



More than just a Buddy: Implementation of a peer-support program in a private community neurorehabilitation service

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1: Independent Rehabilitation Services

Independent Rehabilitation Services is a private community-based neurorehabilitation service with over 40 multi-disciplinary staff. Feedback from exit interviews revealed a gap in support for new staff adjusting to the challenges of lone working and private practice. In response, a Buddy Program was introduced. This peer-support program matched new staff with a clinician from a different discipline, who provided informal support. Staff could access up to 12 hours per year of paid buddy support. Buddy support typically occurred face-to-face, outside of the office over a coffee or walk, and lasted up to one hour per session. After 12 months we evaluated the effectiveness of the Buddy Program.

METHOD

1.

Recruitment of 8 staff to participate in focus group

2.

Interview guide developed

3.

Focus group facilitated by independent senior clinician

4.

Focus group recorded, transcribed and thematic analysis completed

RESULTS

3 Key Themes

The Buddy Program is **flexible** to my needs

The Buddy Program **compliments my clinical supervision**

The Buddy Program supports my **wellbeing** in the workplace

SIGNIFICANCE

- Peer-support programs can be successfully introduced in private community rehabilitation settings.
- Peer-support programs help clinicians develop healthy and sustainable work practices and reduce the risk of staff burnout.
- The benefits extend to clients who receive care continuity and quality interventions because their clinicians are prioritising self-care.

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