



KARAKAN PEER WORKFORCE FRAMEWORK



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Acknowledgement

Karakan respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country across Australia. We recognise their important role within the community and country, and we pay our respects to the Elders of this land past, present and emerging.



This framework was designed and written by members of the Karakan Peer Workforce Project Management Group and consultant, Donna Didlick. Karakan acknowledges the valuable contributions of everyone involved in developing the Karakan Peer Workforce Framework.

Introduction - The Purpose of the Framework

Karakan's Peer Workforce Framework is our commitment to placing lived experience at the heart of everything we do.

It's more than a framework. It's a shared vision for how peer workers will work with people, utilising lived experience expertise, to support better outcomes for our clients.

This framework sets the foundation for how designated lived experience roles are valued, supported, and embedded across Karakan. It captures what good peer work looks like, the principles that guide it, and the culture that helps it thrive.

By integrating designated lived experience roles, we strengthen our recovery-oriented practice and continue building a community where lived experience is recognised as real expertise. Together, we are bringing lived experience to life across Karakan's workforce and culture.

Statement from the CEO

I am proud to see the Karakan community take this vitally important step of embracing and valuing the power of lived experience expertise across our organisation. I feel deeply passionate about ensuring the voices, experiences, and insights that come from those with lived experience is central to how we lead, connect, support our staff, and provide services.

Being guided by lived experience is and will continue to be foundational to how we authentically deliver on our mission and realise our vision of a community where people with mental health needs are included and valued – this includes the value that a peer workforce will bring to the work we do each day.

I am committed to listening, learning, and leading together with lived experience at the heart of what we do. I invite you to join me as we grow together and realise the strength and wisdom that this will bring to our community. You Can. We Can!

Cameron Thayer
CEO - Karakan



Alignment with Karakan's Strategic Direction, Values and Culture

Our Vision

An Australia where people with mental health needs are included, valued and empowered

Our Mission

Helping people with mental health needs build resilience and live life better, together

Resilience: We focus on values and strength and strive to build a life of meaning and purpose.

Connection: We value authentic interactions, meaningful conversations, and the power of collaboration

Inclusion: We seek to build an open, safe, and respectful environment and value diverse perspectives.

Guided by the belief that “You can. We can.” these values shape every part of Karakan’s work — from our services to our relationships and culture.

Why This Matters to Karakan?

Integrating a peer workforce brings these values to life, placing lived experience at the centre of our practice and ensuring support is both authentic and collaborative. It builds capability across Karakan to work in genuine partnership with people who have lived experience, strengthening the bridge between professional expertise and personal insight. By embedding peer work, Karakan continues to grow as an organisation grounded in recovery, inclusion and shared learning.

Why Implement a Peer Workforce?

A peer workforce brings the wisdom of lived experience into every layer of mental health practice - transforming services, relationships and outcomes.



For People Accessing Services

- Connection and trust: People feel understood by someone who has "been there"
- Hope: Seeing recovery in others helps people believe it's possible for themselves
- Better outcomes: Evidence shows improvements in self-defined recovery, confidence, and satisfaction with services



For Staff and Teams

- Culture change: Peers model recovery and compassion, reducing stigma and promoting empathy
- Reflective practice: Working alongside peers encourages more person-centred, trauma-informed care
- Workplace wellbeing: Teams report greater psychological safety and connection when lived experience is visible and valued



For the Organisation

- Quality and accountability: Embedding peers demonstrates a tangible commitment to recovery-oriented, rights-based practice
- Innovation and trust: Peer perspectives keep services relevant, grounded, and responsive to community needs
- Alignment with standards: Peer anticipation supports national expectations for consumer partnership with continuous improvement



For Community

- Reducing stigma: Peer roles show that recovery and contribution are possible for everyone
- Building inclusion: Lived experience representation strengthens public trust and community participation
- Creating change: Each peer role is a ripple, shaping systems to be more humane, hopeful, and inclusive

Preventing Tokenism and Ensuring Meaningful Inclusion

Karakan recognises that inclusion without influence risks tokenism and undermines lived experience leadership. Meaningful inclusion of peer workers requires:

- Early involvement in decision-making processes
- Clear pathways for lived-experience input to shape outcomes
- Feedback loops that demonstrate how peer insight has influenced decisions
- Safe mechanisms for peer workers to name tokenism if it occurs

Peer participation must be resourced, respected and capable of influencing change.

