Setting up a peer support group in my local area after being a recipient of Positively UK’s peer support

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we are positive
Period of diagnosis

LIFE IS WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU WHILE YOU’RE BUSY MAKING OTHER PLANS.
Immediate support required after diagnosis

- Medical treatment
- HIV awareness
- Peer support
- Social support
- Legal support
- Mental health awareness and support
Receiving unstructured peer support

Advantages
- Peers
- Information
- Social workers
- Emotional and mental relief

Challenges
- Limited time
- Individual capacity and ability
- Unanswered questions and unmet needs
# Finding structured peer support - Positively UK

## Personal Development and Advocacy
- Active participation and involvement in health and social care decisions that affect me
- Challenges, Empowerment, encouragement and inspiration
- Increasing and developing skills
- Better self-management

## Increased Self-Confidence
- Expert patient awareness and development
- Being aware of and understanding my rights
- Opportunity to share my story and ask questions
- Opportunity to volunteer and actively participate thereby developing my skills
- Choice of different service options, one-to-one or group support

## Mental and Emotional Relief
- Identification of the link between HIV and mental health and getting referral for personal support
- Opportunity to talk freely about HIV in a confidential space that eventually made it easy to talk about (normalizing HIV)

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## Information and Education
- Valid and updated HIV Information sources
- Trainings and workshops

## Networking
- Referrals
- Meeting other people living with HIV
- Sharing information about support and complementary services with others

## Socialising and Reducing Isolation
- Opportunity to meet other PLWH
- Opportunity to listen to other peoples’ experiences and get a choice of best practice or what doesn’t work
- Space to be seen
Setting up peer support in my local area

- PositivelyUK - peer support and personal development
- Forum Link - set up and capacity building
- Sophia Forum- women's activism training (WISE-UP+)
- UK-CAB – information and networking
- HIV Clinic - patient involvement and in-clinic peer support opportunity
- Local organizations commissioned to provide HIV support - guidance
- Peterborough Community Voluntary Service (PCVS) - capacity building, networking, community integration and funding opportunities
- Continuous personal development - learning, development and networking
Conclusion- What can help even more?

• Regional networks to provide a community that can support each other to effect change

• Increased collaboration from the community in London, to build the capacity of those of us that are working outside London and often struggle to get by on our own

• Clinicians, healthcare professionals and community members’ solidarity. Sharing best practice to promote patient involvement, especially with associates outside London
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