

## 13. goal planning



This module focuses on how peer support relationships can support the creation and meeting of goals.

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## 1. welcome

# welcome to WHERE WE ARE AT goal planning



Welcome to **Where We Are At**, a training course for Provincial Peer Support Workers. We're glad you're here! This course is made up of 16 modules, all designed to support your training in peer support work.

The purpose of module **13. goal planning** is to focus on how peer support relationships can support the creation and meeting of goals.

Any of the modules in this training can stand alone, but you'll notice they are very interconnected. All of the concepts and core values have many layers, and they will look a little different when you see them through the lens of different topics. For example, self-determination, one of the core values that is essential for peer support work, will look a little different when we look at it through the lens of learned helplessness, grief and loss, or goal planning, but the main message will always be the same.

You will get to experience all of those layers and intersections when you move through each module of the training. Feel free to navigate back and forth between modules as you move along since learning never has to be linear. There will be references to other modules intersected throughout.

**Thank you** for joining us on this educational journey!

## 2. gratitude

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Before we begin this new **learning** journey, we ask that you reflect on the following question:

**What am I grateful for today?**

We know that taking time to reflect can give us the clarity and strength to do what can sometimes be difficult emotional work.

Download the **reflection journal** below and use it to record your thoughts. Please don't rush. Take all the time you need. This journal will be used for several questions throughout the course.



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72 KB



## 3. about this training

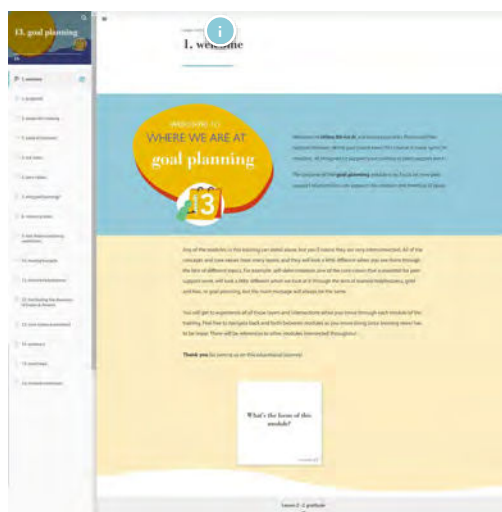
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**The course content has been guided by consultations that were held with peer support workers. It's with the utmost respect for their experience and wisdom that we share these learnings.**

## course navigation

You may have questions on how to use this course. We designed an interactive diagram to give you the chance to explore the different functions on the screen. Click the buttons below to learn more.





## Lesson titles

### Lesson 1 of 16

Above each lesson title, the lesson count is shown.

CONTINUE

## reflection journal

As you discovered in the previous section, included in this training is a reflection journal. The journal is designed for you to use throughout the training. It's full of reflective questions related to the topics being explored that will get you engaging in the world around you with curiosity.

Feel free to use the journal in a way that works for you:

- 1 You can print it off and write in it or just use it to support reflective processing
- 2 You can use the fillable PDF version and complete it online
- 3 You can write in your own journal, using the questions as guides

We encourage you to find a safe, comfortable spot to engage with these questions.

CONTINUE

# where we are at

## provincial peer support worker training curriculum

The *Where We Are At* educational curriculum includes 16 modules. You'll find a brief description of each below.

### 1. the foundations —

An overview of all the practices and knowledge that will be transferable to all of the modules in this training.

### 2. peer support & wholeness —

Provides an introduction to peer support work and explores differences between the peer support role and other roles within the mental health and substance use systems.

### 3. categories & containers: unpacking our biases —

Helps you understand how and why we judge.

### 4. self-determination —

Looks at self-determination, the theory of self-determination, and how peer support workers can support creating an ecology where people trust their own inner wisdom.

### 5. cultural humility —

COMING SOON

### 6. understanding boundaries & what it means to co-create them —

Examines boundary creation within the context of peer support, grounded in the core value of mutuality.

**7. connection & communication** —

Focuses on cultivating compassion and empathy, listening deeply to understand, and asking powerful questions to increase reflection and connection.

**8. healing-centred connection: principles in trauma-informed care** —

Brings together all the learnings from previous modules to support the creation of environments and relationships that are safe and trauma-informed.

**9. social determinants of health** —

Explores the social determinants of health and how social, economic and other factors lead to better or worse health outcomes.

**10. supporting someone who is grieving** —

Examines how to understand grief and loss in order to support someone who is grieving, without trying to “fix” or “save” them.

**11. substance use & peer support** —

Explores the principles and methodologies around the harm reduction approach to substance use disorders and some of the history around the criminalization of substance use.

**12. mental health & supporting those in crisis** —

Explores the mindset shift necessary to support someone through a crisis.

**13. goal planning** —

Focuses on how peer support relationships can support the creation and meeting of goals.

**14. building personal resilience** —

Explores ways to build resiliency, create wellness plans and practice self-compassion.



### 15. family peer support —

Explores family peer support work and how, by working from a place of shared lived experience, family peer support workers can create positive change for families by building long-term relationships based on trust with those supporting loved ones.

### 16. working with youth and young adults —

Explores the unique application of peer support principles to working with youth and young adults.



## 4. table of contents

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Below you'll find a short overview of what topics you'll find in this module.

As you move through these topics, please remember you can always return to this page to revisit the main ideas being explored in each lesson.

### why goal planning? —

Explains why goal planning is included as a module; how it relates to determining program outcomes; and how peer support workers must remember to support people's sincere desire to reach specific goals.

### recovery plans & “moving towards” —

Describes how people referred from another agency may come with a recovery plan, and how strength-based goals are more effective motivators than problem-solving goals.

Explores the difference between problem-focused goals and “moving towards” goals.

### self-determination and worldview —

Reviews the principle of self-determination, types of motivation, and the components of self-determination theory.

### learned helplessness —

Describes what learned helplessness is, and how empathy and compassion can help us support people experiencing this frame of mind.

### goal setting —

Explores a goal-setting process for you and those people with whom you work.

- *facilitating the discovery of hopes and dreams*  
Describes your role in supporting hopes and dreams.
- *vision: a personal goal-planning exercise*  
Looks at how to discover your purpose in life.
- *identifying strengths*  
Explores how to know and own your personal strengths.
- *how do you want to feel?*  
Describes how to include feelings in your personal goals.
- *find the goal*  
Encourages you to come up with your goal.
- *my toolbox: resources*  
Encourages you to identify resources needed to meet your goals.
- *my community and support network*  
Encourages you to identify your support network who will support you with your goal.
- *barriers and resistance*  
Looks at ways we can overcome barriers, both internal and external.
- *celebrate*  
Describes how we need to retrain your brain to celebrate small wins on the path to achieving your goal.



## 5. our focus

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What's the focus of this module?

Many peer support relationships focus on creating goals and then working to meet them together. In this module, we'll look at what it means to support someone to dream and create a vision that will serve as a guidepost for goal planning.

1 of 1

after reviewing this module, you'll be able to...



Generate goals, based on exploring your personal vision, hopes and dreams.



**Recognize the importance of supporting someone to explore their hopes and dreams with a strength-based approach.**



**Apply the principle of self-determination when supporting the goal planning of others.**

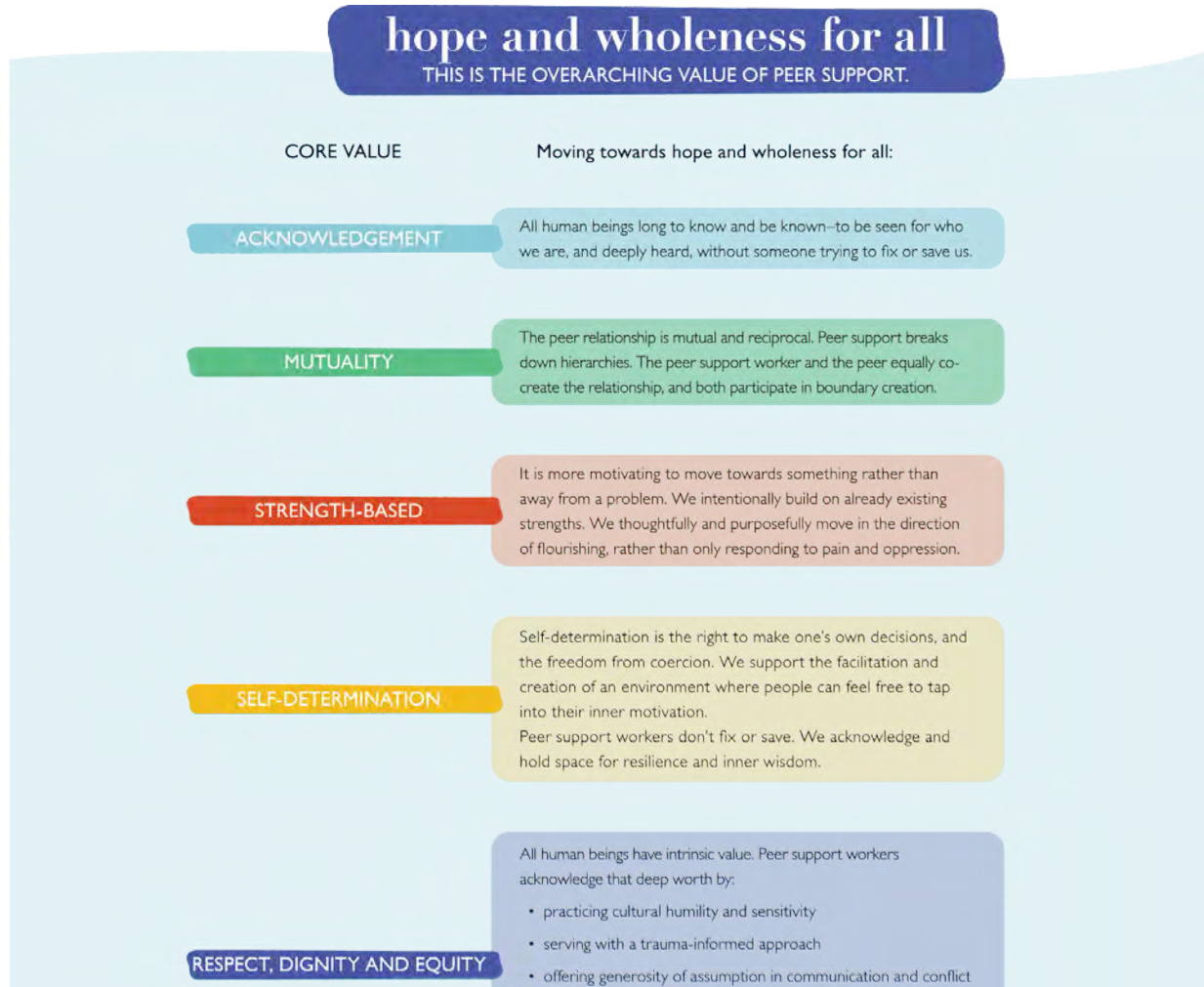


Support someone in assessing their barriers to meeting goals, and support them in creating a plan to address their barriers and resistance.



