

# Walk the Talk: A Support Framework for Working with Peer Researchers

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# Peer Researchers

**H o w   W e   G o t   H e r e**

## **Activism**

**Nothing About Us Without Us!**

**Greater Involvement /  
Meaningful Engagement of  
People Living with HIV**



# What Do Peer Researchers Do?

## PRAs have *day to day duties* which include:

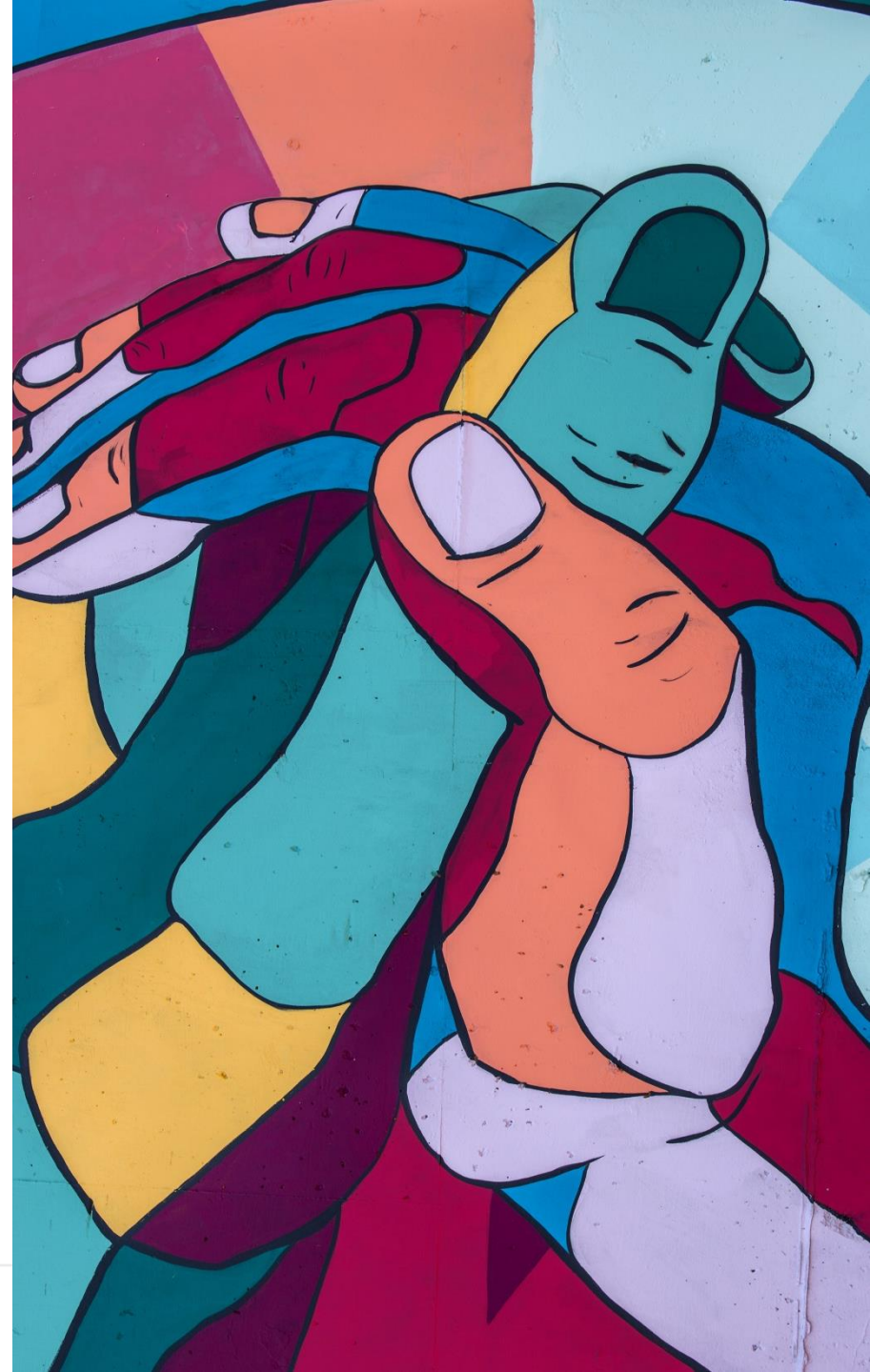
- Screening and recruiting participants
- Seeking informed consent
- Collecting data using different methods
- Keeping data safe and confidential
- Completing administrative duties
- Contributing to data analysis & dissemination of findings

