



Introduction

The Q Improvement Lab is working on the challenge of ‘what would it take for effective peer support to be available to everyone who needs it, to help manage their long-term health and wellbeing needs.’

This document is a summary of the final Lab workshop on the topic of peer support. It focussed on how we can bring together, share and act on the learning that has been generated.

The workshop was held on 21 March 2018 at BMA House, London and 36 people attended.



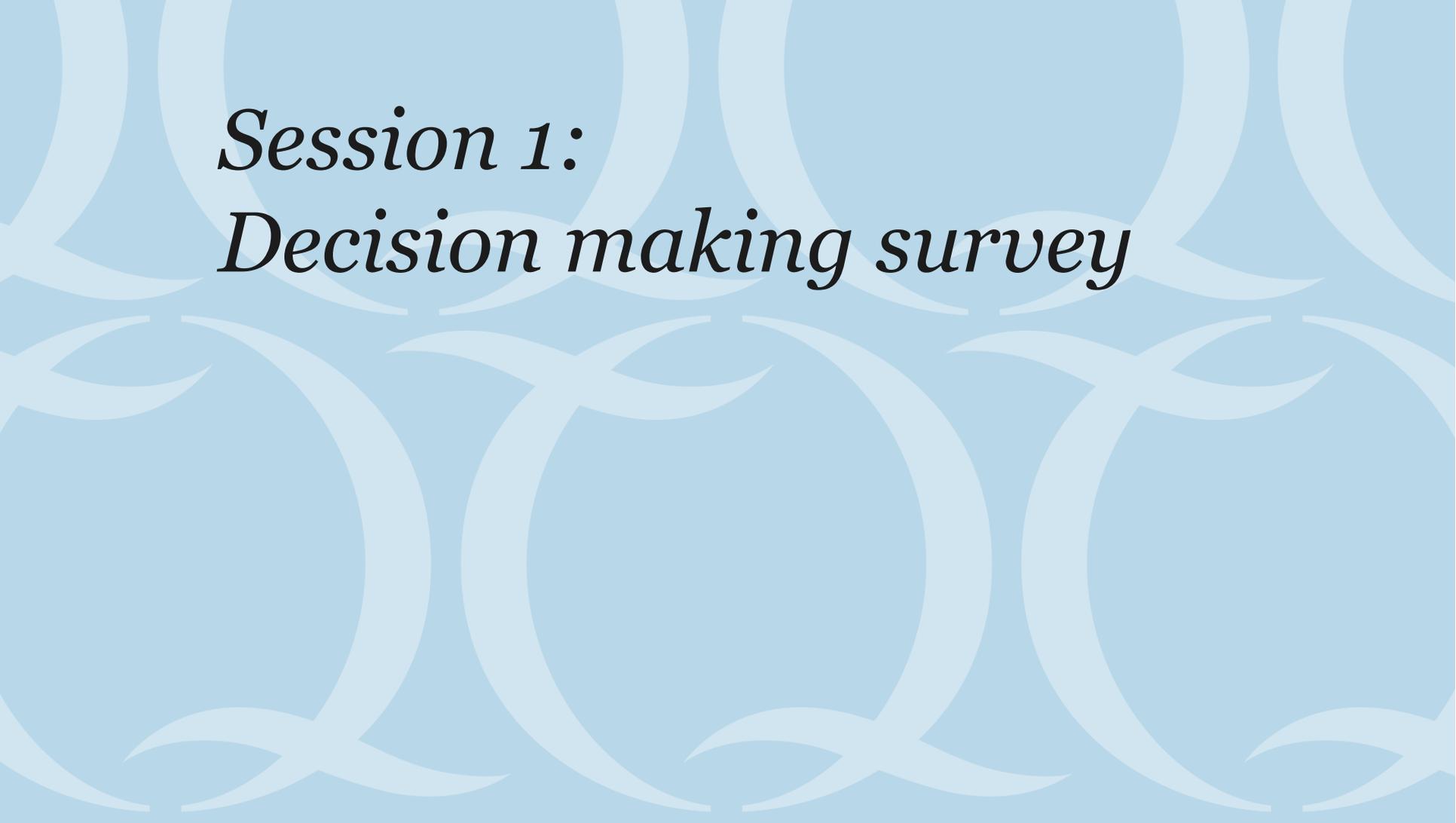
Introduction

To kick-off the day we heard from Sarah Rae, who is a Lab participant and Q member.

Sarah shared her experiences of being involved with the Lab this year and how she sees the Lab as a key way of contributing to the wider Q agenda.

Over the year she has benefited from meeting people with other skills and knowledge, which she has been able to feed into her work. Sarah is a trustee with MIND and through her involvement in the Lab has been influential in starting the collaboration with Q Lab, National Voices and Mind on scoping a new online peer support evidence hub.





Session 1:
Decision making survey

Findings from the Lab's decision making survey

This session presented findings from the Lab's [decision making survey](#) which aims to better understand what was important to people when deciding to refer to, recommend or access peer support services.

