

Let's Put a Peer Worker on Campus!

Keely Phillips, Self Help & Peer Support
OPDI Conference, October 2018

About Self Help & Peer Support



Peer Navigator Services at Conestoga College

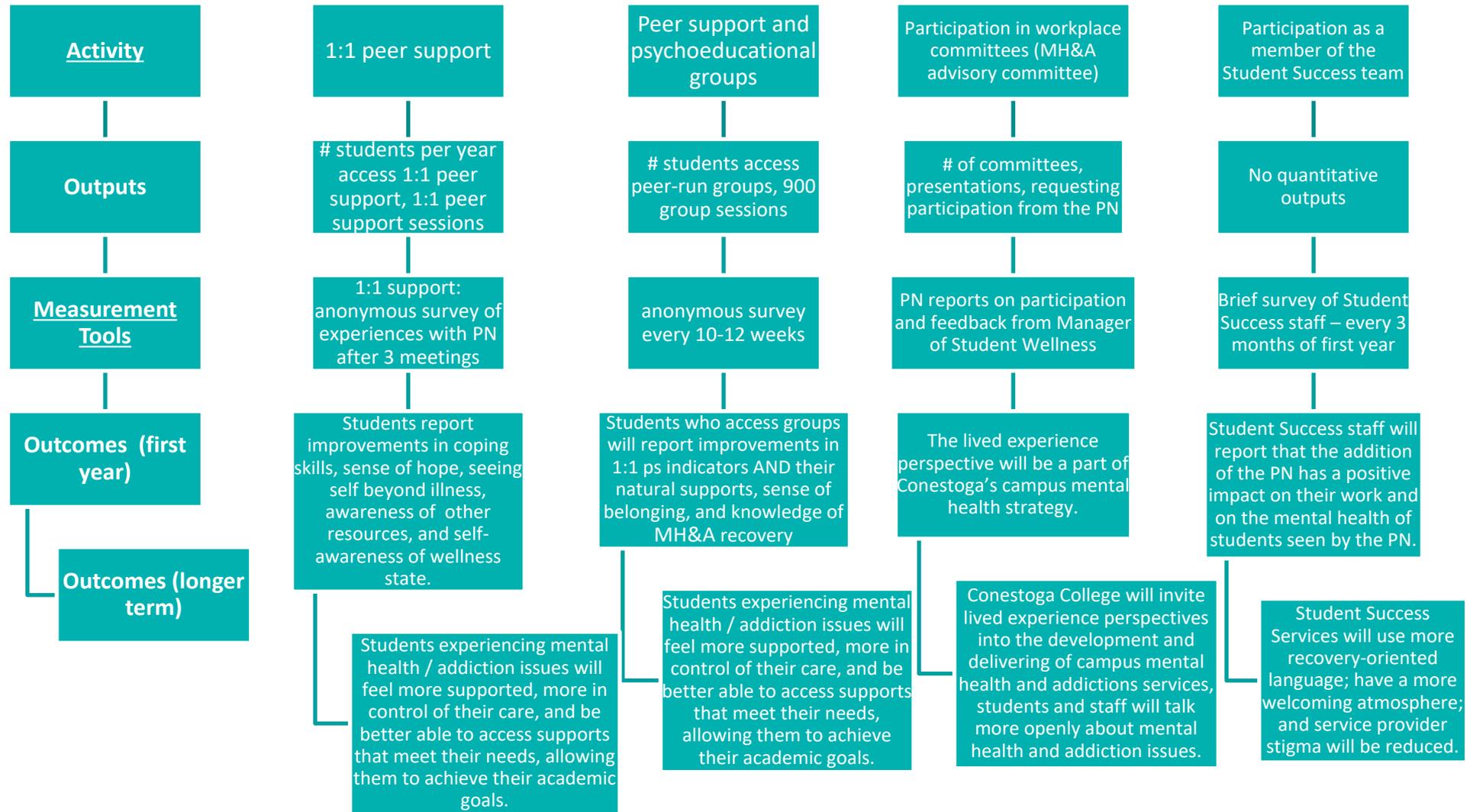
- A full-time Peer Navigator will provide:
 - Daily drop-in peer support and recovery skill groups
 - Drop-in and scheduled 1:1 peer support
 - Part of other mental health initiatives on campus
 - Recruitment and training of peer support volunteers (all who have personal lived experience with mental health /addiction)

About the Partnership

- History
- Pilot project
- Role funded by Conestoga College and held and supervised by Self Help & Peer Support

