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Peer2Peer Scale Up Project

Call for Applications

Project Rationale and Background

Peer workers are at the forefront of overdose response initiatives in British Columbia and are often most affected by the drug toxicity crisis. **Peer workers are individuals who have lived experience with substance use, and incorporate that lived experience into their professional work.** They perform a variety of roles including distribution of harm reduction supplies, peer witnessing of drug use, peer-to-peer support, referrals to services such as housing agencies (systems navigation), advocacy, outreach work, overdose response, and research. Working in overdose response settings means constant exposure trauma, loss, grief and death, which can have a lasting impact on the emotional, social and mental well-being of individuals. Despite the recognized stresses of working in overdose response settings, peer workers, unlike other frontline workers, often lack employee supports from the organizations where they are employed.

The Peer2Peer project, funded by Health Canada, aims to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate support interventions for peer workers in overdose response settings. The pilot project was conducted at two organizations – RainCity Housing in Vancouver and Maple Ridge, and SOLID Outreach in Victoria. Needs assessments in the form of focus groups were conducted with peer workers at these sites to identify priority needs to support employee health and well being. The needs were summarized into three overarching themes which formed the basis of an intervention model, ROSE; R stands for Recognition of peer work, O stands for Organizational support and S stands for Skill development. The E emphasizes that the intervention is for everyone. The ROSE model consists of multiple practical strategies that were implemented at the pilot sites beginning September 2019. More details about the ROSE model can be found [here](#). Evaluation of the project at pilot sites indicated that the ROSE model improved: 1) recognition for peer workers, 2) overall job satisfaction and pride derived from work, as well as 3) a sense of connection with others.

Given the promising results from the one-year evaluation of the project, we have received funding to scale up this project and support **five** organizations across BC (including organizations in the Northern and Interior regions) to tailor and implement the ROSE model at their sites to support the peer workers at those organizations. Through this expansion, we hope to create a ripple effect across the province and create a culture of support whereby peer workers are respected and supported like other professionals working in the front lines during the dual public health emergencies. We are looking for a mixture of organization types ranging from overdose prevention services, housing sites, advocacy groups, etc. The participating organizations will become part of a network of service providers for the initiative.

Scale-up Aim

To identify the needs of peer workers at participating sites, tailor and implement the ROSE Model and evaluate the intervention at respective sites.

Eligibility

All organizations or associations that hire peer workers in multiple roles, including overdose response, are eligible to apply. Five organizations in areas with greatest need of support for peer workers and with the infrastructure to successfully implement the intervention will be prioritized. For example, organizations in rural areas where stigma against people who use substances is pervasive and there are limited supports available for people with lived/ living experience.



Participating organizations will be expected to:

- ❑ Commit to forming an Action Team consisting of one management staff member and at least one peer research assistant
- ❑ Support the implementation of the ROSE Model at the respective sites, providing administrative and logistical support to the Action Team members, and creating awareness about the supports implemented for the peer workers.
- ❑ Be willing and open to modify organizational practices as per the needs identified by the peer workers at the site during focus groups. For example, job descriptions, contracts, teambuilding days, etc.
- ❑ Commit to evaluate the impact of the intervention at their sites.
- ❑ Have a plan to sustain the supports at their sites beyond the duration of the project.
- ❑ Commit to sharing any resources developed with other organizations within their network.

