



SWAN Peer Support Leaders Training Program - Volunteer Role

The Position

The SWAN Information and Peer Support Mentoring Program is open to all SWAN members across Australia who would like to become SWAN Peer Support Leaders and support other SWAN members. The role is a voluntary role and reports directly to SWAN's CEO or a nominated staff member.

Peer Support

Peer Support is based on a relationship between people who have a lived experience in common, where a Peer Facilitator provides emotional and social support to others. This common experience may be relative to their own health or that of a loved one. The empathy, understanding, and acquired skill of the peer facilitator, coupled with their willingness to be open about their own experience, demonstrates their belief that a path for improving one's life can be created. Peer support is distinct from, but complementary to other forms of support or care provided by family and friends, healthcare professionals, and other service providers, such as emotional, social and practical assistance for managing epilepsy and promoting positive health and wellbeing.

Source: The Epilepsy Foundation Peer Support Toolkit

Benefits of Peer Support

- Limit isolation
- Support others on an emotional level
- Assist with coming to terms with the condition
- Build confidence in others and increase their capacity to cope
- Encourage and support others
- Shared knowledge and information with others

About the Role

Peer support is at the crux of SWAN's vision statement, to support and empower families. The role of our peer support leaders will aim to empower families to seek information, knowledge and support so they can be advocates in their community to support their children to reach their full potential. The time commitment to be a peer support leader is a minimum of 12 months.

The Peer Support Leaders Mentoring Training Program

The training program will involve a 10 virtual sessions, two hours per session plus participation in a Mental Health First Aid Course and First Aid Certificate. Program participants will have to make a commitment to attend all sessions. Please note that training sessions may be subject to change but we will do our best to commit to the established program timelines.

SWAN will train peer support leaders in the following areas:

- Peer support
- Event organisation
- Establishing boundaries
- Caring and self-care - burnout
- Counselling – communication and listening
- Communication strategies and skills
- Facilitation skills
- General first aid
- Genetic and genomic testing
- Health and Wellbeing – when to refer on
- Respectful language and inclusive language
- Dealing with difficult people
- NDIS from a SWAN perspective

Key Responsibilities

- Organise face to face and virtual SWAN peer support events for group members in your local area, with the support of SWAN management.
- Check in with group members on a regular basis via email, text, FB messenger or phone.
- Refer your group members to SWAN management if you feel further support is required.
- Support SWAN families through verbal and written communication which is timely, informative and compassionate.
- Share knowledge and lived experience with group members
- Share health and disability support and service information with group members
- Share resources with your group members seeking information (please be mindful of our conflict of interest policy)
- Attend peer support group leaders' monthly support sessions for the purpose of professional development, information and peer support
- Provide relevant and accurate information in relation to healthcare, including hospitals, genomics, education and disability services or refer on if you don't have this first-hand knowledge.
- Assist families with information about the transition stages through different settings; education, hospital and social supports or refer on if you don't have this first-hand knowledge.
- Refer families to SWAN's dedicated resources, workshops, information sessions, events and website resources as well as other community resources.
- Empower SWAN families through advocacy or equip them with the knowledge to advocate for themselves.
- Maintain members' records and protect confidentiality.
- Provide emotional support within the scope of practice, referring families to appropriate professional help if they are in need or in crisis.

Essential key Selection Criteria

- Lived experience of caring for a SWAN child
- Excellent communication skills (both verbal and written), including active listening skills and attention to detail to enhance parent-centred support.
- Good organisation and time management skills
- Knowledge of, or willingness to learn about rare genetic conditions, the experience of being undiagnosed and specific challenges in relation to healthcare, genomic testing and disability services.
- Exemplary interpersonal skills, including the ability to network with SWAN members of diverse ages and backgrounds and collaborate with SWAN staff, the board and volunteers.

Desirable Requirements

- Current First Aid certificate and Mental Health First Aid and/or Suicide Prevention.
- Current Working with Children Check and Police check.

Applications may be made by forwarding a cover letter, CV and responses to the essential key selection criteria to heather@swanaus.org.au by COB Monday, 31 July 2023. Please contact Heather via email for further information.