Uniqueness of the Partnership

- Other campus peer support programs tend to focus on the shared lived experience of being students – this is about the shared lived experience of being a student living with mental health / addiction issues
- This bridges community peer support expertise (Self Help & Peer Support / Centre for Excellence in Peer Support) and campus student wellness (Conestoga College's Student Success Office)



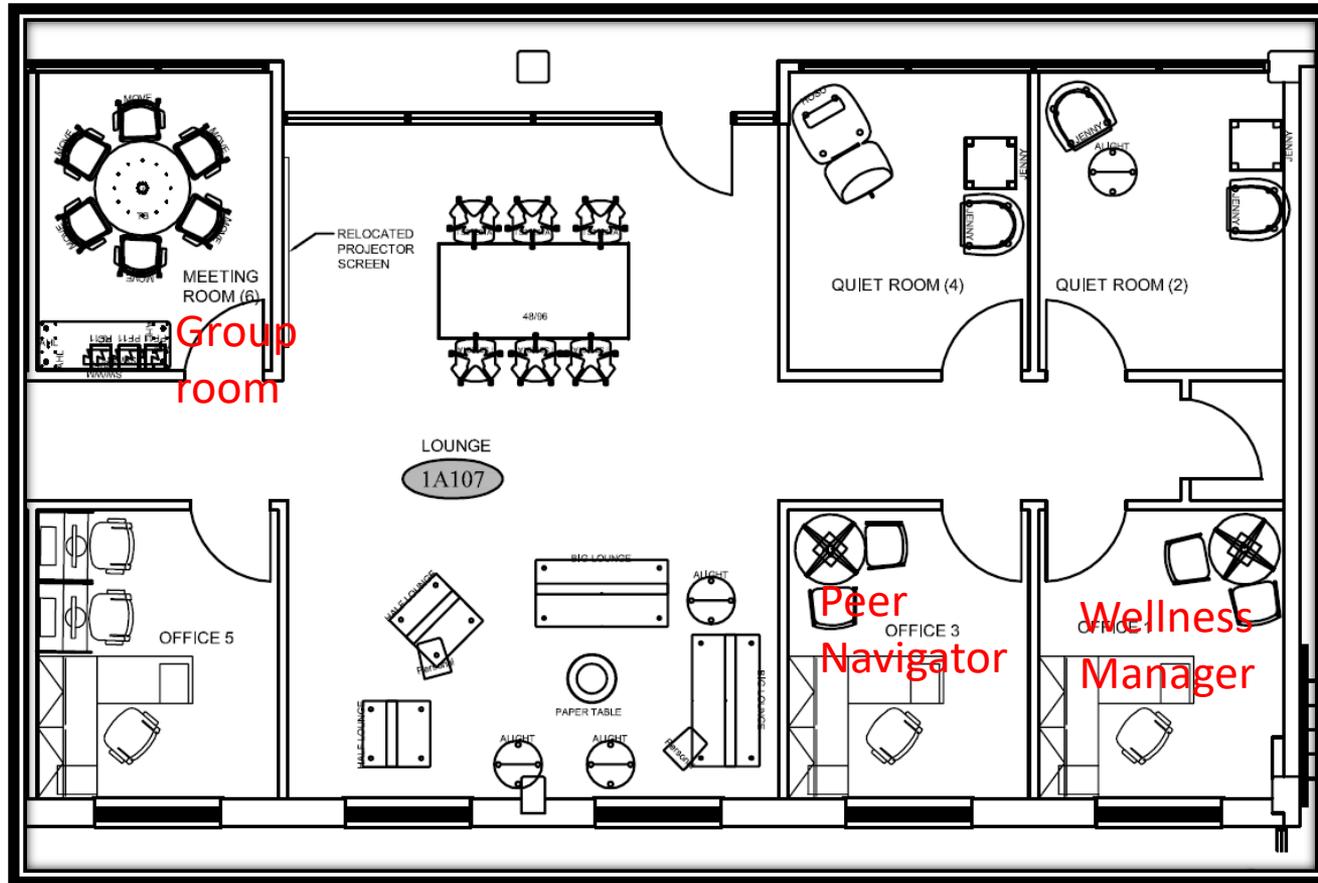
Who Is the Peer Navigator?

