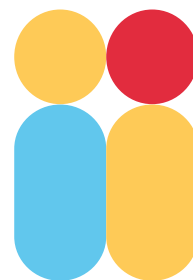


Benefits of Peer Support Programs.



Peer-based approaches benefit all people involved, including the people leading the activities (peer leader) and those accessing activities (peers/young people). The benefits of peer support programs are outlined below.

Short term impacts on individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased social connectedness• Increased self esteem• Increased confidence• Improved social skills• Positive role model for peers• Improved problem-solving skills• Improved help-seeking behaviour• Improved coping skills• Optimism.
Impacts on others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved relationships• Positive influence on networks• Leadership within community• Leadership within program.
Long term outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental wellbeing• Physical wellbeing• Education/employment• Help-seeking• Community engagement.

Peer-based approaches are valuable for young people because they can:

- Be perceived as a credible source of help
- Empower participants to help themselves
- Provide a means of transferring knowledge
- Be a decreased level of threat since they are strengths-based and non-judgmental
- Provide learning opportunities through role-modelling
- Be beneficial to trained peers
- Be more acceptable than mainstream support services to marginalised groups
- Help hard to reach target groups access help
- Provide ongoing contact for isolated groups
- Reframe negative perceptions
- Provide ongoing personal development opportunities
- Be cost-effective.

