Experts by Experience

Scottish Recovery Network

Values Framework for Peer Working

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Developed by

The Scottish Recovery Network

In partnership with the

Peer Learning Network

Special thanks to

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Introduction

The Scottish Recovery Network (SRN) was formally launched in 2004 as an initiative designed to promote and support recovery from mental health problems. Our goals are to raise awareness of recovery; encourage empowerment; develop the evidence base and influence policy and practice. Since 2004 interest in the concept of recovery has increased greatly. We understand more about what recovery means to people and are working to raise awareness of the implications of this for the way people with mental health problems are supported.

What is Peer Working?

Peer working is an emerging role within the mental health sector.
Peer workers are individuals with personal experience of mental health problems who are trained and employed to support others. This involves:

- **Developing mutually empowering relationships.**
- **Sharing personal experiences of recovery in a way that inspires hope.**
- **Offering help and support as an equal.**

Peer working is a complement to both informal peer support and services provided by a range of different organisations and agencies.

Peer working is a potentially powerful way to support and develop recovery focused practice. Peer support and recovery focused practice are underpinned by common sets of values that guide and inform their approaches.

Why develop a Values Framework?

SRN offer support to develop and implement peer worker roles through our 'Experts by Experience' guidelines publication. More recently we have also commissioned and worked with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) to develop a national qualification (Professional Development Award) in Mental Health Peer Support.

The Values Framework is part of this work to support and promote peer working in Scotland. We worked with those actively involved in peer working to develop this Values Framework with the aim of:

- **Ensuring the role remains true to the peer support ethos.**
- **Clarifying the role and identity of peer workers.**
- **Creating a basis for the further development of peer worker roles and services.**
- **Improving understanding of peer working.**
- **Complementing the Experts by Experience guidelines and the national SQA award.**