## 6. core values

The following core values are essential for peer support work. At the end of this module, you'll be asked to decide which ones are key to this topic.



- mindfully addressing personal biases

Peer support is about meeting people where they are at and serving others with a knowledge of equity.

## BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

Peer Support acknowledges that all human beings need to belong and be a part of a community. Peer support recognizes that many people have barriers that keep them from developing community. We actively work towards deconstructing those social blockades that prevent inclusion and acceptance. Peer support workers serve with a social justice mindset, and intentionally practice empathy, compassion & self-compassion.

## CURIOSITY

We are always intentional about how curiosity and inquiry support connection, growth, learning and engagement.

This curiosity isn't fueled by personal gain but by a genuine interest in connection. We encourage curiosity while respecting the boundaries and protecting the privacy of the people we support.

We are continually curious, but not invasive, while challenging assumptions and narratives. We ask powerful questions. We offer generosity of assumption to those who think differently than we do. We know that listening and asking questions are more important than providing answers.

*\*Note on the meaning of the term "generosity of assumption" from the glossary of terms: Assumptions happen when we don't know the whole story, and allow our brains to fill in the blanks. Often we make negative assumptions about people or situations. Generosity of assumption means that we extend someone the most generous interpretation of their intent, actions, or words.*



## 7. why goal planning?

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This module is meant to support peer support workers who are required to work with others through the process of goal planning. While not every peer relationship starts with goal planning – especially those in acute settings dealing with emergencies, as well as some involving substance use – there is a benefit from understanding how to support someone with the goal planning process.

Often goal achievement is very tied to measuring outcomes for the program's/organization's funder. What are outcomes measurements?

outcomes measurements are...

**...how an organization measures a program's effectiveness. Outcomes are the measurable results of the work and investment put into an intervention. Terms such as positive, neutral or negative are often used.**

1 of 1

The more effective the program is, the greater the chance of keeping or increasing funding in the future. The only way to prove its effectiveness is by having outcomes that can be seen and measured. This is where statistics come in!

Most health authority funded programs – as well as many others – are required to produce reports throughout the year, and often a big one at the end of the fiscal year. Not all funders require this, but it's likely that some kind of similar report is required. Within nonprofits, reports are also needed for their board of directors. If the agency is accredited by an outside organization, they'll likely have to write even more reports for the accrediting body.

**NOTE:** Many peer support programs in B.C. are accredited organizations. If your program is not accredited, you won't likely have as many demands for paperwork and outcomes measurements.

Program funders are looking for outcomes such as these:

☐

Number of people served

☐

Length of service

☐

Demographics of people served

☐

Number of people benefiting from this service

- This out come can be proved by looking at each participants':
  - Accomplishment s
  - Goals – made and/or achieved
  - Evaluation results
  - Involvement with other services

There will also be required outcomes specific to the program deliverables. Deliverables are written into a contract and refer to expectations for service.

CONTINUE

## holding outcomes measurements lightly

Even though goal planning and achievement are tied to outcome measurement, it's important to understand that we never want to engage with people purely from that point of view. If we only support people from the perspective of wanting to prove that our program is effective so that we can continue to get funding, there's a risk that people's personal needs and interests will get lost in the shuffle. We can very unconsciously begin to guide people to create easy goals that can be checked off as accomplished, meanwhile missing out on supporting them to uncover new hopes and dreams. Basically, we can unconsciously put them in a box so that we meet the overall needs of the program.



While we do need to support the program as a whole by providing outcomes measurements so funding is possible, we also want to hold that lightly. We need to balance that need with supporting a person's need to unearth some of their bigger hopes and dreams. We might not get to check off a box for this type of action, but allowing it can sometimes change the whole direction of someone's life.

It may seem like an easy task to hold these two perspectives at once, but it isn't. It requires us to be mindful, aware and intentional. It requires us to focus on self-determination and mutuality while challenging our assumptions and biases at the same time.

CONTINUE

Why are outcome measurements important? Choose the best answer.

- ☐ They aren't important and should be ignored
- ☐ Most organizations use outcome measurements to help secure funding
- ☐ They are used in reports

## 8. recovery plans & “moving towards”

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Often a person will be referred to peer support through a referring agency. This isn't always the case, as sometimes people are able to self-refer depending on the policies of the program. If the person does come from another agency or program, it's quite likely they already have a clinician supporting them. Because of this, some people will already come into peer support with goals or a recovery plan in place.

recovery plan

**A recovery plan is a personalized and proactive approach to managing and overcoming challenges. It involves identifying the individual's specific needs and preferences, setting achievable goals and creating a plan of action to achieve those goals.**

Regardless of whether you yourself will be using a recovery plan, use these guiding questions and planning options as a way to understand them and to better support others in this process.

Recovery plans are all different; there's no "right" way to create one. Every agency will approach this process differently, and you'll need to know what plans from referring agencies look like and how they relate to the services you'll be providing. Explore some topics that might be included in a recovery plan by expanding the boxes below.

Identify your strengths and weaknesses —

Write down your strengths and areas where you need improvement. This will help you identify areas that you need to work on and develop a plan to improve them.

Set realistic goals —

Write down achievable goals that you want to achieve. These goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). For example, if you are struggling with anxiety, a goal might be to attend a social event without feeling overwhelmed.

**Identify your triggers**     —

Identify situations or events that trigger your mental health symptoms. This will help you prepare for these situations and avoid them when possible.

**Develop coping strategies**     —

Develop strategies to help you manage your symptoms. These might include relaxation techniques, mindfulness exercises, or engaging in activities that you enjoy.

**Seek support**     —

Identify individuals who can support you during difficult times, such as family members, friends, or mental health professionals. Develop a plan to reach out to them when you need help.

**Practice self-care**     —

Take care of yourself by getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and engaging in activities that you enjoy.

**Monitor your progress**     —

Keep track of your progress towards your goals. Celebrate your successes and make adjustments to your plan when necessary.

One thing to consider when writing recovery plans is that a strength-based, “moving towards” something type of goal is much more motivating than a problem-solving goal. Why?

Language has power. The words we choose are actually forming the reality in which we live. The first step in creating the life we want is to become intentional about the language we use at all times. This is especially so when setting goals. Using strength-based language for goal planning is essential.

If we create goals that are centred on problem-solving rather than on “moving towards” a bigger hope and dream, we can actually stay tied to the problem. This is because we put more attention on the problem and less on where we want to go. This problem-focused approach might even cause our bodies to tighten up and constrict! (Pay attention to how your body feels the next time you’re focused on a problem.)

If we focus on “moving towards” where we want to go, we’ll feel more inspired. We’ll no longer be thinking of the problem, but will be thinking creatively in ways that fuel our intrinsic motivation.

As an example, look at the two approaches to setting goals for a fictional person named Sean:

**problem-solving goal**

**Sean wants to decrease isolation**

**“moving toward” goal**

- **Sean wants to join a community photography group and make some new friends**
- **Sean wants to work towards being more comfortable in the community, so that they can volunteer and get to know more people**

A problem-solving goal like, “to decrease isolation,” is very unmotivating. There is nothing positive to move towards. Naming concrete goals based on a person’s strengths, however, such as “joining a photography group” or “getting to know more people,” is much more specific and motivating.

CONTINUE

## question for reflection

Answer this question in your wonder journal.



1 of 1

How do the two goals, “to decrease isolation,” and, “to work towards being more comfortable in the community, so that they can volunteer and get to know more people,” feel in your body when you read or say them out loud?

CONTINUE

In Shery Mead’s *Intentional Peer Support* (2014) program, she identifies using a “moving towards” approach to planning as one of the four tasks of peer support. The other three are: worldview, connection and mutuality.

**A “moving towards” approach opens us up to possibility.**

Here’s another example of these two approaches to goal planning:

problem-focused goal

I currently spend too much time alone playing video games, and it makes me feel lonely. I will limit my game time to 2 hours per day.

“moving towards” goal

- I want to find a community and a place where I belong
- I want to develop some good friendships and feel connected
- I also want to exercise my creativity and love for music
- I will join the music group that meets at the clubhouse on Wednesdays
- I will play video games with other people

check your understanding of “moving towards” goals:



Which of the following are “moving towards” goals?

