

"What About Peer Support?"
Panel Discussion (Moderator: Ailgif Resident)
Mental Health Symposium 2022
Friday, May 13

[2022/05/13 09:59] Carolyn Carillon: Hello everyone.

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Transcriptionists will fill in any gaps and support the Question & Answer section at the end.

A little explanation about this service.

Voice-to-text transcriptionists provide a translation of the key ideas discussed, NOT a word for word transcription.

Voice-to-text services provide an in-the-moment snapshot of ideas and concepts, so that those who are unable to hear or to understand the audio program are able to participate in real-time.

You will see the transcription in local chat.

Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.

The transcriptionists are:

Elektra Panthar

Carolyn Carillon

The speakers will be identified by initials as they speak.

The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers:

AR: Ailgif Resident (Moderator)

NM: Namaara MacMoragh

GS: Golda Stein

SSG: Shyla the Super Gecko

AI: Anya Ibor

KB: Kelyren Benoir

DB: Dorie Bernstein

[2022/05/13 09:59] Dorie Bernstein: Golda Stein wasn't able to be here today

[2022/05/13 10:00] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Good morning, everyone My name is Ailgif. I am a volunteer with Virtual Ability in Second Life. During this panel discussion, panel members will describe their experiences with peer support, in RL and SL. To begin, I would like to welcome our panelists to everyone to the Mental Health Symposium. I would like to go down the row to begin our panel discussion, beginning with Kely.

[2022/05/13 10:01] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): 1. Will you please introduce yourself and tell us why peer support is important to you?

[2022/05/13 10:02] Elektra Panthar: KB: hi everyone I'm a 53 [year old] stroke survivor of 25 years, it's important for me know that I'm not alone

It does my heart good when I can help other people overcome those feelings

[2022/05/13 10:02] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Kely

1. [Dorie] Will you please introduce yourself and tell us why peer support is important to you?

[2022/05/13 10:02] Dorie Bernstein: My name is Dorie Bernstein, a 49-year-old disabled autistic. Kely, Golda Stein, and I are the managers for the Dream Travelers group and Dreams Estate. Our group hosts support groups for stroke and TBI survivors and caregivers, persons on the autism spectrum, and adults with ADD or ADHD. All of our groups are examples of peer support, as we do not have any professionals on staff. Without that peer support, we wouldn't be able to exist.

[2022/05/13 10:03] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Dorie. Shyla: 1. Will you please introduce yourself and tell us why peer support is important to you?

[2022/05/13 10:03] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): I am Shyla the Super Gecko. I live with chronic pain, chronic illness and PTSD. My conditions impact me physically, emotionally and mentally. Peer support helps me be around others who have found solutions and live better today as a result.

I learn a lot from peer support groups. They offer me greater happiness, social skills and help me see I am competent, capable and worthy. They helped me see that I have options, opportunities. That I do not have to succumb to able-istic ideas, like my work defines me. I am able to contribute in different ways. How important it was to let go of my old ideas and accept (learn) new ones. This I did through peer support and one-on-one therapy.

I must be honest here, and hopefully this provides a picture of my state of mind when I attended my first support group. It was before I had chronic pain and illness. Essentially, they suggested I leave and seek one-on-one help. I was angry and aggressive and a disruption. I wasn't getting any positive outcome from the group.

[2022/05/13 10:05] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Shyla. Anya: Will you please introduce yourself and tell us why peer support is important to you?

[2022/05/13 10:05] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): Dr. Colleen M. Crary (PhD, Psychology) (Anya Ibor in SL)

colleencrary@outlook.com

Founder & Director of Fearless Nation PTSD Support

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Fearless%20Nation/70/160/30>

[2022/05/13 10:05] Elektra Panthar: AI: Thank you very much , it's always an honor to be here

I feel strongly that peer support is great because there isn't that power imbalance I used to support meetings, I found that if you have equal footing with people it's so healing - I don't do it for myself, but for all of those who are struggling with the same issues as well

[2022/05/13 10:06] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Anya. Namaara: 1. Will you please introduce yourself and tell us why peer support is important to you?

[2022/05/13 10:06] Namaara MacMoragh: Thank you for inviting me. I'm glad to see everyone today.

I am the Executive Director of the Brain Energy Support Team

(<https://brainenergysupportteam.org>). We have been providing peer support for over 12 years.

In the United States, those with mental health challenges often feel isolated, inadequately supported, and ultimately become frustrated because care is often difficult and/or expensive to access.

