

Position Description

Lived & Living Experience Senior Family Carer Peer Worker

Classification:	Lived Experience Worker Grade 4 (4.1 – 4.4)
Business unit/department:	Older Adult Community Service Team (AOAMHS)
Work location:	Austin Hospital ☒ Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ☒ Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre ☒ Other ☒ Burgundy Street
Agreement:	Victorian Public Mental Health Services Enterprise Agreement 2024-2028
	Choose an item.
	Choose an item.
Employment type:	Full-Time
Hours per week:	40 hours (38 plus ADO)
Professionally Reports to:	Director, Family Carer Lived & Living Experience
Direct reports:	Program Manager – Older Adult Mental Health Service
Financial management:	Budget: Nil
Date:	November 2025

Position purpose

The Senior Family Carer Peer Worker is a designated lived and living experience role within the Older Adult Community Team, Adult and Older Adult Mental Health Services (AOAMHS). The position supports families, carers and supporters of older adults experiencing mental health and/or alcohol and other drug (AOD) challenges, often alongside physical health, cognitive, social and age-related changes. The role draws on personal family carer lived experience and collective Family Carer Lived Experience (FCLE) discipline knowledge to provide holistic and sustained peer support.

The Senior Family Carer Peer Worker practices independently, applies judgement in complex and fluctuating situations, and uses lived experience purposefully, safely and ethically. Practice is grounded in mutuality, relational recovery, self-determination, human rights, trauma-informed and strength-based approaches, family-inclusive practice, and harm reduction.

The role provides one-to-one peer support, family education, carer led groups, system navigation, and advocacy. It supports carers to understand their rights, strengthen their own wellbeing and boundaries, participate meaningfully in care and service decisions, connect with appropriate mental health, AOD, aged care and community support, and identify their own solutions.

In addition to direct practice, the position provides support to junior Family Carer Peer Workers and Peer Cadets through orientation, mentoring, coaching and, where appropriately trained and authorized, discipline specific supervision. The role contributes family carer lived expertise to multidisciplinary practice, workforce education, service improvement, co-design, policy and pathway development, and

quality and governance activities. The role retains a substantial direct-practice focus and is distinct from a systems-only Family Carer Consultant position.

About the Mental Health Division

Austin Mental Health Division (MHD) provides care and services through a comprehensive range of teams to meet the needs of mental health consumers and carers throughout Victoria. Services in the Mental Health Division are located across Austin Health and the community. Employees may be redeployed within the MHD.

All mental health services work within a clinical framework that promotes recovery-oriented practice and supports decision-making. This approach to client wellbeing builds on the strengths of the individual working in partnership with their treating team. It encompasses the principles of self-determination and individualised treatment and care.

Austin Health's Older Adult Mental Health Community Team provides person-centred, recovery-oriented care to older adults experiencing, or at risk of, serious mental illness. The multidisciplinary team—including clinicians, medical staff and Lived and Living Experience (LLE) experts—works collaboratively to deliver trauma-informed, evidence-based support that includes families, carers, and kin.

The team fosters a culture of collaboration, shared learning, and mutual respect to ensure holistic, high-quality care that promotes recovery, dignity, and wellbeing in the community.

Position responsibilities

Family Carer Peer Practice

- Independently provide compassionate and non-judgmental peer support to families, carers and supporters experiencing complex, long-term or fluctuating circumstances.
- Use purposeful disclosure and collective FCLE discipline knowledge to support hope, mutuality, self-determination and relational recovery, without directing, diagnosing or imposing personal solutions.
- Support families, carers and supporters to identify their own priorities, strengths, boundaries and wellbeing needs, and to make informed choices.
- Provide support across the family carer journey, including periods of uncertainty, distress, service transition, discharge planning and changes in the older adult's mental health, AOD use or physical health.
- Support understanding of family carer rights, consent, confidentiality, information sharing, dignity of risk and available complaints or advocacy pathways.
- Assist families, carers and supporters to prepare for and participate in care planning, clinical review and service discussions, while respecting the consumer's rights and preferences.
- Provide system navigation, information, linkages and referrals to mental health, AOD, aged care, carer community support programs, financial, legal and practical supports within role scope.
- Recognize situations requiring escalation, seek or provide appropriate consultation, and follow Austin Health duty of care, safety and risk processes while maintaining the relational scope of the role.

Leadership, Supervision and Workforce Development

- Provide orientation, practice guidance, coaching and mentoring to Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 Family Carer peers to develop purposeful use of lived experience, relational practice, ethical boundaries, reflective practice, cultural responsiveness and confidence in multidisciplinary settings.
- Provide discipline-specific supervision clearly distinguishing discipline supervision from



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line management.

- Identify and respond to peer drift, role ambiguity, co-option and requests outside LLEW scope, and support workers and managers to maintain role integrity.
- Act as a focal point for complex family carer peer practice questions and provide advice within the area of expertise.
- Promote peer-to-peer learning, communities of practice and a supportive culture that values workforce wellbeing, reflection, connection and sustainable practice.
- Contribute to orientation resources, practice tools, group materials and capability-development activities for the FCLE workforce and broader team.