# Implicit Tasks

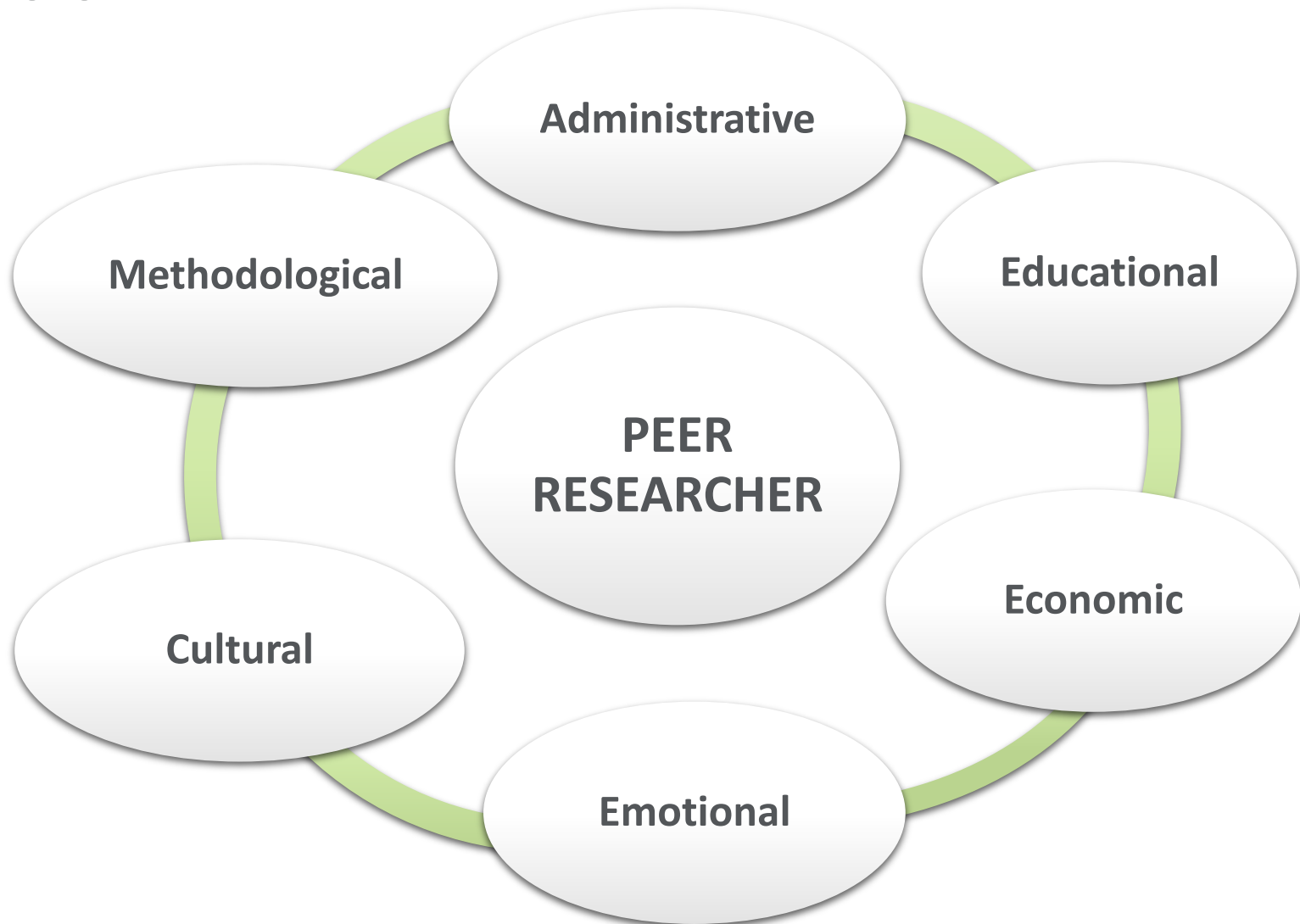
1. Disclosure & applying lived experience to work
2. Engage in emotional labour
3. Advocate for meaningful engagement in their work



# A Peer Researcher Support Framework



# Support Framework



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# Administrative Support

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- Provide clear & accessible administrative processes (e.g., invoicing, digital manual specific to a study)
- Instrumental support includes making workplace accommodations compatible with an episodic disability and with substance addictions (e.g., working evenings, having unscheduled rest, etc.).
- Maintain transparency about study administration (e.g., prickly discussions about budgeting and necessary changes along the lifetime of a study)



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# Educational Support

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- Train Peer Researchers for a task (e.g., data collection) as well as for the future (e.g., leadership in advisory boards) Training should include building skills (know-how) and reflection (know why).
- Provide, or connect, peer researchers with learning opportunities (conferences etc.)
- Use available technologies and social media (e.g., blended learning)
- Compensate peer researchers for their learning time
- Identify opportunities for accredited learning (e.g., Tools for CBR through Continuing Education)

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# Economic Support

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## PAN's: Compensating Peer Researchers Tip Sheet

- It's important to develop a process that meets institutional guidelines but is responsive to the needs and context of each individual PRA.
- There is no “one-size-fits-all” model.
- Have conversations around the financial implications of receiving wages or honoraria.
- Some PRAs take pride in finding employment where they pay taxes. Do not assume that PRAs would prefer a more creative compensation arrangement. Have an open conversation about the topic.

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# Emotional Support

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- Emotional labor” is a finite resource, if unsupported.
- Encourage peer researchers to recognize positive and negative coping/living strategies
- Provide training to develop practical ongoing self-care strategies including formal and informal supports, appropriate boundaries and resiliency (e.g., bracketing and debriefing, ETSS)
- Develop personal & team debriefing strategies collaboratively with peer researchers (Informal & formal supports, debriefing options worksheet)

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# Cultural Support

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- PRAs should be encouraged to discuss their cultural and spiritual needs during research process
- Knowledge or practice of an approach to gender, diversity, social justice and anti-oppression should be included in training and process
- When working with Indigenous peer researchers, elders should be given opportunity to provide knowledge on research process and support Indigenous peer researchers

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# Methodological Support

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- Design, implement, evaluate and report on research processes in ways that break down traditional academic community and academic hierarchies (e.g., patriarchal)
- Methodologies should take into account community strengths and skills
- Explore the costs and time investment of well-applied audio visual/arts-based methodologies such as photo voice, body mapping, performance based methods

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# Applying the Framework

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- When you intend to integrate people living w/ HIV as peer researchers first ask yourself if you are ready, is your team ready – What resources do you have?
- Think of how, when and where to bring in peer researchers, and at what administrative, financial and personal cost
- Assess how continuous or intermittent this participation might be and make provisions for the ebb and flow
- How much of each of the six key areas of support can you implement?

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