Mutual Empowerment through Peer Supporter Program in a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Unit
Chui KW
(1) Ward D301, Castle Peak Hospital, (2) D302, Castle Peak Hospital, (3) EXITERS, Castle Peak Hospital

Keywords:
Peer supporter

Introduction
Empowerment in care setting can be perceived as a process providing opportunities and information for people to gain control over their lives. In Rehabilitation Team of Castle Peak Hospital, half-way house (HWH) was considered to be one of the options for discharge of many patients. Ex-patients who were successfully integrated into the community through their placement in HWH were invited to return to our team to become Peer Supporters to provide information on the environment of HWH, to share their challenges and how they confronted them with our existing in-patients.

Objectives
a. To empower service users in the hospital to manage their lives upon discharge via understanding of HWH environment, role modelling with peer supporters and facilitation of personal choice and responsibility taking. b. To empower the peer supporters via their presentation and sharing of personal recovery journey so they gained self-confidence, experienced the joy for being able to help others to be able to freely express themselves.

Methodology
Patients discharged to HWH from Rehabilitation Team were invited to be the Peer Supporters and attended the community meetings of the three rehabilitation wards. They provided information about the environment, rules and regulations, routines and expectations of HWH. Moreover, they shared their experience in their recovery journey, such as the challenges they faced upon discharge, how they confronted them and how they were able to have their new lives in the community. Altogether, 12 sessions were run from Jan 2014 to Dec 2014. There were 142 attendances to the program. After the program, all the participants completed a quantitative evaluation questionnaire and the peer supporters completed a qualitative evaluation questionnaire.
Result
Sixty-seven percent of the participants had a score more than 7/10 in their confidence in coping with the future or life upon discharge and 70% of them had a score more than 7/10 in their understanding of the environment or situation after discharge. Sixty-nine percent of the participants had improvement in their confidence in coping with the future or life upon discharge and 71% had improvement in their understanding of the environment or situation after discharge. For the Peer Supporters, their feedback on the programs was positive. All of them believed the program was significant and useful. Not only did they feel satisfied about being able to share their recovery journey with others, they felt it was a mutually empowering process as they could experience joy from being able to help others, able to practice talking freely in front of a group and boosting their self-confidence.