

THE ROLE OF PEER SUPPORT IN MANAGING IMPAIREMENT

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Outline



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Introduction



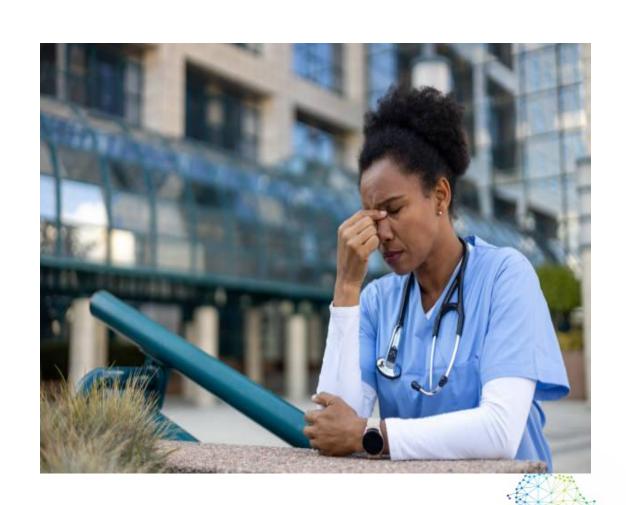
- The healthcare profession is demanding and stressful.
- Health professionals' impairment resulting from various challenges (mental health depression and anxiety, behavioural substance abuse, or physical health illness or injury) can affect performance of the professional increasing the occurrence of:
 - Medical errors
 - Patients' complaints and litigation
 - Workforce attrition
- Health professionals have a risk of developing impairment of 1 in 4 during their career (Bruce 2005, Baldisseri 2007)
- Regulators have a duty to protect patients while supporting the recovery and safe practice of the impaired professionals
- Peer support is an essential tool in achieving this balance



Peer Support

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- Various peer support programs have been described in the literature
- No formal programs in many AMCOA Countries
- In countries where available, services are underutilised – Fear, stigma, confidentiality
- Personal example: Emotional support provided by colleagues with shared experience



Peer Support

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- Early identification and intervention of impairment
 - Minimizes harm to patients and professionals
- The culture of compassion reducing Stigma and isolation
- Encouraging Help-Seeking behavior
- Provides emotional resilience and coping strategies
 - Improves workforce morale and longevity
- Shared responsibility fosters trust and accountability





REGULATOR 2.0

Benefits of Peer Support- Regulation



- Facilitates non punitive approaches.
 - Encourages reporting of errors and near misses without fear, promoting a culture of safety and transparency
 - Fosters a learning environment
 - Improves patient safety
- Encourages self-reporting and compliance
 - Promotes transparency and accountability while professionals take responsibility for their actions
 - Early detection and intervention reducing risk of harm to patients
- Enhances safe reintegration into practice
 - Protects patients professionals are fit to return to practice without posing harm to patients
 - Maintains public trusts

Risks And Ethical Considerations



- Confidentiality vs. Duty to report (patient safety)
 - Balancing support with safety obligations
- Compassion and Accountability (Boundary Management)
 - Peers must avoid acting as therapists or enablers
- Support and regulatory responsibility



Conclusion



- Impairment is a real and manageable risk in medical regulation
- Peer support compliments regulatory goals by promoting recovery and professionalism.

 Compassionate, evidence-based approaches enhance both patient safety and clinician

