

# **Evaluation of PeerTalk Charitable Foundation's peer support groups**

**(Undertaken as an MSc dissertation project  
by **S/N** Themba Dlamini)**

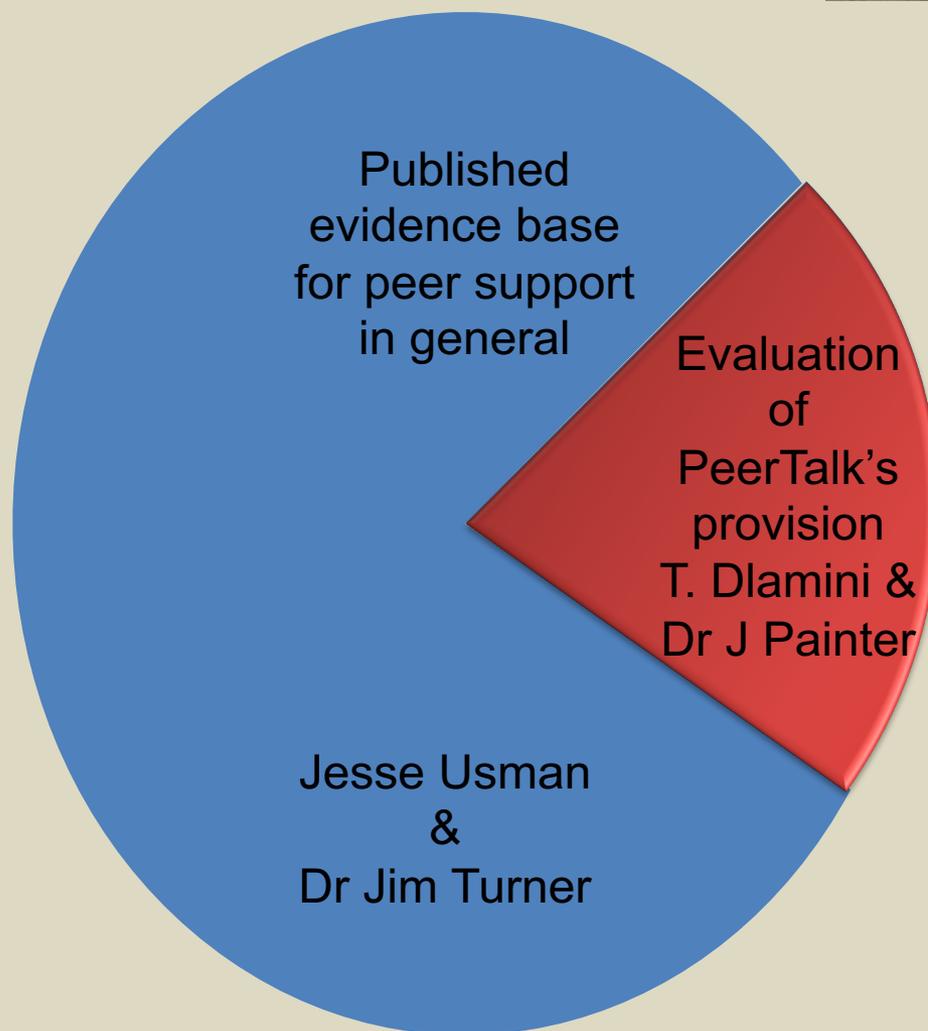
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# Mind the gap

