



**DisAbled Women's Network**  
**Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées**

## *DAWN Canada and the Peer Support Continuum*

For the past five years, DAWN Canada has been focused on advancing research, policy reform, and education to Root Resilience, Root Change, and ultimately Root Justice. As part of that work we are currently doing, and with the support of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), DAWN Canada is leading a partnership project called “Rooting Resilience” to promote the development of peer support groups with our key partners in the disability and feminist GBV sectors.

Peer support has been proven as an effective response for women survivors of gender-based violence and is a key component of how we are measuring our impact. While peer support is becoming increasingly well known as a successful method for improving system navigation and building capacity across the disability and feminist GBV sectors, the challenges associated with developing and sustaining peer support models and networks is an evolving topic that invites discussion.

This workshop will explore the role of what DAWN Canada is calling the “peer support continuum” in providing a unique set of supports for women, girls and gender diverse people with disabilities who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing gender based violence.

### *What is the ‘peer support continuum’?*

Peer support is grounded in the capacity of women with disabilities to support one another and lead the development of solutions to the systemic barriers they face.

Peer support practices are grounded in trusted and authentic forms of community, collective empowerment, and lived experience. Whether through informal offers of support between women with disabilities in online and/or other community spaces or through formal peer support programming, peer support practices across the continuum differ radically from medical and other social service settings where the ‘patient/practitioner’ relationship shapes the experience.

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For this reason, peer support has the ability to build the leadership capacity of women with disabilities and improve access to services and supports.

DAWN Canada is actively mapping the peer support continuum with the intention of creating a community of practice that aims to build the leadership capacity of diverse women and gender diverse people with disabilities. Mapping the practices and strategies that are currently being enacted across the peer support continuum will involve looking at how, where, and why peer support is being practiced; how, as a program and policy tool, peer support can help meet the distinct needs of diverse women, girls and gender diverse individuals with disabilities across multiple sectors and community spaces; and how we will collectively leverage NAP funding to build a critical mass of support for the women in this country who are most impacted by gender based violence (women with disabilities).

*Join DAWN Canada's Community of Practice*

We invite you to take a brief survey following our workshop to help us build our collective capacity and form a community of practice around peer support:

[Shockproofing Conference - Community of Practice Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/shockproofing-conference-community-of-practice-survey)

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