

ASSIST introduces Peer Support Program

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ASSIST took a big step in November 2010 with the launch of a peer support program for Alberta lawyers. After years of discussion and deliberation, the program launched with training sessions in Calgary and Edmonton for approximately twenty volunteer lawyers willing to offer support to fellow lawyers.

At the training sessions, peer support volunteers heard from other lawyers who had been through difficult times and who had received wonderful support from family and friends. They listened to experts talk about the qualities of a good peer support volunteer and the dynamics of a positive peer support relationship. They learned that peer support is confidential, stress free and non-judgmental, and that a peer support volunteer does not offer medical, legal or financial advice. A peer support volunteer may refer a participant to appropriate professionals when necessary. An effective peer support volunteer is a good listener and a source of strength and hope to a fellow lawyer.

We are encouraged by the commitment and the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the volunteers

who participated in the inaugural training sessions. Our peer support volunteers are committed to being there when needed by a fellow lawyer. We welcome volunteers and participants from all walks of legal life into the peer support program.

Peer support will not replace, but is a complement to, ASSIST's existing confidential professional counseling service. Peer support offers Alberta lawyers another support to get help by talking to another lawyer who has been there and who is willing to listen.

If you are interested in peer support training or if you think you might benefit from non-judgmental, confidential discussions with one of ASSIST's peer supporter volunteers, please call ASSIST's Executive Director, Marian De Souza, at 403-537-5508 or our Peer Support Manager, Susan Dumont at 403-700-8853.

Marian and Susan are willing to listen.