- ☐ I will stop wasting time on social media
- ☐ I will list five things I am grateful for
- ☐ I will stop dwelling on negative thoughts
- ☐ I will practice the piano 20 minutes today

SUBMIT

CONTINUE

## question for reflection

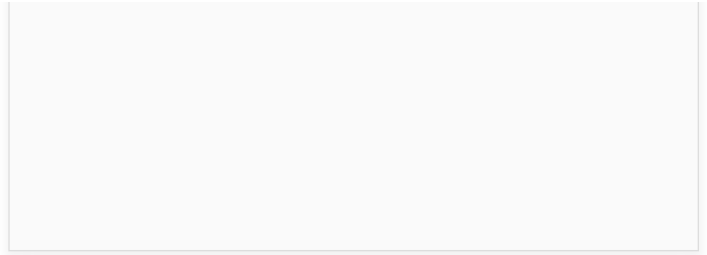
Answer these question in your reflection journal.



If you've had any personal experience with goal planning, how does it compare to the above? Is there anything you would change?



1 of 1



CONTINUE

## building rapport

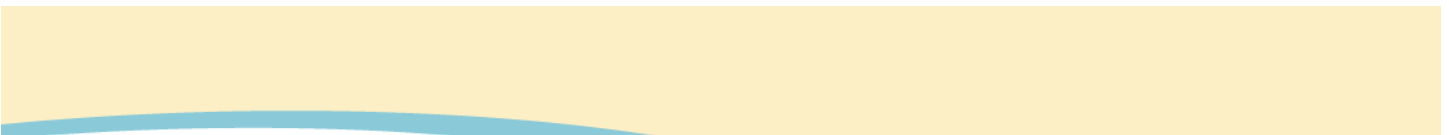
You may find yourself supporting the creation of a recovery plan with the people you work with. To do so, your program will likely provide specific guidelines and even forms.

Some peer support programs find that meeting together for a few visits to intentionally get to know each other better is helpful. During this time, you can explore goals, hopes and dreams prior to doing any formal goal planning together. This relationship-building can inspire program participants to create more meaningful goals. Some peer support programs call this phase the “rapport period.”

**rapport period**

**A period of relationship-building time spent with a participant prior to any formal goal planning**

1 of 1





Some examples of ways you might develop better rapport with the people you work with include:



**Active listening and empathy:** You can spend time actively listening to your peers and showing empathy for their experiences. This can help build trust and create a safe space for them to share their thoughts and feelings.



**Sharing your own experiences:** You can share your own experiences of recovery or of managing mental health challenges. This can help the peer feel less alone and more understood.



**Identifying common interests:** You can spend time identifying common interests with your peers, such as hobbies, music or sports. This can provide a way to connect on a personal level and build rapport.



**Encouraging self-expression:** You can encourage peers to express themselves in a way that feels comfortable, such as through art, music or writing. This can provide a way to connect on a deeper level and build trust.



**Providing practical support:** You can provide practical support for your peers, such as helping them navigate the mental health system, find housing or connect with community resources. This can demonstrate your commitment to their well-being and build trust over time.

## 9. self-determination & worldview

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### self-determination

Before we dig into the how-tos of goal planning, it's essential we review the importance of supporting someone's self-determination.

In the **self-determination** module, we cover motivation and how no one can motivate someone else; all motivation needs to come from within. We cover two types of motivation:



**Extrinsic motivation:** This is when we're motivated by something outside of ourselves, such as success, money, fame or popularity.



**Intrinsic motivation:** This is when we're motivated by a purpose, or something inside ourselves, such as:

- An interest or belief
- The pleasure of learning
- Our impact on the world around us
- Life satisfaction

**We know that both types of motivation are usually present. However, lasting motivation is fuelled intrinsically.**

Let's also look at Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory:

CONTINUE

# self-determination theory

HUMAN BEINGS HAVE THREE BASIC NEEDS:

## COMPETENCE

People need to gain mastery and control of their own lives & their environment. Essential to wellness.

## AUTONOMY

People need to feel in control of their own life, behaviours and goals. This is about choice.

## RELATEDNESS

People need to experience a sense of belonging and connection with other people.

*Feeling cared for by others  
& to care for others.*

Based on the work of Richard Ryan and Edward Deci.

CONTINUE

Which is an example of extrinsic motivation? Choose all that apply.

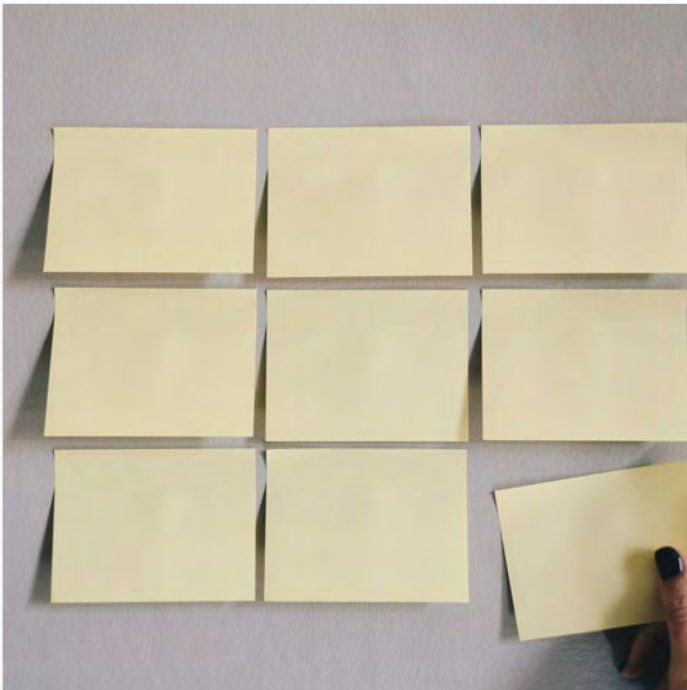
- ☐ Studying to get a good grade
- ☐ Playing sports because it's fun
- ☐ Volunteering because it looks good on your resume
- ☐ Working together because you like the feeling of collaboration

SUBMIT

CONTINUE

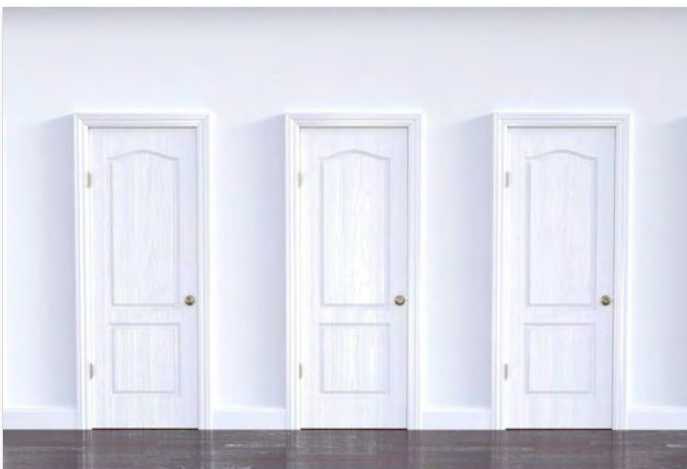
## questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



How do you think intrinsic and extrinsic motivation intersect with goal planning?

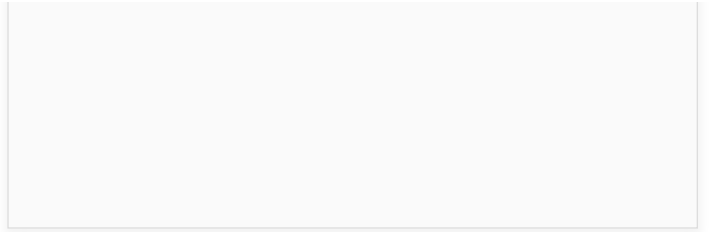
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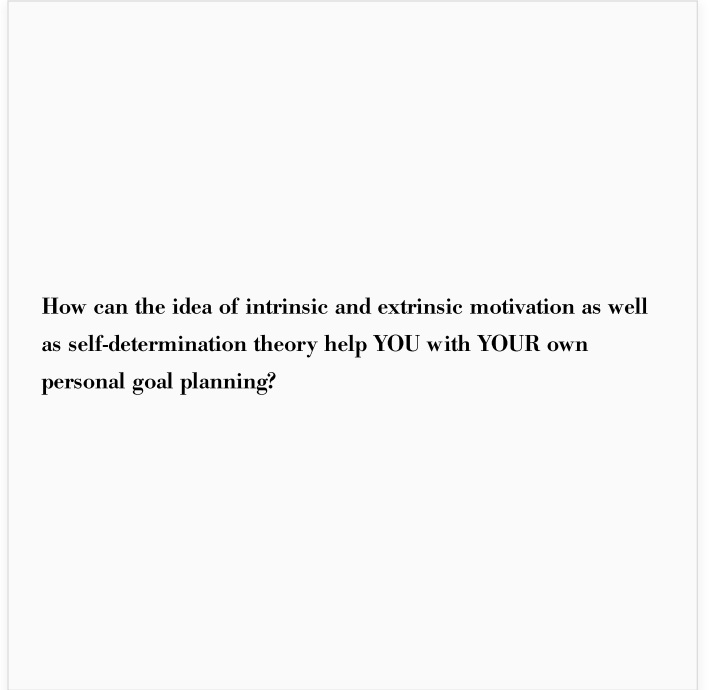
Look at the self-determination theory chart. Why do you think it's important to consider competence, autonomy and relatedness when supporting people with goal planning?



2 of 3



3 of 3



CONTINUE

## worldview

In module **3. categories & containers: unpacking our biases**, we covered worldview, assumptions and biases. Remember, our experiences make up our own personal view of the world, and our worldview will be different from anyone else's.

When we're supporting someone with goal planning, it's essential to consistently check our own biases and assumptions. If we're not careful, we can project our own worldview onto someone else, and this can influence their goals.



