



Peer Health Coaching

Achieving healthy outcomes guided by the experience of recovery

In partnership with SANE Australia, Neami National delivered a successful 3-year Peer Health Coaching (PHC) pilot, addressing the poor physical health outcomes of people living with a mental illness.

PHC was a short-term programme for consumers wishing to work on a specific physical health goal.

Peer Health Coaches

As well as being trained in using their lived experience of recovery, Peer Health Coaches are passionate about the link between physical and mental health and the challenges of making behaviour changes. The peer relationship emerged as the most valued aspect of PHC.

“One of the main things was we were on an equal level. She’d been where I have been and she had felt what I had. I felt I could relate to her much better” - Consumer

Peer Health Coaches also specialise in coaching techniques which enable consumers to find sustainable and meaningful strategies to achieve their physical health goals. Peer Health Coaches are skilled at keeping sessions on the topic of physical health, whilst being creative and flexible to respond to individual needs.

Outcomes of the program

182 consumers participated in the PHC pilot with 12 Peer Health Coaches delivering 547 one-to-one sessions and 12 group sessions across 16 Neami sites and the Mind Recovery College, surpassing the project’s predicted targets.

More consumers reported their overall health as being ‘Good’ or ‘Very Good’ after PHC, compared to before. 73% of consumers reported achieving their goal within PHC sessions or feeling confident to pursue

it independently afterwards. Consumer health goals included increasing physical activity, improving diet and smoking cessation.

“I’m getting out and about. We often have PHC sessions at the beach. I can go swimming now and have a bit of natural exercise and I feel healthier.” - Consumer

Health literacy

“PHC unlocked the keys about diet and exercise” - Consumer

A questionnaire measuring health literacy (the ability to access, understand and use health information and services) was given to consumers before and after completing PHC. There was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) with medium effect ($r = > -0.3 < -0.5$) between responses in pre and post questionnaires, meaning consumer health literacy improved significantly after participating in PHC.

Beyond physical health

Consumers commented that their mental health and general wellbeing had improved as a result of PHC. Consumers felt PHC assisted with their other goals and values, such as social inclusion and connection with nature.

“The whole lot has come together, my mind is working great now.” - Consumer

More Information

- Watch our Health Literacy video
- Read SANE’s PHC overview and practice manual at www.sane.org and listen to the PHC podcast