



SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

April 2016

What is peer support?

Peer support involves providing support or services to people with mental health problems by other people who have experienced mental health problems. Peer support may promote confidence and hope through sharing experiences and modelling recovery and coping strategies. The potential for recipients of peer support to provide reciprocal support may also be empowering and of therapeutic value.

What is the evidence for peer support?

With unidirectional peer support, moderate to low quality evidence suggests a small effect of improved recovery and hope at the end of treatment and at follow-up, and improved depression and anxiety, quality of life, and empowerment at follow-up only. No differences were reported between unidirectional peer support and standard care in psychotic symptoms, hospitalisation or satisfaction with services. With bidirectional mutual support, moderate to low quality evidence suggests a medium-sized effect of improved depression and anxiety, and a large effect of improved quality of life and empowerment at the end of treatment. No differences were reported between bidirectional peer support and standard care in recovery or hospitalisation rates. Moderate to low quality evidence suggests a medium-sized effect of less satisfaction with services with peer delivered services compared to standard delivery.

For further information see the technical table



NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.