



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Waterloo Wellington



**SELF HELP &
PEER SUPPORT**

Reflexive Practice Guideline for Peer Support



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Outline

- About the project
- Reflexive Practice defined
- Application to Peer Support
- Tools for engaging in Reflexive Practice
- Excerpts from Peer Support consultation process
- Q&A

About the Project





Reflexive Practice Guideline for Peer Support

- A project by The Center for Excellence in Peer Support
- The objective is to find out how we can best support peers who work among interdisciplinary teams and in mainstream mental health and addiction agencies.
- How we can address some of the issues that we are finding when peers are working among interdisciplinary teams.



Reflexive Practice

- Reflexivity has been used as a way to increase accountability and improve professional practices
- As a concept, it can mean introspection, but as a practice it brings into question interpersonal relationships and broader contextual issues
- 3 main themes of reflexive practice
 - The journey to self exploration
 - The exploration of power relations
 - Understanding the role our emotions play

(D'Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007)

Application to Peer Support

Looking Outward and Looking Inward

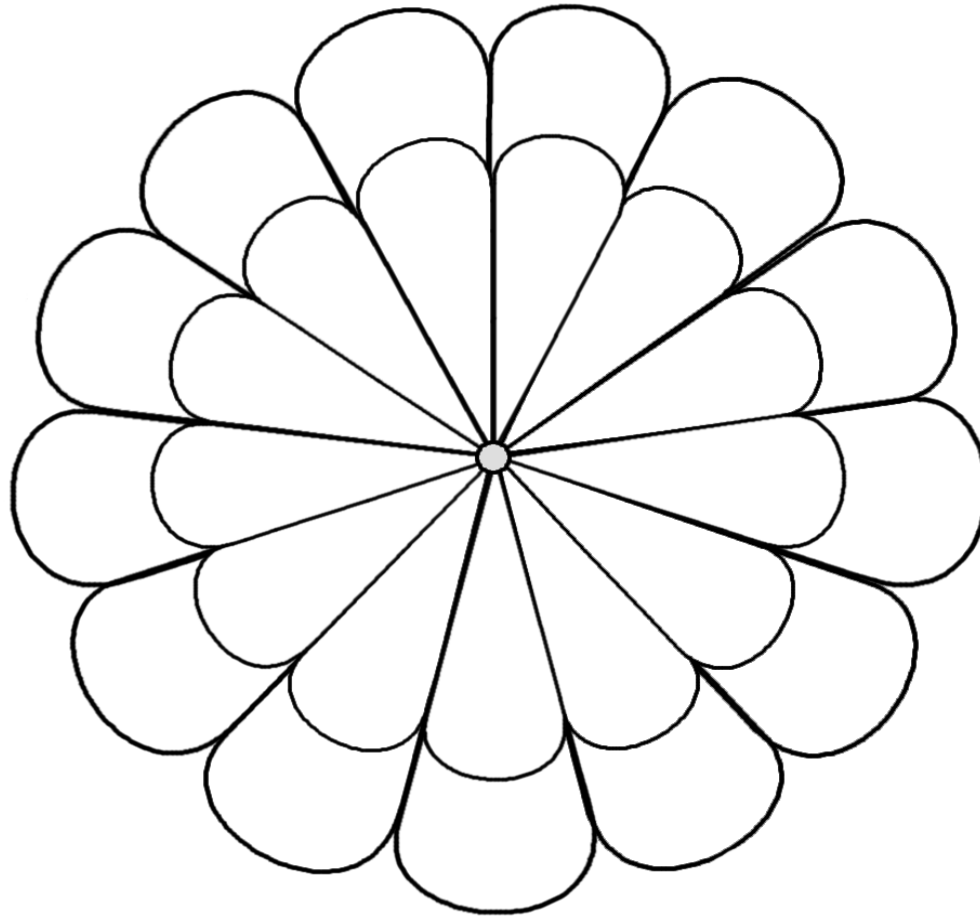


- Recognizing unnamed assumptions and biases
- Identifying issues of power and subjectivity
- Identifying the discourses shaping interpretations or narratives
- emotional responses, selective awareness, interactions, values, belief systems, lived experience
- social location/social identities in interaction with those we walk along side

