



5 Ways to Improve Networking in Peer Support

Please note that a “peer” is an individual who has lived experience of mental health issues.

Excellent networking skills can help to further your career goals through professional connections, make it easier to find information you may need in your role in the peer support community, and give you a broad range of personal and professional support.

1. Build a Large Professional Support System.

Make connections everywhere you go. In peer support, your network could include peers, peer advocates, providers, support workers, clinical staff and community partners. Attend events, join committees, take trainings and make your face known. You are a walking billboard sign of who you are as a person and employee. You are your best marketing tool.

2. Remember Quality vs Quantity.

Take extra time and effort to make real connections with people. The few extra minutes you spend having a conversation with someone about your shared interests can make a real difference later when building a network. They may not remember the 50 other people they met that day who simply handed them a business card, but you are more likely to be remembered if you have taken the time for meaningful conversation.

3. Use Social Networks to Stay Connected.

Look for ways to connect online: Google Plus, Facebook, LinkedIn, online groups, etc. Recognize that your social networks reflect you. If you want to keep your personal and professional life separate, set up another Facebook account just for your professional contacts. Whatever avenues you use to connect, be mindful of what you post and what you want to express to the people in your network.

4. Save Contact Info Intentionally.

When saving numbers in your phone, include everything you can about your connections: where they work, how you know them, and a picture if possible. That way you can refer to that info the next time you connect. This sends the message they stood out to you. And, you will stand out to them.

5. Always Follow Up.

Continue the connection you have made with a follow up, “It was nice to meet you” email or text later to remind them of your interaction. Maintaining a connection takes work and that means maintaining contact.

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