CONTINUE



# questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



**Do you think it could be easy to project your own worldview on someone else during the process of goal planning? Why or why not?**

1 of 3



**How can you remind yourself to reflect on your own assumptions and biases when you are supporting someone else with THEIR goals?**

2 of 3



Have you ever been in the position when someone else tried to influence your goals, and pushed you towards setting something that wasn't very important to you? If so, how did that feel?

3 of 3

## 10. learned helplessness

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Exploring hopes and dreams can seem like an impossible task, especially when we're deep in the pain, struggle, despair and trauma that can come with a mental health diagnosis or when we're engaged in the potentially harmful use of substances. In fact, it can be very difficult to imagine even slightly different circumstances.

Let's reflect back on learned helplessness, a concept we explore in module **2. peer support and wholeness**.

Learned helplessness happens when someone is repeatedly exposed to a stressful situation or environment outside of their control. No matter what they try, they're not able to change the situation, and eventually, perceiving it as hopeless, they give up. Interestingly, this can happen even when opportunities for change emerge or present themselves.



People who are experiencing learned helplessness can be perceived as pessimistic with a gloomy disposition. An image of Eeyore from the Winnie the Pooh stories might come up for you. People experiencing learned helplessness can tend to feel victimized and are often passive participants in their lives. This conditioned behaviour comes because they have constantly endured great hardship that has stemmed from an even greater loss of autonomy.

When we're supporting someone, it's essential that we do so with compassion and empathy, while applying the skills we've learned around facilitating self-determination. All of this can be tricky to balance when we hold all of the core values of peer support in place, including mutuality. But it is possible!

This means we might move very slowly, and that's totally okay.

The perspective-taking nature of empathy assists us to better understand people who are experiencing learned helplessness. In this regard, it might be helpful to visit module **3. categories and containers: unpacking our biases**, and remember that when we remind ourselves that someone's past experiences influence their current worldview, we have a better capacity to meet them where they are.

Many people who experience learned helplessness can benefit from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Not everyone has access to therapy, but there are likely some resources available in your community, and there are often free CBT supports online as well.

CONTINUE

Which phrase best sums up the thinking of someone experiencing learned helplessness?

- ☐ If I focus on a good thought, I can improve my situation
- ☐ I won't give up trying to get better
- ☐ Nothing can end my misery
- ☐ Things are bound to improve

SUBMIT

CONTINUE

## questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



**Consider the social determinants of health module. How do you think someone's social determinants can support the development of learned helplessness?**

1 of 3



**Have you ever felt helpless in your situation? Have you ever felt that nothing can change your situation? If so, what supported you to move towards possibility?**

2 of 3







What can you do to support someone to move towards possibility? [Hint: Consider self-determination theory.]

3 of 3

CONTINUE

## goal planning as a support for someone experiencing learned helplessness

Goal planning can be a powerful tool to help overcome learned helplessness. When individuals feel that their actions have no impact on their outcomes, they may become passive and unmotivated to try new things. However, setting specific and achievable goals can help them break out of this pattern. By focusing on small, attainable steps, individuals can start to see progress and feel a sense of control over their situation. This can lead to increased confidence and a belief that their efforts can make a difference. Through ongoing goal planning and monitoring, individuals can continue to build momentum and break the cycle of learned helplessness. Ultimately, this can lead to increased motivation, a greater sense of agency and improved overall well-being.

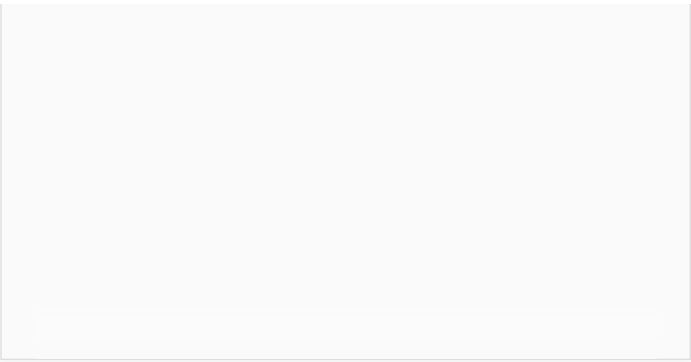
CONTINUE

## question for reflection

Answer this question in your reflection journal.



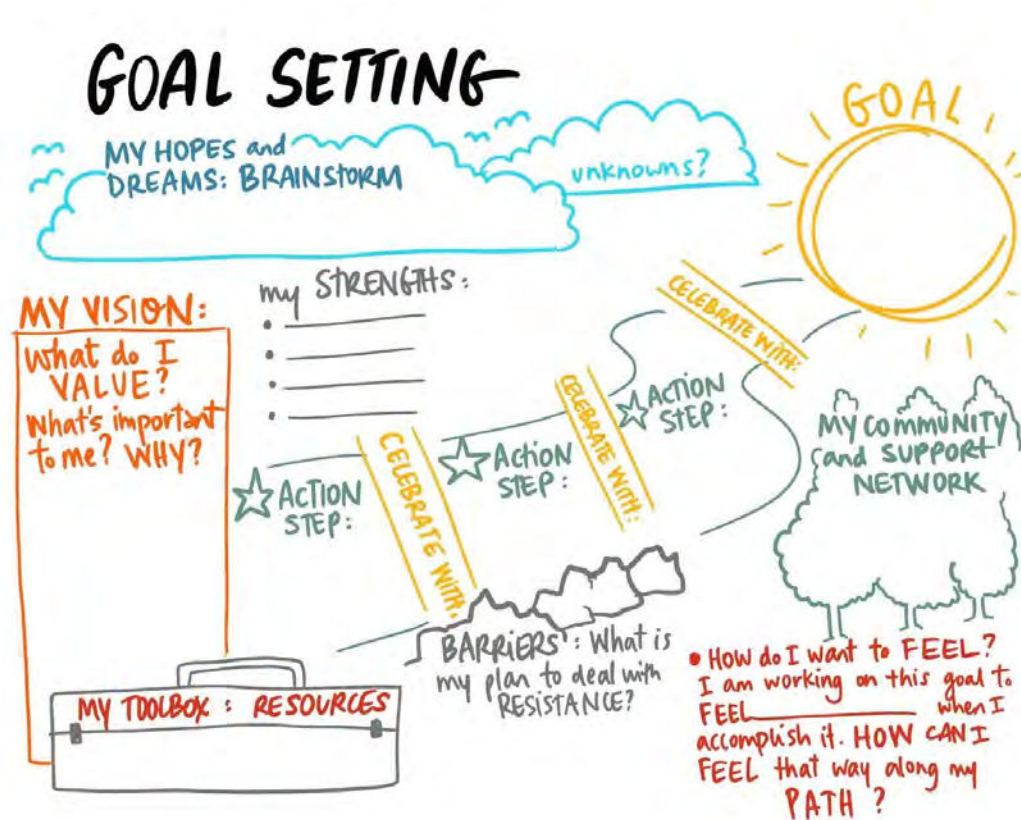
Consider the core values of peer support, the theory of self-determination and awareness of your own worldview. Then brainstorm some ideas on how you can support someone to move out of learned helplessness. (Hint: the hands-on mutuality of peer support really can provide great support for this.)



1 of 1



# 11. goal setting



The rest of this module is written for you to explore the goal-planning process for yourself. Above, you'll see a goal-planning worksheet that can be helpful to use. You can download a copy below, or create your own.



M13\_Goal Setting Worksheet.pdf

110.2 KB



It's also, of course, a tool you can use to support someone else going through the goal-planning process. But we find doing it for yourselves first makes it a much richer experience when you share it with others.

Let's dig in and learn how to use it!

## facilitating the discovery of hopes & dreams



In the “why goal planning?” chapter at the beginning of this module, we discussed how it can be very tempting for a program to focus solely on short-term, easy-to-achieve goals so that successful outcomes can be presented to funders. Obviously, it’s important to secure ongoing funding; without it, our programs will shut down. But it’s also essential to support someone to discover their bigger hopes and dreams. When someone only identifies and pursues short-term goals, they aren’t tapping into the deeper intrinsic motivation needed to move them towards the life that they want. Any conversation about goal planning must, therefore, include exploration of those bigger picture hopes and dreams.



### **hope = possibility**

Possibility always begins with a spark of hope. Hope and possibility are deeply interconnected. Hope is the tiny glimmer that suggests life might have the potential for new possibilities. Hope can show up in a poem, a cup of coffee, a warm word from a stranger, a recovery story or a good laugh.

When we fan the spark of hope, it grows and is contagious. It can spread.

As a peer support worker, you might find yourself helping someone fan that little spark of hope for a long, long time. Eventually, after time and consistency, the person you're supporting will be ready to dream bigger.

And when they're ready, you should be there with support.

## how do we support someone to dream?

In module **7. connection and communication**, we talk about curiosity and asking questions. You'll definitely put this skill to use when supporting someone to hope and dream.

There's not one right way to support someone in this process. It'll depend on the person you're working with, the chemistry you have together and the structure of the program where you work.

It's often in the small, simple moments of life where our hopes and dreams are born. This is something that can't always be predicted; there's no formula.

Here are some ideas you can use to support conversations about hopes and dreams:

1. Listen deeply to understand.

2. Pay attention to when the person you are supporting lights up about something. When you notice their interest piquing, ask them some questions about their interests.

3. Do fun things together.

4. Explore places in the community together, like the library.

5. Ask thought-provoking questions. Often we can learn more about our future dreams when we dig into what we loved in the past.

6. Support the person as they strive to identify their strengths and abilities (we'll dig more into that later in this module).

