

“WHAT I WANT MY PEERS TO KNOW” RESOURCE

Insights from AOD, mental health, and harm reduction peer workers on working with people experiencing mental health and substance use.



18 NOVEMBER 2025

Acknowledgment of Country

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG PEOPLE OF THE KULIN NATION AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE MEET TODAY AND PAY OUR RESPECT TO THE ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.

Recognition of Lived Experience

WE RECOGNISE AND VALUE THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, THEIR SUPPORTERS AND THE PRACTITIONERS WHO WORK WITH THEM. WE CELEBRATE THEIR STRENGTHS AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION THAT THEY MAKE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.



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About the Alliances and LLEW Network

About NEMHSCA and EMHSCA

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA are inter-agency mental health and wellbeing partnerships that work together to improve service coordination in the North East and Eastern Metropolitan Regions of Victoria.

Vision	Purpose	Aims
<p>The communities we serve receive person-centred, timely and flexible mental health and wellbeing support through effective regional service coordination.</p>	<p>To enhance service integration and communication so that communities can access responsive and appropriate mental health, AOD and wellbeing support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve, support and promote safe, recovery-focused, person-centred and collaborative practices across mental health sector.• Promote structured and coordinated Lived Experience Leadership, and workforce development models.• Support members to navigate mental health system reforms. Provide platform for consultation and information sharing.

North East Metro LLEW Network



Lived and Living Experience Workforce Network

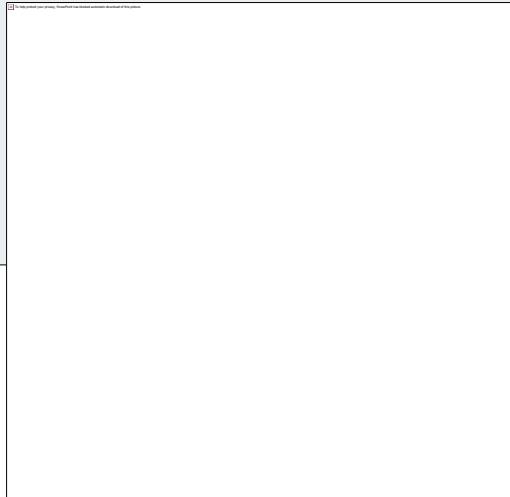
Creating a space for mutual support, collaboration, learning and skill development.

Welcoming anyone who works in a Lived and Living Experience role in mental health, AOD, harm reduction, gambling or suicide prevention sectors in the north east, inner east and outer east regions of Melbourne.



LLEW “Networking with Purpose” Forums

Global Peer Worker Day celebration



LLEW Leadership Forum



LLEW and Clinical Staff Collaboration Forum

NEMHSCA
NORTH EAST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE

EMHSCA
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE

LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCE WORKFORCE NETWORKING FORUM

BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR WELLBEING



Do you work in a Lived and Living Experience role in mental health, AOD, harm reduction, gambling or suicide prevention sectors in the north east, inner east and outer east regions of Melbourne?
Don't miss out this opportunity to connect with your peers.

9.30am - 1.30pm
29 August 2024
Lunch provided

Banyule Community Health
21 Alamein Rd, West Heidelberg

Let's come together to:

- Network with other LLEW in the region
- Take time out to pause
- Find out how to enhance wellbeing
- Develop solutions to challenges

LLEW Wellbeing Forum

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What I Want My Peers To Know

LLEW Integration Forum



To build the confidence, capability, and connection of mental health and AOD LLEW in supporting people with co-occurring AOD and mental health needs, through peer-led sharing, practical integration examples, and cross-sector networking.

Panel discussion:

- Lucy Schrader, AOD Peer Support Worker, Access Health and Community
- Simon Coleman, AOD Peer Support Worker, Access Health and Community
- Helene Lee, Family & Carer Peer Worker, North East Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect
- Fatima Muhammad, Peer Worker, Whittlesea Mental Health and Wellbeing Local
- Shaun Mulder, Senior Consumer Peer Worker, ICYMH Early Psychosis Team, Eastern Health
- Amelia Berg, Fuse Initiatives Coordinator, Harm Reduction Victoria

The Heart of the Resource



Change comes from the person – meet them where they are.



Behaviours are coping, not weakness – look beyond the substance.



Connection heals – trust, relationships, and community support recovery.



Recovery is unique – holistic, not one-size-fits-all.



Relapse is learning, not failure – respond with empathy.

“Connection is the opposite of addiction” – Johann Hari

Practice tips



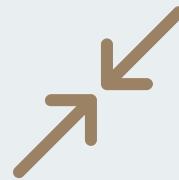
Listen with compassion
– trauma-informed, non-judgmental.



Build trust slowly –
safety, rapport, and
collaboration first.



Focus on feelings, not
beliefs – support
through validating
feelings.



Use harm reduction &
strengths-based
approaches – meet
people where they are.

**“Slow down, take time to build the rapport, and take the scenic route –
rapport and trust may be the shortcut.”**

The Role of Language

Use non-stigmatising, respectful language – words matter

Instead:

- Junkie, druggie, drug user, drug abuser
- Drug habit
- Suffering from addiction



Use:

- Person who uses or has used alcohol or other drugs
- Person with a dependence on drugs, person with a dependence on alcohol
- Person experiencing addiction

Key messages

Recovery is personal,
relational, and holistic.

Connection, trust, and
curiosity are central.

Harm reduction and
non-judgmental spaces
create opportunities
for growth.

Peer workers plant
seeds of hope, even if
growth is slow.

Respect dignity of
choice, not just “risk.”

**“Know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a
human soul, be just another human soul.” – Carl Jung**

Invitation to use the resource



**The resource is available on
Tuesdays with Nexus
website.**



**Use it in team discussions or
supervision.**



**Reflect on “What do my
peers want me to know?”**

Get in touch

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