It's, also, a difficult system to navigate. However, in a peer setting an individual connects with someone who has a shared life experience. They "get it". That is they understand what you're going through.

This is true for peer support groups, too.

In the 1960s and 70s we had what were called "rap groups". These were peer support groups for a wide variety of issues and ages. As a teen I attended a weekly group for about a year and even had a teen mentor.

To this day, I can recall how helpful it was as I navigated all things adolescent.

When I began working with BEST I appreciated the value of peer support from my youth and understood the need for community-based, peer support groups.

Over the last few years, research has shown that peer support has better outcomes in areas related to mental health management and/or recovery and that peer support tends to offer greater levels of self-efficacy, empowerment, and engagement.

Overall, our experience with peer support is that it facilitates better quality of life outcomes, greater understanding of the challenges that neurodivergent populations have to deal with, and a sense of belonging.

Further benefits include lessened suicidal ideation, lesser rate of reported isolation and hopelessness, diminished frustration with others while citing increased reports of positive feelings and overall life outlook

This is why I believe peer support is important to our community.

[2022/05/13 10:09] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Namaara and thank you everyone for introducing yourselves. We will move onto our first question. Before I do, I wanted to let everyone attending the symposium know that depending on time, we will have open questions at the end.

Starting with Kely, What has been your experience with peer support (RL and/or SL)?

[2022/05/13 10:10] kely (Kelyren Benoir): My experience in RL has been that most Stroke support groups are geared toward older people, more severe cases or caretakers. I'm relatively able-bodied, independent and active, but definitely still feel my own limitations. The closest "Young Stroke Survivors" Group is 60 miles away, though the times I went I really felt connected ... they do have a Facebook presence, but it's not the same as face-to-face in world interaction. My experience in SL is isolated to the Dreams Stroke Survivor Group, Shockproof. It's not as active as I'd hoped but when we do have some who show up to meet it's helpful to have people to talk to who understand my struggles and pains.

[2022/05/13 10:11] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Kely

Dorie, What has been your experience with peer support (RL and/or SL)?

[2022/05/13 10:11] Dorie Bernstein: I've had experience with peer support in a variety of settings. I am on the autism spectrum and also have a serious genetic syndrome that significantly impacts daily life. Also, I am a parent of an autistic young man.

Peer support for parenting a disabled person comes through a local non-profit group that provides programming for all abilities. My genetic syndrome peers rely on the internet for support due to the rarity of our condition. Most of us don't know anyone locally with our syndrome unless a family member also has it. I've toyed with peer support in SL for myself, but found that it was overwhelming. SL can be a better escape if I can "forget" for a moment what RL is throwing at me. Yes, I totally get the irony of helping manage Dreams and the related groups. Alts are imperative for the ability to enter SL "off the clock."

[2022/05/13 10:13] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Dorie. Shyla: What has been your experience with peer support (RL and/or SL)?

[2022/05/13 10:13] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): My experience is, needs change over time. All peer groups I've belonged to have helped me in some way. With time, the type of group I benefit from changes. It is important for me to seek out new groups which can address the issues impacting me in this moment.

For me, it is important to remember I can leave a group, find another, and stay in contact with the close friends I have made in all of them. It is the same with Second Life, but it expands to other forms of peer support. In SL, I have experienced much support from individuals and various groups which might not be viewed as 'support'.

To explain, I started on a SL university campus. I was there a year before I took a suggestion and branched out to a 'freebie' store. People there helped me learn how to dress. People in Virtual Ability and Dreams helped me learn how to build and texture things. Another person helped me learn a bit about scripting. Those experiences changed me, for the positive. I visit most of those groups much less now, but I can still stay in touch with people from those groups.

Today, I engage in artistic endeavors which have gone beyond Second Life. I define myself today as a poet, orator and writer and I participate in works inside SL, outside SL, and projects which combine the use of SL and the physical world.

I believe, without question, peer support groups, social groups and individuals played a significant role in making this possible, each and every one. So we can talk of peer support groups, but in a way, I experience various kinds of positive support in Second Life, and I think that it is important to remember, More than peer groups offer support, and these avenues of support are important as well.

[2022/05/13 10:16] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Shyla. Anya: What has been your experience with peer support (RL and/or SL)?

[2022/05/13 10:16] Elektra Panthar: AI: Very positive- I feel like I'm not alone

Having PTSD is a pretty lonely road

When I'm on equal footing with people I can see that we are evolving and changing together

There's nothing like peer support - it's different than working with a therapist, which is important nonetheless

With peer support we can be strong together

[2022/05/13 10:17] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Anya. Namaara: What has been your experience with peer support (RL and/or SL)?