- A Self Help & Peer Support staff member
 - Has 7 years of experience delivering peer support
 - Lived experience of mental health issues during post-secondary studies
 - Currently becoming certified by Peer Support Canada
- Peer Navigator has:
 - Regular supervision with a peer support supervisor
 - Access to Waterloo Wellington Peer Worker Community of Practice
 - Day-to-day connection with Director of Student Success / Manager of Campus Wellnes

Preparing for the Role

- Training for the teams and campus stakeholders:
 - Counselling Services
 - Accessibility
 - Medical
 - Academic tutoring / writing centre
 - Residence
 - Athletics
 - Student Union
- Training for the peer worker on working in inter-professional teams and knowledge transfer of peer support practices to non-peer staff

Wellness & Peer Support Space



Student : Student Peer Support

- Volunteers with lived experience of mental health / addiction will be recruited from student body
- Adapting our successful community peer support volunteer program to campus
- Goal of most groups and 1:1 peer support being delivered by students by end of pilot with Peer Navigator mentoring and training volunteers

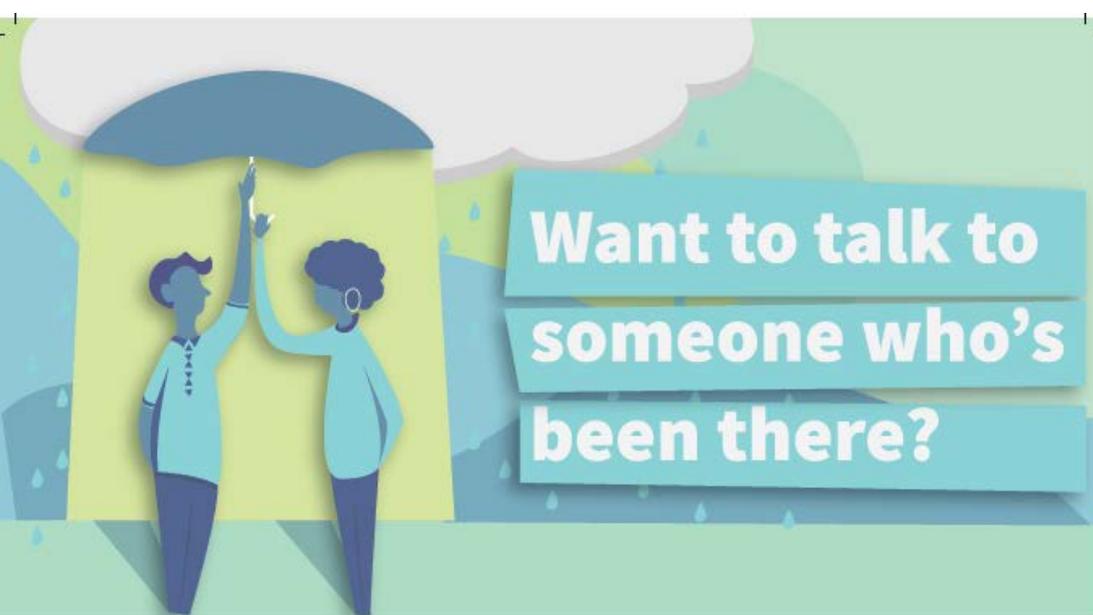


Campus Promotion

- Word of mouth
- Social media plan
- Street team
- Postcards and posters
- [Website](#)
- “Name the space contest” where students will provide suggestions and then vote to choose the name for the space

Embracing Peer Support Expertise Throughout Campus Services

- Peer Navigator is included in many decisions about the space
- Met with various department leaders
- Part of the wellness strategy planning and other mental health related committees
- Presentation to Conestoga Student Inc. board
- Continuous connection with other members of Student Success team
- Hiring of Street Team who will be working to promote Student Success services including the wellness space and likely act as greeters in the wellness space



Want to talk to
someone who's
been there?



Postcards

Peer Support & Self Help

Our CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) Peer Worker has lived experience of mental health and/or addiction issues.