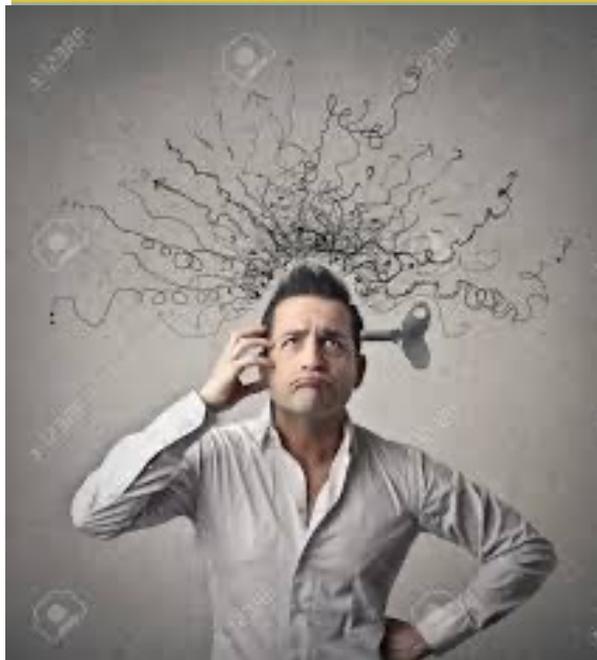


# Getting from **F** to **T**

## **F**ocus group n=8

1. What is **your experience** of the PeerTalk group, and how does it help?
2. Are there any **challenges or barriers** you face or have faced being at the group?
3. How has going to PeerTalk group **changed your life** in any way? In a good way or not so good way?
4. What ways can the organisation **improve** the group sessions?

## Thematic Analysis



## **T**hemes

1. Reciprocity of peer support:
2. The right place to 'lance the boil'
3. Re-building of confidence
4. Service Improvements

# 1) Reciprocity of peer support



*It is that interaction, really, that I find helping other people and telling them about yourself and they help you in turn.*

*By helping other people, you kind of also help yourself as well*

*Sometimes people just need to be listened to.*

**Understanding one another and building relationships.**

*The group just helps me feel not alone, that I am not in this on my own, that there are other people going through what I am going through.*

*It's a win-win for everybody.*

*That there are other people going through what I am going through.*

*It's a team effort, and we all listen to each other, and we all give our views freely*

*It becomes almost a symbiotic thing that is going on; there is not a side; you do not have sort of one side or the other side; it's very much a team effort.*

*It's just nice to get other people's points of view and their coping strategies with depression*

## 2) The right place to 'lance the boil'



*So, being able to go there and lance that boil and squeeze it and get rid of some of the infection every week, I feel it is a quite useful thing to do. It works for me, anyway.*

*Oh, thank God for that. I thought it was only me who felt this way*

*Well, I think sometimes people need-- me included-- we all need help to be able to look at things in a different way.*

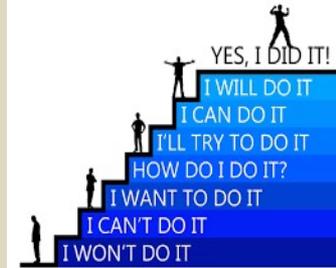
### Relieving the pressure

*I wish I had this sort of group a long time before*

*You can go back in without that pressure because you have managed to just let it out just once a week. That means I still have a wife.*

*It's just nice to get other people's point of views and their coping strategies with depression. Sometimes you can go away and potentially put some of those ideas into practice*

### 3) Re-building of confidence



*It actually gives you the belief to actually make that next step forward*

*It has given me a lot of confidence. I would not normally go into a group, now I go by choice.*

*It gives you a sense of purpose*

*I lost confidence in having a conversation with people outside my family group... I feel much more confident to have a chat with somebody*

**Enhanced sense of worth, purpose and meaning.**

*You work as a group to try and help them, and when you see them growing confidence, it helps your confidence grow as well.*

*That gives you a sense of worth and a sense of value*

*The only problematic thing, is getting that confidence in yourself to go to the meeting*

*It's that high five together, all for one, one for all kind of thing*

*I found once I went to my first meeting and sat around with people who are going through similar things to you, it brings so much more confidence,*

## 4) Service Improvements



*But less is more facilitating.*

*Professionalising the group does not work, so, do not mess it up by changing it because as a principle of getting like-minded people together to talk about common issues, and just talking as peers, literally, it works.  
If it's not broken, do not fix it!*

*It's PeerTalk, and it's about the members of the group*

Peers as facilitators

Improving availability & accessibility

*I know sometimes, particularly in the cold weather, they struggle to get to meetings because of health issues and ice on the paths... but we could have the webcam in the group... then that would give us the best of both worlds*

*So, yes, combine the Zoom type technology with the live meetings as well. I would not want to see the live meetings disappear*

*You really cannot beat face to face meetings.*

*It may also be nice...in whatever location it is ....if we could open that up to known members on Zoom as well.*

# Takeaway message



- A small-scale evaluation of PeerTalk support groups
- **Universally positive experiences** that are perceived to have a **positive impact** on the lives of **people living with depression**
- Participants didn't want big changes to the recipe
- They wanted the menu made easier to find
- They wanted faster delivery