

Peer Support Program



A PSW assists with life skills training to support a client housed by Coast Mental Health

The Peer Support Program is a community service operating out of Coast Mental Health’s Resource Centre located at 1225 Seymour Street in downtown Vancouver. The program was created in 2009 and offers members a variety of peer-run groups and activities.

The program also offers 3 Peer Support Worker Training's per year. Peer Support Workers (PSWs) are people who have lived/living experience with mental health and/or substance use challenges and are at a place in their recovery where they can support someone else who is struggling. They understand what their peers are going through because they have been there themselves.

PSWs provide important human connection and inspire hope to individuals as they find their path forward in their recovery. At the time, PSWs find meaningful vocational opportunities that support their own interests and wellness.

What Peer Support Workers Do

- Share recovery stories to build connection and support consultations
- Provide emotional support and model wellness through lived experience
- Empower individuals to set goals, navigate services, and make informed choices
- Facilitate life skills development through groups and 1:1 support



“I’ve taken the peer support training through Coast, which has given me employment as well as a sense of purpose”

Jodi Gray | Peer Support Worker.

Program Details

The PSW Training Program helps fill an important gap in the health care system by providing a bridge between professional and individuals. It offers a space for individuals feel safe, understood and accepted. This space creates an environment where others can openly discuss their struggles and be reminded that they are not alone.

We offer 3 training cohorts per year. The training is in-person and completely free of cost. Students complete over 70 hours of classroom learning followed by a 50-hour unpaid practicum.

As trained PSWs, participants have successfully found employment within community organizations and healthcare agencies, as well as supporting individual clients or as part of peer-led groups and activities.

Peer-led Activities:

- Pottery & Monthly Art Workshops
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Better Together Street Outreach
- Karaoke and Bingo
- Digital Literacy
- And more!

Current Partnerships:

- St. Paul's Hospital Psychiatric Units
- BC Children's Hospital SURF Team
- Gaston Vocational Services
- VCH Mental Health Teams

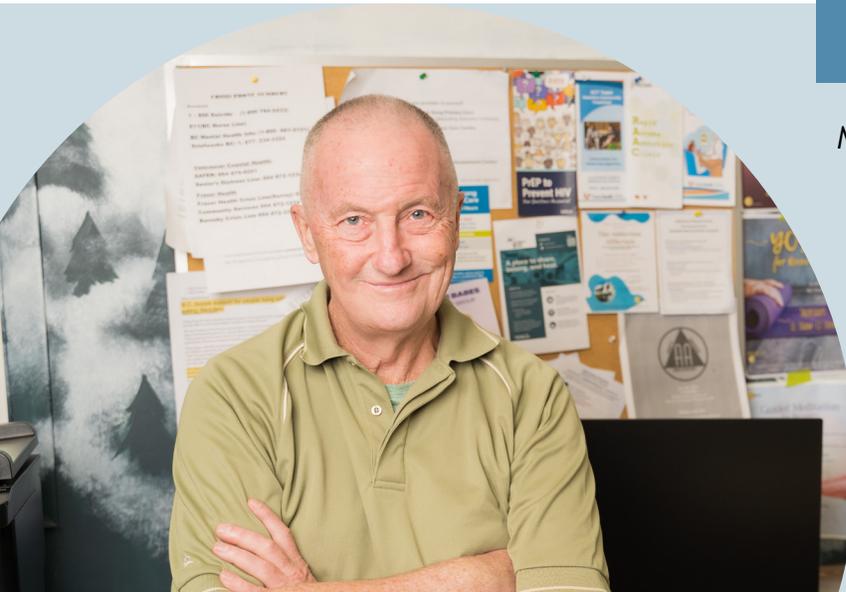
PSW led tie-dyeing workshop at Coast's Resource Centre



Michael's Story

Michael is a familiar face at both Coast's Clubhouse and Resource Centre – and his warm smile is infectious. In his role as Peer Support Worker he takes members on group outings or meets them on an individual basis depending on their needs.

"I'm able to help people who are new to the Street Clean Team. I go around with them on their route, make sure they're fitting in, listen if they have any needs that they'd like to get help with. We had one guy who was homeless, I was able to get him into housing."



For more information please contact: peersupport@coastmentalhealth.com