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Canada West Health Leaders
CONFERENCE

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#CWHLC2024



Synergies in action: The power of collaboration

Creating Community in the Digital Age: The Super Feelers Club Story

Laurie Edmundson, CHE, MHA

November 14th 2024



CREATING COMMUNITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: THE SUPER FEELERS CLUB STORY

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What fears do you have about
allowing people with mental
health challenges to lead
themselves without your
oversight?



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What fears do you have about allowing people with mental health challenges to lead themselves without your oversight?

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About Me

- **Lifelong** mental health **challenges**
- **Inspired** by the lack of positive role models and peer support
- **Overcoming** the stereotypes
- **Dedicated to leading** with my lived experience **unapologetically**

Our Time Together

01. The Work

02. The Impact

03. Learning From Each Other



The Super Feelers Club

A **virtual safe space** for people with strong emotions and/or borderline personality disorder.

Hold space to **share stories, celebrate successes, seek advice and learn skills.**

Peer support happens when people provide knowledge, experience, emotional, social or practical help to each other through shared experiences.

The Origins

01

Lived **experience**, battles with the system **and lack of hope**

02

Connected to others with lived **experience** and established podcast to **share stories of truth** from around the world

03

Significant lack of connection in people's lives. We realize we could **lead ourselves to change**

04

Established **The Super Feelers Club**, a virtual low barrier peer support group

05

Recognized need for a **strengths based** and broader approach to leading with lived experience and established the **Super Feeler** podcast

The Aims

Podcasting:

- Sharing stories of **hope**
- Amplifying voices of lived experience
- Uncensored stories
- **Validate** listener's and making them feel connected to others like them
- Promote **health literacy**

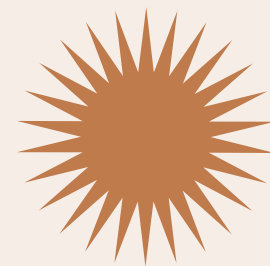
Peer Support:

- Build **connections**
- Provide a **supportive environment**
- **Validate** each other
- Practice life saving **skills** together

Leading with Lived Experience:

- Inspire others
- Improve the health system
- Change the narrative

Why Peer Support?



"If you don't have our diagnosis
you don't understand us.

Not having the acceptance or
the understanding of why we
do what we do, why we feel the
way that we feel, and how
much we wear our emotions
on the outside... it hurts when
no one else understands that."

Research Participant

What we (and others) feared

LACK OF INTEREST

TRIGGERING OTHERS

**ESCALATION OF
CRISIS**

**CHALLENGES
BETWEEN PEERS**

What Participants Experienced

Unique Authenticity



Genuine Care and Connection



Positive Changes in Life



Flexibility



Wins and Successes



Difficulty with Peers



The personal growth and creative outlet was the goal but instead we've had **positive impacts on lives around the world.**

Understanding this work can't be done alone and **requires collaboration** with others. **Formal partnerships would have stood as a barrier** to this work's growth.

Taking responsibility for my needs and **being determined and innovative** despite the personal cost



Connect individuals with lived experience, families, providers and systems together through understanding. **The work is still informal, but many health systems refer to us.**

Shifting perspectives, decreasing stigma, inspiring people with lived experience to work within their systems and showing the system that **we can and do deserve to be actively involved in our own health journeys**

The background features a watercolor-style wash of colors. There are large, irregular patches of light orange and peach, various shades of green (from pale to forest green), and some areas of light blue and purple. The colors are blended and layered, creating a soft, artistic texture. The central text is set against a plain white background that is framed by these colorful washes.

Q&A

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Audience Q&A

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Reflection Questions

What opportunities
exist for lived
experience-led
initiatives in your
organization or
community?



Reflection Questions

When have you seen
lived experience
leadership done well?
What did it look like?



Reflection Questions

How will you support
people with lived
experience to lead
within your
organization or
community?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!



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