[2022/05/13 10:18] Namaara MacMoragh: In 2007 there were 15 known peer support groups across Washington State. With three exceptions they were led by, or were linked to mental health groups.

From 2008 through 2020 BEST created, administered, and provided resources and funding for 72 independent support groups with 108 peer facilitators and 1,100 to 1,500 participants per month.

[2022/05/13 10:18] Elektra Panthar: NM: Shyla brought up a very good point about support groups, I benefitted from those as well

[2022/05/13 10:19] Namaara MacMoragh: In 2020 the Washington State Department of Social and Human Services shifted their priorities away from peer support and chose to fund internal initiatives that focused on education and general information activities facilitated by state certified professionals.

BEST now offers peer-led activities in Second Life, hosting video meetings, one-to-one coaching, along with resources and education. Our activities in SL include a broad range of participants that are neuro-atypical.

One example of how we use SL is engaging BEST program participants in life skills activities at Etopia as well as the activities offered by SL partners such as VAI and WBH. We've had a lot of success with that and, in fact, we've seen much of the same quality of life gains over the past two years hosting peer support in SL as we did prior to 2020 in our in-person groups, coaching, and mentoring.

Knowing that within SL we are reaching a large segment of people who are unable to attend in-person peer support settings and those who can reinforces our belief that Second Life is a valuable environment in which to offer peer support.

[2022/05/13 10:20] Anya (Anya Ibor): Strongly agrees

[2022/05/13 10:20] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): yes

[2022/05/13 10:20] Namaara MacMoragh: :-)

[2022/05/13 10:20] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Namaara. You have each spoken about your experiences. I would like to talk about mental health needs in your communities. Kely, What are the mental health needs of your particular disability community and how is a virtual world beneficial for providing mental health support for your particular disability community?

[2022/05/13 10:21] kely (Kelyren Benoir): Many stroke survivors find it difficult to leave their home and benefit from knowing they are not alone. We can all help each other with ideas for living easier and more fulfilling lives. For those who are functioning enough to be online, I can see where a peer support group would make them feel they belong in a place such as Second Life. It can be a really good social outlet if you are lucky enough to meet good people.

[2022/05/13 10:21] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Kely. Dorie: What are the mental health needs of your particular disability community and how is a virtual world beneficial for providing mental health support for your particular disability community?

[2022/05/13 10:22] Dorie Bernstein: Virtual worlds are a boon for the autism community. Many autistics are able to thrive behind the screen. The ability to thoroughly customize avatars without the limitations of being stuck in human form gives a way to explore one's identity and to show others how you see yourself. The ability to log out when things become overwhelming is cathartic.

The ability to rely on text chat for communication can help many autistics avoid some of the obvious tells that give them away in RL. For at least awhile, one can be seen as normal from the start. Text also gives one the ability to edit speech before hitting the Enter key to send it out into the world. As many people are slow typists, slow answers aren't a tell that someone may be needing to type carefully. Virtual worlds also allow one to control visual and auditory stimuli coming through the computer to you. That's so amazing for avoiding sensory overload!

[2022/05/13 10:23] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Dorie. Shyla: What are the mental health needs of your particular disability community and how is a virtual world beneficial for providing mental health support for your particular disability community?

[2022/05/13 10:23] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): People with chronic illness and/or pain (pain lasting 3 months or more) are four times more likely to experience depression and/or anxiety. (1)

In 2014, people with some form of chronic pain (not figuring in chronic illness), was an estimated 20.4% of Americans; close to 68-million people. (1)

Of those, 8.0% have high-impact chronic pain (that is chronic pain which prevents some activity: working, house cleaning and/or maintenance, etc.) That equates to 26-million people. (1)

I have high-impact chronic pain. Depression and additional anxiety were invasive. Today, thanks to one-on-one therapy and peer groups, my depression and anxiety comes and goes, infringing most when my pain spikes.

Support groups help me feel better about myself and my condition. I have new perspectives on how to define myself, how I contribute to society, and the importance of self-compassion for my mental, physical and emotional well-being.

Virtual worlds provide an outlet for artistic expression. Second Life allows me to do things I can not in the physical world. Here, in my virtual world of choice, I find social interaction, something lacking in my the physical world.

I read poetry, I snowboard, I meditate with others and visit the most extravagant events, like SL's Fantasy Faire. SL offers me some sense of belonging to a community and being a contributor.

