

Peer work in a real world health care setting

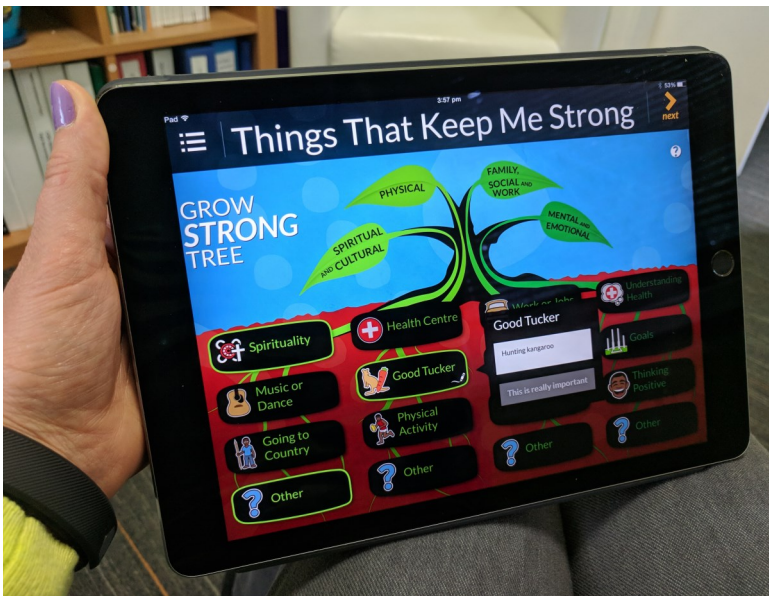
Peer workers are people with lived experience of mental health problems who use their experiences to support others.

There is now more demand for peer workers to work alongside consumers in health care services to improve recovery and outcomes.

Project aims

The intervention we studied was a peer worker who was providing a mental health recovery program using an iPad app called Stay Strong.

We wanted to find out if this was feasible, acceptable and effective for people with moderate to severe mental illness in addition to their usual care in a community-based public mental health service.



What we did

Six consumers, and five health service staff participated.

Outcomes for consumers included recovery, and the acceptability of the program and its delivery.

Staff interviews were about the program acceptability and feasibility, and the peer worker.

What we found

Views from consumers and health care staff were very positive, particularly about the peer worker.

Consumers really liked the iPad, working with the peer worker, and completing the program during time they would normally just wait around.

Staff believed that the peer worker was highly useful for consumers and staff. Some minor issues were noted around the use of technology, and integrating the peer worker into the health care team.

Dr Michelle Banfield is conducting a larger scale peer work trial during the next 2 years as part of her Translating Practice into Research (TRIP) fellowship awarded by the Medical Research Future Fund.

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