

The Peer to Community Model

A service to support people after they've been unhoused



What is this project about?

This project will offer a new service involving peer support (persons with lived experiences of homelessness), social work, and occupational therapy in the community delivered in the places that are most comfortable for you. This may include your home, the community space where the program is situated, or anywhere else in the community that you'd prefer. The purpose of this program is to help people build social networks and engage in meaningful activity in their community following homelessness as a way of supporting their well-being. This service was developed through a two-year project involving persons with lived experiences of homelessness, community providers and researchers in Kingston and London, ON.

Why did we develop this service?

There are few programs that are known to be effective for supporting individuals to integrate in their community after being unhoused, and sometimes people feel unwell or lose their housing because things aren't going well. Being supported by peer support specialists who know what it's like to experience homelessness, and by mental health professionals who have skills that can help individuals move towards well-being might help. This is just a theory, and we want to conduct this project to see if this approach is helping people in the way that we hope.

What is involved?

Participating in this project will not cost you anything, and the program is provided at no cost to you. After being referred, you will either be offered the supports delivered by this program, or you will be placed on a waitlist. In either of these scenarios, we will ask you to participate in an interview now and every three months after for a total of five interviews over the next year, which will help us to see if this project is helping. You will be compensated for these interviews, and the amount that we provide will increase over time to thank you for continuing to participate (\$40 for the first interview, \$50 for the second, \$60 for the third, \$70 for the fourth and \$80 for the fifth). If you are selected to receive the support provided by the program right away, you will be provided with support from a trained peer support specialist, an occupational therapist, and a social worker at least once per week or more if that is what you'd prefer.

Who can be referred?

- Individuals who are 25 or older
- Individuals who self-identify as having a mental health condition or substance use difficulty
- Individuals who have experienced homelessness for at least one month in the past year

What are the benefits of participating?

You will have access to a service that can provide additional mental health and social supports over the next year to help you to build community and fill your time in ways that are meaningful. You will also have opportunities to provide your input on what is working with this new service to inform how we can make it better in the future.

How can you get involved or learn more?

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact us using the following information:

- **Contact** Brooke Phillips at bphill24@uwo.ca
- **Visit the link below** to refer yourself to the program or ask for help from a service provider that you already see to help you complete the referral form:

https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1yV9KwmRRAOLNTU