Defining Lived Experience & Peer Work

Karakan acknowledges that there are many definitions and understandings of lived experience and peer work across the mental health sector. At Karakan, we wanted to express our own definition, one that reflects who we are, what we value, and how we work. Our approach is grounded in the belief that people with lived experience hold unique wisdom that transforms individuals, teams, and systems for the better.

Lived Experience and Lived Experience Expertise

Lived experience refers to the personal knowledge gained through directly experiencing:

1. distress, challenges and/or barriers around your mental health needs;
2. personal recovery; and
3. systems that support (or sometimes fail to support) wellbeing;

AND

That these experiences led to redefining and renegotiating your life: finding meaning, rebuilding identity, and reshaping what it means to live well.

Lived experience expertise builds on this — it's when those experiences are intentionally reflected on, translated into insights, and used purposefully and professionally to support others, influence practice, and create change.

This comes from people who have walked the path themselves, turned that experience into collective wisdom and utilise it in their professional practice.

Peer Work and Peer Workers

Peer work is grounded in authenticity, hope, and mutual understanding built on “I’ve been there too” where Peer Workers use their lived experience expertise to walk alongside others, not to fix or rescue, but to hold space for possibility, model recovery, and promote genuine collaboration.

At Karakan, peer work is recognised as both a discipline and a way of being.

A Peer Worker is someone employed specifically because of their lived experience expertise, which is central to their role, identity, and practice. Their insights and understanding are used intentionally to support others and drive system improvements.

Peer Workers and Allies: What’s the Difference?

An ally is someone who may or may not have lived experience of mental health needs but is deeply committed to working with and alongside those who do. Allies recognise and value lived-experience expertise, amplify peer voices, and help create environments where peer work can thrive.

Both Peer Workers and allies play vital roles in Karakan’s culture.

Note: A glossary is included at the end of this framework to outline key terms and concepts commonly used in lived experience and peer work. It provides clear, plain-language definitions to support shared understanding across all readers — whether you are new to peer work or deeply familiar with it. The glossary is designed as a practical reference to help ensure the language we use at Karakan is consistent, respectful and aligned with best practice.

Karakan's Commitments

Karakan is committed to creating a workplace environment that enables designated lived experience roles — such as Peer Workers — to be valued, supported and able to thrive. To uphold this, Karakan has identified five key commitment areas that together, when upheld, will form the foundation for a safe, inclusive and growth-oriented workplace.



Psychologically Safe, Non-Discriminatory and Inclusive Workplace

Karakan will:

- Promote inclusion, belonging and respect for all people, regardless of background or role.
- Maintain an open, non-judgemental communication approach that builds trust and psychological safety.
- Utilise reasonable adjustment, wellness and recovery plans to support all staff to prioritise self-care and mental health.
- Ensure lived experience expertise roles are foundational to the workforce and are integrated into systems and structures.

Karakan will:

- Show visible and consistent support for lived experience and peer work at every level of the organisation.
- Create an environment where stigma, tokenism and discrimination are promptly and constructively challenged.
- Model allyship, recognising and celebrating Peer Workers' professional expertise as a discipline.
- Ensure professional supervision and development opportunities are available for lived experience roles.



Upholding and Cultivating Leadership and Allyship



Valuing and Demonstrating Vulnerability and Authenticity as a Strength

Karakan will:

- Ensure authenticity and vulnerability are recognised as essential to trust and connection.
- Ensure storytelling and sharing lived experience are used purposefully to foster understanding, hope and learning.
- Model openness and humility to promote psychological safety across teams.