(1) Source: Prevalence and Profile of High Impact Chronic Pain, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Sep 14, 2018, Accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6736a2.htm>

[2022/05/13 10:26] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Shyla. Anya: What are the mental health needs of your particular disability community and how is a virtual world beneficial for providing mental health support for your particular disability community?

[2022/05/13 10:27] Elektra Panthar: AI: We've been talking about isolation. PTSD can be very isolating

People with PTSD tend to isolate, and finding a therapist is very hard

[2022/05/13 10:27] Namaara MacMoragh: No kidding Anya.

[2022/05/13 10:27] Elektra Panthar: AI: it's also very expensive

Peer support groups can help people going through a grieving process

If there weren't support groups the numbers of suicidal ideation and depression would increase greatly

Virtual worlds are also good for those who prefer the written word

[2022/05/13 10:28] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Anya. Namaara: What are the mental health needs of your particular disability community and how is a virtual world beneficial for providing mental health support for your particular disability community?

[2022/05/13 10:29] Namaara MacMoragh: As in other communities, our population struggles with isolation, loneliness, depression, and hopelessness.

Though a lot of people are dealing with these as part of the pandemic experience, for those who are neurodivergent these issues definitely existed pre-COVID.

Additionally, access to transportation, quality health care, nutritious food, and safe housing are universal concerns that are further exacerbated by the constraints and concerns of navigating a pandemic impacted world.

[2022/05/13 10:29] Elektra Panthar: NM: I have difficulty answering this question within the time constraints because it's quite a broad question

I'll try my best

[2022/05/13 10:29] Namaara MacMoragh: There are lots of statistics, but because of time I'd like to share just a few.

If we look at the research on mental health and brain injuries we find that up to 61% of adults struggle with depression, anxiety, PTSD, and suicidal ideation after incurring a TBI. Major depression is the #1 mental health issue for individuals with brain injury and their families.

Additionally, research shows that nearly 78% of Autistic children have at least one mental health condition compared to 14% of neurotypical children and Autistic adults are 33% more likely to have mental health challenges than neurotypical adults.

[2022/05/13 10:31] Elektra Panthar: NM: PTSD as an occurrence of bullying - we have to deal with this

[2022/05/13 10:30] Namaara MacMoragh: Our community not only needs, but demands, appropriate, respectful, and holistic approaches to our mental health needs.

For as long as medical model care provided by professionals is the "go-to, one size fits all" option those needs will not be met.

It is our belief that peer support is the best way to help those with cognitive differences to understand and articulate their needs to better advocate for themselves

so that they are able get the most out of mainstream medical and mental health care.

While engaging with people in SL doesn't resolve many of these issues, Second Life has proven to be not only an innovative approach to provide peer support, but it's been an amazing social, educational, and for some an exceptional professional environment.

[2022/05/13 10:32] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): Agrees. Bullying is trauma. Co-morbidity is the rule, not the exception. The metaverse is invaluable for these issues.

[2022/05/13 10:32] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Namaara. I have one last question for all of you.

For our last question, starting with Kely and working down the row without being called on, is there anything else you would like everyone to know that hasn't been addressed in one of the questions today?

[2022/05/13 10:33] Dorie Bernstein: Learning from experts has its place while dealing with disabilities. Peer support offers you the place to be with others who understand on a more intimate level what you're going through. While experts do know a lot, they rarely truly KNOW it from a personal level. Peer support doesn't have to focus on discussions about one's personal disability all the time. Just being in the same space and time with peers can be enough to create a comfortable place to be. Conversations can happen. But they're not required.

[2022/05/13 10:33] Elektra Panthar: KB: Nothing from me, sorry

[2022/05/13 10:33] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): There are a variety of peer support groups styles. Try one, and if it doesn't seem to help, or, worse, agitates, try a different one.

Some peer groups are lead by other group members, sometimes chairs revolve amongst members of the group, and sometimes peer group leaders have some training or even credentials.

Groups can focus on different things. Some might be focused on just listening (providing space) and others may be more practical. Some might be spiritual and others secular.

Groups vary across the board. Some may address specific conditions, while others are more general.

Guidelines vary too. Sometimes they are more like rules and sometimes they are suggestions. It helps to know the guidelines of the group.

I suggest 'trying' a group to see if it is a good fit. If not, try another. Peer support groups have helped me, but everyone is unique. I think, as an option for support, they're worth a try. One group I am comfortable recommending to people with chronic pain is Pain Connection. Pain Connection offers a variety of meetings, including listed on the poster behind me). It is an organization for people with physical chronic pain. You can click the Pain Connection poster for a notecard on their website and additional information.