7. Share some of your hopes and dreams.

8. Connect with others in the community. Interaction with others leads to inspiration.

9. Take a workshop together. A workshop like [WRAP](#) (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) is a good place to uncover some new things about oneself.

10. Create a worksheet for your program that explores interests.

CONTINUE

**In the worksheet:** List some of your Hopes and Dreams in the bubble at the top left of the page.

CONTINUE

## vision: a personal goal-planning exercise

**“You’ve got to think about big things while you’re doing small things so that all the small things go in the right direction.”**

Alvin Toffler

CONTINUE

## discovering your purpose

When we goal-plan, we tend to spend much more time in the details – the “hows” and “whats” of the plan – then the “why” behind the goal we picked in the first place. But the “why” is the key for the whole plan!

---

**Feeling fulfilled often starts with asking the bigger, deeper questions first. Your WHY is the bigger vision for how you want your life to be like, and how you want to feel.**

---

At it's best, exploring your “why” taps into uncovering your hopes and dreams, and, at the very least, it helps you pick some goals that are a little richer.

If the idea of finding your “why” is new to you, we invite you to explore some bigger thoughts. Think of some foundational experiences in your life that make you who you are:

- What has motivated you to take this training?
- What are some things that inspire hope in you?
- What gives you a little spark of purpose?

Uncovering your hopes and dreams is often connected to your past – your origins. Think of your own personal heroes. All heroes have an origin story. Origin stories tell us where they came from, what they had to face before becoming a hero, what they care about, and what they want to do in their lives.

You're the hero of your own life. Even though you might not feel like it, you are! What's your origin story? How does it relate to your purpose?

As you think about this, it might help to consider an origin story from a leader in the recovery movement:

#### Mary Ellen Copeland, founder of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)

It's 1997. It's a snowy winter evening in Vermont. Mary Ellen Copeland, the future founder of [WRAP](#), is developing a wellness program with a group of people who had experience living with a mental health diagnosis. This moment is the culmination of many years of learning. It changed her life and would impact the lives of so many others around her. But how had she gotten to this moment? What was her origin story?

Mary Ellen had seen her mother, Kate, institutionalized for a mental health diagnosis in the 1950s – a time when many people were commonly mistreated. Despite the odds at the time, Kate got better. She left the state hospital and created an amazing life for herself. Her mother's legacy would later be a key source of hope and inspiration for her own life.

Like her mother, Mary Ellen also faced living with a mental health diagnosis. She led a full life with a family and job, but her life eventually spiraled out of control and she found herself living in a group home, struggling with regular daily activities. All the things she had cared about were fading away. In an effort to maintain hope, she worked with a vocational counsellor to create a survey so she could find out what others did to take care of themselves. Her motivation for creating the survey was not because she wanted to change the world, but because she wanted to figure out how to get herself better. She sent out 125 surveys across the country to people with experience living with a mental health diagnosis, asking them what they did to take care of themselves. She got them back and shoved them in a box under her desk.

Later, when she had the strength and focus to read them, she pulled the surveys out and analyzed them. She discovered patterns. There were people who were able to live well despite their diagnosis. They all had hope, practiced personal responsibility, educated themselves, knew how to self-advocate and foster strong support systems.

The information that Mary Ellen gleaned from the wisdom of others changed her life, and she felt like she had to share this information with others. So in 1997, on that infamous snowy night in Vermont, with a group of like-minded people with lived experience, she shared what became the key concepts of WRAP. She and that group then worked together to come up with the infrastructure for the WRAP wellness plan that hundreds of thousands of people use now to keep themselves healthy.

This is Mary Ellen's story – her origin story. There are several moments in her story where something happened and her life shifted. Hope is often birthed out of shifts in life, even though they can be times of extreme pain and struggle. In Mary Ellen's case, anyone who has attended a WRAP workshop anywhere in the world has found hope, thus benefiting from her hero's journey!

NOTE: WRAP is a program that people use to manage challenges in life. It offers workshops for people who are living with a mental health diagnosis, are experiencing problematic substance use and/or having physical health issues such as chronic pain and diabetes. There are also versions written specifically for youth, children, veterans and neurodiverse people. Check to see if your community offers WRAP.

On a personal note, Jenn Cusick, one of the writers of this course, heard Mary Ellen Copeland tell her story at a WRAP Leadership retreat in Vermont in the winter of 2013, which is the source for this account.

CONTINUE

## now consider your origin story

You've been through some hard things. You've had some a-ha moments. Let's tap into that.

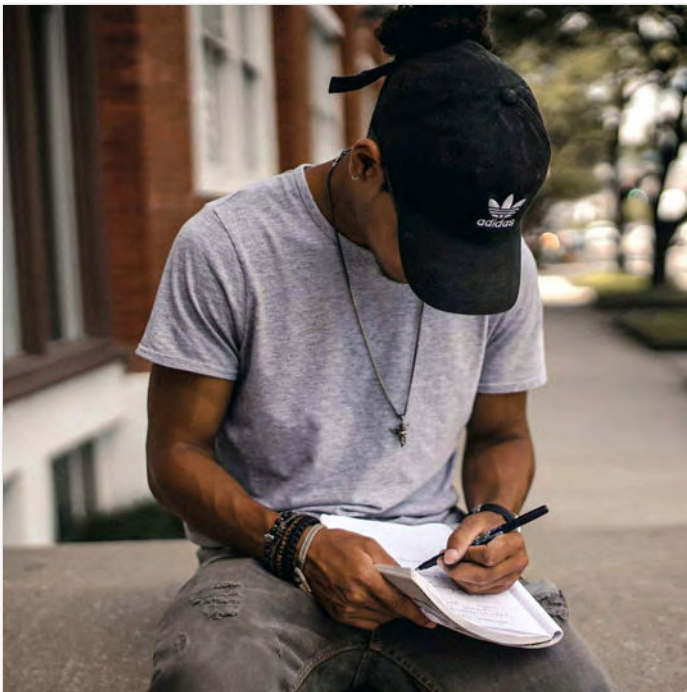
# questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



**Can you think of a defining moment that brought you here to this training?**

1 of 6



**What are bits of your story that make you, YOU? They can be good – or difficult –experiences.**

2 of 6





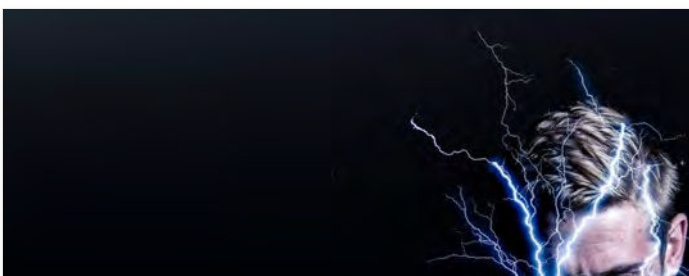
**What was the hardest thing you had to overcome?**

3 of 6



**Who supported you? Who are your allies and mentors?**

4 of 6







What are your superpowers (we all have superpowers/strengths)?

5 of 6



How do you see all of this supporting your “why?”

6 of 6

CONTINUE

**After giving your initial answers to these questions, spend some time over these next few weeks thinking about how all of them are connected to your “why,” or your sense of purpose.**

**Be curious.**

## developing a personal mission statement

By supporting you in the process of goal planning, we want you as a peer support worker to dream bigger. Through this process, you will become more equipped to support others in planning and pursuing their goals. You will also be able to share your plans with those same people. -----



We encourage you to consider a paradigm for goal planning that begins with developing a simple mission or vision statement for your own life. This kind of visioning can give you clarity in decision making. In fact, a good mission statement will also provide you with a yardstick that can be used to make choices that align with your values.

Let's look at an example of a mission statement:

### Disney Mission Statement

**“The mission of The Walt Disney Company is to entertain, inform and inspire people around the globe through the power of unparalleled storytelling, reflecting the iconic brands, creative minds and innovative technologies that make ours the world’s premier [entertainment company](#).”**

1 of 1

Whatever you feel about the Disney brand, you can see that their mission statement is broad and motivating.” A vision statement provides us with a GPS of where we want to go. Many people write their own personal vision statement.

As you consider your own, here are some questions to consider:

☐

What makes you feel good when you think about what your life might be like in 10 years?

☐

What are the things in life that are important to you?”

☐

What are the non-negotiable things that you value? What are you unwilling to compromise? For example: connection with friends and family, work, creativity or serving others.

☐

What would you love to accomplish within this next year? Why?

☐

What are some basic steps you can take to make those dreams a reality?

CONTINUE

**In the worksheet:** In the “My Vision” box on the left side of the page, fill in the answers to these questions: What do I value? What’s important to me? Why?

# identifying strengths

Outside of a job interview, most people struggle with identifying personal strengths: it can feel braggy, narcissistic or immodest.

But knowing what our strengths are is essential to creating the life we want. We all have strengths, whether we see them or not. Discovering what they are, and building on them, supports us to strengthen our character and resiliency. Strengths aren't static. They can grow and develop, especially when we are intentional to develop them.

Owning our personal core strengths supports community and interconnection. When each of us are clear on what strengths we bring to the table, we can work together to be a stronger whole.

In the book *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification (2004)*, authors Christopher Peterson and Martin E.P. Seligman identify 24 character strengths. They are as follows:

CHARACTER STRENGTHS		
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	Humility	Open-mindedness
Bravery	Humour	Perseverance
Creativity	Integrity	Perspective
Curiosity	Kindness	Prudence
Enthusiasm	Leadership	Purpose
Fairness	Love	Self-Control
Forgiveness	Love of Learning	Social Intelligence
Gratitude	Optimism	Teamwork

All of us have all of these character strengths, but some will be stronger than others.

CONTINUE

## questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



What are some strengths that you might feel are missing from this list?

