

Peer support practice review

Stage 4 research plan

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1 Introduction

The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) have been engaged by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to research, develop and pilot capacity building resources for the delivery of sustainable models of peer support.

This project, led by the ANZSOG research team, aims to build the organisational capacity of peer support providers to deliver peer support. The overall project plan by Fisher, Davy and Purcal (2017) can be seen in the SPRC website¹. The SPRC has three key roles in this project: 1) support ANZSOG in project design and provide advice on inclusion and accessibility issues; 2) review the materials, strategies and processes currently used by peer support providers to inform the project as a whole; and 3) observe and evaluate the capacity building training and resources developed by ANZSOG researchers to support the delivery of peer support programs.

This research plan outlines the overall project but will focus on SPRC's final role: 3) observe and evaluate the capacity building training and resources developed by ANZSOG researchers to support the delivery of peer support programs.

1.1 Policy context and rationale

The Disability Support Organisation Capacity Building Project (the DSO Project) was initiated by the NDIA in December 2014, in recognition of the need to build the capacity of people with disability and their families to engage with the emerging NDIS and the shift to individualised support. Through the NDIS Sector Development Fund (SDF), the NDIA funded 18 organisations to develop up to 20 peer support networks each. The peer support networks aimed to build the capacity of people with disability and family members to:

- Effectively engage with the NDIS
- Effectively engage with mainstream programs, services and activities
- Exercise choice and control
- Engage with opportunities for independence, self-management and community inclusion.

In line with positive research findings about the benefits of peer support and positive outcomes for peer support participants reported from the DSO Project and the SPRC Stage 1A Review findings (Davy, Fisher & Wehbe, 2018), peer support will continue to be one of the key program areas funded through the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) component of the NDIS. ILC will be available nationally from 2019-2020.

¹ <https://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/research/projects/peer-support-practice-review/>

As peer support delivery continues in the context of full NDIS and ILC roll-out, it is particularly important to reach sometimes marginalised and further disadvantaged people and communities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, people living in boarding houses and people with contact with the criminal justice system, and that further strategies and resources are developed to assist organisations to achieve this.

This organisational capacity building project, led by ANZSOG in collaboration with SPRC, builds on the research and service development that have been undertaken in this area thus far.

It will review current practice amongst organisations delivering peer support (completed), develop a suite of capacity building resources, and formulate good practice guidelines to assist the new disability funding and service environment to meet increasing peer support needs. It is envisaged that the research and materials developed in this project will be of use both in contributing to the evidence base informing how ILC might invest in delivering peer support in the future, and in contributing to publicly available tools and resources for organisations that deliver peer support to people with disability and their families into the future.

1.2 Project aims and summary

As stated in the Project Plan (Fisher, Davy and Purcal 2017), the overall aims of this project are to:

1. Increase the organisational capacity of peer support providers to implement good-practice peer support programs
2. Develop a suite of capacity building resources including training, tools and other materials that will assist providers to implement peer support programs
3. Develop good practice guidelines on implementing peer support that address issues such as resourcing, recruitment, outreach to marginalised people and groups, capacity training, monitoring, and evaluating.

The overall project is conducted between September 2017 and May 2019 (extended from November 2018) and comprises 5 key stages:

- Stage 1A: Review of current good practice in peer support delivery
- Stage 1B: Research and literature review of international evidence and best practice in peer support programs
- Stage 2: Development of good practice materials for capacity building
- Stage 3: Delivery of pilot organisational capacity building training and resources
- Stage 4: Evaluation of pilot organisational capacity building materials
- Stage 5: Development of a set of good practice materials for ongoing capacity building.

The SPRC role in this project is concentrated on Stage 1A and Stage 4, however the SPRC will continue to provide advice in the other stages. SPRC has completed Stage 1A and the report is available here: (<https://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/research/projects/peer-support-practice-review/>).

SPRC's next role, focusing on Stage 4, is to observe and evaluate the capacity building training and resources developed by ANZSOG researchers to support the delivery of peer support programs. This research plan outlines the project design and methods.

2 Stage 4 project design and methods

This section explains SPRC's role in the project Stage 4: Evaluation of pilot organisational capacity building materials.

Stage 4 involves evaluation activities to assess the impact of the capacity building resources developed and delivered in Stage 2 and 3 of the project.

2.1 Project design and management

As per stage 2, ANZSOG, in collaboration with JFA and other disability organisations, are co-designing different resources. These resources include:

- Resources co-designed with JFA to supplement the Peer Connect online resources (e.g. NDIS, Housing, Peer network facilitation, Youth)
- Translation of existing resources into 5 different languages, Auslan and easy read
- Evaluation resources
- Evidence base resources

The SPRC will evaluate up to 9 of these resources.

ANZSOG will pilot and deliver these resources (Stage 3) and the SPRC will observe and collect feedback (Stage 4) for ANZSOG to refine them. ANZSOG will then refine the resources based on the SPRC pilot observations and reports.