Thank you for letting me participate in the conference, and a special thank you to all the volunteers who make it possible and welcoming.

[2022/05/13 10:36] Namaara MacMoragh: oooo can I share something?

I agree with Dorie about peer support versus a professionally facilitated group. This is something that has always been at the core of what BEST does. It's also something that informs and drives our Empowered Self program which facilitates an individual's process of identifying and creating ... articulating ... a quality of life that works best for them.

Thank you for inviting me today and I thank everyone on the panel. Many great points about peer support have been shared.

[2022/05/13 10:37] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, Namaara. Does anyone else in the panel who would like to add anything?

[2022/05/13 10:37] Carolyn Carillon: AI: I agree

Virtual Ability has been invaluable

Peer support groups will give you contrary opinions

You can work it out and not be inside your head

Look at the poster behind me

About the efficacy of SL for those with PTSD

Click it

It's been an honour to be with you today

[2022/05/13 10:36] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you so much to our panelists for sharing with us today.. Are there questions or comments from our audience?

[2022/05/13 10:36] Ava Dougall: loved your contributions and expressions!

[2022/05/13 10:35] Carla Heartsong: :)

[2022/05/13 10:35] Lyr Lobo: /me cheers

[2022/05/13 10:36] RoXkSie (Roxksie Logan): /me .:{APPLAUSE}:

[2022/05/13 10:36] Zzri Avian (Zri Portal): Claps!

[2022/05/13 10:36] Zinnia Zauber: Thank you all for sharing your experiences and also supporting people within our communities.

[2022/05/13 10:37] Hope PAŞŞÎFLØRÅ (LPEaceAndLove Resident): thank you all so very much

[2022/05/13 10:38] Gentle Heron: Thank you Ailgif and panelists. Ailgif, you didn't get to introduce yourself. Would you like to tell us about yourself and your research in Second Life?

[2022/05/13 10:39] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): I would like to. Thank you
I don't have anything typed

[2022/05/13 10:39] Carolyn Carillon: AR: thank you to Gentle for inviting me

I'm an instructor at a community college
One of the classes I teach is on multimedia
Another is on interactive storytelling
I incorporate SL
Shyla has met with my class to share her poetry
[2022/05/13 10:41] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): ::: E.X.C.E.L.L.E.N.T :::
Shyla is an poet and spoken word artist \o/

[2022/05/13 10:40] Carolyn Carillon: AR: I've had so much support from Virtual Ability
Especially from Gentle and iSkye
When I was a graduate student
My focus is on understanding our environment through what we hear
And making sure our environment is accessibility
I relied on people from this group for making my content accessible
That's what I've been working on
I'd like to thank you and all the panelists
If I may add, there's a person[a] part of my life with my mom who's no longer here
She suffered from mental health issues
Sometimes she would go into deep depression
When she couldn't care for me or my brother
Watching her go through that
Makes it important for me to see the support here in SL
That's all

[2022/05/13 10:41] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): thank you ailgif
[2022/05/13 10:41] Namaara MacMoragh: Thank you Ailgif
[2022/05/13 10:41] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): Thank you Ailgif HUGS
[2022/05/13 10:41] kely (Kelyren Benoir): Thank You Ailgif for all your work.
[2022/05/13 10:42] Zinnia Zauber: Thank you for sharing and supporting us.
Thank you all!
[2022/05/13 10:42] Suellen Heartsong: thank you for sharing

[2022/05/13 10:42] Carolyn Carillon: AR: do we have time for questions?
[2022/05/13 10:42] Carolyn Carillon: GH: yes we do!
[2022/05/13 10:42] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): great, are there any questions
Or comments

[2022/05/13 10:42] Polaris Grayson: I was in SL since before I developed MS and groups
who helped during my transition has been essential...TY 😊

[2022/05/13 10:42] Gentle Heron: [10:36] Mook Wheeler: COMMENT: Peer support can
be as impactful as family support -- oftentimes even more. Parents, siblings, partners and
children may love you, but they may not fully understand your condition and its issues.
Being *understood* is necessary to (mental) health; understanding -- not 'acceptance' -- is
what tells us that we are not alone with our problem, that our situation can be
comprehended by others. Being understood -- not just 'accepted' -- is, to me, one of the
most powerful stress and anxiety relievers, because 'understanding' (and not 'acceptance')
leads to the possibility of answers and forward progress.

