

THE PEER2PEER PROJECT



Introduction

A public health emergency was declared in BC in April 2016 due to the dramatic rise in drug overdoses and deaths. This increased the level of demand placed on peers/experiential workers*, and the associated long-lasting physical and emotional impacts of the job.

Why did we do the study?

Peers/experiential workers, provide crucial services to support individuals that use drugs in overdose response settings. These situations can be stressful and traumatizing.

Despite working in these stressful environments, unlike other healthcare providers and first responders, peers/experiential workers lack access to institutional or occupational mental health support.

Their experiences can also be impacted by poverty, homelessness, stigma, and discrimination - elements that also need to be considered.

What is our goal?

To develop, implement, and evaluate models and strategies to support peers/experiential workers* who are working in BC overdose response settings.

How did we carry out the study?

Eight focus groups (needs assessments) were led by peer/experiential researchers in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island between November 2018 and March 2019. Key themes were identified from which peer/experiential researchers designed an intervention model - "ROSE"; R-Recognition, O-Organizational Support, S-Skill Development, and E-for Everyone. Components of this intervention were implemented at pilot sites and knowledge sharing materials were developed and made available for other organizations that hire experiential workers.

Pre and post-implementation surveys were conducted to assess for improvement in perceptions of health and quality of life, and job satisfaction.

KEY WORDS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

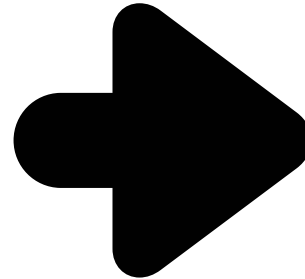


PEER2PEER NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

KEY ISSUES

Need for Recognition

- Peers/experiential workers feel they do not get the respect they deserve from other professionals.
- Community-level stigma was identified as an issue.



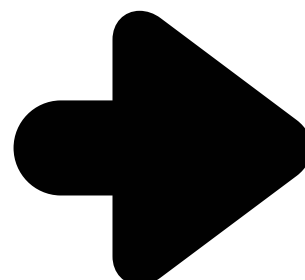
Recognition of Peer Work

- Organize meet and greet events with other professionals, including police, housing agencies, and ambulance workers to raise awareness about peers/experiential workers' roles and facilitate relationship-building.
- Create a video featuring "A Day in the Life of a Peer" to create awareness about peer/experiential work.
- Introduce photo ID and business cards to professionalize the role.

R

Workplace Resources

- The word "peer" is not taken seriously.
- Lack of clarity around the role
- Inequitable pay.
- Lack of clarity around expectations.
- Peers/experiential workers are not treated as professionals in and outside of the organization.
- Need for improved communication and relationship-building within the organization.
- Need for better check-in system for peers/experiential workers to ensure they feel supported.
- Unstable living conditions affect experiential workers' productivity and mental health.



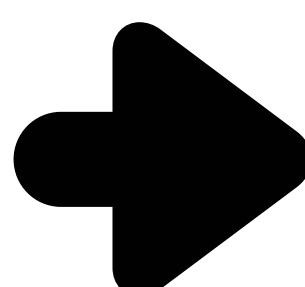
Organizational Support

- Create job descriptions with a formal job title.
- Indicate recommended pay - BC living wage.
- Create a contract highlighting expectations at work, scheduling guidelines, break policies, etc.
- Introduce team-building days.
- Introduce a formal peer debriefing program where peers have someone to call when they need support.
- Introduce a formal role within the organization that provides referrals and support for housing.

O

Skill Development

- Peers/experiential workers identified several skills they would like to develop further, including: mental health awareness, First Aid and CPR, overdose response, self defence, communication skills, etc.



Skill Development

- Introduce training for peers/experiential workers covering topics identified by them as priorities.

S

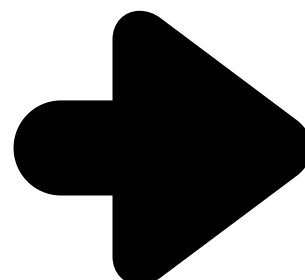
ADDITIONAL NEEDS: COVID-19

The declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020 introduced a new set of problems facing peers/experiential workers. Over the course of many discussions, our team came up with several initiatives to address their rapidly changing work conditions under our ROSE categories of 'Organizational Support' and 'Skill Development'.

KEY ISSUES

Workplace Resources

- Increase in benzo overdoses during which people are unsure whether the person is overdosing or experiencing a heavy nod.
- Little knowledge about supports available for vulnerable populations during COVID-19.



INTERVENTION PROPOSED



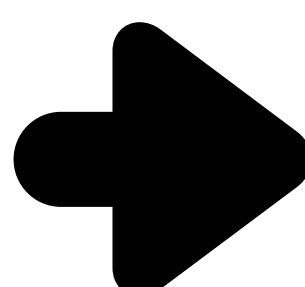
Organizational Support

- Providing pulse oximeters to pilot organizations.
- Developing guidelines on how to use pulse oximeters.
- Developing a document with resources available to support marginalized populations.



