



# WA Peer Supporters' News

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Connecting a vibrant and valued network of peer supporters in WA

30<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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Hi everyone and welcome to the March of the WA Peer Supporters' newsletter!

Apologies for cross-postings and please feel free to distribute to networks.

## WAPSN Latest News

### WAPSN Update

WAPSN welcomes Renai Searle as the new Convener of the WA Peer Supporters' Network. Renai joined WAPSN in 2018 after working and volunteering in peer support roles in various sectors since 2008. Renai is passionate about advancing the Peer Workforce in all sectors and continuing to develop and grow the WA Peer Supporters Network.

In the interest of developing the WAPSN, we are seeking a leadership group to guide and direct the activities and focus of WAPSN. We wish to hear from our members in what they would like to see from WAPSN. A focused EOI will be developed in the coming weeks. Right now, we are accepting emails of interest or suggestions to [info@peersupportwa.org.au](mailto:info@peersupportwa.org.au).



WA Peer Supporters Network

*Your place to connect, learn and grow.*

## May WA Peer Supporters' Network Meeting

WAPSN invites members to come to the next WAPSN meeting. After our 'blue skies' planning session at the end of 2020, we will be changing the meetings slightly, and bringing in some 'life skills' sessions for Peer Workers and Peer Supporters. In the May meeting we will be discussing resumes and transferrable skills. This will be followed by a co-reflection space. We hope to see you there!

**You are invited to join us for the next WAPSN meeting.**

**Date:** Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May

**Time:** 10am - 12.30pm

**Place:** CoMHWA Training Room, 14/275 Belmont Avenue, Cloverdale

**RSVP:** [info@peersupportwa.org.au](mailto:info@peersupportwa.org.au)

## ABC's of Peer Work

WAPSN recognises that Peer Support is at the heart of humanity. Peer Support is utilised in schools, in mental health, in health, in alcohol and other drugs, parenting, sexual health, cultural groups, industries and much more.

Informal, volunteer, paid and unintentional Peer Support happens in so many communities and we wanted to take a moment to celebrate and recognise the various spaces in which Peer Support is occurring. We popped together this ABC's of Peer Work to highlight some of the great areas utilising Peer Support.

WAPSN recognises that we often highlight mental health Peer Support. However, we celebrate the diversity within Peer Work and recognise the benefits and mutual learning we can have from our peers providing Peer Support in various sectors.

Would you like to share spaces you have engaged with Peer Support? We are always looking for initiatives to promote, guest speakers, education and training opportunities to share and to broaden our membership. Please email any suggestions to [info@peersupportwa.org.au](mailto:info@peersupportwa.org.au)

**WA Peer Supporters Network**  
Connecting a vibrant and valued network of  
Peer Supporters in WA

**PEER SUPPORT IS EVERYWHERE!  
WE CELEBRATE AND RECOGNISE THE  
HARD WORK OF PEER SUPPORTERS**

THE ABC'S OF PEER WORK WAS CREATED TO DEMONSTRATE THE  
DIVERSITY OF COMMUNITIES BENEFITED BY PEER SUPPORT.  
**WHERE ELSE HAVE YOU SEEN PEER SUPPORT?**

[www.wapsn.org.au](http://www.wapsn.org.au)  
[info@peersupportwa.org.au](mailto:info@peersupportwa.org.au)

Generously hosted by Consumers of Mental Health WA,  
with funding support from the Mental Health Commission of Western Australia

<b>A</b> Autism	<b>B</b> Breastfeeding	<b>C</b> Carers	<b>D</b> Disability	<b>E</b> Endometriosis
<b>F</b> Fibromyalgia	<b>G</b> Grief	<b>H</b> Heart Health	<b>I</b> Infant Loss	<b>J</b> Justice
<b>K</b> Kidney Health	<b>L</b> Liver Health	<b>M</b> Multiple Sclerosis	<b>N</b> Neonatal	<b>O</b> Opioid Safety
<b>P</b> Phobias	<b>Q</b> Queer & LGBTI+	<b>R</b> Refugees	<b>S</b> Sexual Health	<b>T</b> Trauma
<b>U</b> Ulcerative Colitis	<b>V</b> Veterans	<b>W</b> Weight	<b>X</b> Xeroderma	<b>Y</b> Youth