Karakan will:

- Contribute ideas and co-create solutions that strengthen services and relationships.
- Ensure reflection and feedback are valued as tools for personal and professional growth.
- Balance accountability with empathy and model reflective practice across teams.
- Ensure challenges and setbacks are viewed as opportunities for learning, growth and building resilience.



Emotionally Intelligent and Growth-Mindset Culture



Implementing System Improvements

Karakan will:

- Ensure Feedback loops such as peer advisory groups, reflective forums and staff surveys capture lived experience insights to inform organisational learning, policies and processes.
- Utilise co-design and continuous feedback mechanisms to ensure lived experience insights drive innovation, ongoing program and system enhancements.
- Ensure annual reflection and learning forums share outcomes, progress and challenges to strengthen transparency and accountability.

These commitments reflect Karakan's ongoing journey to embed lived experience as a valued and essential part of how we lead, learn and work together.

Practice Principles

Karakan's Peer Work Practice Principles describe the heart of how we work. They reflect our shared values and guide how Peer Workers bring lived experience to life.

These principles are ways of being. They remind us that peer work is grounded in hope, humanity, and mutual respect, and that change happens when we lead with empathy, courage, and collaboration. Together, they define what good peer work looks like in practice at Karakan.

Uphold Lived Experience as Expertise



Peer Workers:

- Value and use their lived experience as a form of knowledge and expertise.
- Bring their own expertise and the collective wisdom of the lived experience movement to support others and improve services.
- Are committed to improving their discipline through peer supervision.
- Share their lived experiences thoughtfully and purposefully in ways that build trust and connection, keeping the focus on the person being supported.

Stand Up for Human Rights



Peer Workers:

- Understand how inequality, identity, intersectionality and power difference in systems affect people's choices, healing and wellbeing.
- Stand against coercion and control over others and support each person's right to freedom, dignity, choice, and a good life.
- Lead by example in upholding fairness, equity, and inclusion of all people.
- Stand up for justice and rights at individual, service, and system levels — knowing this takes time and courage.

Be Authentic



Peer Workers:

- Bring their authentic selves to their work while working with care, attentiveness, and empathy
- Are honest about what they can and can't do – they know their boundaries and respect the boundaries of others.
- Are self-aware and committed to learning and growing in their own sense of self and wellbeing.
- Support others to explore and develop their sense of self and wellbeing.

Embrace Mutuality

Peer Workers:

- Build two-way relationships based on shared experience and genuine connection.
- Walk alongside people — being with them to support independence.
- Learn and grow together through mutual understanding and respect.
- Always protect confidentiality and treat personal stories as private and sacred.
- Share experiences purposefully, with consent and care.



Hold Hope

Peer Workers:

- Believe that change and recovery are always possible and their presence, actions, and stories demonstrate this.
- Help others see their own strengths and possibilities and that healing can happen, especially after hardship or when hope is hard to hold onto.
- Offer quiet confidence, not false optimism.



Drive Change

Peer Workers:

- Act as catalysts for positive change in people and systems.
- Challenge stigma, discrimination and power imbalances by promoting understanding and shared power through open, curious and respectful dialogue.
- Encourage reflection, patience and new ways of thinking.
- Work in genuine partnership to co-design and co-produce solutions.



Peer Work Competencies

Competencies are grouped under each Peer Work Practice Principle and include underpinning Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes.

1. Uphold Lived Experience as Expertise



- Peer Workers value and use their lived experience as a form of knowledge and expertise.

- Peer Workers bring their own expertise and the collective wisdom of the lived experience movement to support others and improve services.

- Peer Workers are committed to improving their discipline through peer supervision.

