

Position Description

Peer Support Carer Worker

Classification:	Lived Experience Worker – Peer Support Carer Worker Grade 3 (Y1 – Y4)
Business unit/department:	Continuing Care Service (CCS)
Work location:	Austin Hospital ☐ Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital ☐ Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre ☐ Other ☒ Hawdon Street
Agreement:	Victorian Public Mental Health Services Enterprise Agreement 2020-2024
Employment type:	Part-Time
Hours per week:	22.8 hours
Reports to:	CCS Manager
Direct reports:	Ni
Financial management:	Budget: Nil
Date:	August 2025

Austin Health acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Austin Health operates, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Position purpose

The **Carer Peer Worker** is a lived and living experience role within the Continuing Carer Service (CCS) supporting families, carers, and supporters of adults and older adults living with **mental health and/or alcohol and other drug (AOD) challenges**. Drawing on their **personal experience** of supporting a loved one with emotional dysregulation, mental health, and/or AOD challenges, the Carer Peer Worker provides holistic, strengths-based, and sustained support to families, partners, and carers.

In the community, carers often manage **long-term, complex and fluctuating needs**, while navigating stigma, fragmented systems, and their own wellbeing. Where AOD use is present, carers may experience **increased isolation, misunderstanding, or judgement**, both socially and within services. The Carer Peer Worker provides **empathetic, non-judgmental peer support**, grounded in mutuality and harm reduction principles.

The role includes **1:1 peer support, family psychoeducation, carer-led groups, system navigation, and advocacy**. The Carer Peer Worker supports carers to build resilience, connect with services, access mental health & AOD-specific family supports, and feel empowered in setting healthy boundaries.

They also contribute to **service improvement, workforce education, and carer-inclusive practice**, helping shape services that understand and respond to the realities of dual mental health and AOD experiences. This role fosters a culture of **hope, respect, and inclusion**, supporting recovery for both carers and the individuals they support.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The Adult & Older Adult Mental Health Service provides comprehensive mental health care for individuals aged 26 years and over, as well as support for their families and carers. The service operates across the City of Banyule and Shire of Nillumbik and forms part of the broader Mental Health Division.

Community-based services focus on providing accessible, recovery-oriented care in the local area. These services include crisis assessment and response, continuing care, outreach support, rehabilitation, drug and alcohol services, and collaborative programs with primary care and emergency services. The aim is to support individuals in their recovery journey and reduce the need for hospitalisation through early intervention and integrated care.

Position responsibilities

Working for and supporting families, carers and supporters

- Providing empathetic and informed peer support to families, carers and supporters of people whose lives are impacted by mental health and/or substance use challenges, being mindful of the principles of purposeful disclosure.
- Supporting carers to discover their own solutions and empowering them to take ownership of the journey.
- Encouraging and facilitating referrals to internal and external services, family/carers/supporter support groups and education, and access to hardship funds, where appropriate.
- Effective communication skills and the ability to engage with families, carers, and supporters in everyday, non-clinical language.

Networking and Collaboration

- Working closely with team members to provide an accessible and welcoming service for families, carers, and supporters.
- Actively participating and working within the multidisciplinary team, collaborative partner organisations other stakeholders.
- Support education of clinical team members about the distinct role, values, and boundaries of Carer Peer Work to promote shared understanding and effective collaboration.
- Developing and maintaining appropriate networks and resources to enable the referral of families, carers, and supporters to broader community services.
- Representing CCS on relevant networks and committees as required in a professional and respectful manner.



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- Encouraging and facilitating referrals to internal and external services, family/carer/supporter support groups, education, and access to hardship funds where appropriate.
- Participating in regular peer-to-peer learning through communities of practice.

Group Facilitation and Support

- Working as part of a team to guide the group according to the principles agreed upon by group participants and/or other stakeholders.
- Being committed to and abiding by the Austin Health privacy and confidentiality policy applicable to all staff.
- Providing a supportive environment for members to participate, learn, and share in a group setting.
- Attending all group meetings as an authentic and active participant, mindful of the principles of purposeful disclosure.
- Ensuring the focus of the group is supporting the needs of the participants. Participating in evaluation, identifying gaps in content and/or updating group materials for continuous improvement.
- Providing support for various administration duties, which may include maintaining records of group attendance and current group membership, communicating with members from time to time, organising group rosters, preparing meeting topic planners, etc.
- Regularly attending meetings and committing to ongoing professional development and training.

Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

- Encouraging carer feedback to the service and implementing continuous improvement initiatives with the team.
- A commitment to ensuring safe, best-practice care that puts consumers and carers at the heart of the decision-making process.
- Ensuring the data collection and reporting requirements are complete to a high standard and in a timely manner.

Supervision, Professional Development and Wellbeing

- Participating in regular self-reflection, group, and operational (line management) supervision and professional development in line with individual work plan, as directed by the Team Leader and Carer Discipline Lead.
- Participating in regular carer perspective supervision including self-reflective practice and identification of needs.
- Seeking support and debriefing and actively following up challenging or concerning issues with the manager/team leader. Informing senior staff members or managers when duty of care issues arises.
- Willingness to participate in ongoing training related to the role.
- Demonstrates a strong self-awareness of personal triggers and the ability to effectively self-regulate in challenging situations, ensuring a calm and supportive environment for families, carers, and supporters.



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Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

Lived/Living Experience:

- Lived and/or living experience of supporting a loved one who is navigating the Victorian public mental health system due to emotional dysregulation, mental health and/or AoD challenges.
- Recognition and understanding of personal experiences in crises as a family member, Carer or supporter, with the ability to use these experiences to provide empathetic and hope-inspiring support to others.
- Knowledge of carer peer support principles, committed to providing support from a mutual perspective, sharing lived experiences to foster hope and empowerment.
- Ability to use a lived experience family/carer perspective to collaborate effectively with staff and instil hope and belief in recovery.

Professional Experience:

- Minimum of 2 years' experience working in a carer peer position or equivalent role.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of the nuances of working within clinical mental health services, including the dynamics between clinical and lived/living experience perspectives, and shows the ability to navigate these environments with confidence, empathy, and professionalism

System Knowledge and Recovery Approach:

- A strong understanding of the Victorian public mental health system, including contemporary trends and issues from a lived experience family/carer viewpoint.
- A deep understanding of relational recovery and the ability to work from a tripartite approach (consumer, carer, and clinician collaboration).
- Understanding and application of the strengths-based model of recovery.
- Sound knowledge of the relevant legislation (including Mental Health Act, Carer Recognition Act, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist Guidelines) and frameworks for recovery-oriented practice pertaining to working in mental health and with consumers and their families, carers and supporters.

Empathy, Diversity & Cultural Sensitivity:

- Demonstrated understanding of and empathy for the broad impact of mental illness on consumers, carers, and families.
- Awareness of the need to be sensitive to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills:

- Sound communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with consumers, families/carers, colleagues, clinical staff, and other health and welfare services.
- Ability to work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team, including expressing own viewpoints respectfully and valuing the perspectives of others.



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Professional qualifications and registration requirements

Essential:

- Completion of **Intentional Peer Support (IPS)** training.
- Completion of, or working towards, **Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work** or similar qualification.
- **Single Session Peer Work (SSPW)** - Willingness to obtain within a year of joining.

Desirable but not essential:

- Lived & Living Experience Peer Support Cadetship Program.
- Certificate IV community, welfare or community development, or equivalent.
- Relevant Qualification in child and family, or health care.

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 organisational 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 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



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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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