Peer to Peer

Self-Directed Support Networks

ValuedLives
Valued People

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Our Values

- Innovation
- Integrity
- Self–Determination
- Choice and Control
- Right Relationship
- Partnership

About Valued Lives

Valued Lives Foundation (inc.) is a not for profit organisation registered charity with ACNC that is led predominantly by a Board of passionate individuals and family members who have experience of living with disability and or mental health issues. We operate as a social enterprise whereby we trade to fulfill our social vision.

Valued Lives is passionate around promoting individualised, self – directed supports and services and is committed to promoting community inclusion and active citizenship for all.

Our Vision

All people are respected; live full and Valued lives with real choice, assuming genuine control and have a real say in the support and services that they receive.

Our Goals

- Providing a vehicle for the individual and family voice in Self–Directed Supports and Services in WA.
- Promoting Self-Directed Supports and Services
- Enabling Choice and Control
- Develop and Facilitate Innovative Supports and Services.
- Promoting holistic planning
- Building Capacity of Individuals and Families
  - Facilitating Peer-to-Peer support
  - Promoting Leadership
  - Learning and sharing together

Self-Directed Supports and Services

The term 'self-directed supports and services' describes an approach characterised by people with disability, their family and Carers having genuine choice and control over the planning, design and implementation of the services and supports they require.

The self-directed approach puts the person with a disability or mental health issue at the centre of their own lives and aims to ensure that supports and resources are provided based on each person's needs, goals, lifestyle choices and aspirations.

In Western Australia, increasing numbers of people and/or families are choosing to self-direct their supports and services. Many are managing individualised funding made available to them through grants from The Disability Services Commission. Typically, this arrangement has been facilitated through the Local Area Coordination program or via Disability Sector Organisations. There are now significant numbers of people with disability and/or their families/carers who have gathered expertise, ideas, knowledge and experience in self-managing or share managing their own supports and services.

Peer Support

Peer support in its various forms is widely recognised and valued across the globe as being beneficial in enabling, connecting and sharing information with others who have shared similar journeys.

People are often more comfortable sharing knowledge, ideas and experiences with their peers through informal and natural conversations, rather than engaging formally with service providers.

Peer support is recognised more predominantly in Mental Health Services than in Disability Services in Western Australia.

Valued Lives Founation (inc) actively promotes and facilitates peer support where possible, believing it can be the most important and effective form of support to families who experience disability/and or mental health conditions.

The intent of peer support at Valued Lives is to provide an opportunity for a person and/or family to connect and share information with others, building capacity of the person and/or family to self-direct their support.

We do this within a framework of solution focused thinking and practice.

Background to the Peer-to-Peer Self-Directed Support Network Project

The Peer-to-Peer Self-Directed Support Network Project (SDSN Network) evolved from many conversations Valued Lives had with individuals and families who identified a significant gap around peer support for people who were self-directing their own supports and services.

Individuals and families felt that they had much to share and learn from each other regarding how people were directing and engaging their own supports.

Valued Lives provides a vehicle for The Peer to Peer Self-Directed Support Networks to develop and thrive; facilitating the bringing together of people to share ideas, skills, knowledge and experiences with peers who are on the same journey of self-managing or share managing their own supports.

The Peer-to-Peer Self-Directed Support Network encourages participation from all people who self-manage or share-manage their supports and services regardless of the agency assists them. It is envisaged that Local Area Coordinators and Service Providers will promote and support the networks as they develop.

The Peer-to-Peer Self-Directed Support Network Project has been funded through The Community Living and Participation Grants, administered through National Disability Services to trial the development of Networks in designated local areas. The My Way sites of Cockburn, Kwinana and Perth Hills NDIS area will be the first areas to trial the networks, with roll outs across metro and some country areas, funding permitting.

- Co-producing the framework for the Peer to Peer Self-Directed Support Networks

Valued Lives Foundation is committed to working with individuals and families to co-design any supports and services that they may require.

In August 2013, Valued Lives held a design session to establish how best to develo p the Peer-to-Peer Self-Directed Support Networks. We invited individuals, families and service providers to come together to co-produce a framework for how the networks will operate in practice.

