



ADVANCING AND CELEBRATING PEER SUPPORT: OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

**Counties Manukau Mental Health and Addictions
Annual Research Symposium 2016**

Dr. Anne Scott

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS SESSION:

- Magdel Hammond
- Anne Scott
- David Cutten
- Cassandra Laskey
- Sheridan Pooley



COLLABORATORS ON PEER SUPPORT STUDY

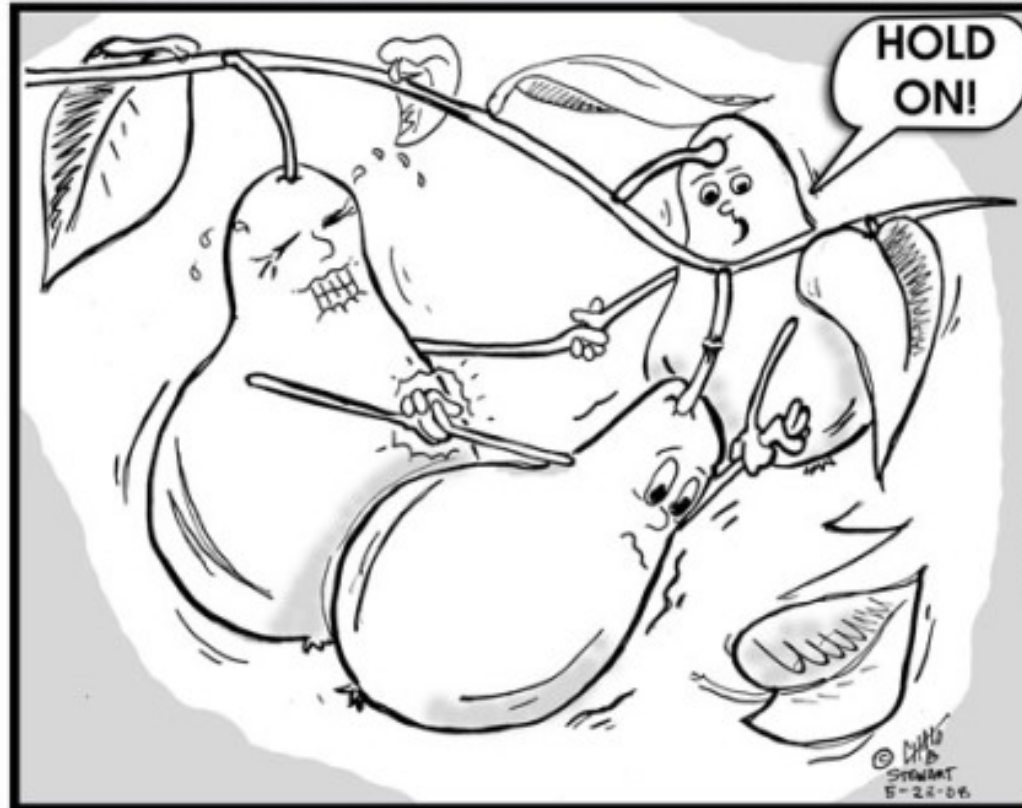
- Anne Scott
- Carolyn Doughty
- Hamuera Kahi
- And thanks to Egan Bidois, Waiatamai
Tamehana, Victoria Grace, Frank Bristol, Shery
Mead and Mary Hart



PEER SUPPORT AS A 'LIMINAL OCCUPATION'

MentalHealthHumor.com

By: Chato B. Stewart



Pear to Pear Support





THEME ONE: RELATIONSHIPS

“And to be honest, the difference between a peer service and non-peer service *is* the relationship. And the relationship creates everything else that’s different”. (Geoff, manager)

Peer support and whanaungatanga are essentially the same thing. (Steve, peer supporter)

You know, I've met a lot of people in my journey, and I've learned that if you don't judge people, if you *actually* don't, then they know it...

It's a difficult thing to understand, but connection is about that.

(Melody, peer supporter).