- Peer Workers share their lived experiences thoughtfully and purposefully in ways that build trust and connection, keeping the focus on the person being supported.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **The history, values and purpose of the lived experience movement**, including its role in shaping peer work.
2. **How personal and collective lived experience contribute to practice** and strengthen connection, insight and service improvement.
3. **The difference between personal experience and the experiences of others**, and why reflection on this difference is essential.
4. **How to share lived experience safely, intentionally and purposefully (why, when and how)** within peer work.
5. **The principles of confidentiality, consent and information sharing**, and how these protect relationships and trust.
6. **The role of peer supervision** in developing, sustaining and deepening lived experience expertise.
7. **Trauma-informed practice principles**, including safety, choice, trust, collaboration and empowerment.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Draw on and share lived experience in a thoughtful, purposeful way** that centres the person they are supporting.
2. **Step back from their own story**, recognising differences between personal experience and the experiences of others.
3. **Use reflection** to generate insight, deepen self-awareness and strengthen practice from both individual and collective experience.
4. **Communicate clearly about confidentiality and consent**, ensuring people understand what information will be shared and why.
5. **Maintain safe storytelling practices**, sharing only what supports connection, learning or empowerment.
6. **Participate in regular peer supervision** to expand insight, improve practice and uphold the professional discipline of peer work.
7. **Apply trauma-informed practice** by creating interactions and environments that uphold safety, build trust, recognising trauma responses and triggers and communicating in a trauma-sensitive way.

2. Stand up for Human Rights



- Peer Workers understand how inequality, identity, intersectionality and power difference in systems affect people's choices, healing and wellbeing.

- Peer Workers stand against coercion and control over others and support each person's right to freedom, dignity, choice, and a good life.

- Peer Workers lead by example in upholding fairness, equity, and inclusion of all people

- Peer Workers stand up for justice and rights at individual, service, and system levels — knowing this takes time and courage.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **Professional, legal, ethical and human-rights frameworks**, including equality, inclusion and anti-discrimination principles.
2. **How inequality, identity, intersectionality and power influence** people's choices, wellbeing and participation, including how social, emotional, spiritual and cultural factors shape safety, belonging and healing.
3. **The social and systemic contexts that enable or restrict rights, dignity and inclusion, and how environments that support cultural safety, emotional safety, and respect for spiritual beliefs contribute to people feeling safe, valued and empowered.**
4. **The principles of citizenship, self-determination and meaningful contribution**, and why these are central to recovery and human rights.
5. **The role of power and coercion in services and systems**, and the importance of resisting control and promoting autonomy.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Support and encourage people to make their own informed choices**, respecting autonomy and self-determination.
2. **Promote fairness, inclusion and equity** in everyday interactions and relationships.
3. **Use advocacy skills respectfully and effectively** to uphold people's rights, dignity and freedom.
4. **Challenge stigma, discrimination and inequity with courage and compassion**, at individual and system levels.
5. **Encourage and strengthen self-advocacy**, helping people build confidence in asserting their rights.
6. **Model human-rights-aligned behaviour**, demonstrating respect, dignity and justice in all interactions.

3. Be Authentic



- Peer Workers bring their authentic selves to their work while working with care, attentiveness, and empathy.

- Peer Workers are honest about what they can and can't do – they know their boundaries and respect the boundaries of others.

- Peer Workers are self-aware and committed to learning and growing in their own sense of self and wellbeing.

- Peer Workers support others to explore and develop their sense of self and wellbeing.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **The role of authenticity** in building trust, connection and psychological safety.
2. **The importance of self-awareness**, including how personal experiences, emotions and triggers can influence interactions.
3. **Healthy boundaries** in peer work - what they are, why they matter and how they protect both people in the relationship.
4. **The relationship between authenticity, wellbeing and reflective practice**, including how growth and self-care support sustainable practice.
5. **How identity, values and lived experience shape personal meaning**, and how this influences connection with others.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Show up with genuine presence**, empathy and honesty while maintaining professionalism.
2. **Communicate transparently** about what they can and cannot offer, and seek support when needed.
3. **Use reflective practice** to recognise their emotional state, stay grounded and adjust their approach when required.
4. **Maintain healthy boundaries**, respecting their own limits and the limits of others.
5. **Support others to explore their identity, strengths and wellbeing** through curiosity, validation and shared reflection.
6. **Model self-awareness and self-care**, demonstrating authenticity without over-disclosure or self-detriment.

