



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Unit code: F9DV 34

Superclass: PH

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to provide candidates with the knowledge and skills and values required to provide peer support. It will also enable candidates to understand and reflect on the peer relationship and how this can be used to support recovery. Candidates will gain knowledge from a range of theories and concepts used to inform the peer support role, they will gain a greater understanding of the principles and perspectives of the role. Candidates will consider the work role and function of a peer support worker and relate this to their own personal experience.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Apply a range of theories and concepts in the peer support role.
- 2 Develop relationships based on peer support principles.
- 3 Understand perspectives of the work role.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

To enable candidates to complete this Unit they should be able to demonstrate awareness of and active involvement in mental health support. This can be within the capacity of paid employment or as a volunteer. It is preferred the individual providing the peer support has a personal experience of mental health problems.

It is recommended that candidates have good written and oral communication skills. This can be evidenced by a qualification at SCQF level 5 or above. The skills to undertake this Unit could also be demonstrated by the process of application and interview in the absence of certificated learning.

General information (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills and Core Skills components of *Communication, Problem Solving* and *Working with Others* at SCQF level 6 in this Unit, although there is no certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment

In order to achieve this Unit, candidates are required to present sufficient evidence that they have met all the knowledge and skills requirements for each Outcome. Details of these requirements are given for each Outcome; an integrated approach to assessment is encouraged.

An understanding of both theories and their relation to practice are required therefore the assessment must include both the requirement to discuss issues and the opportunity to relate these to practice. Candidates are asked to relate learning to real work practice and are expected to produce evidence relating to the role and function of peer support.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Apply a range of theories and concepts in the peer support role.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Purpose and principles of peer support
- ◆ Role modelling, hope and belief
- ◆ Resilience
- ◆ Power, choice and control
- ◆ Labelling, identity and self-esteem
- ◆ Trauma informed peer support practice
- ◆ Strengths based approaches

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the purpose and principles of peer support
- ◆ demonstrate through practice the application of role modelling and hope in the peer support relationship, including use of self and constructive sharing of experience
- ◆ explain methods of promoting resilience
- ◆ demonstrate through practice the promotion of power, choice and control in the peer support relationship
- ◆ reflect on the effects of labelling on identity and self-esteem and identify strategies to challenge these.
- ◆ demonstrate an awareness of the effects of trauma
- ◆ demonstrate the application of a strength based approach

Assessment Guidelines

Holistic assessment presented as a portfolio of evidence using real work experience in which the candidate undertakes an analysis of their use of theories and concepts to support people to identify their desired Outcomes, set their own goals and recognise their own expertise. Candidates are asked to relate learning to real work practice and are expected to produce evidence relating to the role and function of peer support. The total word count of this portfolio should not exceed 2,500 words.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Outcome 2

Develop relationships based on peer support principles.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Establishment of peer relationships that are mutual and empathic
- ◆ Concept of the individual as expert by experience
- ◆ Key ethical and diversity issues
- ◆ Communication and recording, with a focus on active listening and recovery language
- ◆ Working with risk

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ demonstrate the ability to establish peer relationship based on mutuality and empathy
- ◆ define the concept of the individual as expert and provide an example of how this might inform practice
- ◆ demonstrate the application of values which challenge inequality
- ◆ demonstrate use of effective communication including active listening, recording and recovery language
- ◆ reflect on approaches to working with risk

Assessment Guidelines

See Outcome 1 for guidance.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Outcome 3

Understand perspectives of the work role.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Peer support environment
- ◆ Role tension and boundaries
- ◆ Safe practice, self care and confidentiality
- ◆ Role of supervision
- ◆ Setting personal goals and managing setbacks
- ◆ Change processes

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ identify what makes an environment appropriate for peer support
- ◆ identify and explain two aspects of role tension and boundaries
- ◆ identify and describe two aspects of safe practice, self care and confidentiality
- ◆ explain the role of supervision
- ◆ identify the principles of confidentiality and information sharing
- ◆ explain how goal setting would be achieved and how setbacks could be managed
- ◆ describe a process of change from personal experience

Assessment Guidelines

See Outcome 1 for guidance.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of mental health recovery and the specific role of peer support. Candidates would normally be expected to undertake this Unit after completing or simultaneously with the Unit *Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context*.

Candidates will apply a range of theories and concepts in the peer support role, consider relationships based on peer support principles and understand implications inherent in the work role.

Outcome 1

In this Outcome candidates should develop an understanding of a range of the key theories and concepts employed within the peer support role and the principles that underpin the role. The theoretical concepts should include role modelling, it's relationship to hope and belief, as well as use of power, labelling, identity and self esteem and strengths based approaches to mental health.

In addition candidates should also understand issues of power choice and control and how these can impact on resilience. In order to gain a deeper understanding of these areas candidates should be able to relate them to their own and others personal experience.

It will be important to consider the effects of trauma and the role this can play in the recovery process. In order to achieve this, candidates should learn about the principles and process of trauma informed practice.

Candidate's may bring their previous knowledge and skills to bear when considering strength based approaches and through this will become more able to select the concepts most relevant to their specific role and the needs of the individual's they are supporting. They should develop their awareness of the importance and complexities of sharing personal experience.

Outcome 2

In this Outcome candidates should learn how to establish empowering and mutually beneficial relationships in the role of peer support and this will include understanding the concept of the individual as an expert by their own experience. This may be developed through a greater awareness of communication skills in terms of non verbal communication and presentation of self.