Power Flower for Peer Support

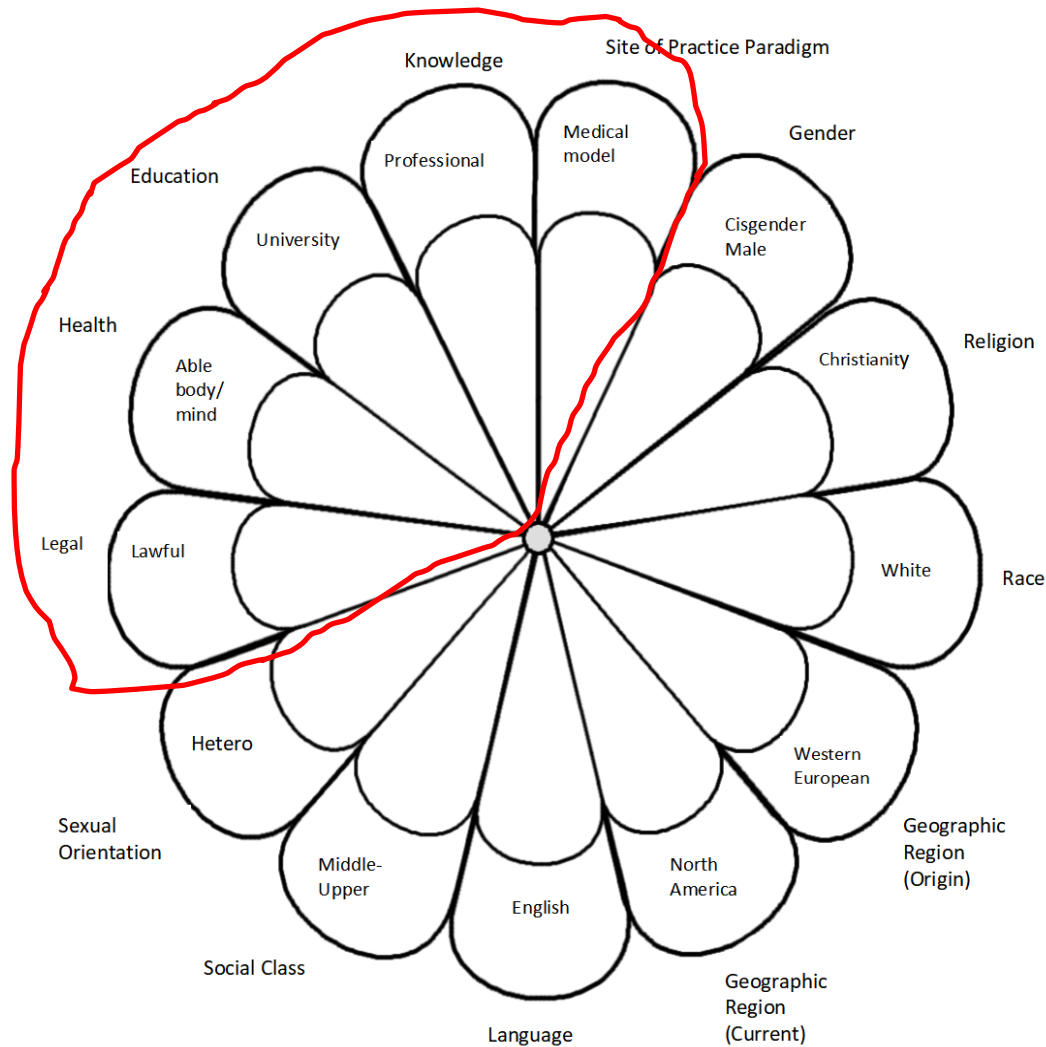
- Objective:
 - Social Location
 - Who's knowledge is oppressed/privileged?
 - Ensure peers are fostering diversity and inclusion

Example of The Power Flower



Adapted from (Racism
for Reel, 2002)

Power Flower for Peer Support



Specific Areas of Focus

Legal – Lawful/ Criminalized

Health – Able bodied – minded/
DisAbilities of any type

Education – University/ College or
Secondary School

Knowledge – Professional/Lived
Experience

Site of Practice – Mainstream/CSI

Reflexive Writing

- Objective
 - To support peer staff in processing some of the hidden or unspoken conflicts they may be experiencing
 - To aid in the process of questioning assumptions
 - To help peers practice within peer values
 - To help peers understand how to intentionally use their lived experience

Reflexive Writing

“But I feel happy when I’m helping”

- What nurtures you when you help people supported?
- Why do you want to help people?
- What are your motives/intentions to helping?
- What does it mean to be a helper?

(Mandell, 2012)