Skill Development

- Lack of clarity on how to respond to an overdose in light of COVID-19 concerns.

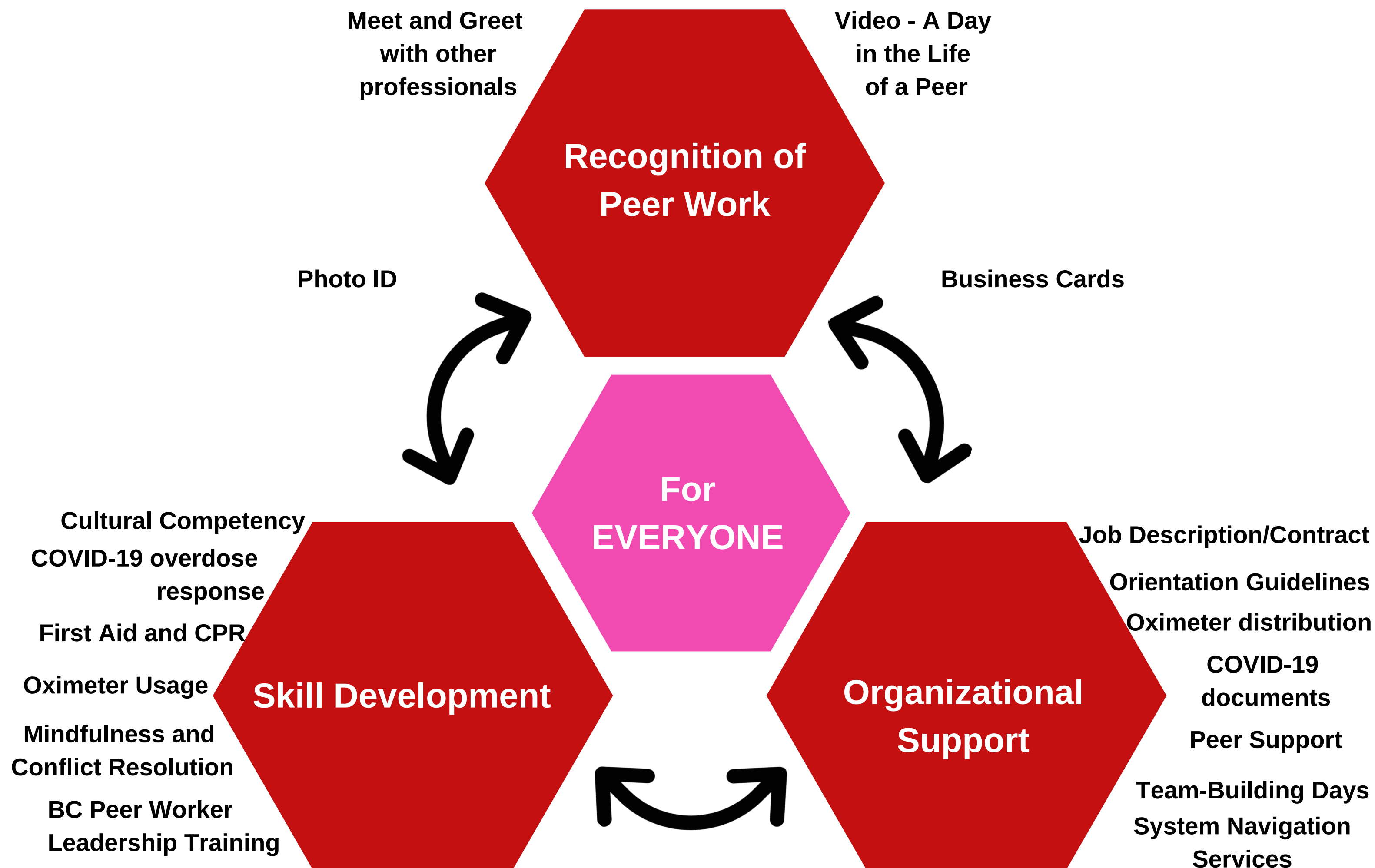


Skill Development

- Developing instructional videos on overdose response during COVID-19.
- Developing guidelines on overdose response during COVID-19.