The likely process will be:

1. For each resource developed, ANZSOG and SPRC will organise and select a peer support site that has not been involved in the codesign process, to conduct the pilot delivery to a group in this peer support site.
2. The SPRC will conduct observation of resources piloted, e.g. in a peer network, a group, a workshop or event and seek feedback through asking peer participants and staff about the usefulness of the resource. In each site, depending on how the resource is piloted, SRPC will observe how groups use the resource, or gain their assessment of its utility and seek their feedback about how to improve the resource.
3. SPRC will then analyse the findings and report back to ANZSOG.

2.2 Program logic and observation questions

Based on the project aims, questions and findings from the Stage 1A report, the evaluation questions for Stage 4 will focus on understanding the pilot groups' perception of the utility of the resources and their feedback on how to improve them. The observation questions are outlined against the project aims and review questions below.

Table 1: Program logic and questions

Project Aims (ANZSOG/SPRC)	Review Questions (Stage 1A)	Evaluation Questions (Stage 4)
<p>1. Increase the organisational capacity of peer support providers to implement good-practice peer support programs</p>	<p>Question 1: What benefits do peer support providers and peer facilitators aim to achieve for participants, and how do they work towards achieving these benefits in their practice?</p> <p>Question 3: What materials, strategies and processes have providers developed or used so far to facilitate peer support program delivery?</p> <p>Question 2: What strategies have been developed by peer support providers to engage marginalised or further disadvantaged people and communities in peer support, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, people in contact with the criminal justice system and people living in boarding houses?</p>	
<p>2. Develop a suite of capacity building resources including training, tools and other materials that will assist providers to implement peer support programs</p>	<p>Question 4: What further capacity building resources do providers suggest are needed to improve peer support provision and strengthen the ability of organisations to provide peer support?</p>	<p>What is your first reaction to this resource?</p> <p>Was it easy to understand and use?</p> <p>Would this resource help build or run your support group?</p> <p>How useful is this resource to achieve the goals you have for your peer support group or your organisation?</p> <p>Do you think this resource is flexible or accessible for people to use? How so? How could it be improved?</p>
<p>3. Develop good practice guidelines on implementing peer support that address issues such as resourcing, recruitment, outreach to marginalised people and groups, capacity training, monitoring, and evaluating.</p>		<p>Does your organisation have appropriate staff and material resources to use this resource well? What else would you need?</p> <p>Who do you think will benefit from this resource the most?</p> <p>Would any groups be difficult to reach with this resource?</p> <p>How could it be made more useful for a wider audience?</p>

2.3 Timeline

The time frame for this stage of this stage of the project will be late October 2018 through to April 2019.

	Tasks	Responsible	Timeframe
<i>Project Design</i>	Amend ethics	SPRC	November
	Develop project plan	SPRC	November
	Consult and finalise research plan	SPRC, ANZSOG, NDIA, advisors	December
	Resources to be completed	ANZSOG	18 December 2018- 15 th March 2019 ²
<i>Data collection</i>	Sampling decisions	SPRC, ANZSOG, NDIA, advisors	end December
	contact different organisations and organise sites	SPRC and ANZSOG	December 2018 - January 2019
	Conduct observations on peer support sites	SPRC	January- March 2019
<i>Data analysis and report writing</i>	Analyse observation data	SPRC	March - April 2019
	Write final report	SPRC	April 2019
	Present final report to ANZSOG	SPRC	April 2019
	Approve public version of final report	NDIA	May 2019

² If draft resources are delivered later than 15th March, a less thorough piloting may be necessary to manage the timeframe.

3 Project management

3.1 Governance

This project is funded by the NDIA and managed by the NDIA's Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) Branch. The project is led by ANZSOG, with SPRC playing a key role in Stage 1A and 4, and a supporting role in the other stages.

3.2 Communication strategy

The SPRC research team will participate in a mix of teleconference and face to face meetings with ANZSOG (every 3-4 weeks, or as needed) and NDIA (as needed) throughout the life span of the project. All project outputs and deliverables will be presented in draft to the NDIA, ANZSOG, and SPRC's project advisors to receive comment, make amendments, and a final version agreed.

3.3 Project team

The project team members at ANZSOG, SPRC, and SPRC partners are listed in the table below.

ANZSOG	
Project lead	George Argyrous
Literature review and evaluation	Greet Peersman
Project support, literature review and evaluation	Keryn Hassall
Project support, literature review and evaluation	Alice MacFarlan
Evaluation	Patricia Rogers
Resource Development	Eban Pollard
SPRC	
Chief Investigator, SPRC	Karen Fisher
Project manager, SPRC	Christiane Purcal
Research Officer	Ayah Wehbe
Advisor	Rosemary Kayess
SCU	
Advisor	Sally Robinson

4 References

Davy, L., Fisher, K. R., Wehbe, A. (2018). Peer support practice review: Final report of Stage 1A findings (SPRC Report 4/2018). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.
<http://doi.org/10.26190/5b84b4a23c6ff>

Fisher, K., Davy, L., Purcal, C. (2017). Peer support practice review. (Project research plan). Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.