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Identifying the Value of Peer Support by Bringing Community Based Research To Our Work With Positive Women Through the Circle of Care program in Toronto

Track: Social Sciences

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure

In the past 2 years I have been an employee of:

**Estimate Lab, MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael's Hospital,
Unity Health Toronto**

In the past 2 years I have been a member of the:

- 1. CHARAC/CHASRAC (CIHR HIV/AIDS Research Advisory Committee/HIV/AIDS STBBI
Research Advisory Committee)**
- 2. CATIE Board of Directors**

In the past 2 years I have been a speaker for: **Toronto PWA, ACT. Opening Doors East Central**

In the past 2 years I have received honoraria from: **Casey House, Toronto PWA, ACT**

There are relationships to disclose: **NO**



CIRCLE OF CARE PEERS WORKING WITH POSITIVE WOMEN



Bringing Community Based Research and Participatory Evaluation To Our Work With Positive Women through Circle of Care in Toronto



Capacity Building:
Community Based
Research Skills



Supporting the
Supporters



Supporting Our Community of
Positive Women

Issues faced by Positive Women

Poverty, income & food insecurity
Inadequate housing; Intimate Partner Violence
Stigma and discrimination
Criminalization, Colonization, Patriarchy and Racism
Isolation and Loneliness
Mental Health issues: Fear, Trauma
Insecure immigration status
Barriers when accessing healthcare and supports, including language, racism, stigma & more

Monthly Team Meetings

- Check in: how are we doing? Emotional, Physical, Mental, Spiritual. Getting grounded.
- Issues arising from our work: what is happening to the women we are supporting? Are there Gaps?
- What do **WE** need in order to do this work well?
- Support and Learn from each other; Team maintenance & planning; mutual support & humour

Peer Support Work: what do we do?

Peers meet positive women in their homes, in healthcare and other community settings, helping them to:

- * meet their daily needs (food security, income support, housing, immigration hearings, interpretation)
- * pursue health seeking and other beneficial activities: appointments, medical tests, advocacy & more

Capacity Building: Learning How to do Community Based Research

- How to write a research or evaluation application
- Program description
- Identify research question(s)
- Align methods with research question
- Research Ethics and participant experience
- Implementing recommendations to program & KTE
- Apply for & Receive funding

Potential research questions

For clients:

- Is life becoming easier?
- Are clients engaging more in community?
- Do they experience less HIV stigma?
- Are they more engaged in HIV care?

For peer workers:

- Supports needed while working?
- Is HIV stigma reduced?
- Are labour market attachments built or strengthened?

Program enhancements:

- Engaged, healthy and successful community members, pursuing career goals and their dreams
- Communities become safer places to live, work and play
- Employment and learning opportunities
- Building career skills



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Home Agency: Toronto People With AIDS (**PWA**) Foundation

Circle Of Care Program agencies include: **PWA, AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT), The Teresa Group, PASAN** and **Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)**

Community Engagement



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