



Alice Coren

Job Title: Founder & Director
Locality: Wigan
Project Title: Comparing Community and Clinical Peer Support



Project Aim

I wanted to look at how community-based peer support could be beneficial for people at risk of poor mental health and health inequalities in Wigan, with a particular focus on women.

What did I do?

I aimed to compare community peer support initiatives with Wigan's Living Well, focusing on benefits for women. I examined Remade Wigan and Community Corner, gathered women's perceptions, and discussed peer support with other organizations. I also reviewed UK-wide examples and insights from Living Well pilots. To deepen my understanding, I completed an ABCD course, participated in a local ABCD network, and am concluding a Train the Trainer Ripple Mapping course.

What did I learn

I have gained insights into the complexities of health and funding systems, recognizing the challenges of implementing simple ideas. Sharing women's stories in the community has proven essential for fostering connections and a relational future. This period allowed you to reflect on diverse operational contexts, despite the shared goal of improving lives. Additionally, I contemplated cultural differences between community-based and NHS-based systems, leading to the development of stories, practice examples, and a clearer understanding of the importance of resourcing community peer support.

What happens next?

This journey has empowered me to confidently engage in discussions with public health and senior leadership representatives, expanding my sphere of influence beyond my workshop. It has reinforced my conviction that a community-driven and asset-based approach is essential for fostering positive change in Wigan. This experience has also strengthened my commitment to creating peer support spaces for women in our community, recognizing that these spaces are not merely beneficial, but essential for their well-being.

Has this changed how you work?

We are organising a learning event to share the stories of how we have developed associational spaces within our communities and the insights gained through peer support. I will present evidence of the impact of our workshop community work through our ripple mapping training and provide oversight of other ripple maps from various community activities. Our established relationships with public health and adult social care enable us to invite services into the community to co-create innovative solutions for Wigan. We aim to collaborate with medical services, statutory bodies, and academics to build a robust evidence base that persuades traditional funders to trust communities to deliver their own support.

To read more about Alice's journey, scan the QR code below



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