## WAPSN Member Spotlight

**Introducing Emma!** Emma is the President of SWEAR WA, Western Australia's Peer sex worker organisation.

Emma has represented SWEAR WA on community radio and in podcasts; as a guest speaker at university symposiums; and recently had her op-ed article regarding sex work published by several national news outlets. Emma also holds a tertiary qualification in Community Services and is a nationally recognised SANTAP Sex Work Peer Educator.

Emma's favourite pastimes include daydreaming about dismantling the patriarchy and confessing to anyone who will listen of her unrequited love of 'bin chickens'.



To know more about SWEAR WA and the work they do, visit [www.sexworkerrightswa.org](http://www.sexworkerrightswa.org)

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## Events and Training

### Upcoming Peer Work Training Courses at CoMHWA

#### What is Peer Work?

This information session is designed for people who are exploring if being a Peer Worker is for them. If you have a lived experience of mental health distress and feel you have progressed along your recovery pathway to contribute as a Peer and would like to know about Peer Work this session is suitable for you. You will be provided with an overview of the Peer and Consumer advocacy sectors and introduced to values and key aspects of what it means to be a Peer Worker.

**Date:** Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April

**Time:** 9.30am - 12.30pm

**REGISTER:** [admin@comhwa.org.au](mailto:admin@comhwa.org.au)

#### Intentional Disclosure of Lived Experience for Peer Workers

This workshop addresses the importance of purposeful lived experience sharing in Peer Work roles and Consumer Representation. Key elements and aspects of sharing lived experience safely, ethically and effectively considering a trauma informed and recovery-based approach are discussed.

**Date:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May

**Time:** 9.30am - 2.00pm

**Register:** [admin@comhwa.org.au](mailto:admin@comhwa.org.au)



## ASPIRE Speaker Series

Inviting all Peer Support Workers and graduates of the Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work to attend the ASPIRE Speaker Series. These events will be a wonderful opportunity to hear from an expert in their field and network with other Peer Support Workers.

The Speaker Series will be:

- Held bi-monthly (April, June, August, October)
- Covering topics tailored to Peer Support Work
- An opportunity to network
- Including light refreshments.

**April's guest speaker:** Phoebe Wilson – Soldiers & Sirens

**Topic:** Professional boundaries, sharing lived experience safely and working with clients/consumers/people with PTSD

**Date:** Tuesday 13th April 2021

**Time:** 10:00–11:30am

**Location:** CoMHWA Training Room 14, 2/275 Belmont Avenue, Cloverdale.

Please note, remote/regional participants can be linked in via Zoom.

**RSVP:** Registration essential – register your attendance by Wednesday 7th April to [admin@comhwa.org.au](mailto:admin@comhwa.org.au)

[Click here to view and share the Speaker Series flyer.](#)

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## **Alternatives to Suicide Facilitator Launch Event Training EOI Open**

Alternatives to Suicide (ATS) is a peer-to-peer group support approach to suicide intervention, which has no clinical involvement. The groups focus on connection and relationship building among those who experience suicidal thoughts or feelings, or those who have made an attempt. They are facilitated by trained facilitators who have their own lived experience. The groups provide a safe space, supporting people with suicidal distress and those who are suicide survivors. It is a totally peer-run group support approach.

The Alternatives to Suicide WA Alliance is comprised of a group of organisations and individuals which support this approach to suicide intervention, as it provides choice and fills a gap in the current continuum of responses to suicide.