4. Embrace Mutuality



- Peer Workers build two-way relationships based on shared experience and genuine connection.

- Peer Workers walk alongside people — being with them to support independence

- Peer Workers learn and grow together through mutual understanding and respect.

- Peer Workers always protect confidentiality and treat personal stories as private and sacred.

- Peer Workers share experiences purposefully, with consent and care.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **The principles of mutuality, shared power and reciprocity**, and how these shape peer work.
2. **Dignity of risk**, including why shared decision-making and personal agency are essential to growth and recovery.
3. **How power is redistributed** in peer relationships, and the importance of walking beside people rather than leading or directing.
4. **Safe storytelling and shared learning principles**, including when, why and how to share lived experience purposefully.
5. **Confidentiality, informed consent and privacy principles**, and how they underpin safety and trust in mutual relationships.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Develop and maintain mutual, two-way relationships** grounded in respect, connection and shared experience.
2. **Walk alongside people**, supporting growth and learning through shared understanding to build independence.
3. **Collaborate and reflect together**, fostering mutual insight, shared problem-solving and joint meaning-making.
4. **Use safe, intentional disclosure**, sharing experiences only when it supports connection, learning or empowerment.
5. **Maintain confidentiality and protect personal stories**, treating them with care, consent and respect.
6. **Explain, check and obtain informed consent** in a transparent, respectful and accessible way.

5. Hold Hope



- Peer Workers believe that change and recovery are always possible and their presence, actions, and stories demonstrate this.

- Peer Workers help others see their own strengths and possibilities and that healing can happen, especially after hardship or when hope is hard to hold onto.

- Peer Workers offer quiet confidence, not false optimism.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **That recovery is not linear**, and each person's journey, pace and pathway are unique.
2. **How hope supports healing**, including the emotional, psychological and relational impact of believing that change is possible.
3. **The difference between realistic optimism and false reassurance**, and why authenticity matters.
4. **Strengths-based and recovery-oriented principles**, including how language shapes identity and possibility.
5. **How their own presence, stories and behaviour influence hope**, both positively and unintentionally.
6. **Recovery-oriented and person-centred approaches**, and how these support autonomy and wellbeing.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Convey genuine, realistic optimism**, demonstrating belief in people's strengths, potential and capacity for change.
2. **Maintain a calm, steady and supportive presence**, especially when hope feels fragile or distress is high.
3. **Use strengths-based and recovery-oriented language**, reinforcing capability, agency and possibility.
4. **Help people recognise their own strengths, resilience and achievements**, even in difficult circumstances.
5. **Model persistence, patience and confidence**, showing through their actions that recovery is possible.
6. **Use self-awareness to communicate hope responsibly**, ensuring expressions of hope remain authentic, respectful and grounded in the person's reality.

6. Drive Change



- Peer Workers act as catalysts for positive change in people and systems.

- Peer Workers challenge stigma, discrimination and power imbalances by promoting understanding and shared power through open, curious and respectful dialogue.

- Peer Workers encourage reflection, patience and new ways of thinking.

- Peer Workers work in genuine partnership to co-design and co-produce solutions.

Knowledge

Peer Workers **understand**:

1. **How positive change occurs** at individual, service and system levels, and the role peer workers play as catalysts for that change.
2. **Advocacy—when, where and why it is needed**, and the contexts, relationships and timing that shape effective advocacy.
3. **Power dynamics and shared power principles**, including how inclusion and collaboration disrupt imbalance.
4. **How stigma, discrimination and structural inequity** affect people's wellbeing and participation.
5. **The value of co-design and co-production**, and how shared decision-making strengthens solutions and relationships.

