

WEEKLY DIGEST N°1

ATL Trainer curriculum
Introduction to peer support

What is peer support?

It is an intervention model in which people with lived experience in a specific matter or area help each other.

Homelessness

It is very difficult to define. Busch-Geertsema proposes a general definition where homelessness is conceptualized as *'lacking access to minimally adequate housing'*. FEANTSA estimates that, in 2021, there were approximately 700.000 homeless people living on the streets or in shelters in the European Union, an increase of 70% compared to 2011.

"Tri-morbidity" is a common condition experienced by homeless people. It is the co-occurrence of poor mental health, poor physical health and substance use.

Multiple disadvantages

Homelessness may not be the only problem Peers face. They often struggle with mental health issues, substance misuse, poor physical health, domestic or sexual abuse, a history of offending or community isolation. Knowledge of the other difficulties is essential to understand the context and to provide effective and appropriate help.

IN THE UNIT 1 YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

- what peer support is and what is the role of a peer support agent
- goals and values, the importance of mutual confidentiality for professionals.
- the impact that helping others can have on a provider OF HELP.





PURPOSES OF PEER SUPPORT:

- The general objective of peer support is to help a person navigate their way through challenging situations/circumstances;
- It is fundamental to realize that it is not supposed to provide predetermined answers and solutions;
- Help a person deal with difficulties by establishing a connection based on mutual understanding, respect and sharing,
- Act as a bridge between clients and professional help.
- Committing to clients

In Unit 1 you will also learn more about the core functions of a peer supporter as: offering social and emotional support, forming a long-term personal relationship, helping with daily management and/or providing links to professional support and community resources.

Further reading:

- Peer Support Specialist Training
- Peer support in the context of homelessness
- Provision of peer support at the intersection of homelessness



BENEFITING FROM HELPING OTHERS

Helping others also benefits those who help. It helps in gaining self-confidence, a sense of belonging, purpose and a positive self-image. However, it may also lead to negative emotions such as feeling frustrated or overburdened. The balance between offering and receiving support is what leads to an effective implementation of peer support where all parties can benefit from this practice.

To understand the challenges and opportunities of providing peer support [click here](#)