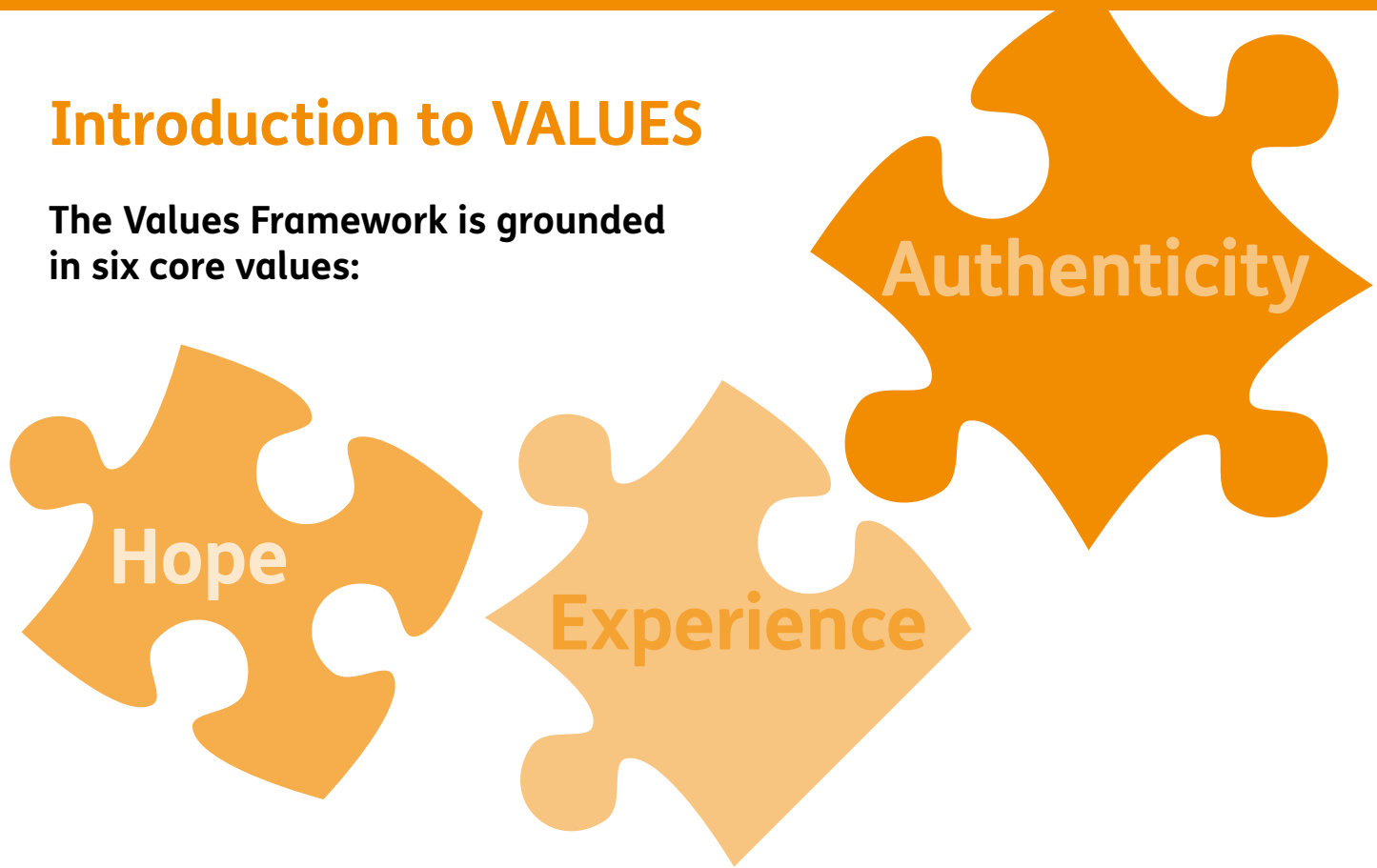
How to use the Values Framework

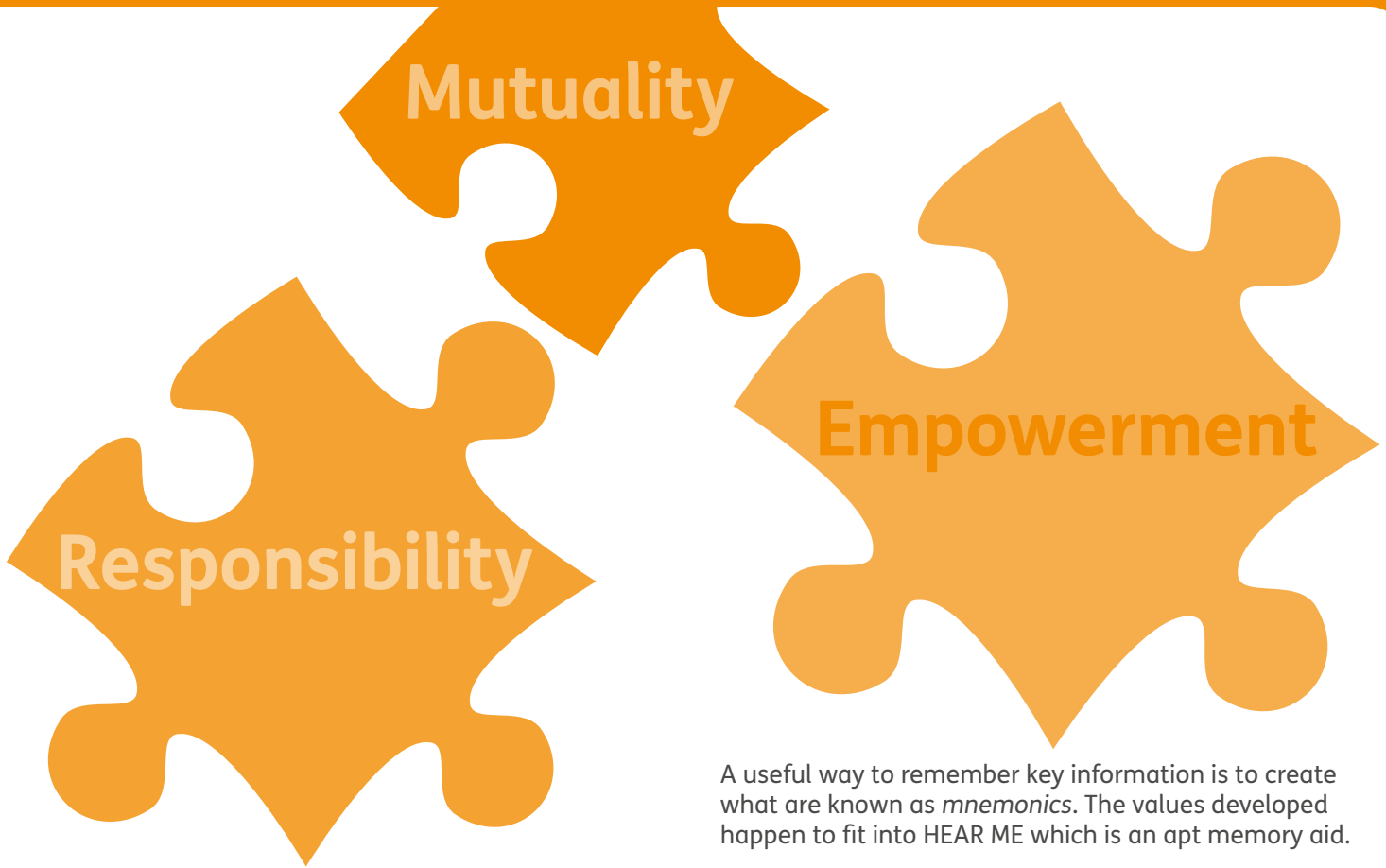
The Values Framework has been developed to increase awareness and understanding of the role. It will inform and guide peer workers, employers and those interested in developing peer working roles.

