

What is peer support?

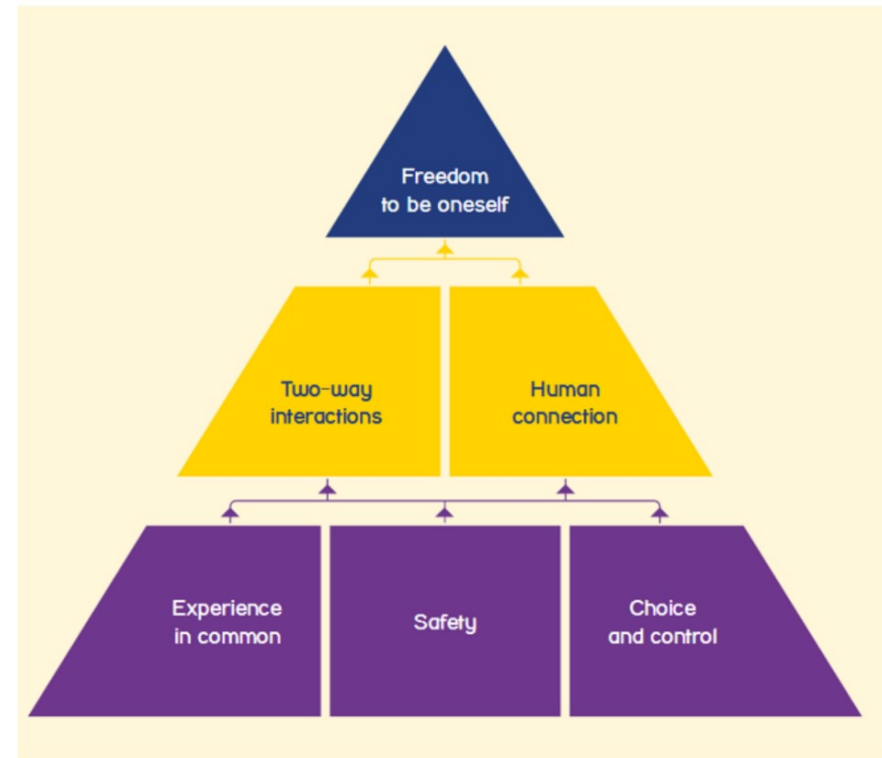
Peer support is a group of people who get together with a common concern to give and receive support.

The foundations:

1. We're all concerned about what's happening to our ecosystem and climate change.
2. Together we create a safe environment to talk in.
3. You can go at our own pace and decide what's right for you.

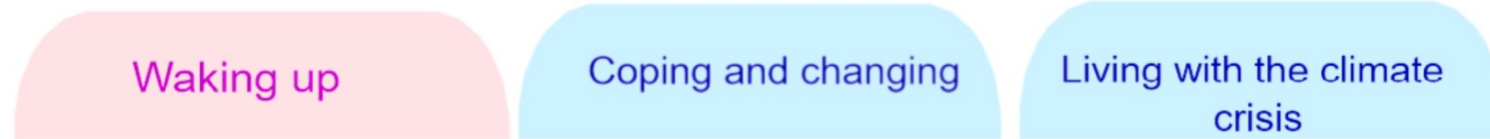
When these foundations are in place:

- We can begin to have real conversations and feel connected to others.
- Hopefully, you feel comfortable to be yourself.



Developing peer support in the community: a toolkit

Our experience in common: on a journey learning how to live with the climate crisis



Adapted from Dr Panu Pihkala's *Process model of eco-anxiety and ecological grief* (2022)

How do we create a safe space to talk in?

- The room and facilities
- Structured conversation with a facilitator
- We share the responsibility

Group agreement:

1. We listen to understand each other.
2. We avoid giving advice - unless it's requested!
3. We keep each other's details and stories confidential.

Can you agree to do this? Is there anything else you need?

Arrive on Time
Stay on Topic

Conversation

Changing social structures

Creating and joining groups

What needs to change?

How do you change a system?

"the most important thing an individual can do, is be a little less of an individual and join together with others in movements large enough to make change"

Bill McKibben

Difference between joining + starting + being the second person - really hard being the first

Goes against nature
'Bowling Alone' - social + economic reasons make it harder.
- people work in an atomised way

Who started clubs + associations?

I'm a bit of a joiner - sociable
- share work
- problems caused by individuals
- need rules or something bigger to control it
- we're not used to it
- really big groups like Greenpeace

Personality
Structure
Practice

good but then don't feel connected to it

Necessary to figure out how to work together but feels difficult

We're not very good at it

- dozens of environmental groups in Manchester
- many fail

Opportunities to learn?

By doing XR or cooperatives

Hierarchical eg cadets

Different models + structures

Bus / circus factor

What opportunities do we already have to practise working in a group successfully?

Have a framework or mission statement (+ use it)
nice concise set of axioms (statements that are basic building blocks)

Identifying shared principles even if you have different worldviews

Make an effort to understand other

- not assuming
- judging
- drop ego
- compassion + empathy

Formal rules

Practise in everyday life

Interpersonal problems = Mediators - or learn to do it

Practise speaking up

Look at successful groups + what they have in common - harder for environment groups - diffuse - complicated

Design groups so they can change

It's okay different structures - match it to what you're doing

Some groups fit inside existing organisations