

Admission Criteria for MSA Peer Support Training

PREAMBLE

Following the presentation by Male Survivors Aotearoa (MSA) of two Introductory IPS and one Advanced IPS training courses during 2018 and 2019, several senior MSA peer-workers have reflected on the experience of some participants who were negatively ‘triggered’ by aspects of the course and were unable to demonstrate the necessary coping and resilience behaviours to sustain their effective participation in the training.

Also, several participants from the Introductory IPS course did not continue to apply their learning by subsequently participating in MSA Member Organisation (MMO) peer support activities. Although these people may well have derived personal benefits from the training, the lack of translation of participants into active peer-support roles represents an investment and potential resource loss for both MSA and its MMO’s.

The intent of this guideline is to enhance our selection criteria for admission into IPS training and thus mitigate the risks both for MSA and its Member Organisations by assuring the personal safety of training participants and their readiness and willingness to contribute to an MMO by performing in a future peer-support role.

CONTEXT

The criteria to be a peer worker are clearly outlined in the **Peer Support Practice Guidelines** published by Male Survivors Aotearoa (MSA) on the National Website – refer **Peer Support Essentials** (page 4) and note the essential peer characteristics evident in the six core values: *Mutuality; Recovery and Hope; Experiential Knowledge; Self-Determination; Participation; and Equality.*

MSA has in the past drawn on the experience of Te Pou, who suggest in their Guide for Managers and Employers that prospective peer-workers should be able to demonstrate the following selection criteria:

- Has learnt from their lived experience and can communicate this;
- Has personal resilience strategies [for MSA this is essential];
- Can deal with self-stigma and is at ease with self-disclosure in the work context;
- Can share relevant aspects of their story for the benefits of others;
- Has empathy and listening skills
- Is able and willing to fulfil the duties in the role of a peer-worker
- Is able and willing to learn new skills.

It is recommended that the above criteria should be applied to assess the eligibility of all potential candidates for participation in MSA peer-support training courses.

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POLICY

All candidates proposed for admission to MSA Peer Support training should have completed a period of internship – a period of experience within a peer-support context designed to enhance their knowledge and experience. This period of internship enables the relevant MMO assess the readiness of the candidate using the following criteria:

CRITERIA	EVIDENCE	RATIONALE
Assessing resilience to engage with others stories	Evidenced from observation and/or reports of engagement with survivors as confirmed by peer mentors, counsellors, peer supervisors	Critical for personal safety and the safety of others
Assessing resolve of own abuse experience	Evidenced from own capacity to tell/use own abuse story as a peer for mutuality and moving forward as confirmed by observation and/or reports from peer mentors, counsellors, supervisors	
Assessing capacity for the application of the required peer skills	Evidenced by an understanding of peer work gained from a period of internship – involvement in supervised and/or mentored peer support activities – as confirmed by observation and/or reports from peer mentors, counsellors, supervisors	Essential to enable contribution as a result of the training experience
Assessing willingness to develop in the role and work within approved guidelines	Evidenced by familiarity with MSA Peer Support Guidelines	
	Evidenced by MMO management expressing confidence in the candidate's integrity, commitment to MSA's purpose and capacity to participate in a peer support role.	Essential to assure the reputation of MSA and the MMO

APPLICATION

It is recommended that the following narrative assessment be completed by MMO management as a pre-requisite for proposing a candidate to participate in MSA peer support training.

CANDIDATE:	
Assessment of readiness: – resilience – personal resolve – capacity to enter peer support training	
Personal resilience ... ability to hear others abuse stories (and not be triggered)	Evidence: Peer mentor observations, counsellors report, peer supervisors report.
<i>Narrative Report:</i>	

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Personal resolve ... can tell/use one's own abuse story effectively as a peer for connection and mutual peer clients	Evidence: Peer client feedback, peer mentor observations, peer supervisors report.
<i>Narrative Report:</i>	
Peer knowledge and skills ... demonstrates the capacity to develop and/or demonstrates already developed peer knowledge and skills	Evidence: Direct peer mentor observations, period of internship in peer roles, related trainings attended, peer client feedback, knowledge of MSA peer support guidelines
<i>Narrative Report:</i>	
Identifies with MSA's purpose and upholds the integrity and intention of the MMO Service	Evidence: MSA Staff observations, feedback wider roles, peer mentors feedback.
<i>Narrative Report:</i>	