Thank you to all the Lab participants for their help in designing, testing and spreading the survey!

Working with YouGov, we were able to collect **2666 responses**. To our knowledge, it is the biggest peer support survey to have been done in the UK.

The findings will be published in **May**.



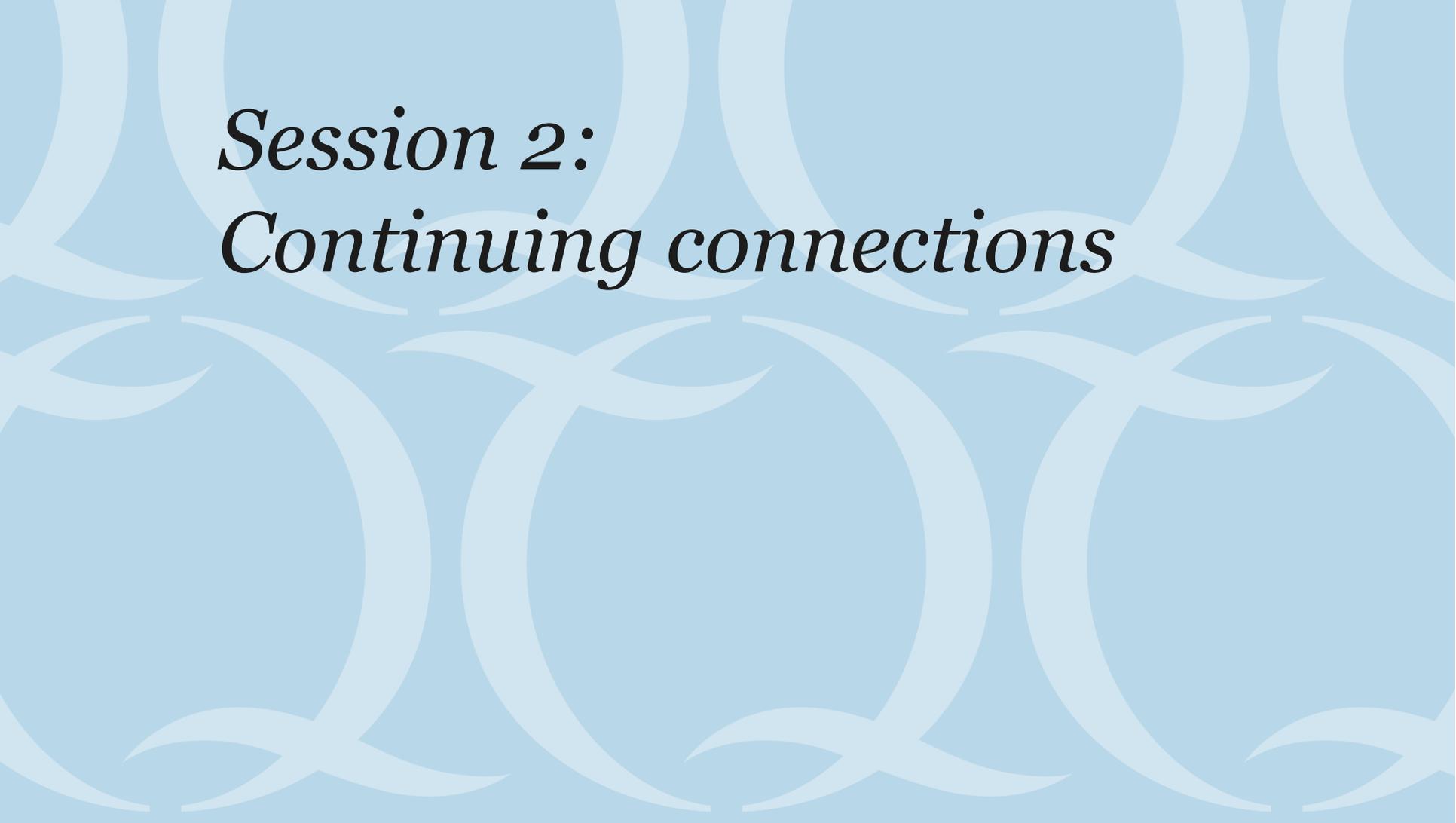
Ideas to use the new insights

People were asked to think about how the findings might be used in practice. We used a method by [Liberating Structures called 25/10](#) that allowed us to quickly collect and rank each others ideas.

The exercise generated lots of ideas. They clustered around six main themes which are shown here.

We will be exploring these ideas further as we continue to discuss how we can translate these insights into impact.





Session 2:
Continuing connections

Continuing connections

One of the ambitions of the Q Lab is to support people who are involved to build new relationships and to form collaborations that may be helpful in their work. In this session we gave people time and space to reflect on their experiences, and to think about what they'd like to see in the future for the group of people who've been involved in the peer support challenge.



Space to reflect:
Everyone individually reflected and answered questions about Lab connections



Time to connect:
Everyone then had the opportunity to meet others and discuss their answers in pairs



Future of Lab group:
The answers feed into the continuing discussion about the future of this peer support Lab group

What we value in connections

Here is a summary of the outputs from this session, about what people value in individual and group connections.