1 of 2



What are your top three strengths?

2 of 2

CONTINUE

The Positivity Project website article *Character Strengths* states this:

Character strengths aren't about ignoring the negative. Instead, they help us overcome life's inevitable adversities. For example, you can't be **brave** without first feeling fear; you can't show **perseverance** without first wanting to quit; you can't show **self-control** without first being tempted to do something you know you shouldn't.

CONTINUE

## skills inventory

Strengths are not the same as skills. People often use these terms interchangeably but they are two different things.

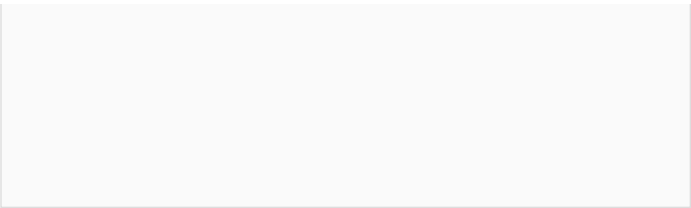
strengths

who you are

skills

what you can do





Strengths, such as focused, humourous, open-minded and kind, are associated with character, while skills are our abilities. We can all build our skillset. One day we can learn to play guitar or draw. So many people discover new skillsets even later in life. Skill building is one of the key points within self-determination theory. These are some examples of skills: cooking, carpentry, auto mechanics, drawing, numeracy, website design and so much more.

When goal planning, it might be useful to list skills as well, but know that skills are ever-growing. Everyone starts off rough in the journey of learning to do something new. Skill development requires practice, attention and time. Learning new skills is part of the magic of life, so we don't need to be limited by our skills.

CONTINUE

# questions for reflection

Answer these questions in your reflection journal.



What are some of your skills?

1 of 2





What are some skills you would like to develop?

2 of 2

CONTINUE

**In the worksheet:** In the “My Strengths” section, write your top self-identified strengths. You can include skills too.

CONTINUE

## how do you want to feel?

We are highly emotional beings, yet we don't often talk about our feelings. We certainly don't often reflect on our feelings when we're creating goals.

When we are in pain, we can become detached from our feelings and emotions. Sometimes, if the pain is very strong, we may engage in behaviours or consume substances that either help distract from the pain or numb it. These patterns can be very hard to change, even when we find ourselves in a place of growth and healing.

Getting in touch with our feelings can be very hard work, and we might need the support of a therapist along the way.

However, when it feels more possible to investigate our feelings, identifying how we want to feel can be a very helpful tool to incorporate into our goal planning. Those feeling words we identify can become guides in our decision making. Some examples of feeling words that can support goal planning are: peace, joy, delight, contentment, adventure, magic, fun, hope, harmony, clarity, serene, safe and vibrant.

Which feeling words resonate with you? Which can provide you with some support when you begin to set goals?





Consider any goal you might make. Most of us create a goal at least in part because we want to feel a certain way when we accomplish the goal. When we do meet that goal, the satisfied and happy feeling can be quite fleeting, because as soon as we accomplish it we often make a new one! Don't forget to celebrate your successes!

In her book *The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals With Soul* (2014), Danielle LaPorte talks about naming a goal down to the feeling you desire to feel when you achieve it. Instead of focusing only on creating big, lofty goals, LaPorte suggests naming how you want to feel and using that feeling as a guidepost for daily living. Basically, the desired feeling becomes a GPS for informing your daily choices.



## let's consider an example

Let's say you want to save your pennies so you can travel Europe, learn about history and see all the beautiful art and architecture of bygone eras. This is your goal.

What if it takes eight years to save up enough money to be able to take the trip? That's an awfully long time to wait for a trip that might last just a month.

So, what if we distill that goal down to how you hope to feel when you are on that trip? Imagine that you are craving **adventure**. Perhaps you want to learn and explore new things, and you want the **freedom** and **excitement** that comes with exploring a place you have never been.

Then I can break it down even further. I want to feel:

☐

ADVENTUROUS

☐

FREE

☐

EXCITED

☐

I want to learn, and feel ILLUMINATED

In *The Desire Map* (2014), LaPorte calls these “Core Desired Feelings.” When we have clarity about how we want to feel, we can make choices to feel “adventurous” every day in simple ways. Maybe we can’t go to Europe, but we can explore a new part of our neighbourhood and choose to see something we’ve never seen before. We can order a dish we’ve never tried off the menu of a restaurant we’re trying for the first time.

Or perhaps we can use that feeling to support ourselves when picking our new goals.

When we as peer support workers support others in goal planning, we can encourage them to consider their feelings. Those desired feelings can then serve as the catalyst for them to explore hopes and dreams. Those hopes and dreams can then be distilled down to an achievable goal.

NOTE: For more learning about goals and feelings, consider reading LaPorte’s book *The Desire Map: A Guide to Creating Goals With Soul*.

CONTINUE

**In the worksheet:** On the bottom right side of the page, write down one to three feeling words to describe how you want to feel. For example: joyful, free, adventurous, peaceful, abundant, expansive.

CONTINUE

## find the goal

Through all the discovery work you have done above, spend some time considering what you want your goal to be.

☐

Dream big. Then hone it in and come up with something that feels doable and accessible for you. Make sure it’s your goal and not someone else’s.

☐

Be specific.

☐

Create some timelines around the goal.

**NOTE:** If you are supporting someone else with this part, please remember the importance of self-determination. Support the person to find their own goal without pushing them towards something that doesn’t resonate for them.

CONTINUE

---

**In the worksheet:** List your goal inside the image of the sun at the top right of the page.

CONTINUE



### **my toolbox: resources**

This is the section of your plan where you reflect on the resources you have to support you with meeting your goal. You might need to brainstorm with someone else to come up with some ideas. Write down as many resources that you can think of because, when things get tough and barriers come up, you want to be prepared.

CONTINUE

---

**In the worksheet:** In the “My Toolbox” section in the lower left of the illustration, write down all your resources.

CONTINUE

## my community & support network

This is where you gather all of your supports. Who do you need support from to make your goal happen? Are there people who will play a role? Or will they simply be a sounding board for you to brainstorm with?

List everyone you can think of who can provide some support with this goal.

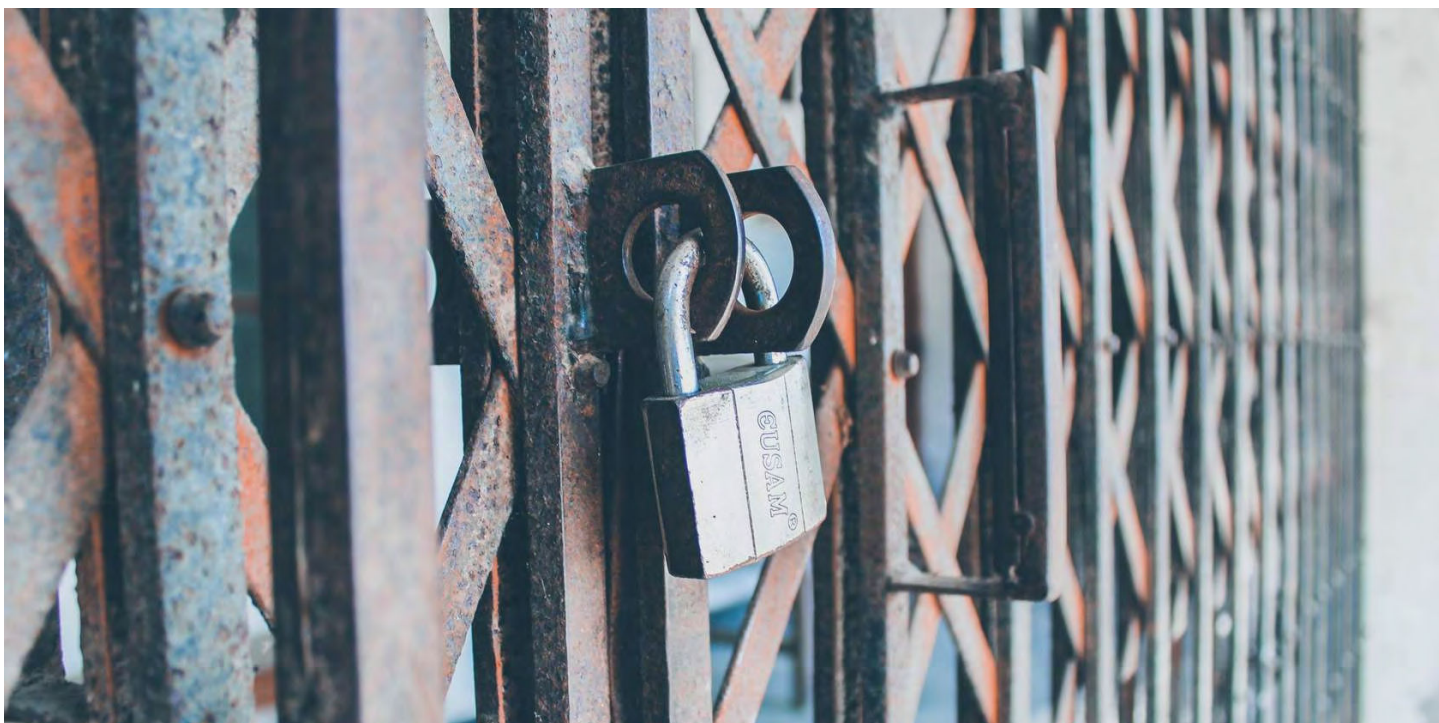
It's very important to speak to them in advance and let them know what their role is in your plan.



CONTINUE

**In the worksheet:** In the “My community: My support network” section on the right side of the page, write down all your supports.