Multidisciplinary Collaboration and System Navigation

- Participate confidently and independently in multidisciplinary meetings, clinical review processes and team activities, bringing a clear family carer lived experience perspective.
- Advise and negotiate with clinicians, managers and internal and external stakeholders to strengthen family-inclusive, recovery-oriented and rights-based practices.
- Promote a tripartite approach that values collaboration between consumers, families/carers/supporters and clinicians, while recognizing that perspectives and rights may differ.
- Support team members to communicate with families, carers and supporters in clear, accessible, and non-clinical language.
- Build and maintain networks with relevant mental health, AOD, aged care, primary care, carer and community services to improve referral pathways and continuity of support.
- Represent the Older Adult Community Team and the FCLE discipline on relevant networks, committees, working groups and forums as required.

Group Facilitation, Education and Resource Development

- Lead or co-lead the design, facilitation and evaluation of carer peer groups, family education and support activities.
- Create a safe, inclusive, and mutually respectful group environment, manage complex group dynamics, and respond appropriately to distress or conflict.
- Ensure group content remains carer-led, relevant and responsive to the experiences of families supporting older adults with mental health, AOD and related health challenges.
- Review feedback, participation and outcome data to improve group content, accessibility, and delivery.
- Develop and update family carer information, education and navigation resources in partnership with families, carers, supporters and relevant staff.
- Provide education and reflective learning activities for clinical and non-clinical staff on FCLE values, scope, family-inclusive practice, relational recovery and the purposeful use of lived experience.

Service Improvement, Co-design and Systems Influence

- Identify recurring themes, gaps and barriers arising from direct peer work and translate these into practical service improvement recommendations.
- liaise with Family Carer Consultant to co-design, quality improvement, evaluation and service-development initiatives relevant to older adults and their families, carers and supporters.
- Contribute family carer lived experience expertise to the review and development of policies, procedures, referral pathways, information resources and models of care.
- Support meaningful and culturally responsive participation of families, carers and supporters in service planning, redesign and evaluation.
- Provide advice to senior staff and external stakeholders on family carer engagement, direct peer practice, group delivery and service access within the role's area of operation.
- Support implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agreed improvement actions



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and communicate outcomes back to families, carers, supporters and the workforce where appropriate.

Quality, Governance and Documentation

- Maintain accurate, timely and respectful documentation consistent with Austin Health
- Complete data collection, reporting and evaluation requirements to a high standard and use information to support service improvement.
- Contribute to quality, safety, risk and governance activities and escalate concerns when unable to resolve them within role scope.
- Promote lawful, safe, fair, and culturally responsive services for families, carers and supporters.
- Maintain awareness of relevant legislation, policy and practice frameworks and apply these appropriately in day-to-day practice.

Professional Practice, Development and Wellbeing

- Work independently, prioritise competing demands and exercise judgement within the scope of practice.
- Participate in regular line management supervision, FCLE discipline-specific supervision, reflective practice, and professional development.
- Model ethical use of lived experience, professional boundaries, accountability, reliability, and respectful workplace behaviour.
- Maintain strong self-awareness of personal triggers, use support and debriefing appropriately, and demonstrate sustainable strategies for wellbeing and self-regulation.
- Maintain connection with the broader FCLE workforce through communities of practice, networks, training and discipline-development activities.
- Undertake other duties consistent with the Grade 4 classification, designated FCLE scope, and the requirements of the Older Adult Community Team.

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

1. Lived and Living Experience

- Lived and/or living experience of supporting an older adult, family member, partner, friend or loved one navigating the Victorian public mental health system due to mental health and/or AOD challenges, including experience of the impacts on families, carers and support networks.
- Demonstrated ability to use personal family carer lived experience purposefully, safely and ethically, and to draw on collective FCLE discipline knowledge rather than relying only on one's own story.
- Understanding and application of family carer peer work values and ways of working, including mutuality, relational recovery, self-determination, hope, human rights, purposeful disclosure, boundaries, family-inclusive practice and harm reduction.
- Ability to represent and advocate for family, carer and supporter perspectives while recognizing diversity and avoiding speaking on behalf of all families and carers.

2. Family Carer Peer Practice

- Minimum of three years' experience in a designated Family Carer Lived and Living Experience, carer peer or equivalent role, including experience within a public or community mental health service or another complex service environment.
- Demonstrated independent peer practice with families, carers and supporters experiencing complex, long-term, fluctuating or high-distress situations.
- Demonstrated ability to apply lived experience expertise beyond one's personal circumstances and work effectively with diverse family structures, caring relationships and experiences.



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- Experience leading or co-leading carer peer groups, education or support activities, including managing group dynamics and evaluating effectiveness.
- Demonstrated ability to recognize scope, duty of care and safety concerns and to make sound decisions about consultation and escalation.