Skills

Peer Workers are **able to**:

1. **Advocate respectfully and effectively**, using influence and partnership rather than activism or coercion.
2. **Challenge stigma, discrimination and power imbalances** with courage, curiosity and compassion.
3. **Build trusting relationships** that enable shared power, inclusion and collaborative problem-solving.
4. **Use emotional intelligence and clear communication** to influence outcomes and support positive change.
5. **Encourage reflection and new ways of thinking**, helping people see possibilities and alternative approaches.
6. **Engage in co-design and co-production**, working side by side with people and teams to create meaningful, sustainable solutions.
7. **Seek and integrate diverse perspectives**, using solution-focused dialogue to bring people together and strengthen understanding.

Attitudes



Skilled Peer Workers display the following attitudes:

Approach all people with warmth, acceptance, patience and genuine respect; treat personal stories with care and dignity.

Keep an open heart and mind; welcome diverse viewpoints; embrace reflection and learning as ongoing parts of the work; remain curious about others' experiences and perspectives; honour individual choices and experiences without judgement.

Show up as genuine, grounded and honest; maintain self-awareness of personal limits, emotions and triggers; value transparency and integrity in relationships; value wellbeing for self and others through sustainable ways of working.

Act with humility and consistency; honour confidentiality and consent; build trust through reliability and ethical behaviour; respect boundaries—both their own and others'.

Hold a deep belief in the possibility of change and recovery; convey calm confidence without pressure or false optimism; see and value people's strengths, even in difficult times.

Value shared power, shared learning and genuine two-way connection; approach relationships as partnerships; welcome diversity and strive for inclusion in all interactions.

Stand up for fairness, dignity and human rights; are willing to challenge stigma, discrimination and inequity; approach advocacy with respect, courage and compassion.

Glossary

A

Activism

Refers to actions taken to create social, political or systemic change, often by challenging injustice and raising awareness.

Advocacy

Supporting someone to have their voice heard, rights upheld, and needs recognised in services and systems. May involve speaking with or on behalf of a person or enabling self-advocacy.

Ally / Allyship

A person who may or may not have lived experience but actively supports, values and amplifies lived-experience expertise, and helps create environments where peer work can thrive.

Authenticity

Showing up as genuine, real and grounded, bringing one's true self into relationships while remaining professional.

C

Citizenship

Citizenship in mental health refers to a person's right to belong, participate and be included in community life, with access to the same opportunities, resources, roles and responsibilities as any other member of society.

Co-design / Co-production

Working in equal partnership with people with lived experience to design, deliver or evaluate services, ensuring their insights drive decisions and outcomes.

Coercion

Refers to any action or influence that pressures, forces or limits a person's ability to make free and informed choices about their own mental health, treatment or life decisions.

Confidentiality

The ethical and legal obligation to keep personal information private unless consent is provided or there is serious risk of harm.

Connection

A sense of mutual understanding, trust and relational closeness built through authentic engagement. A core Karakan value.

Cultural Safety

An environment where a person feels respected, safe, and free from racism, stereotyping or judgement, and where their cultural identity, values and practices are acknowledged and upheld. **Source:** Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) cultural safety definition.

D

Dignity of Risk

The right for individuals to make their own choices, including those involving risk, to support growth, autonomy and recovery.

Discrimination

Unfair or unequal treatment based on personal characteristics such as mental health, disability, culture, identity or background. **Source:** Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld).

E

Emotional Intelligence

Is the ability to notice, understand and regulate your own emotional responses, while tuning into and responding respectfully to the emotions and experiences of others in ways that build trust, safety and connection.

Empowerment

Supporting people to recognise their strengths, make informed decisions and take control of their own personal recovery and life direction.

Ethical Practice

Working in ways that uphold trust, safety, boundaries, confidentiality and professional integrity.

H

Human-Rights-Based Practice

Approaches that ensure people's rights to dignity, autonomy, equality, safety and inclusion are upheld in all interactions and systems.