The Alternatives to Suicide WA Alliance, led by ConnectGroups (peak body for Support Groups in WA) and in partnership with Recovery Matters, HelpingMinds, CoMHWA, DISCHARGED, Australian Childhood Foundation and Curtin University, is responsible for leading the expansion of the ATS in WA following the receipt of a Lotterywest seed funding grant.

This is an invaluable opportunity to become a facilitator and to contribute to the establishment of the Alternatives to Suicide Model across WA.

View the Information Sheet and Expression of Interest Form online: <https://connectgroups.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ATS-Info-Sheet-and-EOI-CG-Logo.pdf>

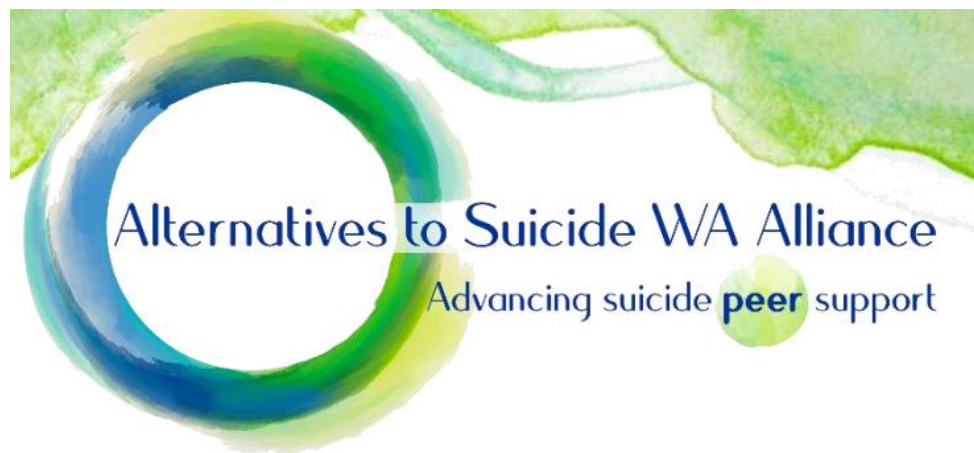
The Alternatives to Suicide WA Alliance invites you to attend its Alternatives to Suicide (ATS) Program Launch. This will be an opportunity to meet the WA Alliance, to hear about the ATS Program and how you can get involved. NGO's, consumers, and peer workers are encouraged to attend, Alternatives to Suicide (ATS) approach is an innovative response to suicide that focuses on connection and relationship building among those who are struggling. The program focuses on supporting people with suicidal distress or those who are suicide survivors by using Peer Support, enlisting others with lived experience in the area to work with these groups. It is a totally Peer-run intervention.

**Date:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> April

**Time:** 11am-1.30pm

**Venue:** The Rise, 28 Eighth Avenue, Maylands

**RSVP:** <https://connectgroups.org.au/ats-wa-alliance-info-session-registration/>



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## Self-Care for Facilitators

This workshop will provide an opportunity for Support Group Facilitators to learn self-care practices and strategies that will improve their wellbeing and prevent burn-out.

The workshop will include:

- Understanding and identifying stress
- The impacts of stress on our health
- Understanding external and internal stressors
- Managing overwhelm
- Burnout prevention and treatment
- Self-care tools and practices

**Date:** Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Time:** 9.30am - 12.00pm

**Venue:** ConnectGroups office, 52 Kishorn Road, Applecross WA 6153

**Cost:** \$38 for Support Group Members

**RSVP:** <https://connectgroups.org.au/events/self-care-for-facilitators/>

## How to Coordinate a Facebook Support Group

This workshop will provide Facebook Support Group admins and moderators with the tools to effectively coordinate their group. The session will include:

- Setting and maintaining group code of conduct
- Posting effectively
- Managing members
- Managing group conversations
- Responding to difficult posts

**Date:** Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.00pm

**Venue:** ConnectGroups office, 52 Kishorn Road, Applecross WA 6153

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** <https://connectgroups.org.au/events/how-to-coordinate-a-facebook-support-group/>

