



E.L.I.T.E (CIC)

Enabling Living Independently Today and Everyday

Peer Support

Sharing your concerns with someone else can seem a daunting prospect, particularly if you think people might judge you, or not take you seriously; sometimes it can seem easier not to bother... Peer Supporters know how hard it can be to admit to ourselves that we are finding things difficult, let alone tell someone else how we're feeling. That's why we've put together some FAQs - the kind of questions we all ask ourselves when we're wondering whether to talk to someone else about what's bothering us...

What kinds of support can Peer Support offer?

Peer Support is an informal listening & support service provided by disabled people and carers for disabled people and carers.

We can offer:

- Non-judgemental supportive listening - to help you get some perspective on what's bothering you, and clarify your options...
- We can help you find some workable strategies to make whatever you're finding hard to do for yourself easier, and support you with putting them into practice...
- Information about other sources of help, and support in accessing them - being friendly and informal makes Peer Support an ideal first port of call if you're having difficulties, but sometimes you may need more professional help... Peer Supporters are well-informed about where such support can be found and can point you in the right direction. They will also understand that this might feel like a big step to take and can support you through the process...

Why would a Peer Supporter be able to understand me?

Peer Supporters have first-hand experience of how challenging being a disabled person or a carer can be. Many of them decide to become Peer Supporters because they have been through tough times themselves. Peer Supporters know that everyone has good days and bad days, and on the bad days it can help to have someone around who asks 'How are you?' or 'How's it going?' and genuinely wants to know the answer...

My problem doesn't seem that important... how do I know if it's big enough to bother someone else with?

This is a question everyone asks themselves - because we all feel nervous about asking for support, but the truth is we all need support sometimes. Even if you think your problem seems a small one, if it's affecting you it will probably help to talk it through with a Peer Supporter. Sometimes we think our problems aren't important because we assume that we are the only person who feels this way about an issue, and we're afraid someone else will think we're making a fuss about nothing; the strange thing is that when we do talk about our feelings, we

discover that lots of other people have similar feelings. And that can help us feel better about ourselves.

What sort of problems can Peer Supporters help with?

Peer Supporters offer support with the whole range of problems that can affect disabled people and carers in their daily lives. Peer Supporters listen in a way that is emphatic and supportive, and can help you to understand your situation. Peer Supporters are not counsellors and if they believe you would be helped by seeing a counsellor, or another professional, they will suggest this. The problems Peer Supporters can offer support in include:

- Friendship and relationship difficulties
- Family problems and pressures
- Money worries
- Social anxiety and loneliness
- Worries about the future Independent
- Living Accessing support providers

Shouldn't I just deal with my problem?

Won't talking about things just make me feel worse? There are lots of pressures within society to make us believe we should 'just deal' with things. The reality is that acknowledging that something is bothering us is one of the best ways of dealing with it. It really is 'good to talk'. It can take the pressure off things, and help us get things in perspective. Another thing that can stop us talking to someone else about a problem is the fear that the other person won't understand, and that this will make us feel worse. Peer supporters are good at understanding where someone else is coming from; and the experience of being understood by someone else can release any strong emotions and feelings which could build up and reach crisis point.

Peer Support claims to be confidential; what does this really mean?

It means that you can be confident that your identity and what you tell a Peer Supporter will not be disclosed to anyone without your expressed permission. Peer Supporters attend team meetings where they discuss the issues they have supported individuals with, and how best to offer support with those issues, but the identity of individual is never disclosed in these meetings. In exceptional circumstances - such as where the Peer Supporter believes there is an issue of serious actual or potential self-harm or harm to others, or where not to do so would break the law - a Peer Supporter may need to break confidentiality, In such a situation, wherever possible, the Peer Supporter will at the very least inform you of their decision to break confidentiality, and will encourage you to be the one to tell someone, such as a doctor or counsellor, yourself.

ELITE contact details:

Telephone: 01782 444576

Email: info@elitestaffordshire.co.uk

Website: www.elitestaffordshire.co.uk