For more information about peer working go to our website **www.scottishrecovery.net**.

Introduction to VALUES

The Values Framework is grounded in six core values:





A useful way to remember key information is to create what are known as *mnemonics*. The values developed happen to fit into HEAR ME which is an apt memory aid.

Values and Beliefs

Hope

We believe in the reality of recovery for all and that:

- Peer workers are powerful role models and evidence of the reality of recovery.
- We are all unique individuals, with hopes, dreams and aspirations with the potential to be all that we can be.
- The peer relationship offers a unique healing environment and powerful way of promoting hope and optimism.
- It is possible to learn and grow from challenges and setbacks.

We believe recovery is a unique and individual experience and that:

- We are all experts in our own experience.
- There are many roads to recovery and different ways of understanding and interpreting experiences.
- The sharing of experiences can be a powerful catalyst for personal change and growth.
- Peer workers use their lived experience intentionally to encourage and support recovery.

Values and Beliefs

Authenticity

We believe being authentic is about being true to ourselves and that:

- Empathy and compassion are at the heart of the peer relationship.
- Authentic relationships are open, honest and mutual.
- Peer support is about building connections that enable people to trust and to share their wisdom.
- Having compassion for others is grounded in being compassionate towards yourself.

Responsibility

We believe wellness and recovery involves taking responsibility and that:

- Supporting people to make changes is achieved through 'being with' rather than 'doing for'.
- Peer workers have a responsibility to ensure that the values of peer support are nurtured and developed.
- Peer workers should take responsibility for their learning and development.
- Peer workers have a responsibility to challenge stigma and discrimination encountered in their role.

Mutuality

We believe that mutuality is core to peer working and that:

- We are interdependent and all have something to contribute.
- Mutuality is developed through respectfully sharing ideas, learning and experiences.
- Mutuality develops through discussion and negotiation of what is helpful in the relationship.
- Everyone involved in the relationship has a responsibility for making it work.

We believe empowerment means being in the driving seat and that:

- Recovery is the job of each individual and the peer relationship is based on learning together.
- Empowerment happens as we draw on our strengths and abilities both individually and collectively.
- Taking risks, trying new things and moving beyond our comfort zone are essential to personal growth and change.
- Having power and control comes from identifying our own needs, making choices and taking responsibility for finding solutions.

Values into Practice

The values in the framework are demonstrated in practice through the following behaviours

Intentionally sharing experiences and stories of hope and recovery.

Accepting peers where they are at, avoiding judgement and interpretation.

Demonstrating and modelling relationship skills through our attitudes, interactions, behaviours and use of language.

Being alongside and partnering peers – not doing to or for.

Help peers explore and broaden personal identity and worldview.

Encourage responsibility for self care, wellness and recovery.

Take a strengths based approach focusing on hopes, aspirations and self defined goals.

Encourage peers to challenge themselves and to mitigate for potential risks.

Encourage the reframing of setbacks and help identify ways to learn from them.

Encourage peers to make informed choices and seek out relevant information to enable this.

Support peers to explore meaning and purpose in their lives.

Help people build social supports and make community connections.

Work with boundaries that are responsive and flexible being mindful of organisational policies.

Acknowledge and discuss issues relating to power.

Respect rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality.

Respect diversity and have cultural awareness.

Maintaining and building on skills and learning whilst keeping current with emerging knowledge on peer support and recovery.

Be a reflective practitioner and learn from experience.

Use supervision to support and enable you to develop your understanding and practice.

Seek out opportunities to meet with other peer workers to share learning.

Take personal responsibility for your own self development, self care, wellness and recovery.

See and use the community as a resource.

To be a role model and champion recovery.

Ensure the values of peer working are at the centre of all our interactions.

Advocate for peers to make their own decisions in matters affecting their lives.

Be an active member of the team and contribute in a positive and solution focused manner.

Constructively challenge non-recovery focused, stigmatising and discriminatory practices.

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