



Valuing and supporting  
lived experience of  
mental health problems  
in mental health professionals

## Mentoring and Peerspace Guide

This document should be read in conjunction with the Privacy Policy and Mentoring Guide available upon request and easily accessible from our website.

### Who are we?

At in2gr8mentalhealth, our mentors are registered mental health professionals accredited with the Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC) who also identify as having their own lived experience of mental health difficulties. They will provide a reflective space based not only on their professional training, but on their lived experience of navigating a personal and professional journey in the mental health scene. They will share aspects of this if you ask them about it. Currently, mentoring is provided by Dr Natalie Kemp and Dr Anna Chiara Sicilia.

### The mentoring we offer

Our mentoring services are open to trainee and qualified registered mental health professionals, and registered or accredited therapists, also those aspiring to be in the mental health professions. You have lived or living experience of mental health difficulties. You may be in work, not currently in work, or between workplaces. You may be anywhere in your personal journey.

We recognise that it is often difficult as a mental health professional to find safe spaces to discuss issues, including intersectionality, that can arise in navigating your personal and professional journey when it comes to your lived experience of mental health problems. We provide an independent and impartial space to help you explore. We are peers who are open about having lived experience of mental health difficulties as professionals ourselves. We are experienced in navigating the themes and feelings that can arise and the systems around us in this area. We provide a unique perspective and can help reduce the feeling of isolation that stigma will want to perpetuate. We won't let it.

The mentoring offered at in2gr8mentalhealth Ltd, whether one-to-one or Peerspace group, has a specific focus on themes centered around the intersection of having lived experience of mental health difficulties and being a mental health professional. A mentoring relationship has the main aim of supporting the mentee to reflect and build confidence so that they can understand more about the environment they find themselves in, and take control over their own personal and professional narrative and development both in and outside of the workplace. It is a process where the mentor and mentee enter a professional relationship with the overall aim of providing guidance, motivation, emotional support and role modelling. A mentor may help with exploring careers, setting goals, developing contacts, and identifying resources. It is up to the mentee how they want to take forward what is discussed in mentoring sessions. In Peerspace groups, the mentor will help develop the sharing of ideas,



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experiences and resources between members. Peerspace groups can also help to normalise the experience of being a mental health professional with lived experience of mental health difficulties.

### **What themes does in2gr8 mentoring often cover?**

Below are some themes you may want to explore as part of a mentoring relationship. Please note that this is not meant to be a comprehensive list but just some ideas about of themes / topics that people bring to mentoring from our experience.

- Navigating your options and choices around sharing in general with colleagues, peers, supervisors and managers and at interviews;
- Planning around intended sharing of your lived experience;
- Helping you develop and understand your sharing narrative and any “hot spots” for protection and emotional safety, these can change over time;
- General reflections on sharing as part of the therapeutic relationship: navigating professional and therapeutic boundaries (no identifying case material will be shared);
- Integrating your lived experience into your wider professional role: how to do this safely and confidently in an organisation so that you can use your lived experience as an asset, you may want some support to think about work you are doing to increase these opportunities in general in your organisation;
- Reflecting on experiences of self-care, burn-out, work and wider organisational pressures.
- Reflecting on experiences of navigating internal workplace organisational policies ie those of Human Resources, Occupational Health. Talking about mental health Fitness to Practice fears or reflecting on past experiences of Fitness to Practice investigations. At in2gr8mentalhealth we look at the system around the person and will be interested in how compassionate and supportive the system is around you.
- Note: people speak to us at different times in their journey through personally meaningful stages of recovery. We hold in mind people's different recovery points and that sometimes people might have experienced less choice over what has been shared of their lived experience.

### **Mentoring procedure**

After you have requested an initial conversation about a one-to-one or a PeerSpace group, a Director will be in touch to confirm the meeting with you and whether it should be by phone or Zoom. If Zoom, they will send you a Zoom link. During your initial meeting, the Director will tell you more about mentoring, ascertain the type of mentoring you are looking for, what your aims or questions might be that you want to explore, and whether we might be best placed to help you. All requests for mentoring are then discussed in a weekly intake meeting, and the Director will come back to you and let you know the outcome. If we are unable to



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offer you mentoring for any reason, we will explain this to you and seek to signpost you to other resources if that is helpful.

### *One to one mentoring*

One to one mentoring sessions usually run for one hour. The number and frequency of the sessions will be agreed between the mentor and the mentee prior to starting the mentoring relationship and will be reviewed regularly. Commonly, mentoring is offered once a month, although on this could be agreed to be more frequent, particularly around a planned event i.e. pre- and post-support regarding an important sharing event. Communication between mentor and mentee between mentoring sessions is usually limited to organising appointment times unless otherwise agreed. Mentoring sessions are currently offered by Dr Natalie Kemp and Dr Anna Sicilia. Dr Natalie Kemp is a Clinical Tutor for the University of Hertfordshire Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and as such is unable to offer mentoring to current trainees or those applying to the course, such requests will be directed to Dr Anna Sicilia.

### *PeerSpace group*

PeerSpace group sessions will usually run for 1.5 hours for a fixed number of sessions and will comprise a closed group of between six to eight people. They will be facilitated by either Dr Natalie Kemp or Dr Anna Sicilia or both. If you are a current trainee or applying to the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Hertfordshire, please let it be known and Natalie can discuss attendance options further. We ask for a commitment to the group and that you don't miss more than one session to ensure that safety is maintained within the group. We appreciate that there might be unexpected events happening and we will take this into account on an individual basis. We will run groups as long as there is interest in at least six people joining them. The content of mentoring themes will be the same as for the one to one mentoring, the intersection of the personal and the professional as regards lived experience of mental health difficulties. Groups will be monthly and early evening to maximise attendance.

You may be asked to fill out a satisfaction questionnaire at the end of your mentoring or PeerSpace group involvement to feedback on your experience. This helps us develop our services.

### **What our mentoring isn't**

Although all our mentors are registered mental health professionals, the mentoring is not formal therapy for any mental health difficulty. Should a mentee wish to look into formal therapy for a mental health difficulty, the mentor will be able to signpost them to resources. Sources of support can also be found on our website: [www.in2gr8mentalhealth.com/sourcesofsupport](http://www.in2gr8mentalhealth.com/sourcesofsupport).



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## **Fitness to practice**

We do not exclude seeing people in mentoring if they are under a current fitness to practise investigation. The decision to offer mentoring will be made on an individual basis. We will need to speak to you openly about the circumstances for the investigation as there are occasions when we are not able to offer a mentoring space, for example where there are current active risks or any legal or criminal implications. You should be aware that there are circumstances where we may be asked to provide evidence about your involvement with us to any ongoing investigation.

## **Location**

One-to-one mentoring sessions and PeerSpace groups are currently held online via Zoom. One-to-one mentoring sessions can also be held on the phone.

## **Mentoring contract and terms and conditions**

If you begin mentoring with us, we will send you a copy of this guide and our contract before the first session. Please read through both and sign and return the contract before beginning your first mentoring or Peerspace group.

## **How to contact us**

If you have any questions, please email us on [contact@in2gr8mentalhealth.com](mailto:contact@in2gr8mentalhealth.com) or use the contact page on our website [www.in2gr8mentalhealth.com/contact](http://www.in2gr8mentalhealth.com/contact)