## barriers & resistance

Meeting barriers and resistance is normal when we are on the road to achieving goals. We all experience them. Normalizing barriers and resistance make them easier to address. Reflection is really important so that we can find the source of the resistance.

Some questions to ask when we're feeling resistance to meeting a goal are:

☐

Is this really a goal that I want to achieve? If not, change the goal!

☐

Is there some natural resistance popping up? Is some part of me resisting this goal? If so, why is that? Where does the resistance stem from?

In her training manual *Intentional Peer Support: An Alternative Approach* (2014), Shery Mead talks about the task of "moving towards."

Rather than helping each other "move away" from what isn't working, such as problems and solutions, we help each other "move towards" what we want, such as vision and action. In traditional mental health, the focus has been developing solutions or strategies to deal with problems. Most of our conversations are about what's not working. BUT when we're moving away from what's not working, we stay tied to the problem. When we're moving towards what we want, we can create the beliefs and the actions that we'll need to get there. Believe it or not, this is a radical shift in thinking, and one that challenges our traditional assumptions about help.



## identifying barriers & supporting someone through resistance to meeting goals

We know that most of us experience barriers or resistance at some point when working to reach a goal.

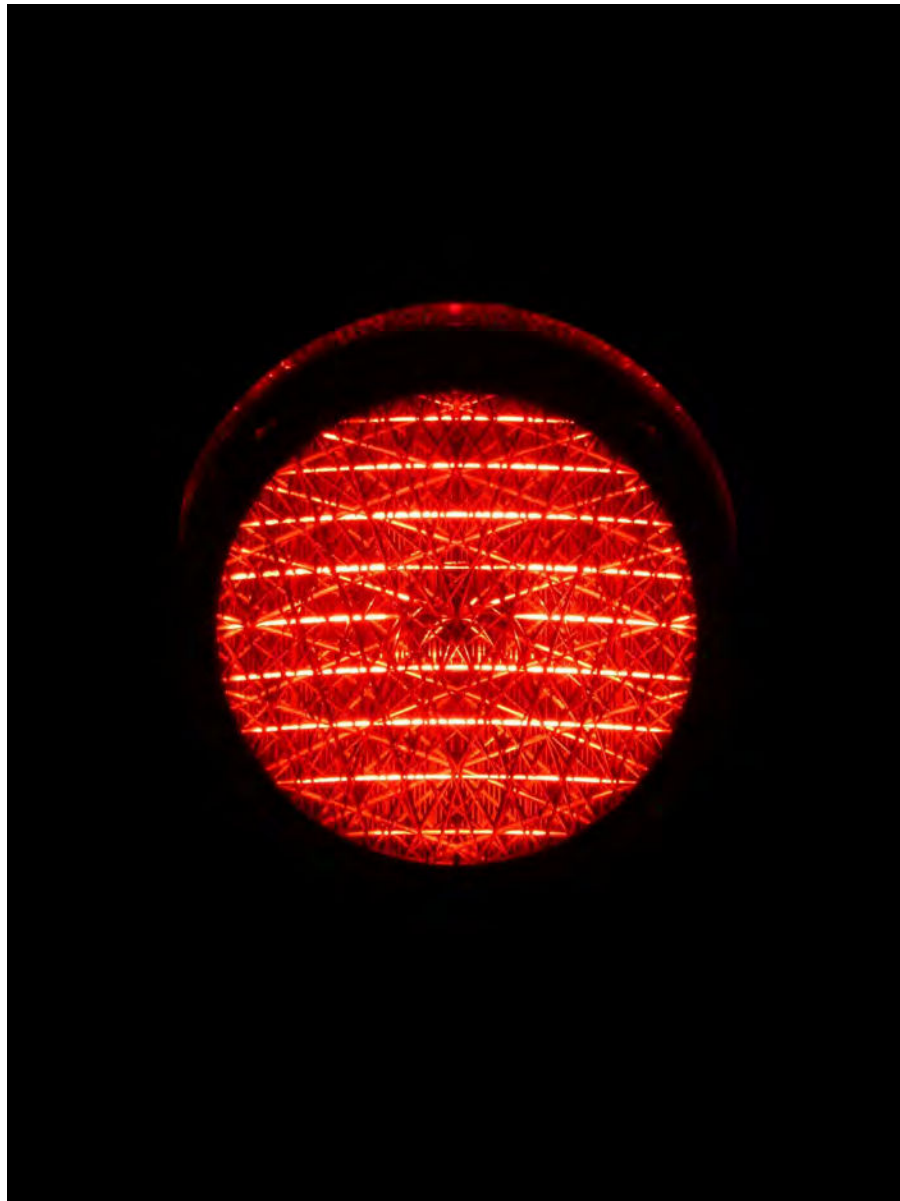
One of the ways we work with barriers is through gathering resources and creating a network of support. There are two sections in this plan where we identify resources and supporters. These things can make all the difference in getting past barriers.

In your role as a peer support worker, when you support someone in goal planning, you will likely also help them as they identify and gather the tools they need to challenge their barriers. Sometimes this will require the skill of self-advocacy. In Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), one of the Key Concepts of Recovery is self-advocacy.

CONTINUE

## resistance can be internal

We can find ourselves feeling resistance when working towards a goal for many different reasons. Reflecting on why we are feeling resistance is important. Sometimes it might be that the goal was handed to us by someone else and we don't really care about it. Or perhaps we have some fear around the goal that we need to unpack. When we are supporting someone with goal planning, we might need to support them through unpacking their own internal resistance.



CONTINUE

---

**In the worksheet:** In the bottom middle of the goal planning worksheet, write some ideas on how you will overcome resistance.

CONTINUE



celebrate



“Small wins are exactly what they sound like, and are part of how keystone habits create widespread changes.”

Charles Duhigg

CONTINUE

Celebrating small and big wins is so important.

In the TED article, *How to make your small wins work for you*, Rob Smith shares Vancouver-based educator Mehrnaz Bassiri's philosophy with us.

---

**Drawing on the work of organizational theorist and psychologist Karl Weick, Bassiri says, “Small wins have a transformational power. Once a small win has been accomplished, forces are set in motion to favor another small win and another small win until the combination of these small wins lead to larger and greater accomplishments.” (2019)**

---

Often we just hit a small win with little to no fanfare and life just continues as usual. However, if we want to really harness the power of that small win, we need to be more intentional about noticing and celebrating it!

CONTINUE





### **velcro & teflon**

It's very easy to let something positive slide right past us – like a pancake sliding off a teflon pan. But when something negative happens, it sticks in our brains like velcro. Psychologist Dr. Rick Hanson says that the brain is wired to pay attention to the negative, because noticing these things in the past increased our chances for survival. Not paying attention to negative things in hunter-gatherer days, for example, could have meant getting attacked by a tiger, or something similar. Holding onto the positive back then wasn't so directly correlated to our survival.

CONTINUE

### **retraining your brain**

Dr. Hanson says that there is a way to retrain your brain to hold onto the positive like velcro. If we simply hold onto a positive thought, a compliment or a small win for at least 20–30 seconds, we will move it into our long-term memory.

In other words, we really need to learn how to let those little moments sink in, even if it feels awkward and uncomfortable. Savour and really enjoy those good experiences!



CONTINUE

## supporting your peers to celebrate wins!

As a peer support worker, you get to be in a position to support someone to learn to savour and celebrate these small and big wins. And in the spirit of mutuality, you can be supporting your own growth at the very same time!

Together, you can work on learning to identify successes and small wins. Learn to point them out to each other! Get comfortable with both giving and receiving compliments and encouragement.

When something good happens, celebrate it! Also, deconstruct the win: why was it a success? what can I/we learn from this win? how can it be recreated in the future?

Again, it's important to go back to self-determination theory. With self-determination theory, we know that skill building is very important. So celebrating those wins leads to more skill building – and more little wins. All of this leads us closer to our goals.

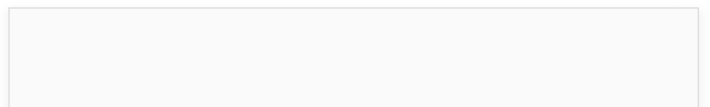
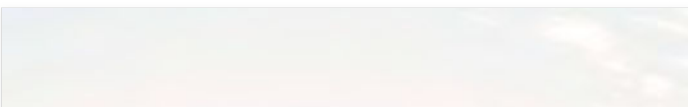
A small win that is grounded in intrinsic motivation is tied to our sense of purpose. That keeps us connected to our hopes and dreams and overall vision!

