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Type of Presentation: Workshop

Self-disclosure: Are boundaries barriers to connecting with people who experience psychosis?

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Learning Goal:

To encourage participants to:

- reflect on how and when they self-disclose and for what reasons
- explore how disclosure can impact others' perceptions
- examine the impact of self-disclosure on mental health professionals and service users
- consider how self-disclosure (or lack of) can influence the connection with people who experience psychosis

Abstract Text:

When supporting people experiencing psychosis, how can implicit and explicit self-disclosure impact the relationship, both as carers and professionals?

We disclose information about ourselves and our lives every day. Sometimes intentionally, other times unavoidably and occasionally accidentally. While we can choose not to declare our relationship status, wearing a ring immediately holds an assumption. Though a woman may not want to tell people she is pregnant, there will come a point where it is hard to hide.

We cannot escape self-disclosure, but how can we do it better? How do we decide when, how or whether to disclose? And can our decisions about self-disclosure help break down barriers and improve relationships with people who experience psychosis?

In this workshop we will consider different types of self-disclosure and discuss what makes self-disclosure positive or negative. Participants will consider how new approaches to self-disclosure might improve personal and professional relationships with people who experience psychosis.

Particular attention will be given to the topic of self-disclosure of lived experience of mental distress by people with psychosis, their supporters, and professionals. Lived experience of mental ill health is common in the mental health workforce and with an increasing number of peer support workers employed in mental health services, the traditional professional/patient roles seem less discrete.

We will consider whether a professional with lived experience can or should leave it at the door and whether this approach perpetuates stigma. How can professionals with lived experience expect people living with psychosis to open up when they are too afraid to "come out" at work?

Finally, participants will think about how we can build bridges by creating an environment that makes people feel able to disclose their experiences of psychosis.

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**