Implementation Process and Timeline

Figure 1: Implementation Stages for the Scale-Up Project

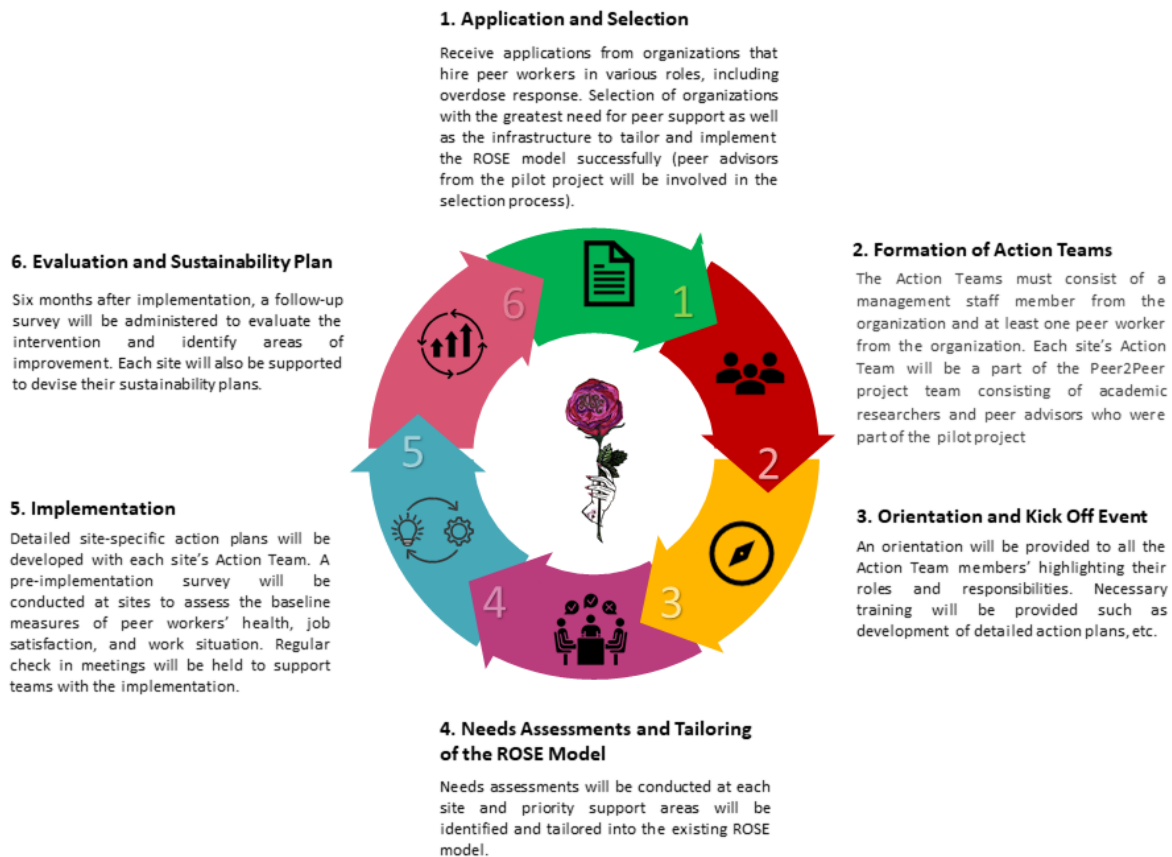
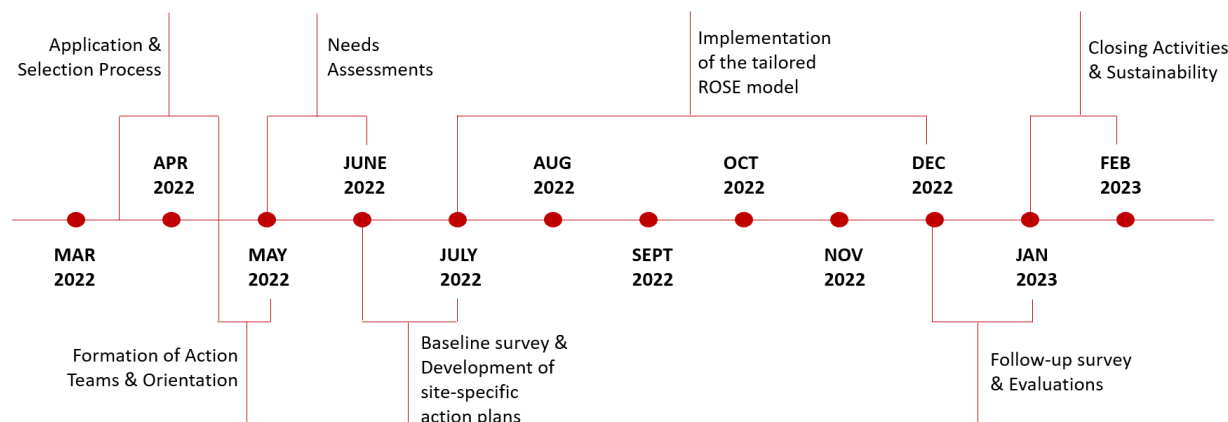




Figure 2: Timeline for the Scale-Up Project



Funding and Support Provided

The Peer2Peer Project will provide coaching and funding for all reasonable activities within the tailored ROSE Model for each organization, as laid out in the site-specific action plans. The project team includes peer advisors from RainCity Housing and SOLID Outreach involved in the pilot project, who will be able to share insights and best practices throughout the implementation process.

The project anticipates providing a **\$2500 start up fund** to participating organizations to get the project started at their respective sites, and this may include stipends for peer researcher assistants to organize focus groups, as well as purchase of pulse oximeters, photo ID printer, and other materials required.

Along with this start up, the project will provide **ongoing funding to assess needs and support the implementation of strategies within the ROSE model**, including stipends for the Action Team members, training cost, honoraria for peer workers attending trainings, meeting expenses, etc.

Note: original receipts must be submitted to the project team for full reimbursement.

Action Team – Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend bi-weekly meetings with the academic researchers and peer advisors.
- Consult on all matters pertaining to the project, bringing in lived/ living experience to guide decision-making and direction of the project.
- Facilitate needs assessments (focus groups) and evaluation activities at respective sites.
- Participate in the data analysis process to identify priority support needs at sites, and brainstorm potential solutions that can be weaved into the ROSE Model.
- Create site-specific action plans and ensure buy-in from respective organizations' leadership.
- Champion the implementation of the ROSE Model at respective sites, ensuring that all peer workers at the organization are aware of the supports available and have access to them.
- Monitor progress of implementation, providing bi-weekly reports to the project team.
- Organize skill development opportunities (and other events laid out the site-specific action plan) for the peer workers at respective sites.



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- ☐ Conduct regular check-ins with peer workers as well as leadership at sites to solicit feedback on the interventions and identify ongoing needs and opportunities for improvement.
- ☐ Participate in resource development and knowledge translation activities.
- ☐ Coordinate finances related to the project at respective sites, ensuring that all peer workers are paid for their participation. Furthermore, if there are any peer roles created such as the Peer Supporter, the Action Team members must ensure that invoices are submitted on time to the Project team.

Application Process

Fill out the Application Form for the Peer2Peer Project – Scale Up and submit it by email to zahra.mamdani@bccdc.ca by **April 15th at 12.00 NOON Pacific Time.**

Questions?

Contact:

Zahra Mamdani

Project Manager – Peer2Peer Project

BC Centre for Disease Control

zahra.mamdani@bccdc.ca