Doon (Kitchener)
Room 1A107

- ✓ Student driven safe space
- ✓ 1:1 Peer Support
- ✓ Drop in groups
- ✓ Quiet spaces and relaxation rooms
- ✓ Wellness activities



Early Challenges and Successes

- **Challenge**

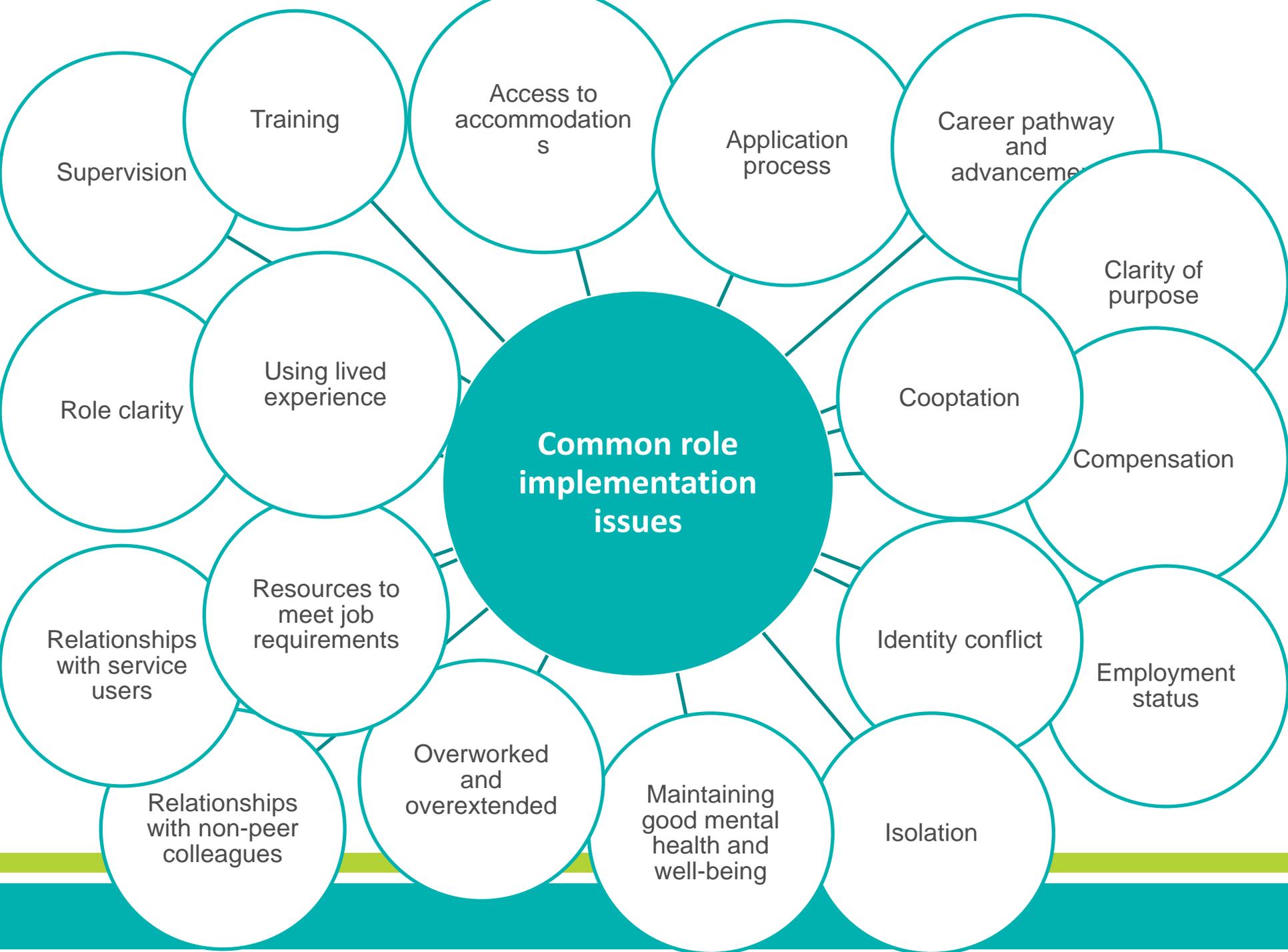
- Space not ready

- **Successes**

- The interest from various departments
- Students already talking about it and being excited that the space will be available and some have been bringing

- **What are you looking forward to most?**

“Everything. I am looking forward to getting to see students learning and growing and supporting each other in their wellness journeys, growing a volunteer base and supporting the volunteers in their skill development. I’m excited to be doing 1:1 peer support and peer support groups. I look forward to hearing the feedback from students”
(Kayleigh Hilborn, Peer Navigator)



Common role implementation issues

Supervision

Training

Access to accommodations

Application process

Career pathway and advancement

Clarity of purpose

Using lived experience

Role clarity

Cooptation

Compensation

Resources to meet job requirements

Identity conflict

Employment status

Relationships with service users

Overworked and overextended

Maintaining good mental health and well-being

Isolation

Relationships with non-peer colleagues

Contact Information

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