Peer Support in Mental Health:
A Selected Bibliography of
Research Studies

Compiled by: Doors to Wellbeing
The Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery
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Temple University Collaboration on Community Inclusion

Introduction

Peer support has become an increasingly recognized and valued component of mental health care. Rooted in shared lived experience, peer support offers individuals the opportunity to connect with others who understand their challenges, fostering hope, empowerment, and recovery. Research has shown that peer-led interventions can improve self-esteem, reduce stigma, enhance social inclusion, and support overall well-being, making them a crucial complement to traditional mental health services.

This bibliography compiles key research studies between the years of 1990 - 2025 on peer support in mental health, highlighting the diverse populations, settings, and outcomes explored in the literature. To make the research more accessible and easier to navigate, the studies are organized into thematic categories. These categories reflect the populations served, the types of peer support interventions, and key conceptual and outcome areas. The themes included in this bibliography are listed in the Table of Contents on the following pages.

How to Access Information

Readers who would like more information about individual studies are encouraged to explore the original sources. Most citations can be copied and pasted into search tools such as Google Scholar or PubMed, where abstracts—and sometimes full articles—are available. Reading the abstract provides a quick overview of each study's purpose, methods, and key findings.

Finding Research When Articles Are Not Free

While most of these are free to access, some research studies may require a fee. While this can limit availability for some readers, there are several low-cost or no-cost ways to explore this research. The options below outline strategies for finding abstracts or accessing articles through publicly available tools and resources.

Request the Article Directly From the Author

Authors are usually allowed to share their own work privately.

<u>Steps</u>

- Find the corresponding author (They is often listed in the article or on the journal webpage.)
- Locate their email This is often available on a University profile, lab website, or LinkedIn/Google Scholar.
- Send a short, polite email asking for a copy.

<u>Example:</u>

"Hello Dr. X, I'm interested in your article on [topic]. I don't have access through an institution and was wondering if you might be willing to share a copy for personal use. Thank you for your time."

<u>Tips</u>

- This is a common request. Many researchers expect it and are often happy to help.
- Letting them know why you're interested can be helpful, but it's not required.

Ask a Colleague or Professional Network

If you're part of a professional, advocacy, or community network, someone you know may already have access.

<u>Steps</u>

- Reach out to colleagues, students, clinicians, or researchers who may be connected to a university or organization.
- Share the article title or citation so it's easy for them to look it up.

Sharing individual articles for personal research use is typically allowed.

Visit a University or Large Public Library

Some libraries offer in-person access to research databases, even if you're not a student or staff member.

Steps

- Look for a nearby university library or large public library.
  - You can do think by searching online for: "[City name] public library research databases"
  - Call the reference desk and ask: Do you offer on-site access to academic or research journals?"
- Check their website or call to ask about visitor access.
- Use a library computer to view and download articles.

Tips

- Printing may cost a small fee.
- Not all databases will be available, but many major journals can be accessed this way.

Search for Author-Archived Versions (Legal Preprints or Postprints)

Many authors deposit versions of their papers in repositories.

Steps

- Search the article title in Google Scholar
- Look for links on the right side labeled: "[PDF]" or "All versions"
- Check institutional repositories

    Examples:

    - University repositories
    - PubMed Central (for some health-related articles)
- Download the available version

    This may be:

    - A preprint (before peer review)
    - A postprint (peer-reviewed but not typeset)

Tips

- Content is usually substantively identical to the published version.
- Licensing varies, but these versions are legal to access.

Table of Contents

Addressing Stigma & Self-Esteem

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