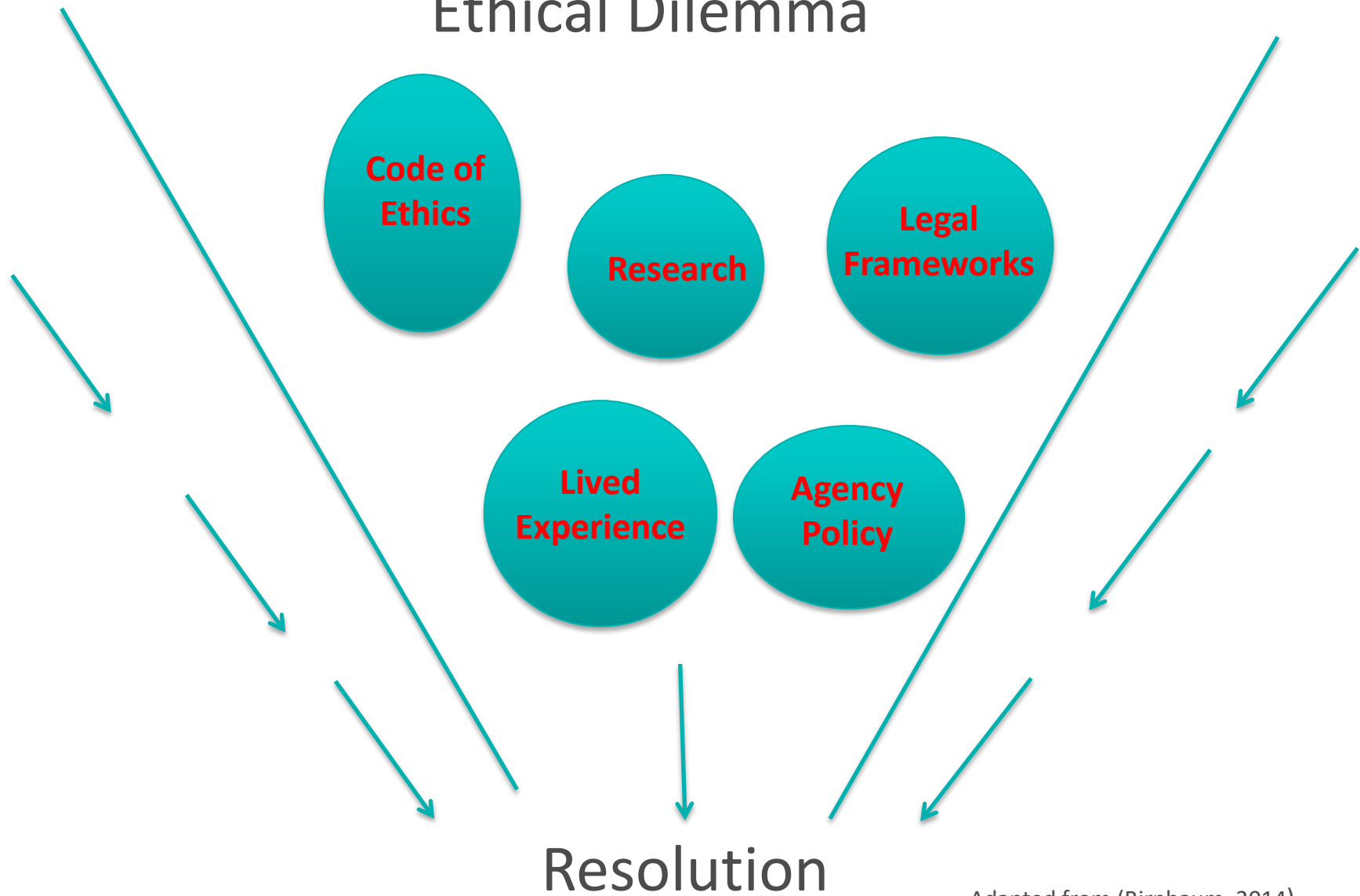
Ethical Decision Making Model

- Many practice ethical dilemmas are value-laden, particularly when there are two competing values at play - example support versus control
- Peers must learn to integrate knowledge derived from these sources to help them resolve ethical dilemmas
 - **Code of ethics** – if affiliated with a college
 - **Research** – evidence best practices, what others have learned
 - **Legal frameworks** – PHIPA, Mental Health Act,
 - **Agency policy** – site of practice policy, Ex. hospital policy
 - **Lived Experience** – Reflexive practice
- Reflexive practices help to uncover biases, experiences, values, assumptions, power, social location, all of which inform our decision making process

(Birnbaum & Lach, 2014)



Ethical Dilemma



Adapted from (Birnbaum, 2014)

Questions that guided the Reflexive Practice Consultation process

Do you have any feedback for me?

What could I do better?

What will help you hone in on your reflexive
practice in the future?

How do you understand
reflexive practice?

How can a reflexive practice
help you in your role as a
peer?

What aspects ring true for
you?

What aspects of reflexive
practice do you not get?

Excerpts from the Peer Support consultation process:

“That there are power differentials among the interdisciplinary team in which I work and the importance of not only being aware of these differentials but also about the importance of being aware of the impact they can have on my emotions, which may in turn impact my ability to perform my job, thus ultimately impacting the people I serve “

“ I see reflexive practice as the exploration and questioning for deeper understanding of how my past life experiences, beliefs, biases, and social location, both consciously and unconsciously, impact my interactions and communications with others (and myself as well). These interactions may be affecting my personal and professional relationships in both a positive and a negative manner.”

Contact Information

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