjoy the View

Regina Kappis