QuickGuide

Peer Support Networks: Finding no-cost resources in your community

Introduction

Establishing and facilitating a Peer Support Network takes resources. Often, there isn't any money to purchase them, or they are things that can't be purchased. Fortunately, your community will have resources that you can use for the network. This Quick Guide will help you think about how and where to find these no-cost resources.

Let's make it happen

What resources will you need?

You may need some or all of these things (see also Quick Guide: Understanding what resources will be needed for the group to operate for a more detailed list)

- Human resources
- Venue
- Catering
- Materials
- Transport/parking
- Marketing materials
- Communication
- Insurance
- Training and development
- Celebrations

How to find no-cost resources

Ask and look around your community for ideas and leads to where resources might be:

- Family and friends
- Community noticeboards
- Council
- Local library
- Local newspaper
- Community organisations

Finding specific resources:

Human resources: See Quick Guide: Finding organisations to assist and Quick Guide: building a posse. And remember, you are your best human resource, so make sure you look after yourself and share the load.

Venues: think about what venues are available in your community. Perhaps your local council or library offers free accessible venues. A community organisation may have a meeting room you can use. Someone you know may have a great accessible room at their house they would be willing for you to use.

QuickGuide

Catering: think about who might provide some low cost or free food for network meetings. Some businesses will give vouchers for food for good purposes. People might like to 'bring a plate'. Or members might like to share the cost by making a small donation.

Materials: You may be able to get donations of materials such as butchers paper and markers from community organisations, service clubs, local businesses such as newsagents or office supplies companies. Even better, some businesses may have paper and other materials that you can recycle!

Transport/parking: Perhaps there are volunteers in town that provides transport for people - check out your family and friends and your local volunteering organisation. Or ask a local community organisation if they have a transport service for clients that you can catch a ride with at the right time. Some communities have a community transport organisation that provides low cost or free transport. Group members might be willing to pick up and drop off other members. Finally, make sure your meeting place has free, accessible parking nearby and is close to public transport.

Marketing and Communications: Members of Parliament or local councillors will often offer free photocopying for community groups (sometimes free postage too - doesn't hurt to ask!). Printing businesses may like to offer free printing in exchange for having their logo on the material. Libraries usually have computers to use and free internet access. Marketing professionals may have a listing on your local volunteering website or notice board, or could even do the job remotely - so check out statewide volunteer job boards, and put up a listing.

Insurance: this one will be hard to find at no-cost, but a local organisation might be willing to include your network meetings on their insurance.

Training and development - Some options to consider include:
- Consider online offerings
- Ask at your local council about scholarships, and join websites and Facebook groups of interest that may list scholarship opportunities
- Think about the organisations you have relationships with - would they be willing to let you or others participate for free in relevant training they are already running?
- Mentoring is a great way to develop your skills - who do you know who may be willing to invest some regular time in your or others' development, one on one?
- The network itself is a great resource for developing skills, knowledge and confidence through peer to peer learning - perhaps the network could consider a peer coaching model, where people pair up to work on aspects of each other's development.

Where you can find more information

See Quick Guide: Understanding what resources will be needed for the group to operate

Useful web links:

My Community Directory may be useful in finding resources in organisations in your community: https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/

QuickGuide

Resources for finding volunteers: https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

A great guide to finding a mentor: http://www.wikihow.com/Find-a-Mentor

For scholarships you might be able to access through local not for profits: https://www.scholarships.org.au/

Co-authored by Queenslanders with Disability (QDN)