The Power of Peer Support

How peer support can help individuals with eating disorders

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"This is why this forum is priceless - immediate access to people who can show by example that the process can work" - Quote from a LoveFat Slack group user.

Objectives

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing technology resources and structured peer support in the effective treatment of eating disorders.
- To demonstrate how a lower level of care using technology can work alongside traditional treatment professionals and provide a larger multi-disciplinary support network for individuals with eating disorders.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of tightening the feedback loop with real-time support.

Resilient recovery communities are built when treatment professionals and recovered individuals share knowledge and support individuals in recovery to find a practical, personalized recovery approach. Ideally a complete support network would be made up of treatment providers, non-professional support contacts, and family members. Peer support can be an essential component of a collaborative, holistic, client-centred treatment plan.

"I realised there were many adults who were experiencing my difficulties, thinking my thoughts and finding their way through the same troubles. I realised I had people there to listen, take time to support and offer practical, compassionate and achievable suggestions that's making such a difference in my recovery."

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Online peer support can be used to:

- Fill knowledge and shared experience gaps
- Decrease feelings of loneliness and isolation
- Increase recovery motivation
- Increase recovery skillset
- Provide 27/7 support and companionship without increasing costs
- Promote openness and honesty
- Increase feelings of belonging and togetherness
- Provide accountability for eating and recovery efforts
- Inspire recovery challenges and goal setting in a fun environment
- Tighten the feedback loop for pro-recovery action
- Dilute eating disorder-occupied space in the brain
- Deliver constant stream of pro-recovery, pro-weight gain messages
- Distract from eating disorder anxieties.
- Have fun and laughter!

How to set up effective online eating disorder support:

- Create strict recovery focused guidelines and make new members agree to them before posting.
- Have a number of active moderators in different time zones who are very committed to the guidelines and confident to delete or counter posts that do not meet guidelines.
- Facilitate conversation topics to keep the focus on active recovery.
- Actively discourage eating disorder behaviours and create a space where recovery is applauded.

"Slack has given ED something to really chew on!"

For more information:

AEDRA Meal + Text Support:
http://adulteatingdisorderrecovery.com/en/our-services
AEDRA online Slack group:
http://adulteatingdisorderrecovery.com/en/adults-in-recovery-slack-forum

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