



Experience

MY INTERNSHIP

PEERWORKS PEER SUPPORT CORE ESSENTIALS

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MY INTERNSHIP: OVERVIEW



The Internship is an integral, but optional, component of the PeerWorks Peer Support Core Essentials™ Program. The intention is to provide participants with an opportunity to:

- apply the knowledge gained and demonstrate the skills practiced in the training sessions, within Peer/Peer Supporter relationships,
- gain and/or expand the experience of delivering Peer Support,
- orient peers, colleagues and others within the Internship setting to the Peer Supporter role.

It's optional:

Doing an internship is completely optional for those who have achieved a Level 1R from their instructor; however it is required to earn the Level 2, or “PeerWorks-Certified Peer Supporter”. People who are already employed in peer support or have relevant work experience might feel no need to do an internship – they may feel they can find employment on the strength of their Level 1R plus their work resume. On the other hand, their current job duties may enable them to complete an internship with very little difficulty.

Internship experiences may include:

- Incorporating the Internship within your current Peer Supporter role either within a CSI or non Peer provider setting
- Establishing a new Peer Supporter role for the purpose of the internship either within a CSI or non Peer provider setting

STEPS:

Successful completion of Level 02 (Certified) includes the following steps:

1. Independently negotiating and completing an Internship within 18 months of completion of Level 1R by:

- a) Securing an Internship Site and Site Supervisor
- b) Submitting an Internship Plan to PeerWorks (as agreed by intern and site supervisor)
- c) Completing 50 Internship hours.
 - Hours are tracked and recorded on an Internship Log. Submit to PeerWorks a signed internship log every 10 internship hours
 - Only hours giving direct person to person support are logged. Submit an intern reflection with each 10-hour log.

2. At end of 50 hours:

- Intern will submit Final Intern Reflection to PeerWorks
- The Site Supervisor will collect and submit to PeerWorks
 - private and confidential reflections from 5 Peers who receive support
 - Site Supervisor evaluation



Internship Plan

The Internship Plan conveys your intention to complete an internship and includes key information about the internship including: Intern's name and contact information, Internship site(s) and location(s), Site Contact name and contact information, a description of how the internship duties will utilize skills learned in training during person-to-person peer support, and an Internship schedule or timeline.

Internship Log

The Internship Log tracks 1-1 peer/peer supporter contacts (date and duration of contact), highlights the contact focus and names the core skills utilized during the interaction.

The log should not include any details of the peer relationship that would enable identification of the peer, or could be considered confidential and/or private. The log will need to be signed by the Peer Supporter and the Site Supervisor.

Internship Reflection

The Internship Reflection provides the intern with the opportunity to review and describe the experience delivering Peer Support. Reflections may include for example - what was done well, areas of growth, comfort level in certain situations, successes and challenges, training goals. Reflections are to be strengths focused and highlight learning around self awareness, self responsibility and self care. The log should not include any details of the peer relationship that would enable identification of the peer, or could be considered confidential and/or private.

Internship Final Reflection

At the conclusion of the Internship (50 hours), the Intern will complete an overall review of the experience including a self assessment of how you have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and qualities of a peer supporter, your strengths and areas of growth, your learning around self awareness, self responsibility, self care as well as what will further support your development as a Peer Supporter.

Peer Reflection

In orienting prospective peers, Interns need to have an open discussion with the person receiving peer support about their involvement with the PeerWorks Peer Support Core Essentials™ Program, the Internship as well as their role as an Intern. Also to be included in the orientation is informing the peer about the opportunity they have to *anonymously* share their reflection on the peer support experience. A minimum of 5 reflections are to be submitted in a way that the Intern cannot read them.



Site Supervisor

The role of the Site Supervisor is to offer administrative and other support to the Intern throughout the internship, with both the establishment as well as the fulfillment of the internship. The Site Supervisor also ensures the intern is oriented to the program or service and the policies and procedures the intern is expected to follow. Upon receipt of an Internship Plan, PeerWorks will send a confirmation/approval email to the Intern and Site Supervisor after addressing any concerns or adjustments. The Intern is to keep the Site Supervisor informed about the internship experience as it unfolds – including hours as well as highlighting triumphs, challenges and learning. A Site Supervisor’s Reflection is to be submitted at the conclusion of the Internship. ***Paid or Volunteer?***

PeerWorks advocates for paid peer support positions to be incorporated into every mental health program, service and institution. At the same time, we recognize that potential employers look for people with job experience, and that many of our peers may have missed out on work opportunities while they were focusing on the important work of recovering their health. Furthermore, people who receive income supports often face limitations and barriers to earning additional income, and may prefer volunteering to make meaning in their lives.

For this reason we leave it up to the training participant to pursue paid or volunteer internships, according to their personal needs and goals. However, to avoid exploitation of volunteerism, we will monitor and, if need be, limit the number of internships any given program may use to test out peer support before committing to paid positions. It is not our intention to see PeerWorks-trained Interns used as a steady stream of unpaid workers.

Exceptions

PeerWorks realizes that not all sites, situations or positions will exactly fit internship criteria. We are willing to negotiate exceptions or adjustments where necessary and where possible. Whether your circumstances seem usual or exceptional, DO NOT begin working and tracking internship hours without first consulting PeerWorks and having your plan approved.

Next Steps?

If you receive a Level 1R from your trainers and wish to do an internship, notify PeerWorks by email at internship@peerworks.ca. You will receive notice of the next Internship webinar date (please note that attending an internship webinar is not required to complete an internship) and PeerWorks will email you the necessary internship planning documents.

Database

PeerWorks keeps a database of all training registrants and participants. We use it to track who has been trained, and what level they have reached in training. If you choose to do an internship, the database will be used to track when we receive your plan, your internship logs, reflections and final evaluations.

We also use the database to compile non-identifying reports and statistics as part of our accountability to our funder. The data will help us monitor the performance of our trainers, ensure the internship time limits remain appropriate, and identify when and where it is time to limit unpaid internships at a program.



As we fulfill our intention to create additional training pieces or modules, some of them (such as the Diabetes & Mental Health Peer Support training for example) may have a basic peer training as pre-requisites, and this database will identify who we should invite, notify or allow to register for these offerings.

We may also use the database to notify past trainees of any free or user-pay webinars, trainings, consultations or surveys of peer supporters that we feel will be educational, capacity-building or informative to advocacy for peer support.

The database also gives us the ability (with your written permission) to confirm with potential employers your training.

Keep in touch:

If you have given PeerWorks a work email address or used someone else's email address, we strongly encourage you to provide a direct personal email address before you begin an internship. People change jobs, leave organizations, and move. Organizations move, integrate or switch internet providers and change their email addresses. Our experience to date has taught us that most participants who provide contact information other than their own will eventually become impossible to reach. Certificates, emails, questions are not always forwarded by intermediaries. With a small staff and limited budget, PeerWorks cannot invest the HR time or money to track people down or re- send undeliverable mail. Please demonstrate the self-responsibility you have discussed in training, by managing your own communications with PeerWorks.

Contacts:

All Internship documentation is to be submitted to

internship@peerworks.ca

For consultation around the internship, contact Kiki Chang at

kiki@peerworks.ca or via phone at 416.484.8785 ext. 4 or 1.866.681.6661.