

Mental Health First Aid Policy

Policy number	5	Version	2.0
Drafted by	Josephine Stewart	Approved by Board on	24/9/2025
Responsible person	Anne Mackay	Scheduled review date	

If there is an urgent risk identified, emergency services should be contacted immediately.

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Radiance's commitment to supporting the mental health, wellbeing, and safe practice of peer support workers engaged in perinatal mental health services. Peer workers bring unique lived experience, empathy, and insight to their roles, and their mental health and safety are a priority for our organisation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all peer support workers (paid and volunteer) within Radiance, including those providing direct peer support, facilitating groups, or participating in program development and advocacy.

3. Principles

As integral members of the team, Peer Workers bring unique insights and support that enhance recovery-focused care. Their contributions include:

- **Sharing lived experience of mental health challenges and recovery**, offering understanding and empathy to parents navigating perinatal difficulties.
- **Using their own journey as a resource**, helping others feel less isolated and more confident in seeking support.
- **Building genuine rapport and trust**, creating safe spaces where consumers feel heard, validated, and respected.
- **Role modelling wellness and recovery**, fostering hope and demonstrating that positive change is possible.
- **Bridging communication between consumers and mental health services (MHS)**, ensuring that parents' voices and perspectives are understood and represented.

Radiance also recognises:

- Lived experience is the foundation of peer work and is recognised as a form of expertise and strength.
- Because peer work relies on sharing personal experience, it can carry unique emotional demands, including risks of vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue.
- Psychological safety and wellbeing are just as important as physical safety in the workplace.

Supportive structures, reflective practice, and open communication are essential to sustain safe, effective, and healthy peer work.

Taking in to account the above below highlights the commitments Radiance takes to support and maintain the valuable peer workforce. Radiance is also guided by the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines.

4. Commitments

4.1 Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

- Regular supervision (individual and/or group) provided by trained supervisors with understanding of peer work.
- Opportunities for reflective practice and debriefing following challenging work.

4.2 Safe Workload & Boundaries

- Clear role descriptions and expectations to support healthy boundaries.
- Monitoring of workloads to prevent overextension or burnout.
- Encouragement of self-care practices, including flexible scheduling where possible.

4.3 Training & Professional Development

- Ongoing training in self-care, resilience, trauma-informed practice, and boundary management.
- Opportunities to participate in lived experience networks and peer workforce development initiatives.

4.4 Inclusive & Respectful Workplace

- Commitment to a culture of respect for lived experience.
- Zero tolerance for stigma or discrimination based on mental health status.
- Facilitators to review Radiance Support Group guidelines with clients, at a minimum, at the start of each term.

4.5 Response to Mental Health Concerns

- Peer workers experiencing mental health difficulties will be supported with compassion, confidentiality, and reasonable adjustments.
- Options for modified duties, leave, or gradual return to work will be offered where appropriate.
- Seeking support or disclosing mental health challenges is encouraged and will always be met with understanding, not penalty.
- Counselling and debriefing options will be made available

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Organisation (Radiance):

- Provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive work environment.
- Ensure access to supervision, debriefing, and well-being supports – reviewed at quarterly staff meetings and bi-monthly board meetings.
- Regularly review this, and all other, policy in collaboration with peer workers at quarterly staff meetings – feedback noted and presented to Board.

Managers:

- Maintain open, supportive communication.
- Identify and address workload or wellbeing concerns early.
- Respect confidentiality of all staff and volunteers.
- Actively maintain a safe environment while upholding their duty of care for both peer workers and the people they support.

Peer Workers:

- Engage in self-care and use available supports.
- Communicate any well-being concerns to supervisors in a timely manner.
- Maintain professional boundaries and role clarity as their job description.

6. Confidentiality

All mental health disclosures will be treated confidentially in line with Radiance's privacy policy, except where there is risk of harm to self or others.

6. Key definitions

Peer worker – people with a relevant lived experience, in this instance, with perinatal mental health

Well-being supports – the organisation actively promotes and encourages staff and volunteers to access (free) training and self-care practices to prevent, for example, compassion fatigue.

Debriefing – Radiance has a simple, yet essential, debriefing template for staff, volunteers and clients to complete as the need arises. The completed form is reviewed by the Manager and Board and actions are taken accordingly.