

PeerWorks



Annual Conference

May 9-10, 2023

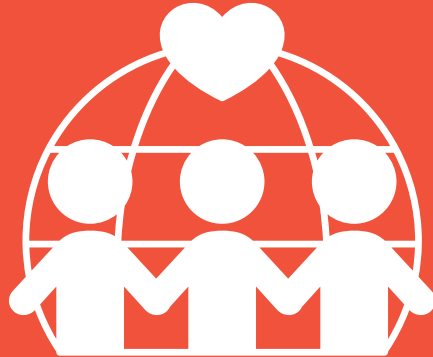
**Location: BMO IFL
3550 Pharmacy Ave,
Scarborough, ON M1W 3E8**



To register for the conference, click [here](#)

Conference Themes: Gathering Together Dreaming Together Transforming Together

This year's conference will be held-in person at the BMO IFL. This will be an opportunity to reconnect with our vibrant peer support community members. We look forward to seeing you all there.



Throughout the conference, attendees will explore this year's themes through networking sessions, learning about the history of Consumer/Survivor movement, hearing about different research projects and program happening throughout the province, and contributing to an organizational mapping project.

CONFERENCE AGENDA (MAY 9TH)

8:30-9:00 AM

Welcome and Conference Opening

9:00-10:30 AM

**Remembering our Origin Story:
The Psychiatric Survivor Movement(s) in Canada,
Consumer/Survivor-Governed Organizations,
and Mutual Aid**

10:30-10:45 AM

Break

10:45-11:45 AM

Gathering Together Networking Session

11:45-12:45 PM

**Underhoused & Underrepresented:
Helping Gender Diverse Peers Thrive**

12:45-2:00 PM

Lunch

2:00-3:00 PM

**Work as Recovery:
Warning Signs of Dystopian Futures?**

3:00-3:15 PM

Break

3:15-4:15 PM

Dreaming Together Networking Session

6:00 PM

Dinner and Lighthouse Awards Ceremony



CONFERENCE AGENDA (MAY 10TH)

8:45-9:00 AM

Welcome

9:00-10:30 AM

**"You start from when you're at":
Research findings, recommendations and strategies for
change from Toronto's Supporting Peer Work (SPW)
project**

10:30-11:00 AM

Break and Checkout

11:00-11:30 AM

Innovative Peer Program

11:30-12:30 PM

Transforming Together Networking Session

12:30-12:45 PM

Closing

12:45 PM

Lunch



Remembering our Origin Story: The Psychiatric Survivor Movement(s) in Canada, Consumer/Survivor-Governed Organizations, and Mutual Aid

Presenters: Tanya Shute and Allan Strong

This dynamic and interactive workshop will focus on the professional development of peer workers and volunteers (either newer workers or those who might enjoy a refresher), demonstrating our contemporary peer practice and consumer/survivor programs and organizations in the psychiatric survivor movement(s) that established them. Tanya Shute and Allan Strong have been in peer service and leadership roles for the past few decades, and will discuss how the movement shaped peer work in Ontario/Canada and how our work must continue to honour the legacy of the activists of the movement. Excerpts from the video “What a Long Strange Trip it’s Been” will be screened.

Speakers Biographies

Tanya Shute is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Laurentian University. She is also a former employee of Krasman Centre and a former PeerWorks board member.

Allan Strong is retired from a 40 year career in mental health and is a former PeerWorks Board member.

“You start from when you’re at”: Research findings, recommendations and strategies for change from Toronto’s Supporting Peer Work (SPW) project
Presenters: Supporting Peer Work (SPW) team

This interactive workshop presents the findings from the Supporting Peer Work (SPW) project which studied working conditions of people hired for their lived/living experience in “low barrier” social service agencies across the GTA in the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the SPW team will share how white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, and other interlocking forms of social power create and maintain exploitative working conditions, and our recommendations for what agencies can and should do differently. Participants will leave with strategies to begin conversations at their own workplaces about how to better support the work of peers.

Speakers Biographies

Supporting Peer Work (SPW) is a community-guided participatory action research project funded by a College and Community Innovation Fund grant. It consists of Primary Investigator griffin epstein; Research Coordinator Julia Walter; Working for Change Community Partner Representative Dawnmarie Harriott; and six individuals currently or recently employed in frontline social service positions reserved for people with lived/living expertise (“peers”): Andre Hermanstyne, Maria Scotton, Madelyn Gold, Suwaida Farah, Lindsay Jennings and Michael Nurse. Every member of the SPW team identifies as having lived/living experience of contact with the social service system.

Underhoused & Underrepresented: Helping Gender Diverse Peers Thrive Presenters: Carl Cruise-Baxter and Alex Andras

With such a high demand for gender affirming care, why is it so hard to find? The Trans Peer Outreach team strives to help break those barriers, allowing trans/non-binary/gender questioning folx to meet with a Trans Peer Outreach Worker and discuss pathways and available supports in the gender affirmation process. This presentation will discuss how Trans Peer Outreach works, how fellow peer workers can better work with gender diverse people, trans safe housing initiatives and how to better be in tune to the unique needs of the 2SLGBTQ+ population.

