

The Peer Connection Program

The two pathways of the Peer Connection Program:

Clients and Volunteers

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Volunteer

Gambler's Help North and North Western

Banyule Community Health Service

Session Overview

1. Rationale for Peer Support
2. What is the Peer Connection Program
3. Client referral pathway and benefits
4. Volunteer recruitment and benefits
5. Questions and Answers

The Rationale for Peer Support

“Any one of us could be affected by an unexpected life event or illness where peer support will be vital to our recovery and well-being”.*

“Peer support should be accessible to all who need it. Every person living with or experiencing a mental health issue has the right to access avenues to share their lived experience in a confidential, safe environment, where they are heard, respected, honoured and understood.”

When peer support is used in conjunction with professional treatments, the result is often even more effective than either approach in isolation.**

• The Charter of Peer Support, June 2011

** Gomes & Pascual-Leone, 2009

Peer Connection Program

Provides peer support for people affected by a gambling problem including affected others.

The service is:

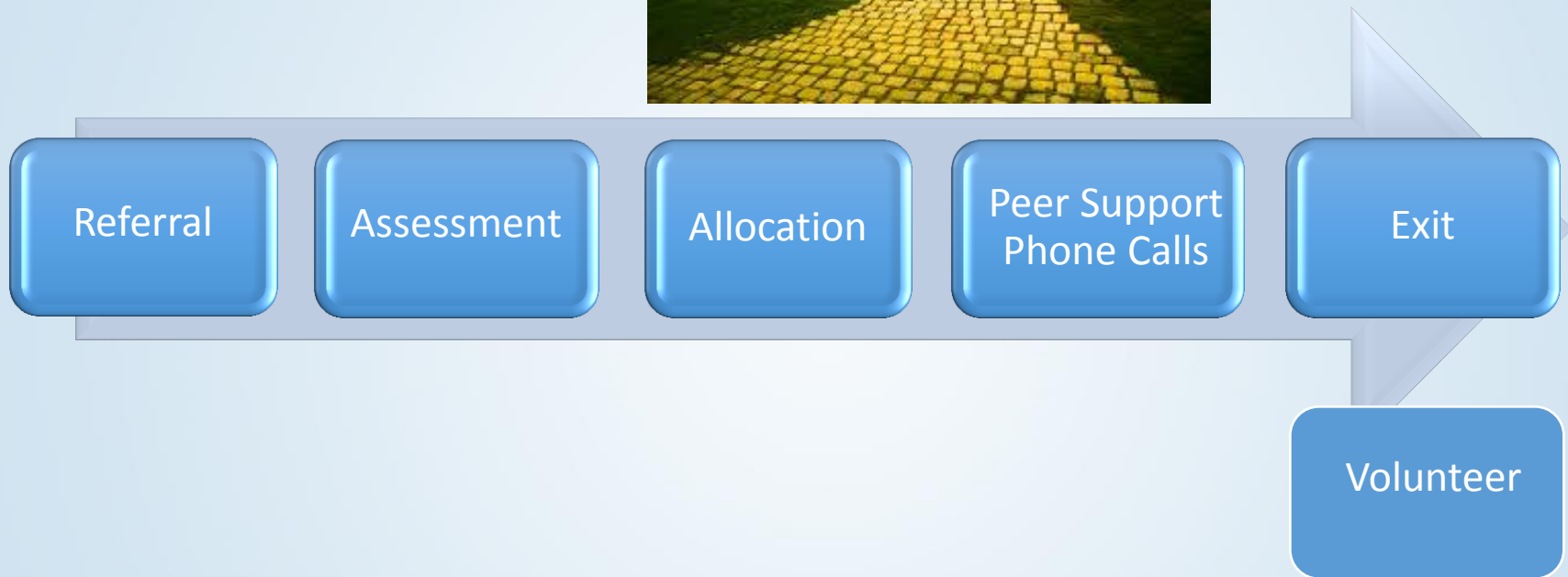
- Telephone based
- State-wide service
- Confidential
- Anonymous
- Adjunct to other support services
- Can support clients to access additional services
- Client Focused
- Frequency and Duration of calls
- Services are provided by trained peer support volunteers
- Specific shifts for the service – afternoons and evenings.

Peer Support

Benefits for clients:

- Increases self efficacy
- Increases self esteem
- Increases sense of hope
- Non threatening, accepting and non judgmental
- Reduces the sense of isolation
- Provides encouragement
- Someone to celebrate successes with
- Learn new strategies

Client Pathway



Trish- Referral

Telephoned GHN&NW intake

1300 133 445

Alternatives

www.peerconnection.org.au

PCIntake@bchs.org.au

Trish- Assessment

Gambling Activity

EGMs for 20+ years

When depressed and feeling isolated

Harm- loses all money

increases negative emotions, and decreases self esteem

Previous supports – SEP

Goal – to control losses, and maybe eventually stop

Risk Assessment

Mental Health – Depression, stable on medication

Suicide/self harm

AOD

Family Violence

Trish- Assessment (cont.)

Physical Health Mobility limitations
Diabetes

Social – Living arrangements

Family make up

Financial

Social connectedness

Finances

Employment, study

Client Pathway



Trish - Allocation

Considerations:

Life stage

Gender

Gambling behavior and triggers

Call frequency and time

Interests

Main issues of concern

Client Feedback

“Haven't gambled for 8 weeks and when I get the call every 2 weeks it is a reminder of how well I am doing.”

“Lots of encouragement. When I tell her I have thoughts of going back she listens and helps me. It's another person I don't want to disappoint by going back.”

“When you speak to a trained professional they don't have the life experience a peer does. The peer has walked in my shoes and understands my situation. It feels more organic than talking to a professional.”

Peer Support Volunteers

Benefits for volunteers:

- The Helper Therapy Principle*
- Enhanced sense of interpersonal competence
- Feel they gain as much as the other
- Learning
- Enhanced sense of self from social approval from those they are supporting
- Experience a sense of being in control
- Reinforces personal recovery
- Decreased feelings of depression

* Frank Reissman 1965

Peer Support Volunteer: Recruitment and Training

Recruitment

- Application
- Interview
- Police Check

Orientation

- Training
- Probation

Supervision and Support

Volunteer Feedback

“More open and understanding of what I went through.”

“Keeps reminding me about the reasons I gave up. The rapport between me and my callers is very rewarding and uplifting at times.”

“One of the big benefits is that it reinforces to me that I do not ever want to feel like my callers again. I am reminded on a regular basis of the misery that gambling can bring to the individual and their families.”

“Improved communication, improved self esteem, use my empathy.”

How to Refer

Website: www.peerconnection.org.au

Phone: 1300 133 445

Email: pcintake@bchs.org.au

“Oh - You're a very bad man!”

“Oh, no my dear.
I'm a very good man.
I'm just a very
bad Wizard.”



[L. Frank Baum, The Wonderful Wizard of Oz](#)

Questions?