Hope / Holding Hope

Communicating a grounded belief in a person's strengths, potential and capacity for change, without false optimism and especially when the person isn't feeling a sense of hope for themselves.

I

Inclusion

Actively ensuring all people feel welcomed, valued, respected and able to participate fully. A core Karakan value.

Informed Consent

Ensuring a person understands what information will be shared, how, why and with whom, and freely agrees to it.

Intersectionality

The way different aspects of identity (such as race, gender, disability, culture and socioeconomic status) interact to shape experiences of inequality, power and privilege.

Source: Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory.

L

Lived Experience

Personal knowledge gained through directly experiencing mental health needs, recovery, and the systems surrounding them, and the process of redefining life, identity and wellbeing through these experiences.

Lived Experience Expertise

When lived experience is intentionally reflected on and used purposefully to support others, influence practice and contribute to system change.

Lived Experience Leadership

Influencing culture, systems and practice by drawing on lived experience, modelling recovery, and creating environments where lived experience is valued.

M

Mental Health Needs

At Karakan we often use the term mental health needs as a non-stigmatising approach to terminology such as mental health challenges, mental health conditions or mental ill-health.

Mutuality

A two-way partnership where both people learn, grow, and contribute, centred on shared experience, equality and respect.

P

Peer Work

A discipline and way of being where people with lived experience use their expertise to support others, build hope, enhance connection, and influence systems through shared understanding and mutuality.

Peer Worker

A worker employed specifically because of their lived experience expertise, which is central to their role, identity and practice in the workplace.

Peer Supervision

A reflective, growth-focused professional supervision process led by trained lived experience practitioners to deepen insight, strengthen practice and uphold discipline standards.

Psychological Safety

A workplace environment where people feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, disclose experiences, and raise concerns without fear of judgement or harm.

Power Dynamics / Shared Power

How authority, influence and decision-making operate in relationships and systems, and the intentional redistribution of power to promote equity and autonomy.

R

Reciprocity

Refers to the give-and-take in peer work where learning, insight and support flow both ways, recognising that each person brings strengths, experiences and knowledge that contribute to the partnership.

Recovery / Recovery-Oriented Practice

Approaches that emphasise strengths, autonomy, connection, hope and the person's own definition of a meaningful life, acknowledging that recovery is non-linear and unique.

Source: National Framework for Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Services (NMHCCF).

Reflective Practice

The intentional process of examining one's thoughts, emotions, actions and assumptions to grow self-awareness and improve practice.

Resilience

The ability to adapt, recover and grow through challenges, supported by connection, strengths and supportive environments. A core Karakan value.

S

Self-Determination

A person's right to make their own decisions and direct their own life, supported by information, respect and autonomy.

Shared Decision-Making

A collaborative process where workers and people receiving support make decisions together, based on mutual respect and shared power.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

A holistic understanding of wellbeing that includes mental, emotional, cultural, spiritual, and community connection, particularly significant in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. **Source:** Australian Indigenous SEWB Framework.

Spirituality / Faith

Beliefs, practices or values related to meaning, identity, connection or transcendence that may play a role in healing, hope or cultural belonging.

Stigma

Negative attitudes, assumptions or stereotypes about people with mental health challenges, which contribute to discrimination and exclusion.

Structural Inequity

Refers to the ways institutions and policies systematically advantage some groups while disadvantaging others, resulting in unequal access to power, resources, opportunities and wellbeing.

T

Trauma-Informed Practice

Approaches that prioritise safety, choice, trust, collaboration and empowerment, and recognise the impacts of trauma on behaviour, emotions and relationships.

Trust / Trustworthiness

Reliability, honesty, and consistency in words and actions that create emotional safety and strengthen relationships.

W

Walk alongside

Describes a way of supporting people that avoids power-over dynamics, centres autonomy and choice, and offers connection, presence and solidarity rather than instruction or control.