



FACT SHEET:

Peer support for diabetes

Connecting with other people who have diabetes is an effective means of accessing peer support. Sharing your experiences with others who face the daily challenges of managing diabetes can help you feel less alone. Read on to find out about peer support and how to access it in your area.

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It's nice to be able to contact someone who's exactly the same as you. They give you that little bit of encouragement. You may be having a flat day and you just want to go, 'Oh, I don't want to get up for work', and that someone is saying, 'No, you can do it' ... I think it's great.”

James, 26, person with diabetes

What is peer support?

Peer support is when people living with a chronic condition (like diabetes) give and/or receive support from one another.

Many people who have diabetes have never talked to anyone else with diabetes, even though they may want to. This can feel very isolating.

People with diabetes may access peer support because:

- Family and friends, despite their best efforts, cannot fully understand what it is like to live with diabetes.
- Health professionals may not always have the time to talk about all aspects of living with diabetes.

Peer support is a way for people with diabetes to share their:

- knowledge and skills
- insights and experiences
- thoughts and concerns
- feelings about living with diabetes.

This can happen in the form of organised, face-to-face peer support groups or one-on-one telephone support; casual conversation;

or through various technologies such as SMS texts and the internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, email or online forums).

What to expect from peer support

Connecting with other people who have diabetes can help in many ways. You may:

- feel less alone (e.g., have someone to talk to or encourage you when diabetes gets you down)
- learn from others about self-management (e.g., how to put medical advice into practice, share helpful tips and boost your motivation levels)
- be able to share tips about access to health professionals and community resources (e.g., personal recommendations)
- improve your overall health and wellbeing.

What not to expect from peer support

Peer support can lead to many positive experiences but it:

- does not replace the advice you get from your health professional (e.g., about treatments or lifestyle). Always talk to your diabetes health professional before making changes to the way you manage your diabetes

- may not be the right fit for you, as it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Some people prefer not to talk about their feelings, or would prefer to do so only with their health professional
- is unlikely to give you the answers to all of your problems. Peer support can be a great source of information and advice, but it will not necessarily 'solve' all your diabetes-related concerns.

If you are unsure about joining a peer support group/community, share your thoughts and feelings with people you trust. Also consider talking about this with your diabetes health professional. They can help you work out what kind of support would be most helpful for you.

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Over the years I've met a few friends with diabetes. Every now and then we have a chat about how things are going. It's definitely helpful to have people who can relate to it.”

Lorna, 62, person with diabetes



Peer support in your area

Ask your diabetes health professional about peer support programs they are aware of. You may also like to contact the following organisations for information about local peer support programs.

Your state/territory diabetes organisation:

Diabetes NSW&ACT

- Go to diabetesaustralia.com.au

Diabetes Queensland

- Go to diabetesaustralia.com.au

Diabetes SA

- Go to diabetessa.com.au

Diabetes Tasmania

- Go to diabetesaustralia.com.au

Diabetes Victoria

- Go to diabetesvic.org.au

Diabetes WA

- Go to diabeteswa.com.au

Healthy Living NT

- Go to healthylivingnt.org.au

Your state/territory Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation:

Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales

- Go to ahmrc.org.au or call **02 9212 4777**.

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

- Go to vaccho.org.au or call **03 9411 9411**.

Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

- Go to qaihc.com.au or call **07 3328 8500**.

Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia

- Go to ahcwa.org.au or call **08 9227 1631**.

Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia

- Go to ahcsa.org.au or call **08 8273 7200**.

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory

- Go to amsant.org.au or call **08 8944 6666**.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

- Go to tacinc.com.au or call **1800 132 260**.

Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health Service (ACT)

- Go to winnunga.org.au or call **02 6284 6222**.

If you have type 1 diabetes, you may also be interested in:

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)

- For peer support, go to jdrf.org.au/living-with-t1d/peer-support-program/ or call **1300 636 126** and select option 3 for peer support.



More information and support

NDSS

- Go to ndss.com.au email info@ndss.com.au or call the **NDSS Helpline 1800 637 700**.

Diabetes Australia

- Go to diabetesaustralia.com.au.

Notes



Top tips

- Peer support is when people living with a chronic condition (like diabetes) give and/or receive support from one another.
- Sharing your experiences with others who face the daily challenges of managing diabetes can help you feel less alone.
- Ask your diabetes health professional about peer support programs they are aware of.
- If you are unsure about joining a peer support group/community, share your thoughts and feelings with people you trust. Also consider talking about this with your diabetes health professional. They can help you work out what kind of support would be most helpful for you.
- Go to the NDSS Adult Peer Support website peersupport.ndss.com.au to learn about peer support, hear from others living with diabetes, or search the directory of online and face-to-face peer support groups across Australia.

The NDSS and you

Whether you have just been diagnosed with diabetes, or have been living with diabetes for a while, the NDSS provides a range of support services, information, and subsidised products to help you manage your diabetes, stay healthy and live well. For access to more resources (including translated versions), or to find out more about support services, go to ndss.com.au or call the **NDSS Helpline 1800 637 700**.

This information is intended as a guide only. It should not replace individual medical advice. If you have any concerns about your health, or further questions, you should contact your health professional.

Developed in collaboration with The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University.