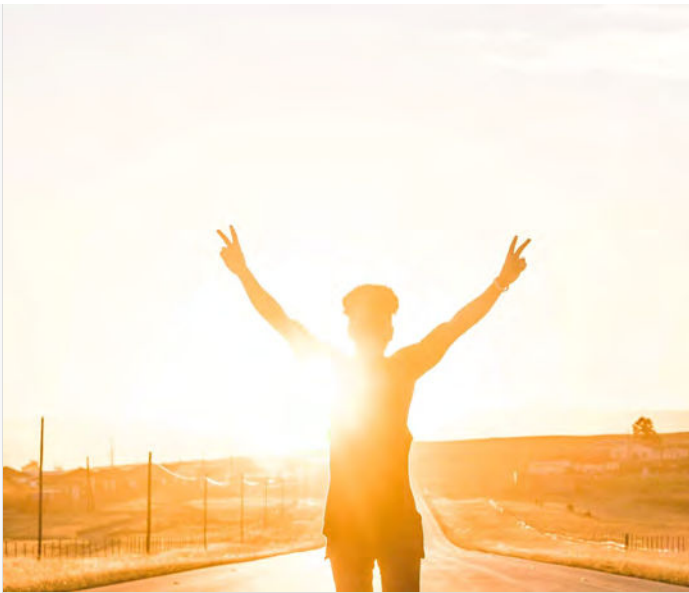


CONTINUE

## questions for reflection

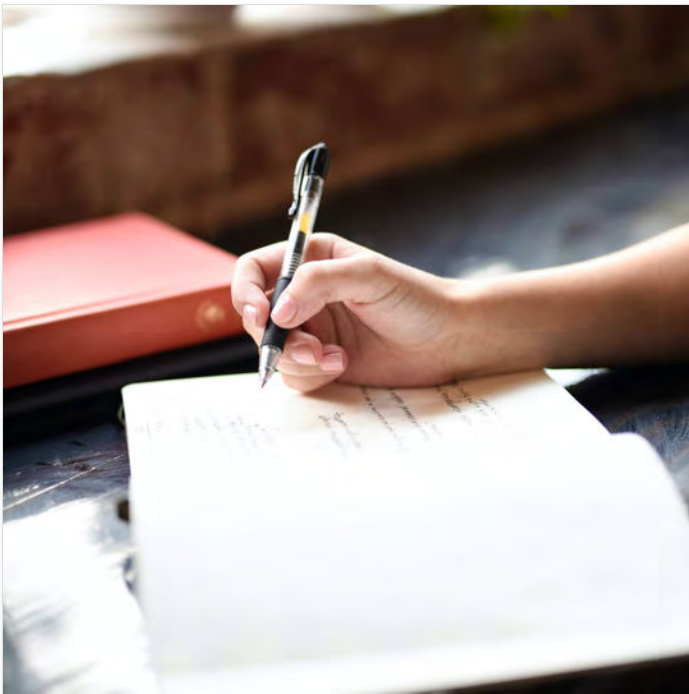
Answer these questions in your reflection journal.





**What are some ways you can celebrate your own small wins?**

1 of 4

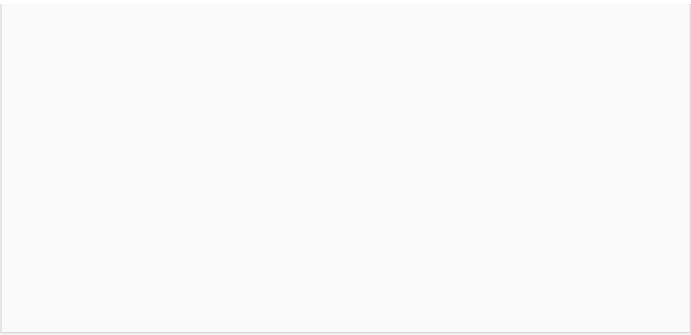


**Is this something you regularly do? Why or why not?**

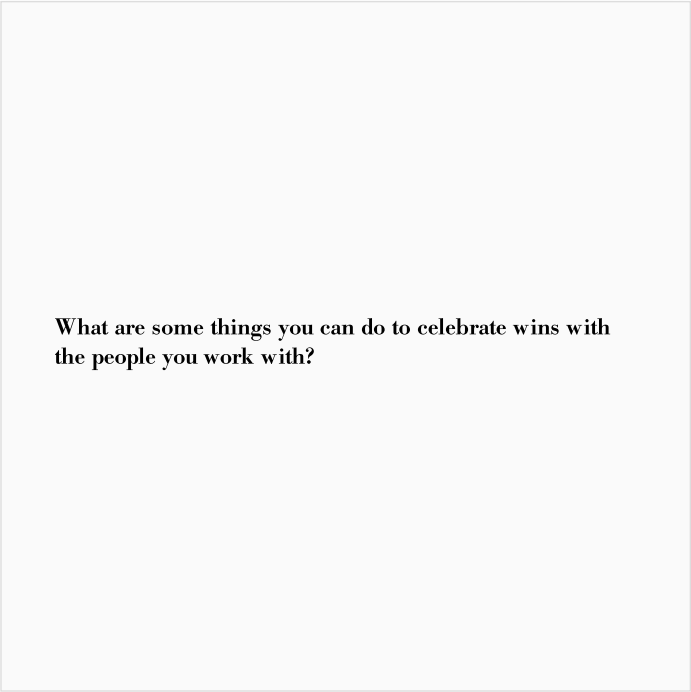
2 of 4



**How can you make celebration a part of the work you do as a peer support worker?**



3 of 4



4 of 4





# 12. core values assessment

## question for reflection

Answer this question in your reflection journal.



In what ways have the core values (see list below) intersected with the topic of goal planning?

1 of 1

CONTINUE

## core peer support values



acknowledgement —

All human beings deserve to be seen for who they are.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support strives to acknowledge – and deeply hear – people where they are in their journey.

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Asking open-ended questions and actively listening to the PSW to see if they feel comfortable sharing their experience. Ask: “What do you think about that situation?”  
“Is there a coping strategy that you have used in a previous similar experience that worked for you?”

## mutuality —

All healthy relationships are mutual and reciprocal.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support relationships are co-created, with all parties participating in boundary creation.

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Having a conversation about what is and isn’t okay to discuss with the PSW.

“...Even though I am a PSW, it’s painful for me to make eye contact with people. Hopefully, clients will see that if I’m looking away that it actually means that I am deeply listening to them. Being vulnerable and open seems to allow the other person to do their version of the same, building trust and respect and co-creating the relationship.”

## strength-based —

Every human being has strengths.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support intentionally builds on existing strengths. It thoughtfully and purposefully moves in the direction of flourishing, rather than only responding to pain and oppression.

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Finding things that the PSW feels really confident about and expanding on those areas or delving into those areas and supporting their choices.

## self-determination —

Motivation works best when it’s driven from within.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support encourages self-determination and acknowledges and holds space for resilience and inner wisdom.

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Support the PSW in making decisions and doing things on their own – based on their wants, needs and goals.

## respect, dignity and equity —

All human beings have intrinsic value.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support honours human value by

- Practicing cultural humility and sensitivity
- Serving with a trauma-informed approach
- Offering generosity of assumption
- Addressing personal biases mindfully
- Meeting people where they are



- Serving with a knowledge of equity

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Treat PSWs as you would like to be treated and expect to be treated. Learn about them on a personal level and treat them as equals.

## belonging and community —

All human beings need to belong and be a part of a community.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support recognizes that many people have barriers that keep them from developing community and it actively works towards deconstructing those social blockades that prevent inclusion and acceptance. Peer support encourages a social justice mindset, and intentionally promotes empathy, compassion and self-compassion.

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Help PSWs feel wanted and cared about. Help them find resources that foster a sense of community and belonging.

"My quality of life improves immensely when I am surrounded by one or a community of people who understand me. I don't feel alone. I can be myself among people who I know understand me on a deeper level. When I feel like I can be myself, I feel more confident and able to take positive risks, thus improving the quality of my life. The root of this is connection and being able to be seen for who I truly am. Peers can help people be seen in a real way."

## curiosity —

Curiosity and inquiry support connection, growth, learning and engagement.

**IN ACTION:** Peer support

- Is continually curious
- Challenges assumptions and narratives
- Asks powerful questions
- Offers generosity of assumption to those who think differently
- Knows that listening and asking questions is more important than providing answers

**PSWs SUGGEST:** Ask questions and be engaged in learning about your PSWs. Find out about their culture and explore with them.



## 13. summary

---

Let's review some of the key concepts covered in this module.

☐

Many peer support workers are required to support someone through a process of goal setting. Goal setting is often tied to measuring outcomes, which in turn can affect the funding efforts of the supporting organization. Peer support workers need to balance the need to provide data for supporting outcomes with the need to sincerely support people to uncover new hopes and dreams.

☐

People referred through a referring agency will often already come with a recovery plan. Peer support workers must learn to work with these plans, and try their best to reframe any problem-solving goals with strength-based goals.

☐

Self-determination depends on motivation. Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Lasting motivation is fuelled intrinsically. Self-determination theory proposes that humans have three basic needs: competence, autonomy and relatedness.

☐

Problem-focused goals generally focus on stopping or moving away from a problem. "Moving towards" goals point us toward the results we would like to achieve. Peer support workers should focus on the latter of these two.

☐

Learned helplessness happens when someone is exposed to a stressful situation or environment repeatedly and, despite numerous efforts, can't escape it. They then become hopeless and passive. Empathy and compassion can help a peer support worker understand this condition and encourage their efforts to move that person towards self-determination.

☐

Following a goal-setting process can help you – or the others you work with – find success.

- Peer support workers should try to awaken people's desires to pursue bigger-picture hopes and dreams. They must fan the spark of hope patiently until the belief in new possibilities emerges.
- Asking "why" we have a goal is more important than the "how's" and "what's" of planning. When we consider our own "origin story," it can help us gain perspective on our life's journey and develop a personal mission statement.
- Strengths are who you are; skills are what you can do. Knowing our own strengths and skills supports community and interconnection and helps us work with others.
- Part of setting goals can include setting a goal for how you want to feel as you are achieving your goals.
- To achieve your goal – or to help others:
  - Determine a doable and accessible goal for yourself
  - Decide what your resources are to assist you in attaining that goal
  - Gather your supports
  - Determine what barriers you may face, or any resistance you may encounter, both external and internal
  - Make sure to celebrate any small victories on the path to achieving your goal



## 14. next steps

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We want to thank you for taking the time to walk alongside peer support workers on a shared path of learning from lived experience.

You are now ready to visit another module of the Peer Support Worker training curriculum!

Please head home to <https://peerconnectbc.ca> where you will find the individual training modules and facilitation guides. You will also find a [resource page](#) at that site to continue your learning about peer support work and the issues surrounding it.

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### A Project of BCcampus, Funded by B.C. Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

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Ministry of  
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## 15. module references

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The following sources were used  
for this module:



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