The importance of peer support in HIV services – Marc Thompson, Positively UK

12 November 2015

we are positive
The changing face of peer support in the response to HIV

- Long history of peer support - Body Positive, Positively Women, THT, UKC, AIDS Treatment Project.
- Defunding of services in post-HAART era resulted in the loss of many organisations/services
- With effective treatment, peer support shifted from helping people to die with dignity to providing solution-focused long term condition management
HIV peer support in clinical settings

- Launch of the clinic Patient Group to shape services, provide support, information and a chance to learn from others
- Clinicians begin to recognise the value of offering peer support in-house rather than referring out
- Public/Patient Involvement (PPI) makes clinics keen to involve patients – Forum Link created to support this development
- Patient Representative role launched – first volunteer in Brighton, then paid in Bloomsbury
- Some HIV organisations forge links with local clinics to create easy access to support
Recognition of the importance of peer support

• BHIVA Standards of Care for People Living with HIV 2013

• NHS England’s 2014 *Five Year Forward View* says peer support should be seen as ‘essential’ to the future of the NHS.

• National Voices 2015 report *Peer Support: What Is It and Does It Work?*

‘There is evidence that peer support can help people feel more knowledgeable, confident and happy and less isolated and alone’. 
Positively UK link peer support into the clinic

- Positively UK pilot peer mentoring programme 2012-2014
- Positively UK and Homerton Hospital Peer Navigator project
- Case workers living with HIV provide outreach support in several London clinics
- Project 100 to deliver a national peer support programme
Positively UK Peer Mentoring Pilot Evaluation
April 2014

HIV Awareness
Safer Sex
Understanding Treatments
Reduced Isolation
Talking About HIV
Accessing Services
Emotional Well-being
Confidence

Increment +1
Increment +2
Increment 3+
Positively UK Peer Mentoring Pilot Evaluation
April 2014

Peer Mentee Emotional Wellbeing

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What the clinicians say:

• “If a patient only sees a clinician, they only get half the story”
  Dr Simon Edwards, Lead Clinician at Bloomsbury

• "Peer support - both psychological and social - is not only important, it is vital"
  Dr Ian Williams, ex-Chair BHIVA, Chair of HIV CRG

• “Introducing peer mentors has provided a level of support for our patients which we have never been able to achieve using health care professionals alone”
  Dr Chloe Orkin, Barts and The London NHS Trust
What PWHIV say?

“My Dr and nurses are great, but also having someone to talk to who had similar experiences to myself really helped me manage my HIV”

“I was struggling to manage my HIV treatment. Talking to a peer mentor helped me as they had a similar experience so they understood my worries and concerns”

“The way I see it, would you want swimming lessons from a person that can’t swim. Or piano lessons from someone who has ever played the piano – wouldn’t you want to have the talk from someone who has done the walk.”
Project 100 will…

- Train 1000 peer mentors across the UK over next four years
- Provide access to peer support to all PWHIV in the UK
- Provide mentors with accredited training, along with ongoing support and development
- Partner with local organisations to offer peer mentoring within clinics and in the community
- Set national standards for HIV peer support
Thanks

Garry Brough – London Coordinator, Project 100
Sarah Fraser – Project Manager, Project 100
Useful Links & Contacts:

• Project 100: http://positivelyuk.org/project-100/

• Telephone: 020 7713 0444

• email: project100@positivelyuk.org