

Peer counselling: a comforting alternative

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In September of 1997, I was fortunate enough to be chosen as one of 16 health care workers, and one of five HSA members, to be trained by the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Agency to deliver peer counselling services to employees who have been displaced, threatened with future displacement or affected by changing skill requirements.

The peer counselling service gives employees the opportunity to discuss their work situation, training/educational needs and employment goals in an attentive and respectful environment. The service has two key objectives. Firstly, it provides one-on-one counselling assistance, which includes a review of the HLAA job options such as job placement, training, early retirement, severance and job sharing. Secondly, it provides referrals to other career development programs such as post-secondary educational institutions, Human Resources Development Canada and community development agencies or services.

The peer counselling service is currently being piloted in six regions: Capital Health, Vancouver / Richmond, South Fraser, Fraser Valley, Simon Fraser and Thompson. If you are interested in learning more about peer counselling or feel that there is a need to bring this service into your facility, please contact the HSA representative on your Health Reform/Labour Adjustment Committee. Members working outside the pilot regions should contact HLAA directly to express interest in receiving the peer counselling service in their facility.

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