



Centre for  
Innovation in  
**Peer Support**

Support House's **Centre for Innovation in Peer Support** provides wellness based, peer-led self-help and social connections programming to community members; and support to organizations who have peer staff, through training in peer-support program implementation, capacity-building, evaluation, research, knowledge brokerage, and quality improvement.

Growing from its original identity as a Consumer Survivor Initiative in 1999, then known as TEACH (Teach, Empower, Advocate for Community Health), the need for the support and training of agencies providing authentic peer support was identified. As a result, the Centre has evolved to become a "Benchmark of Excellence" in peer support and the meaningful engagement of lived experience and family/caregiver co-design. The Centre for Innovation in Peer Support has been engaging and supporting 11 Mississauga Halton LHIN funded & accredited Health Service Providers (HSPs) plus regional, provincial, national, and international collaborators. The HSPs include hospital psychiatric inpatient units, addictions residential treatment, supportive housing programs, central access, employment support programs, justice, community mental health and addiction providers, and self-help education and support groups.

The Centre's Provincial, Systems & Partner stream is focused on building capacity of People with Lived Experience & Family/Caregivers, People Engaging in Services, Peer Support Workers, Peer Support Supervisors, Health Service Providers, Regional Mental Health & Addiction Systems, and Provincial Healthcare Systems. System transformation is key.

The Centre's Direct Service (Peer Programming) stream offers quality regional programs that are designed, developed, implemented and evaluated by people with lived experience. This stream is focused on both peer-led psychosocial rehabilitative programming plus the Volunteer and Peer Mentor Training & Internship programs. Together, we build community and connection through creating safe spaces to heal and grow for people navigating mental health and substance use/addiction challenges, as well as the supporters/families.

The Centre continues to ensure that the lived experience of people and the values (fidelity) of peer support work are viewed as assets that facilitate the journey of individuals to what they see as health and good quality of life. (Life worth living). With those values and priorities, the Centre continues to champion social and healthcare change that fosters person-directed care to ensure every person will be recognized, appreciated and respected for the unique person they are on their unique journey; and to ensure that care provision is adaptable to the fluctuations in peoples' wellness and needs.

The Centre knows that the roots of equality & inclusivity are found through engaging the people who know 'what it's like', and how that can promote values driven/person directed service delivery, inform quality improvement, co-create service provision, inform policy change, encourage cultural humility and transform organizations and systems.

### **The Centre's QI Lens, Provincial Footprint and Awards:**

The Centre's leadership has been trained and coached extensively in quality improvement with the Excellence through Quality Improvement Project (E-QIP) for 2 cohorts. Leadership are also certified in LEADS Healthcare Leadership and are certified in Lean Six Sigma Green Belt. The Centre has been identified as a Promising Practice by Provincial System Support Programs (PSSP) Evidence Exchange Network (EENet) @ Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH), has co-authored on the 2017 Health Canada-Drug Treatment Funding Programs (DTFP) Performance Measurement in Peer Support, and was featured in the Ontario Excellence through Quality Improvement Report – An inspiring look at Quality Improvement in action.

The Centre has been the recipients of the 2017 Ontario Peer Development Initiative (OPDI) Lighthouse Innovators Award, 2017 Recipients of the Addictions & Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) President's Shield Award and 2016 Association of General Hospital Psychiatric Services (AGHPS) Summit Award. The Centre partnered with Evidence Exchange Network (EENet) @ Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH) to identify core elements of peer support programs across different health sectors such as mental health and addictions, diabetes, chronic disease and cancer; positioning this work to support breaking down healthcare silos.

### **About Support House:**

Support House is directed by our core values. They guide our agency's decisions and actions, unite our staff, define our brand, and inspire our culture. We put people first – our supports are person directed. We connect and engage and start conversations to build and maintain relationships. We focus on health and wellness practices to inspire our culture. All employees are required to adhere to our Oath of conduct tied to our values.



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