

Peer Support Volunteering Policy

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Drafted by	Josephine Stewart	Approved by Board on	May 2025
Responsible person	Anne Mackay	Scheduled review date	May 2027

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Radiance Network South West (“Radiance”) provides peer-support based groups for mothers and their babies throughout the South West region. Peer support volunteers may be Radiance staff, Board members, community members, health professionals, or Radiance mothers who “graduated” at least 12-18 months prior to engaging as a peer volunteer, except under exceptional circumstances.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This document sets out Radiance’s policy for peer support volunteers who work in our Radiance Support Groups.
- 2.2 The purpose of this document is to outline the governance structures, responsibilities and processes that have been established to give effect to this policy.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Radiance does not advocate, support or practice discrimination based on race, religion, age, national origin, language, sex, sexual orientation, or mental or physical concern or any other personal attribute protected by law, except where affirmative action may be required to redress individual or social handicaps.
- 3.2 Radiance will make all reasonable accommodations to allow people who experience difficulties in their dealings with the organisation to benefit equally from its work.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all Radiance Support Group Peer Volunteers.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 Peer support: occurs when peer volunteers provide support, knowledge or practical help to one another to facilitate client wellbeing and continuous improvement. Peer support is based on one’s own lived experience with perinatal mental health challenges.
- 5.2 Mentoring: is a relationship between an experienced person who helps to guide, advise, or train a person with less experience to maximise their potential, develop their skills, and improve their capability. In Radiance, this relationship exists between the Radiance Support Group Peer Volunteers and the Radiance Manager and Radiance Support Group Facilitators.
- 5.3 Client: parents and babies in our support groups.

6. Policy Statement

- 6.1 Radiance is committed to supporting and developing its clients through access to robust peer support that meet good practice guidelines.
- 6.2 Radiance recognises that peer support, coaching and mentoring plays an integral role in client wellbeing, development, learning, and continuous improvement.
- 6.3 The content of Radiance Support Groups will remain confidential between participants except for any agreed actions and goals, or where the disclosure of the information is consented to or required by law. See our Confidentiality Policy for more information.
- 6.4 Peer support volunteers may be working with people from the community they live in. It is important to keep professional boundaries in place with clients during and after your commitment with Radiance.

7. Procedure Overview

- 7.1 This policy is accompanied by an excerpt from the PANDA website which describes the importance of the Radiance Support Group Peer Volunteers resilience, support network and questions to ask before committing.
- 7.2 Resilience
Every person's recovery journey is different. Whatever your experience has been, to volunteer with Radiance, it is crucial that you are sufficiently recovered so that you can volunteer safely.

Being a Peer Support Volunteer will involve listening to people describe confronting and distressing experiences and feelings. Good support and debriefing is always available, but resilience and 'robustness' is essential in order to do this work.

- 7.3 Support
Everyone needs good support, whether from family, friends or health professionals. At Radiance, we talk a lot about the importance of self-care and seeking support when needed. This is crucial for our staff and volunteers, as well as for those seeking support via the Radiance Support Groups.

Some people continue to experience episodes of anxiety, depression or other difficulties well after recovering from their perinatal experiences. If this is the case for you, it does not preclude you from volunteering with Radiance. However, it makes it particularly important that you have strong ongoing support networks and resources, and that you are able to seek support from them as needed.

You may wish to volunteer at Radiance events or as part of our Board instead.