3. Practice Leadership and Supervision

- Demonstrated experience orientating, mentoring, coaching or providing practice support to less experienced LLEW employees, students or Peer Cadets.
- Demonstrated capability to support reflective practice, role clarity, ethical boundaries, purposeful disclosure and the prevention of peer drift or co-option.
- Ability to provide constructive feedback, support learning and model FCLE practice while maintaining psychologically safe and respectful relationships.
- Capacity to provide discipline-specific supervision where appropriately trained and authorized, or willingness to complete recognized FCLE supervision training within an agreed timeframe.

4. System Knowledge, Legislation and Recovery Approach

- Understanding of the Victorian public mental health and wellbeing system, including older adult community mental health pathways and relevant mental health, AOD, aged care, carer and community supports.
- Sound knowledge and application of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022, Carer Recognition Act 2012, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, privacy and health-records obligations, and relevant Office of the Chief Psychiatrist guidelines.
- Understanding relational recovery, strengths-based, trauma-informed, family-inclusive and rights-based practice, and the tripartite relationship between consumers, families/carers/supporters and clinicians.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute family carer lived experience expertise to service improvement, co-design, policy or procedure review, referral pathways and models of care.

5. Communication, Collaboration and Influence

- Written, verbal and interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to facilitate complex conversations, negotiate respectfully, provide advice and communicate alternative perspectives.
- Demonstrated ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with families, carers, supporters, consumers, clinicians, managers and external services.
- Ability to participate confidently in multidisciplinary meetings and influence practice while maintaining a clear non-clinical FCLE perspective.
- Strong facilitation, presentation, education and group-work skills, including the ability to develop accessible resources and communicate in everyday language.
- Ability to document practice, feedback themes, improvement recommendations and outcomes clearly and appropriately.

6. Diversity, Cultural Safety and Inclusion

- Demonstrated cultural humility and ability to work respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disability and people experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage or other forms of marginalisation.
- Demonstrated understanding of intersectionality, power, stigma, discrimination and the diverse ways family, caring and support relationships are experienced.
- Ability to adapt to peer practice, engagement, group delivery and communication to promote equitable access, cultural safety and inclusion.

7. Professionalism, Judgement and Work Practices

- Demonstrated ability to work independently, prioritise workload, manage competing demands and exercise judgement in a dynamic community mental health environment.
- Commitment to regular FCLE discipline-specific supervision, line management supervision, reflective practice, professional development and sustainable wellbeing.



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- Strong understanding of confidentiality, privacy, documentation, professional boundaries, ethical practice and organizational accountability.
- Competent digital literacy, including use of clinical or organizational documentation systems, Microsoft Office, and digital communication platforms.
- Ability to travel across Austin Health sites and the community as required by the role.
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Professional qualifications and registration requirements

Essential

- Completion of Intentional Peer Support (IPS) training, or equivalent recognized lived experience relational-practice training.
- Completion of Single Session Peer Work (SSPW), or willingness to complete within 12 months of appointment.
- Completion of Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work or equivalent qualification, or demonstrated equivalent experience in designated family carer lived experience work.
- Completion of recognised Carer Perspective Supervision training, or willingness to complete within 12 months where the role is required to provide formal discipline-specific supervision.
- Current Victorian Driver Licence.

Desirable but not essential

- Advanced Intentional Peer Support, group facilitation, supervision, coaching or practice-leadership training.
- Training or experience in AOD family support, harm reduction, older adult mental health, family violence, grief and loss, or trauma-informed practice.
- Experience in co-design, service improvement, evaluation, policy development, education, research or project coordination.
- A relevant qualification in mental health, AOD, aged care, community services, family support, education, leadership or supervision.

Quality, safety and risk – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, colleagues and members of the public by following organizational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines.
- Escalate concerns regarding safety, quality and risk to the appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself.
- Promote and participate in the evaluation and continuous improvement processes.
- Comply with the principles of person-centered care.
- Comply with requirements of National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.

Other conditions – all roles

All Austin Health employees are required to:

- Adhere to Austin Health's core values: *our actions show we care, we bring our best, together we achieve, and we shape the future.*
- Comply with the Austin Health's Code of Conduct policy, as well as all other policies and procedures (as amended from time to time).
- Comply with all Austin Health mandatory training and continuing professional



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development requirements.

- Provide proof of immunity to nominated vaccine preventable diseases in accordance with Austin Health's immunisation screening policy.
- Work across multiple sites as per work requirements and/or directed by management.

General information

Cultural safety

Austin Health is committed to cultural safety and health equity for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. We recognise cultural safety as the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

Equal Opportunity Employer

We celebrate, value, and include people of all backgrounds, genders, identities, cultures, bodies, and abilities. We welcome and support applications from talented people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, people with disability, neurodiverse people, LGBTQIA+ and people of all ages and cultures.

Austin Health is a child safe environment

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. Austin Health has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and commits to protect children. We take allegations of abuse and neglect seriously and will make every effort to mitigate and respond to risk in line with hospital policy and procedures.



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