The design session set the parameters for the Operational Framework.

Our thanks are extended to Kate Fulton from Perth Home Care Services who facilitated the design session.

Design Session Contributors

- Jackie Softly - Parent
- Sharon Mcfarlane - My Place
- Kim Proctor - Local Area Coordinator
- Mary Hams - My Place
- Donna O'Shea - My Way Coordinator with the Disability Services Commission
- Emma & Gabby - Perth Home Care Services
- Leanne Pearman - WA Individualised Services
- Veronica Burkin - Mum and My Way Coordinator with Valued Lives
- Ellie Wilman - Parent
- Margo McAdam - Parent
- Donna McAleese - Parent
- Sally Bravos - Parent
- Jo Woolhouse - person with a disability
- Kate Fulton - Co-facilitator
- Bronia Holyoak - Co-facilitator

Focus Questions

Several focus questions were designed to facilitate a series of group conversations.

1. "Given your experience of directing your own supports or assisting people to direct their support, what would have helped right at the beginning?

- Clear information about what services can/can't do. Information that is relevant and transparent. What is possible
- Strong underlying principles/values – inclusive
- Imagine better
- One to one introduction until more comfortable. Where you are at on the journey. Mentoring
- Explore and discover what you want then be clear about what you want.
- Simplified, easy to understand information – direct – guidelines/ frameworks. Initially too much information can be overwhelming
- Leadership/anchor point. Facilitators need to be trained or have group skills
- Clarity around those "grey areas" (employer/private and domestic - what are the obligations/ responsibilities)
- Definition of "choice" what does it really mean?
- Shared templates.
- Flexibility – change as needs change
- Support to walk alongside someone who has walked the journey and can relate. How to overcome fears by sharing stories
- Support to walk alongside gatherings and social media

2. What would help long term?

- Needs to be sustainable and real
- Updated information/reviews
- Adapting to changing needs i.e. technology
- Being in control in areas I want, with to support to do that. (People, opportunities, technical and practical)
- Ongoing, "how are things going?" – What do I want now/tomorrow – how has my life changed?

- Peer groups – consistency – relationship based – no need to repeat story over and over
- Local flavour
- Self-sufficiency – framework = dynamic
- Pay it forward
- Tap into existing networks

3. What do you think are the key issues in self-managing and shared managing?

- People who are most vulnerable are not heard
- Lack of clarity – insurances, workers comp etc. Administration and Guardianship
- Visioning – possibilities may be unknown
- Overcoming fears!
- Small steps – at own pace
- Don't reinvent the wheel – use existing resources
- Reporting can be scary for people – focus on outcomes can cause difficulty
- Recruitment of the "right" people
- Spending the money correctly
- Power and relationship changes when individual/ agency pays workers

4. What has really helped you in your experience overall or in assisting others?

- Label for eligibility
- Peer support preferably local
- Funding real choice
- Use of technology
- Relationships with experienced persons - connection
- Guidance – what is possible – challenge around some thinking – "opening doors"
- Timing – headspace to be receptive – often too much information at first – especially at early diagnosis
- Conversations
- Inspiration – supporters and believers! This is possible!
- Consider people with intellectual disability
- Peer advocacy
- Relevant to where you are on your journey
- Local knowledge and easy access

5. What top 5 things would you like a network to offer you?

- Use of technology – social networking & communication devices

- Meetings – drop in – natural environments
- Enriched by shared experience/ideas
- Resources for coaching, mentoring, training workers
- Peer advocacy as needed
- Learning opportunities (training) for individuals and families
- Tapping into existing skills and resources of network members in a paid capacity

6. What would be your bottom line?

- Same formula – you know what to expect
- Solid
- Local flavour!
- Inclusive
- Keep it simple
- Possible to do everything yourself

7. If you had access to funding would you pay to access peer to peer support?

- Would prefer to pay it forward/ barter – in kind support – one person helps one other person
- Yes - if we learned something from others it would be invaluable much better than professionals telling us what to do.
- What would the fee be for?
- Some people do want to share and others may not want to, or have the capacity to help others
- Would this be at the expense of current supports we need?
- There is not enough funding to meet current needs – should be funded externally fee – feels like it changes the nature of peer support
- Becomes over professionalised – and therefore has a different feel
- Outcomes – what will it achieve?
- Hard to put a value on it – we don't know what we don't know – quantitate relationship dollars
- Marketing – how it is presented is important
- Local councils/universities – opportunity to engage with what's out there and find other ways to have the support funded.
- We need to recognise the value of people giving their time, we pay professionals – why don't we acknowledge and pay individual and families for their experience?