Available via online delivery (Zoom) also

**Date:** Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.00pm

**Venue:** Online (Zoom)

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** <https://connectgroups.org.au/events/how-to-coordinate-a-facebook-support-group-zoom-workshop/>

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## Peer Workforce Opportunities

### Carer Peer Worker

The Carer Peer Worker is responsible for coordinating the In Person Peer Support section of the Carer Gateway service in the allocated region. This includes establishing peer support groups and sourcing and allocating members, then training and supporting volunteers to ensure that the groups, once established, operate effectively. The role will also ensure the development of referral pathways to other agencies offering relevant peer support groups.

Click here to view the full advert.

<https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/members/arafmiwa/carer-peer-worker/?keywords=Peer&locations=7,8>

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### Family Peer Support Worker

The overall aims of the Family Peer Support Worker are to:

- In still hope for recovery in young people and families experiencing mental illness

- Support families in the process of providing support for a young person recovering from first episode psychosis
- Ensure that families are advocated for, and have opportunities for family participation and feedback around modes and styles of service delivery

Click here to view the full advert.

<https://www.seek.com.au/job/51699588?type=standout#searchRequestToken=3d5c0b75-a126-4bf5-9387-5b5a507ea820>

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## Of Interest

### **‘I thought there was no one else like me’: Push to build peer support into mental health overhaul**

“It wasn’t until I started working in advocacy in the mid 2010s that I started to understand that a big part of what I was dealing and struggling with was a broken and traumatic system.”

Ms Eastly, who is now in her early 30s, hopes the royal commission will result in peer support – where people with lived experience of mental illness support others – becoming more of a feature in the mental health system.

In 2016, while training as a peer worker at [headspace](#), a mental health foundation focused on youth, Ms Eastly became exposed to the “mental health consumer movement”, which took off in the late 1960s alongside other civil rights movements championed by those who had been marginalised.

The movement advocates peer participation in mental health services and people who access mental health services being part of the decision-making process related to their own recovery.

**Full story:** [https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/i-thought-there-was-no-one-else-like-me-push-to-build-peer-support-into-mental-health-overhaul-20210301-p576rt.html?mc\\_cid=ea42800f16&mc\\_eid=34316344e2&fbclid=IwAR01JSD32iGxaA70vtdjxKtgYOslYoOXRWUXw9kVSzf\\_-7T2QLXrBTSQ5M](https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/i-thought-there-was-no-one-else-like-me-push-to-build-peer-support-into-mental-health-overhaul-20210301-p576rt.html?mc_cid=ea42800f16&mc_eid=34316344e2&fbclid=IwAR01JSD32iGxaA70vtdjxKtgYOslYoOXRWUXw9kVSzf_-7T2QLXrBTSQ5M)

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### **Peer Support and Social Determinants of Health**

**A report from the 2019 Working Research Conference of the UM-UNC Peer Support Core at the Michigan Centre for Diabetes Translational Research**

Initiatives to improve health in disadvantaged populations – often disadvantage comprised of a number of social determinants – have often turned to social, community, and peer support strategies for reaching and benefitting those too often bypassed by health care and public health institutions. 2,3 Peer support stands out in this work. For example, analyses of the effects of dyadic peer support among adults with diabetes showed benefits relative to nurse care management more pronounced among those with low health literacy

or social support for their diabetes care. 4 Indeed, a review<sup>5</sup> documented the distinct advantages of peer support in reaching and benefitting those “hardly reached.”

**Full Report:** <http://peersforprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/210210-mcdtr-ps-meeting-2019-report.pdf>

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### News to Share?

WAPSPN welcomes guest articles from peer supporters and news from our networks on all things peer.

To request a news item phone us on (08) 9258 8911 or email [info@peersupportwa.org.au](mailto:info@peersupportwa.org.au)