



Staying Grounded:

Preventing Peer Drift and
Building Resilience in Peer
Support

May 25, 2025, PeerWorks and Peer Support Canada
Conference





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What We're Really Talking About

This session isn't just about peer drift or boundaries. It's about what happens when peer support roles are working inside systems that don't always reflect peer values — and what we can do to stay grounded in the work we believe in.

By naming these challenges and addressing them collectively, we build resilience — in our peer supporters, and in the programs and systems that support them.



Understanding Peer Drift, Burnout & Moral Injury

Peer drift

Emotional fatigue

Burnout

Moral injury

Small Group Discussions

We're going to spend the next part of our session in small groups, digging into three core ideas that sit at the heart of today's topic.

These are:

- 1. Peer Drift as a Program Risk**
- 2. Wellness and Self-Care as Organizational, Not Just Personal**
- 3. Collaboratively Creating Agreements for Sustainability and Support**



Peer Drift as a Program Risk

Here are some prompts to get you started:

- What does “drifting” look or feel like — in yourself or others? How do you know it’s happening?
- Where do you feel the most tension between your peer values and the expectations of the system or team
- What helps you or others stay grounded and connected to the peer role?
- Can documentation, communication styles, or boundary expectations contribute to peer drift
- What’s helped bring you or your team back to peer-centered practice?



Peer Drift as a Program Risk

- Feeling pressure to sound or act “more clinical” than you’d like
- Avoiding mutuality or self-disclosure out of fear of being judged as “unprofessional”
- Letting go of boundaries to be helpful
- Focusing on fixing or advising, rather than holding space
- Using language that centers deficit or diagnosis instead of connection
- Feeling disconnected from the values that drew you to peer support in the first place
- Documenting or engaging in ways that mirror clinical norms without peer-centered alternatives
- Realizing you’re more focused on system expectations than peer relationships



Wellness and Self-Care as Organizational, Not Just Personal

Here are some prompts to get you started:

- How does your organization currently support (or not support) peer supporter wellness and self-care?
- What's the difference between wellness and self-care that's encouraged vs. wellness that's built in?
- What small policies, habits, or cultural norms could help make wellness and self-care feel like a shared responsibility?
- What would it look like to write wellness and self-care into your team culture or structure?

Wellness and Self-Care as Organizational, Not Just Personal

- Wellness is supported through team check-ins, or protected time for reflection
- Policies name peer supporter wellness as essential — not optional or reactive
- Self-care is seen as a shared value, not just a personal task
- Leaders model vulnerability and boundary-setting — and invite it from others
- There's language and structure around wellness in supervision or performance conversations
- Peer supporters can say “I need a pause” without guilt
- Wellness is baked into the culture — not bolted on as an afterthought

Collaboratively Creating Agreements for Sustainability and Support

Here are some prompts to get you started:

- When you think of a policy or agreement that actually worked — what made it feel real or relevant?
- What does it look like when someone's input is heard and valued — even if they don't get the final say?
- What peer support values do you wish were more visible in your team's policies or procedures?
- What would it look like to create wellness or self-care agreements as a team, not just as individuals?



Collaboratively Creating Agreements for Sustainability and Support

- They're grounded in real experiences — not written in isolation or behind closed doors.
- Staff, peer supporters, and leadership are meaningfully engaged in shaping them.
- Input is welcomed and respected, even if leadership makes the final call.
- It's not about consensus — it's about gathering wisdom before making decisions.
- Co-creating policy might feel counterintuitive in top-down systems — but it builds ownership, trust, and sustainability.
- They reflect peer values like collaboration, mutual respect, and shared responsibility.
- Team agreements or wellness plans are co-created and revisited regularly



Reflecting & Drafting

This is your time to reflect, collaborate, and begin creating something that could live beyond this workshop.

Consider:

What do I need to stay grounded?

What is a team agreement you'd look to see in your setting?

How can we invite others into this conversation?

What would be a small step toward a shared self-care or wellness agreement?

Write what is one value you want to protect in your peer support role or program.

**Peer support is sustainable
when we stay connected —to
what matters, to each other,
and to why we started.**

Thank You for Staying Grounded With Us



Thank you!

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