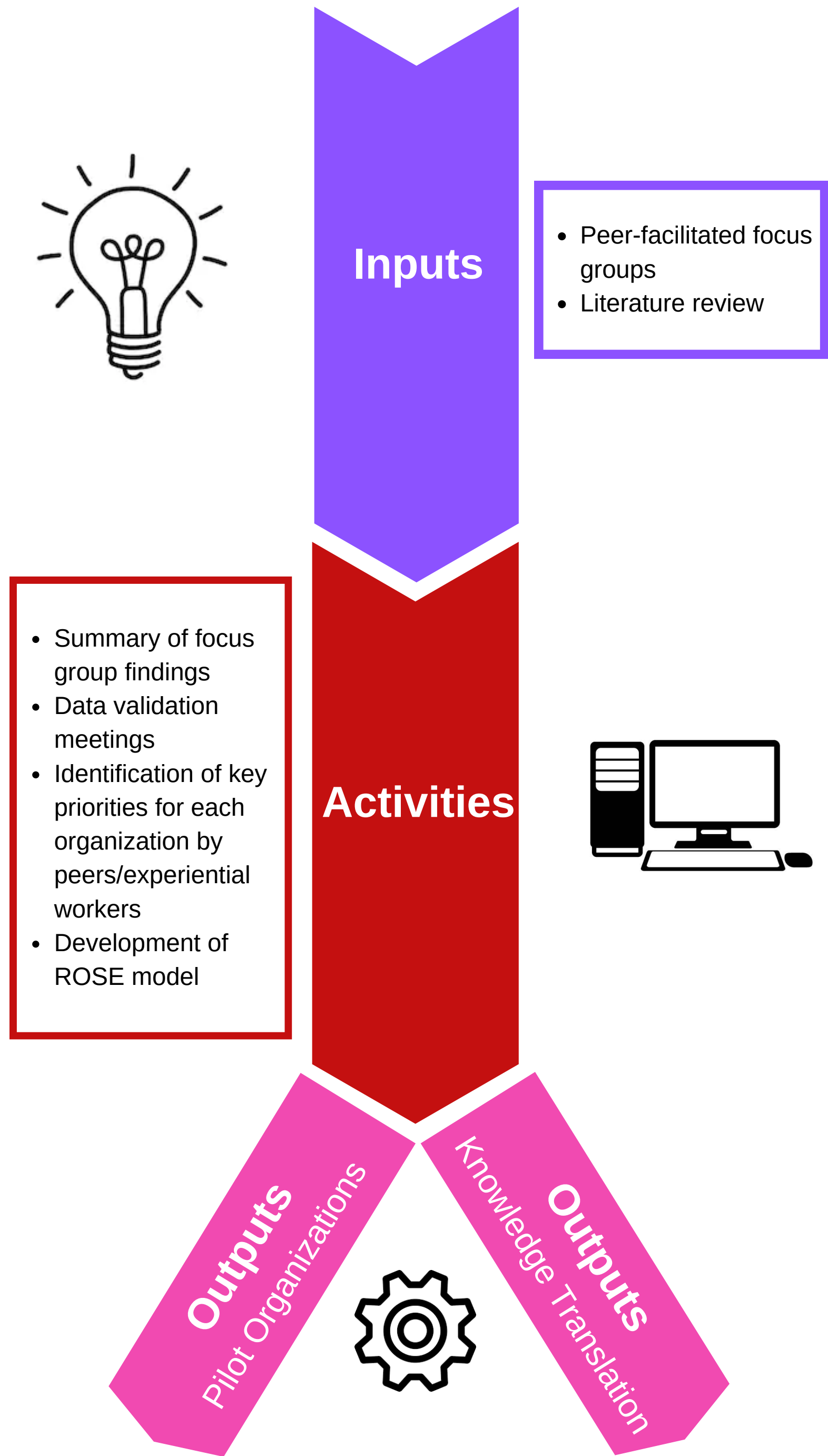


THE ROSE INITIATIVE



The ROSE Initiative is an intervention designed to support peers/experiential workers in the delivery of overdose responses, i.e. to work optimally, with reduced emotional, mental and social stress. The "E" is to emphasize that the initiative and resources developed are for Everyone. The team is committed to making all materials publicly available. All project-related documents can be found online [here](#). You can also follow the P2P [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

THE PROCESS OF THE PEER2PEER PROJECT



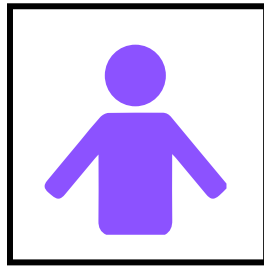
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|--|---|---|--|
| R | O | S | E |
| RECOGNITION | ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTS | SKILL BUILDING | FOR EVERYONE |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet and Greet events with other professionals • "A Day in the Life of a Peer" video • Photo ID and Business Cards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job descriptions • Contracts • Team building days • Orientation checklist • Peer debriefing • Assistance with living conditions • Oximeter distribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for peers/experiential workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo ID & Business card template • Job description templates • Contract template • Orientation checklist template • Video |

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS

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FRED CAMERON

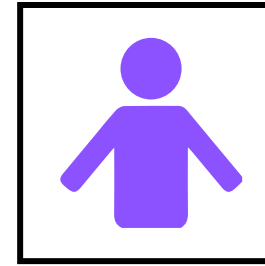


MIKE KNOTT

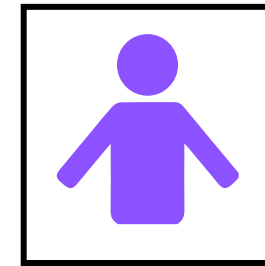
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