[2022/05/13 10:43] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): so true Mook!
[2022/05/13 10:44] Carolyn Carillon: AI: peer support groups provide a kind of family

That's so important
The difference between understanding and acceptance

[2022/05/13 10:43] James Heartsong (PeacefulJames Heartsong): I found that getting over my issues had to start with letting go of self medicating. Getting and staying sober was the best gift that I ever gave myself.

[2022/05/13 10:44] Sitearm (Sitearm Madonna): QUESTION: How does one tell the difference when "peer support" versus "professional support" is appropriate for one's personal situation?

[2022/05/13 10:45] Carolyn Carillon: NM: from my perspective, it's not one or the other
There's room for both

[2022/05/13 10:45] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): yes

[2022/05/13 10:45] kely (Kelyren Benoir): /me nods

[2022/05/13 10:45] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): Indeed

[2022/05/13 10:46] Carolyn Carillon: AI: I agree

The only exception is if I have someone in a peer support group who expresses harming themselves or others

They need professional RL help or medication or a short stay in the "clink"

I shouldn't call it that

But one can reinforce the other

We can [not hold] responsibility for what somebody does

We can only use our education to help people

[2022/05/13 10:47] Carolyn Carillon: SSG: one of the values of peer support groups is that I learned about how to pick a therapist

[2022/05/13 10:47] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): If I could just be really quick

[One of the values of peer support groups, because I don't believe it's one or the other, is that I learned a lot about how to pick a therapist, and what created a healthier experience for that, from other members of support groups. In fact, as a person with chronic pain, I did not know there were therapists who specialized specifically in chronic pain or chronic illness or terminal conditions. And that was very helpful to learn.]

[2022/05/13 10:48] Sitearm (Sitearm Madonna): @Panel I appreciate your observations
thank you

[2022/05/13 10:48] Gentle Heron: QUESTION for anyone- How do you know who is your "peer"? After I was diagnosed with MS, I attended a few different peer support groups, but I could not feel a positive relationship with members of what I felt were "bitch and moan sessions." I felt very different from them. How do I find real peers?

[2022/05/13 10:48] Namaara MacMoragh: That's really up to the facilitator.

[2022/05/13 10:48] Lyr Lobo: good question

[2022/05/13 10:49] Carolyn Carillon: AI: one of the problems with a peer group is yeah, we're all complaining and wallowing

It's up to the facilitator to redirect

[2022/05/13 10:49] Namaara MacMoragh: (just sticking in my own two cents ... lol) The wallowing doesn't have to happen if the group is appropriately facilitated.

[2022/05/13 10:49] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): yeah I think one of the reasons I changed support groups is to avoid getting stuck in a certain place

And I think there was a time that I needed to wallow a bit but I'm glad that I moved from that space

So it seems possible that that those groups do serve a purpose to some degree, but I also think like I said before things may not click

And I think also there's a lot of trust involved for me

And if I can't forge that trust relationship with the group it just doesn't work for me

[2022/05/13 10:49] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): I agree Namaara, and Shyla

[2022/05/13 10:50] Namaara MacMoragh: agrees with Shyla

[2022/05/13 10:50] Gentle Heron: In SL, we have identified over 120 different peer support groups for various disabilities and chronic illnesses in English alone. You can see posters about these groups over on Healthinfo Island

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Healthinfo%20Island/150/73/23>

[2022/05/13 10:51] Ailgif (ailgif Resident): Thank you, everyone

[2022/05/13 10:51] Gentle Heron: Thanks gang

[2022/05/13 10:51] Suellen Heartsong: thank you all

[2022/05/13 10:51] msu40 Resident: thank you

[2022/05/13 10:51] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): applause!!!

[2022/05/13 10:51] Elektra Panthar: 🎵🎵🎵🎵 Applauds 🎵🎵🎵🎵

[2022/05/13 10:51] Shyla the Super Gecko (KriJon Resident): thank you VAI for this conference!

[2022/05/13 10:51] LV (LoriVonne Lustre): Thank you all

[2022/05/13 10:51] Buffy Beale: Cheering loudly, thank you for sharing and being 'real'

[2022/05/13 10:51] RoXkSie (Roxksie Logan): This has been Awesome. Thank you all.

[2022/05/13 10:51] ♡ Anya ♡ (Anya Ibor): Thank you Everyone

Thank you Gentle and Ailgif!!!!!!!

[2022/05/13 10:51] Elektra Panthar: <<transcription ends>>