THEME TWO: RECOVERY

“Peer support is very recovery focused, not maintenance focused.”

(Stephanie, peer supporter).

It's like a young tree gets blown over, and has a green stick fracture in its trunk. And we put a couple of sticks each side of the trunk, and bandage it round, and put some strings out to some stakes. Now the tree's doing the mending, and the tree's doing the growing, and the bandage and the stakes are only doing supporting. They're not doing any growing. They're perhaps showing the tree, "this is the angle at which you need to grow, and we'll support you to do that and help you not go off at a tangent which is going to be bad for you." But you're going to have to do it. So peer support, for me, is a wee bit like that.

(Deborah, peer supporter)





THEME THREE: LEARNING

Q: How is peer support different from a friendship?

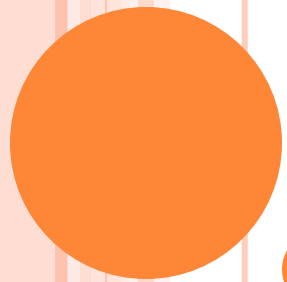
A: Because friends might just go out and have a good time together. “Whereas to me a peer relationship, there’s an element of shared learning. You are in that relationship because you share something you want to learn together” (Lydia, manager).

“Peer support is a very deep thing, you know. And recovery and wellbeing’s a very deep thing as well. You could almost say recovery is like a spiritual experience. But I would say it’s certainly a critical learning experience. It’s an experience of true learning. And if you look at learning environments and recovery environments, they’re the same thing”.
(Geoff, manager).



People fall over a number of times and you're just there; dust them off and keep going. Don't try and prevent them... [This] does [work]. People don't feel pushed, they don't feel forced. They feel respected. They feel they can have their own approach. It provides that dignity word, that respect word. Respect is not preventing people from making mistakes. Respect is letting people find their own way, and follow their own choices, and still be there. (Velda, manager)





DEALING WITH RISK

A DIFFERENT WAY OF SEEING RISK

- Challenge to the idea that all consumers are ‘a risk’.
- ‘Having those conversations’: containing risk within the relationship
- Self awareness, and dealing with one’s own anxieties

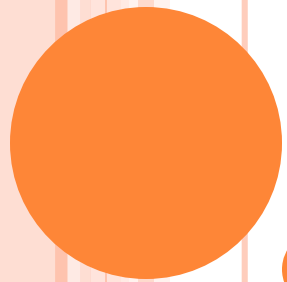


And where I think a big difference is that we see the person and whatever their illness is, is part of them but it's not who they are. And I think that's a big difference. And because of that we don't feel fear to actually talk to people about things. If someone's sitting with me, telling me that they want to overdose and stuff, it doesn't freak me out. I'll talk to them about it. I think other people would want to medicate to stop them wanting to feel like that. (Stephanie, peer supporter).



One team's coming from a very risk averse, medical model, approach. And we're coming from an opportunity, risk is opportunity and if you don't take any risk you don't learn anything, sort of approach. But the safety's in, I guess safety's not quite the right word. The *container* is the relationship, the peer relationship. (Geoff, manager)

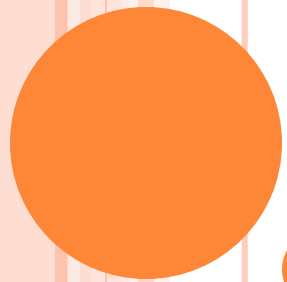




MANAGING BOUNDARIES

For us, there's that companionship, that respect and *aroha* which are really integral to the *mahi* we do. We will *awhi* and hug. You know, we have some of our *whanau* say they love us, and we'll say we love you back. You don't get that in a professional context. (Vanessa, manager).





TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

THREE DISCOURSES AROUND TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS IN PEER SUPPORT

- Health professionalism discourse
- Grassroots discourse
- Transformational peer support discourse





IN CONCLUSION...

“I guess our endgame is to be exceptionally skilled at relationships” (Rick, manager).