

Peer support for diabetes

Peer support is a way for you to connect with people who also face the daily challenges of managing diabetes. Sharing your experiences with other people who have diabetes can help you feel less alone. Read on to find out about peer support and how to access it in your area.



“It’s nice to be able to contact someone who’s exactly the same as you. They give you that little bit of encouragement. You may be having a flat day and you just want to go, ‘Oh, I don’t want to get up for work’, and that someone is saying, ‘No, you can do it’ ... I think it’s great.”

James, 26, person with diabetes

What is peer support?

Peer support is when people living with a chronic condition (like diabetes) give and/or receive support from one another.

Many people who have diabetes have never talked to anyone else with diabetes, even though they may want to. This can feel very isolating.

People with diabetes may access peer support because:

- » family and friends, despite their best efforts, can’t fully understand what it’s like to live with diabetes
- » health professionals may not always have the time to talk about all aspects of living with diabetes.

Peer support is a way for people with diabetes to share their:

- » knowledge and skills
- » insights and experiences
- » thoughts and concerns
- » feelings about living with diabetes.

This can happen in the form of organised face-to-face peer support groups or one-to-one telephone support, casual conversation, or through various technologies such as SMS texts and the internet (eg Facebook, Twitter, email, online forums).

Helpline 1300 136 588

ndss.com.au

What to expect from peer support

Connecting with other people who have diabetes can help in many ways. You may:

- » feel less alone (eg have someone to talk to when diabetes gets you down or who can provide encouragement)
- » learn from others about self-management (eg how to put medical advice into practice, share helpful tips, boost your motivation)
- » be able to share tips about access to health professionals and community resources (eg personal recommendations)
- » have improved health and well-being overall.

What not to expect from peer support

Peer support can lead to many positive experiences but it:

- » does not replace the advice you get from your health professional (eg about treatments or lifestyle). Always consult your health professional before making changes to your diabetes management
- » may not be the right 'fit' for you, as it's not a 'one size fits all' approach. Some people prefer not to talk about their feelings, or would prefer to do so with a health professional
- » is unlikely to give you the answers to all of your problems. Peer support can be a great source of information and advice, but it won't necessarily 'solve' all of your diabetes-related concerns.

If you are unsure about whether to join a peer support group/community, talk with people you trust about your thoughts and feelings. Also, consider talking about this with your diabetes health professional – they can help you work out what kind of support is going to be the most helpful for you.

“Over the years I’ve met a few friends with diabetes. Every now and then we have a chat about how things are going. It’s definitely helpful to have people who can relate to it.”

Lorna, 62, person with diabetes



More information and support

Diabetes Australia & NDSS
www.diabetesaustralia.com.au
www.ndss.com.au
 Helpline 1300 136 588

Diabetes Australia offers a free national NDSS Helpline, through which people with diabetes and their carers can access diabetes information, education programs, peer support groups, and other events.

Contact your state/territory diabetes organisation for more information about peer support near you:

Diabetes NSW/ACT
 ph 1300 136 588
www.diabetesnsw.com.au
www.diabetes-act.com.au

Diabetes Queensland
 ph 1300 136 588
www.diabetesqld.org.au

Diabetes SA
 ph 1300 136 588
www.diabetessa.com.au

Diabetes Tasmania
 ph 1300 136 588
www.diabetestas.org.au

Diabetes Victoria
ph 1300 136 588
www.diabetesvic.org.au

Diabetes WA
ph 1300 136 588
www.diabeteswa.com.au

Healthy Living NT
ph 08 8927 8488
www.healthylivingnt.org.au

Contact your state/territory Aboriginal community controlled health organisation:

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
ph 02 9212 4777
www.ahmrc.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
ph 03 9411 9411
www.vaccho.org.au

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
ph 07 3328 8500
www.qaihc.com.au

Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia
ph 08 9227 1631
www.ahcwa.org.au

Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia
ph 08 8273 7200
www.ahcsa.org.au

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
ph 08 8944 6666
www.amsant.org.au

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
ph 03 6234 0700
tacinc.com.au

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service (ACT)
ph 02 6284 6222
www.winnunga.org.au

For online peer support:

Australian Diabetes Online Community (OzDOC): weekly TweetChat
www.twitter.com/ozdiabetesoc

The community chats online, once a week, using Twitter. Search for @OzDiabetesOC and #OzDOC.

If you have type 1 diabetes, you may also be interested in the following:

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)

For one-on-one peer support:

www.jdrf.org.au/peersupport

For group peer support:

www.jdrf.org.au/type-1-diabetes/support-groups

Email: peersupport@jdrf.org.au

Phone by state/territory:

NSW: 02 9020 6100

VIC: 03 8374 6200

QLD: 07 3046 2700

WA: 08 6444 0700

SA: 08 8490 0100

ACT: 02 6109 4900

You can also ask your diabetes health professional(s) about any peer support programs they may be aware of.

The NDSS and you

The NDSS provides a range of services to help you manage your diabetes. These include our Helpline and website for advice on diabetes management, NDSS products and a range of support programs to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.

Developed in collaboration with The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University.