Speakers Biographies

Carl Cruise-Baxter (they/them) is a H.O.P.E. Learning Centre Peer Specialist and previous Trans Peer Outreach Worker. They live in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough. Outside of work, Carl is a collage artist, roller derby player, and cat & rat dad. They are passionate about community care and advocacy.

Alex Andras (he/they) is a Trans Peer Outreach Worker living in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough who has been working in the field since graduating Humber College in 2018. Alex plays on an all-transgender ice hockey team outside of work and loves a good book on a rainy day.

Innovative Peer Program

Presenters: Maxine Gareau and Arif Majeed

The "Innovative Peer Program" is a peer support program that has achieved great success in the Canadian Mental Health Association, North Bay and District, even after 3 years of divestment and restructuring of Peer Support Programs throughout the pandemic. The program highlights the direction toward success with mutual respect and keeping Peer autonomy alive. The Innovative Peer Program leverages the successful journey that started in 2020 from lockdown to back to in-person peer programming. During the lockdown, Peer Support Services offered a range of virtual programs, and after opening in person to the membership, they came up with the innovative idea of developing hybrid programs. Another innovation in peer support programming is offering these programs in addition, specialized housing, and Peer Rec Program.

Speakers Biographies

Maxine Gareau is a Director of Mental Health, Addiction, and Peer Support with CMHA North Bay & District and promotes professionalism, integrity, and inclusivity. She encourages support throughout the organization and strives to build up both clients and staff alike. She is a certified nurse who speaks French, English, and Ojibwe.

Arif Majeed has extensive experience in Peer Support Services, with a focus on program management and development. He is a Certified Peer Supporter through Peer Support Canada. He developed an innovative peer program services and served as a trainer for the Core Essential Programs at PeerWorks. He is also an advisory committee member for Peer Support Canada.

Work as Recovery: Warning Signs of Dystopian Futures? Presenter: Calvin Prowse

In this presentation, I explore how a discourse of “work as recovery” that frames peer support in terms of its benefits for peer support workers provides one possible explanation for the devaluing of peer support. I will outline how framing labour as a form of therapy and rehabilitation has facilitated labour exploitation in 19th century insane asylums and contemporary sheltered workshops. I draw on these examples to identify the discourse of “work as recovery” as an early warning sign of a future in which the labour of peer supporters is further devalued, underpaid, and exploited as a cost-saving mechanism for the state.

Speakers Biographies

Calvin Prowse (they/them) is a grassroots peer worker/researcher and an MA student in the Critical Disability Studies program at York University. Their current research is centred on (re)imagining the possible futures of peer support by exploring the echoes of the past, trends of the present, and dreams for the future.

Dreaming Together Networking Session **Presenters: Calvin Prowse and Colene Allen**

One concern within the peer support sector is the lack of opportunities for professional advancement. This can make it difficult for peer support workers to imagine a future for themselves, in which they move into different roles. In this session, we will (re)imagine our futures by brainstorming possible pathways for professional advancement. The goal of this session is to open up the future by developing a list of possible roles that could benefit from peer support approaches, knowledges, skills, and lived experience, in order to provide peer workers with ideas for the next steps in their careers.

Speakers Biographies

Calvin Prowse (they/them) is a grassroots peer worker/researcher and an MA student in the Critical Disability Studies program at York University. Their current research is centred on (re)imagining the possible futures of peer support by exploring the echoes of the past, trends of the present, and dreams for the future.

Colene Allen (she/her/elle) has worked as both a volunteer and paid peer facilitator for over ten years. Currently working towards a Practitioner's Certificate for Mental Health in the Workplace from Pacific Coast University, Colene is employed by the Links To Work program as a Job Coach. Colene spent two years working as an Emergency Shelter Support Worker for the House of Friendship ShelterCare program with men experiencing homelessness, physical and mental health challenges, and substance use challenges.

Gathering Together Networking Session

Presenter: TBA

Make connections, meet your 'peers' and find out what's happening in other parts of the province.

Transforming Together Networking Session

Presenter: Mar Mohammed

How can we work towards building the systems, society and world that we want to see?



The Organization Mapping Project

Tanya Shute, and the research assistants on the data collection project with PeerWorks, will host a table where conference attendees can stop by and “place” their organization on the “map”. We will create a large visual – perhaps a conference poster-size document, or something similar that has prompts for organization autonomy types (e.g. completely independent/autonomous to flow through – to amalgamated – to de-amalgamated etc.). Participants won’t have to show the name of their organization on the map if they do not wish.

Tanya Shute is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at Laurentian University. She is also a former employee of Krasman Centre and a former PeerWorks board member.

Zine Table

Come visit Calvin at the Zine Table to see some of the zines that they have made throughout the years, and pick up copies to take home with you!

PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES



We encourage participants to attend to their personal needs and to attend workshops/participate to their comfort level. We have secured a room large enough to allow for participants to distance as they feel comfortable and we will have masks and hand sanitizer available at the conference.

Here is the [LINK](#) to BMO's Health and Safety Measures if you would like more information