

Give Us Peer Support Groups!

Proposer: Thai Braddick (Non-Portfolio Officer)

Seconder: Āliyah Rawat (Womanist Society)

Summary: This motion mandates the Student Officer Committee to begin the preparation to set up facilitated Peer Support Groups (PSGs) for students. The PSGs are for every student to access. During summative season (November through December and May through June) there will be more frequent PSGs.

Union notes:

1. As of this writing there as been four student deaths in the last ten months. ⁸
2. Peer support groups have been running for BAME students and have been attended and in many cases successful.
3. Peer support groups have been done previously by other Students' Unions. ⁹
4. It's widely documented that "peer-run self-help groups yield improvement in psychiatric symptoms resulting in decreased hospitalisation, larger social support networks and enhanced self-esteem and social functioning." ¹⁰
5. The local mental health trust (Norfolk and Suffolk) has been in a crisis "for at least five years and was rated 'inadequate' by inspectors in November (2018)". ¹¹

Union believes:

1. We should support our members and be a virulent campaigning organisation to allow better access to mental health support.
2. Whilst campaigning for better services for our members, we must support them as best we are able.
3. Whilst not a panacea, PSGs will be one of many things that can support our members whilst campaigning for better mental health provision in the coming years.
4. There is a mental health crisis on campus, and that it was caused not just by executive mismanagement from UEA, but also the ongoing failure of local mental health trust to adequately support students and the local community.

Union resolves:

1. To create peer support groups for students, based off of buddy(su) and the BAME Safe Space scheme.

- a. That these peer support groups for students will be available fortnightly, and weekly during summative season.
 - b. That they will be facilitated by trained mental health/peer support group facilitators.
 - c. That the BAME Safe Space scheme will be partially used as a model from which to create these Peer Support Groups but will remain extant and separate to guarantee a space for BAME students.
2. To consult with charities like *Rethink*, *Time to Change*, or *Mind* to create the peer support groups.
3. To create the first peer support groups and have them running in time for next year's intake of first years.
4. To advertise the peer support groups in first year welcome boxes, and to work with the university to put a schedule of peer support groups in first year accommodation on kitchen noticeboards.
5. To educate accommodation wardens on the peer support group scheme so they can educate students in accommodation.
6. To campaign for better mental health provision from UEA and the Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust.
7. To formally acknowledge that the services students are being provided are not enough and that more must be done.
8. To hold open and transparent consultations with students over the next academic year at Student Transformation Weekend, Democracy Days and EDGE Conference to have their input on what they feel needs to be done regarding mental health at UEA.