It is suggested candidates explore how empowering mutual relationships support the recovery process in peer support. Through practice, they should demonstrate skills in developing and maintaining mutually supportive relationships.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Candidates should demonstrate awareness of diversity and equality issues and the application of values and practice.

Candidates should develop and practice active listening skills and the use of recovery language which allows them to validate experiences, they should also demonstrate the ability to record interactions appropriately.

Candidates should recognise and understand the value of promoting a recovery environment in the workplace and understand the role of positive risk-taking in the wider context of balancing risk and responsibilities in the work environment. In order to achieve this they should have an understanding of team work and be able to reflect on this through their recordings of work practice.

Outcome 3

In this Outcome the candidate will explore a range of specific perspectives on the work role, they should identify factors which make an environment appropriate for peer support. Through this learning they should gain greater clarity and understanding of the range of peer support settings and within those become able to consider role tension and boundary issues, rights and responsibilities of themselves as workers and the individuals they are supporting.

Candidates should also gain a sound understanding of the need for self care and alongside this the importance of safe practice. They should know and understand the role and function of supervision in supporting this.

Candidates should understand the principles and practice of confidentiality and information sharing and be able to recognise and accept when and what information can, should, and must be shared with relevant others.

Candidates should explain how goal setting can be achieved and how setbacks are managed. They should also describe a process of change from personal experience, identifying factors which helped or hindered this process and consider implications in relation to the work role.

The following websites give access to further information in support of this Unit.

Scottish Recovery Network: www.scottishrecovery.net

Scottish Association for Mental Health: www.samh.org.uk

SAMHSA National Center for Trauma-Informed Care: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/nctic/>

Choose Life: <http://www.chooselife.net>

Shery Mead Consulting: www.mentalhealthpeers.com

Boston Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation: www.bu.edu/cpr

Strengths Institute: www.socwel.ku.edu/Strengths/

Accurate as at August 2010.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

This Unit is being offered as part of the PDA Mental Health Peer Support at SCQF level 7. This Unit should be undertaken after completing the other Unit, *Mental Health Peer Support: Recovery Context* within the PDA process or there is opportunity for integration across the Units.

This Unit can be delivered as a stand-alone Unit for candidates who wish to gain or increase their knowledge of recovery and peer support.

Given the Evidence Requirements and the assessment process it is preferred that the candidate has a personal experience of mental health problems and is able to share personal experience to promote recovery.

Assessment

Assessment of this Unit should be carried out in an integrated fashion with other Units in the Group Award wherever possible. The recommended assessment for this Unit consists of a portfolio submitted by the candidate which covers all Evidence Requirements in Outcomes 1, 2 and 3.

The total word count of the portfolio should not exceed 2,500. The evidence in the portfolio should relate to real work activity and be authenticated by an appropriate person.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication*, *Working with Others* and *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 6 in the Unit, although there is no certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Communication (at SCQF level 6) could be evidenced by written communication through candidates producing written work in a variety of formats; oral communication will be developed through discussion, debate and evidence generated from engagement with individuals, work colleagues and other key people.

Working with Others (at SCQF level 6) could be developed as candidates work collaboratively with each other, colleagues in the workplace, key people and through the peer relationship with individuals.

Problem Solving (at SCQF level 6) could be evidenced through explanations of candidate's planning and through critical thinking and evaluation of issues that arise in discussions related to the peer support role and function.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

Open learning

This Unit would lend itself to some form of distance learning. However, this would require to be managed effectively with the organisation to ensure the authenticity of the candidate's work. The portfolio would require to be supervised by a responsible person. The evidence must be clearly recorded (by use of checklists) for the assessor so that sufficiency and authenticity can be assured.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Mental Health Peer Support: Developing Practice

This Unit has been designed to provide you with the knowledge required to develop your practice as a worker in mental health peer support.

Outcome 1

You will look at ways in which the peer relationship in mental health can provide powerful support for recovery. This will include recognising that while each person's recovery journey is unique and personal to them, the support of someone who has made a similar journey can be invaluable.

You will learn that good practice in mental health peer support is informed by the application of a range of theories and concepts. Exploring and reflecting on these will give you a deeper understanding of why and how you can use your own experience to support the recovery of someone else in the most effective way.

Outcome 2

You will demonstrate through your practice your understanding that mental health peer support is not an approach that seeks to necessarily fix people's problems — rather the peer relationship is based on mutual trust and respect and which values each person as an expert by experience. You will understand why it is important that peer supporters pay very close attention to the ways in which people think and talk about their lives, their desires and expectations and help them to discover for themselves the way forward, always recognising the strengths and resourcefulness they have within them.

This approach does not seek to deny that people experience distress or difficulty or that making changes in our lives does not involve risk. As your practice develops you will learn ways in which you can work constructively in complex situations.

Outcome 3

Focuses on your work role and the importance of maintaining your own wellbeing. It helps you to look at why this is also a key element of good practice. This Outcome also provides opportunities for you to explore the work role, self management and self care and how supervision contributes to good practice as well as to your own continuing professional development.

In drawing together the learning from all of the Unit Outcomes you will be encouraged to consider your role in promoting recovery cultures and contributing to change.

Outcomes 1, 2 and 3

You will be assessed holistically by presenting a portfolio of evidence using real work experience in which you undertake an analysis of your use of theories and concepts to support people to identify their desired Outcomes, set their own goals and recognise their own expertise. You are asked to relate learning to real work practice and are expected to produce evidence relating to the role and function of peer support. The total word count of this portfolio should not exceed 2,500 words.

General information for candidates (cont)

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