

Peer Support Program Registered With the Ministry of Advanced Education and Training Intended to Bridge Gap

Private Vocational Institute Offering Skills and Knowledge to People With Lived Experience to Further Prepare them for Peer Support Roles

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John Jackson, RPN

[LINKS Institute](#), a registered private vocational institution in Manitoba, is proud to announce the launch of its innovative program designed to equip students who have lived experience in mental health or addiction, with the skills needed to excel in Peer Support roles. With a mission to empower individuals and enhance community well-being, the new program is a significant step towards meeting the growing demand for trained professionals in the field of social support.

Peer support has emerged as a vital aspect of community and social service work in Manitoba, providing a unique avenue for individuals to receive guidance, understanding, and empathy from those who have faced similar challenges. Many organizations, such as Shared Health, and a variety of nonprofit and for-profit organizations have started implementing peer support roles. "Peer support refers to the provision of interpersonal assistance to folks in need, by those who have experienced the same need", says Jackson, CEO of LINKS Institute. "It is that lived experience, either for oneself or as a family member of a person living through difficulties, that qualifies a person for a peer support role. This being said, it does not necessarily mean that the person has the required technical knowledge to properly support people in systems. This program is intended to bridge that gap". Recognizing the importance of this role, LINKS Institute has developed a comprehensive curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills, enabling students to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others.

The newly launched program reflects LINKS Institute's commitment to staying at the forefront of education that addresses real-world needs. As society faces ever-evolving challenges with mental health and addictions service delivery, the demand for skilled individuals who can provide

effective peer support has risen substantially. Whether it's assisting individuals with mental health concerns, substance abuse recovery, or navigating life transitions, peer support workers play a vital role in promoting holistic well-being.

"Peer support is a cornerstone of community empowerment, and our institute is excited to contribute to this field by offering a program that equips students with the expertise needed to make a positive difference," says Jackson. "We believe that the power of shared experience can be transformative, and our program aims to harness that power to foster healthier, more resilient communities."

The curriculum of the Peer Support program has been meticulously designed to cover a wide range of essential topics. Students will gain a deep understanding of effective communication techniques, active listening, and the nuances of empathy. They will also delve into mental health awareness, crisis management, and strategies for fostering positive relationships. The program emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations, cultural sensitivity, and self-care in the context of providing peer support.

Furthermore, the program equips students with practical skills such as problem-solving, goal setting, and advocacy. Graduates will emerge ready to guide individuals through challenges, help them set attainable goals, and provide the necessary tools for personal growth and empowerment. The curriculum also emphasizes the importance of self-care for peer support workers, recognizing that a strong foundation of well-being is essential for effectively assisting others. Individuals interested in joining the Peer Support program can find more information on the LINKS Institute website. The application process is now open, and classes are scheduled to begin in February of 2024.

About LINKS Institute:

LINKS Institute is a private vocational institution based in Manitoba, dedicated to providing innovative education that prepares students for meaningful careers in community and social service fields. With a commitment to fostering personal growth, community empowerment, and professional excellence, LINKS Institute continues to shape the next generation of compassionate and skilled professionals.

John Jackson
LINKS Institute



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