





# LIVED EXPERIENCE @ WORK: MANY PATHWAYS, MANY OBSTACLES, MANY REWARDS

Peers\* told us about their employment journeys why they started, what keeps them going, and how they see the future. They highlighted some ups and downs along the way.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Life before Peer work is happening... ...and then, someone "is ready to go back to work"



- Unstable housing
- Health crises

LIVING THE EXPERIENCE

- Trauma
- Addiction Loss



- Relationships
- Recovery
- Personal growth
  - Diverse jobs Education



There are different ways people find out about Peer jobs...

...but finding out is often by word of mouth or chance.

# TELLING THE EXPERIENCE



a while someone will pick up a mop and



• Language barriers Rejection



"I was invited to share my story"



Working on key competencies is essential.

> "Training built my selfesteem and self-confidence"

A traditional recruitment process...

...and, sometimes, Peers just start: "Once in help us out. It feels really good for people to help us out."

## APPLYING THE EXPERIENCE



WHAT'S HAPPENING · Claw-back of other Skilled emotional labour

> Compensation barriers

- income supports No benefits
- No job security No mental health supports
- Poor pay

"Had to put boundaries in place... I would have to pace myself".

"[Clients] can con you pretty good, gotta be pretty alert."



- Sense of fulfillment • Testing of self
- Part of a great team
- Doing something important
- Opportunity to learn



Peers grow-in-place, move away from Peer work or move on within social services, and direct leadership really makes a difference.

Showing they care: "It's 2 seconds out of the supervisor's day, but it shows they give a \$#!+"

# ADDING TO THE EXPERIENCE



"I always end up where I'm supposed to be"

"I don't know a whole lot about what else is out there"

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

Some Peers are frustrated by hitting an unjustifiable career ceiling and lack of further opportunities, while others have found the work that's perfect for them.

### A FEW THINGS ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO NOW...

Recognize Peer contributions

Revisit job titles and compensation

Support mental health and wellness

Challenge assumptions about Peers

