

Position Description

Senior Lived Experience Peer Worker

ICYMHS Crisis Assessment Treating Team

Classification:	Lived Experience Peer Worker Y1 – Y4
Business unit/department:	Infant Child and Youth Mental Health Service (ICYMHS) Mental Health Division (MHD)
Work location:	Austin Hospital, and Onsite at 37 Burgundy Street Heidelberg – with outreach
Agreement:	Victorian Public Mental Health Services Enterprise Agreement 2020-2024
Employment type:	Part-Time
Hours per week:	0.8 EFT / 30.4 hours per week
Reports to:	Team Leader and Program Manager ICYMHS
Direct reports:	Nil
Financial management:	Nil
Date:	February 2026

Position purpose

The Senior Lived Experience Peer Worker is a key member of the ICYMHS Crisis Assessment Treating Team, bringing personal lived experience of mental health challenges, distress, service use, recovery, and healing to offer authentic, compassionate, and hope-driven support to young people. This role ensures that youth in crisis are met with understanding, dignity, and genuine connection, complementing clinical assessment with relational, human-centred, and recovery-oriented approaches.

Grounded in the principles and tasks of **Intentional Peer Support (IPS)**—*connection, worldview, mutuality, and moving towards*—the Senior Peer Worker purposefully uses their lived experience to create relationships that support meaningful engagement, reduce power imbalances, foster agency, and promote shared learning. The role models safe, purposeful, and ethical use of lived experience to support young people in exploring their own understanding of distress, recovery, hope, and identity.

A core component of this role is **supporting not only the young person, but also their family, carers, and kin**. The Senior Peer Worker works alongside these important people in a young person’s life to:

- Provide reassurance, guidance, and emotional support in times of crisis

- Share lived experience insights that help families and carers understand distress in more compassionate, non-judgmental ways
- Support communication and relational repair where appropriate
- Build shared hope and alignment around the young person's goals, needs, and preferences
- Encourage environments that uphold the young person's autonomy, cultural identity, safety, and sense of belonging

As a senior member of the team, the role provides leadership, mentoring, and reflective practice opportunities for other peer workers, while championing lived experience perspectives across the service. The Senior Peer Worker actively contributes to co-design, service development, and advocacy to ensure youth-centred, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and rights-based practices are embedded in all crisis responses.

This position also collaborates closely with clinicians, community supports, and relevant service partners to enhance holistic, family-inclusive care. The Senior Peer Worker helps shape organisational culture by promoting consumer voice, relational safety, and practices that honour lived experience knowledge at all levels of service.

Ultimately, this role helps young people—and the families, carers, and kin who walk alongside them—move through crisis with greater connection, understanding, and possibility. The Senior Lived Experience Peer Worker supports young people not just to survive moments of distress, but to move toward self-defined recovery, agency, and hope.

About the Directorate/Division/Department

The Mental Health Division provides care and services through a comprehensive range of teams to meet the needs of mental health consumers and carers throughout Victoria. Services are located across Austin Health campuses and in the community.

The Mental Health Division incorporates three program areas:

- Adult and Older Mental Health Services
- Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health Services and,
- Mental Health Specialty Services.

All mental health services work within a clinical framework that promotes recovery-oriented practice and supported 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.

About ICYMHS

The Child and Youth Mental Health Service (ICYMHS) sits within the Mental Health Division and provides tertiary mental health services to the north-eastern catchment of Melbourne (currently the local government areas of Banyule, Boroondara, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, and Yarra). Young people eligible for the service are aged 0-25 years. Lived and Living Experience Workforce is also embedded with the ICYMHS Directorate.

Austin Health ICYMHS have two inpatient units (a child and an adolescent one), a Child and Family Centre called Booboop Narrkwarren Nagarra-Jarra-noun and a Youth Prevention and Recovery Centre (YPARC), along with a range of community teams.

The child and youth community teams work alongside specialist outreach teams, an Under 25 Crisis Assessment & Treatment Service (CATS) and a triage team. The work is supported by specialist roles: - Infant and Child Specialists, Carer and Consumer Consultants, Alcohol & Other Drug



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Specialists, Aboriginal Mental Health Liaison Officers, a group program coordinator and an Autism Spectrum Disorder Assessment Program.

Position responsibilities

Working for consumers, families, carers and supporters

- Providing empathetic and intentional peer support to consumers and carers whose lives are impacted by mental health and/or substance use challenges, being mindful of the principles of purposeful disclosure.
- Supporting consumers and carers to discover their own solutions and empowering them to take ownership of the journey.
- Encouraging and facilitating referrals to internal and external services, support groups and education where appropriate.
- Effective communication skills and the ability to engage with consumers, 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 consumers, 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 Consumer Peer Work to promote shared understanding and effective collaboration.
- Developing and maintaining appropriate networks and resources to enable the referral of consumers, families, carers, and supporters to broader community services.
- Representing ICYMHS CATT on relevant networks and committees as required in a professional and respectful manner.
- 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.



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- 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 consumer and 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 Consumer/Carer Discipline Lead.
- Participating in regular lived experience 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.

Selection criteria

Essential skills and experience:

1. Lived/Living Experience:
 - Lived and/or living experience of a diagnosed mental illness and an understanding of 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, with the ability to use these experiences to provide empathetic and hope-inspiring support to others.



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- Knowledge of intentional peer support principles, committed to providing support from a mutual perspective, sharing lived experiences to foster hope and empowerment.
 - Ability to use a lived and living experience perspective to collaborate effectively with staff and instil hope and belief in recovery.
2. Professional Experience:
- Minimum of 2 years' experience working in a lived experience 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
3. 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 and wellbeing 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.
4. Empathy, Diversity, and 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.
5. 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.
6. Professionalism and Work Practices:
- Ability to manage time and resources effectively in a challenging and dynamic environment.
 - Basic proficiency in computer skills to support documentation and communication requirements.



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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.
- Current Victorian driver licence
- Working with children check

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.



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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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