Operational Framework

Our Values

- Innovation
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Goals

- Promote and facilitate Peer-to-Peer support as a vehicle for sharing knowledge, skills and experience in the journey towards self-direction.
- Promote and support innovative thinking and practice.
- Promote and develop individual and family leadership in self-direction.
- Learn and share together.

Principles

- Recognise and respect where people are at on their journey.
- Respectful relationships
- Shared responsibility, reciprocal and mutual agreement of what is helpful for people.
- Non–directive, support people to recognise their own resources and to seek their own solutions.
- Strengths based and solution focused.
- Promote inclusion with innovative ideas and practice.

How the SDS Networks will operate

- Valued Lives Foundation (Inc.) will engage the Network Facilitators and oversee the development of the networks to ensure that the objectives and principles of the groups are consistent with the Operational Framework.
- Valued Lives Foundation (Inc.) will be a point of contact for the mentoring and training of Network Facilitators; reporting regularly on progress of the networks to the board of Valued lives Foundation (inc.)
- Valued Lives Foundation (inc.) will have regular contact with Network Facilitators and participants to monitor the operation of the networks.
- Networks will operate in local areas, commencing in the Perth Hills and Cockburn/ Melville areas. Additional networks will be rolled out over time, subject to funding.
- Networks will promote a "pay it forward" approach whereby people who have knowledge and skills in self- directing their supports and services, willingly share their ideas with their peers - one person at a time. One person linked with another to provide support is seen to be appropriate so that it does not become an onerous task and "another thing to do"
- Face to face meetings will be held in local areas at a time and date that works for each group. As a guide, six to eight weekly, but will be determined by local networks.
- Meetings will follow a set agenda but it is expected that what is important to people in enabling them to get the benefits of the networks will emerge over time. Valued Lives Foundation (inc.) recognises that "One size does not fit all" and will support flexibility so that the networks have a local flavour.
- Technology will be used as a platform to connect with people outside of local meetings. Facebook closed sites or other platforms will be developed and contributions to these platforms will be moderated by Network Facilitators.
- An online "Ideas Bank" will be developed through The Valued Lives website to capture and share innovative solutions considered by the networks. This will sit alongside a range of community links and resources that may be useful to network members.

The Role of Valued Lives Peer-to-Peer Network Facilitators

- Network Facilitators will have experience in managing their own supports and services and have lived experience of disability/mental health issues.
- Network Facilitators will convene and arrange meetings and moderate communication outside of meetings. This will include developing the agenda, and inviting people to meetings.
- Valued Lives will regularly host opportunities for Network facilitators to come together to provide peer support, to share experiences and ideas, problem solve and to continuously review and refine the project over time.
- Network Facilitators will provide regular feedback to Bronia Holyak – CEO Valued Lives Foundation (inc.)
- Network Facilitators will be reimbursed for expenses and costs associated with the work involved to develop and maintain the network in their local area, subject to funding
- The Networks will follow a simple solution focused framework.

How will we know it is working?

Valued Lives Foundation is committed to ensuring that the networks are solid, working on the ground and are consistent across local areas. Regular feedback will be sought by Bronia Holyoak, who will offer support and mentoring to Network Facilitators.

It is envisioned that positive outcomes for individuals and their families who have benefitted from the networks will action the learning and build to enable people to self-direct their supports and services.

A formal review will be facilitated by Valued Lives Foundation (inc.) in Dec 2014.

Bronia Holyoak

CEO, Valued Lives Foundation (Inc).