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Peer Support Within Clubhouse: A Grounded Theory Study

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Background: Peer support has been recognised as an important facilitator of mental health recovery over the last two decades. Positive outcomes of this occupation have been demonstrated within mutual-help and consumer-run groups. However, little is known about the value and beneficial outcomes of peer support within the Clubhouse model.

Aim/Purpose: This study reports on Clubhouse members' experiences of peer support and the outcomes they identify from engaging in this phenomenon.

Methods: Grounded theory guided the study involving 17 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 10 members of a Clubhouse. Constant comparison and open coding were undertaken to identify underlying concepts of peer support within the Clubhouse context.

Results: A conceptual model of peer support was derived from Clubhouse members' experience. Four levels of peer support emerged: Social inclusion and belonging; shared achievement through doing; interdependency; and at the deepest level, intimacy.

Conclusions: Peer support within Clubhouse is a multi-layered construct in terms of the depth and nature of the relationships. This concept of levels or degrees of peer support does not appear within the peer support literature. Clubhouse appears to contribute a unique 'tier' within the layered construct of peer support. This tier is based on the sharing of achievement through working together on shared tasks within the work-ordered day structure of a Clubhouse.

Learning Objectives:

1. Attendees will gain an understanding of the role and value of the currently under-utilised resource that peer support can provide in consumers' recovery according to members within a Clubhouse context.
2. Attendees will consider how they can maximise opportunities for peer support within their own service delivery by fostering aspects of each level of the Clubhouse Model of Peer Support into their programs/services.