The majority wanted to connect with like-minded people that have similar experiences to them. A minority also welcomed connections with differing views and experiences.

People mostly want to:

- Hear about other people's experiences in order to learn from them.
- Receive help for ideas or problems in order to move them forward.
- Look for potential collaborators and collaborations.

The vast majority said they have made a connection, even if it was their first workshop.

Workshops are the most commonly cited way of making connections. The planned sessions and the breaks during the day are both valued.

The most common way people have made use of these connections is to take the learning from face-to-face conversations at workshop back to their local areas, without further contact.

Many had also kept in touch in between workshops, including through emails, twitter, the online space, text messages and 4 people had additional face-to face meetings. 3 people mentioned widening the network by passing on details of other colleagues.

Many of the things that are valued about being connected to a group through the Q Lab are the same as those for individual connections.

Ideas for the future

The final exercise asked people to consider what has worked well, and the opportunities to do things differently in the future. Some of the suggestions are described here.

The online group could have a clearer focus / purpose

It could be possible to meet people by region

It could be possible to meet people by background

It could be possible to provide more platforms for people to share their interests

Workshops could allow more time on the participants' own projects

Workshop could allow groups from previous workshops to meet again

We will be continuing the discussion about what to do with the Q Lab peer support group at the end of this challenge year. Based on all of the discussions we've had together, we propose:

Online group

- For at least the next six months the group will continue on the Q website and people can continue to join it. We will then review whether people think it'd be useful for it to continue long-term
- The group will need 'connectors' from the peer support group to help create a community – so get in touch if you're interested!

Q Lab emails

- Q Lab peer support emails will continue but the frequency will reduce. This will depend on how much new information and content there is to share.

Other

- There are some other things for us to consider that need to be discussed further. There is the possibility of setting up a Q Lab 'alumni group' and having a 'One year on event' next year.

Session 3:

*Peer support learning and
discussion marketplace*

Peer support learning

Over the past month, the Q Lab has been pulling together what has been learned on peer support over the last 12 months.

This document is designed to surface insights, learning and reflections. We hope it will provide an opportunity for people interested in peer support to consider how their work connects to some of the wider trends and themes and to suggest opportunities for how to improve peer support.

We will be publishing the final version in May. The working draft of the document is available [here](#), please get in touch if you have comments or feedback.



What we've learned about peer support

Insights from the Q Lab

1. What is peer support?

What values define peer support?

If there is no standard model for peer support, are there some inherent principles or standards that are consistent and shared?

This was a question that we asked in our ethnographic interviews, undertaken with people with different experiences of peer support.

Interviewees were asked to answer a set of value-based questions regarding peer support and whether the statement was true, false, sometimes true, or if they were unsure. This charts summarise the answers to each of the value statements and how many responses were received in each category.

Peer support means that the way we work can vary, with people from different sectors involved in peer support. The reason we want to use the term 'peer support' is a range of activities and understanding of the evidence used and aware of



Discussion Marketplace

Before lunch, we ran an Open Space session where people were able to put forward any topics they wanted to talk about in relation to peer support or the Lab.

Everyone then had the opportunity to choose which conversations they wanted to join and could move freely between different groups.

You can find out more about Open Space methods and how these can be used [here](#).

There are four **rules** of Open Space discussions:

- Whoever comes are the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- Whenever it starts is the right time
- When it's over, it's over

And one **law**: the law of two feet – which encourages you to keep moving between conversations



Discussion Marketplace

During the marketplace, 10 lively and engaging conversations took place which covered a range of topics for example:



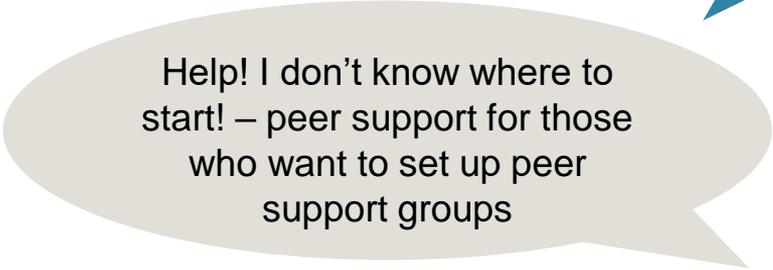
Using online platforms to support and embed peer support



Being innovative in changing misconceptions about whether peer support works or not



Q Exchange ideas and partnerships – let's get together



Help! I don't know where to start! – peer support for those who want to set up peer support groups



Linking peer support to existing services and service improvements

Session 4:
Reflecting with RAND Europe

Reflecting with RAND Europe

RAND Europe, the independent evaluators for the Q Lab, ran a session with attendees. This was focussed on two main activities:

- Sharing stories of impact from the Q Lab
- Reviewing the Q Lab impact model for how we plan to achieve change

The outputs from these discussions will form part of the evaluation of the Q Lab pilot project. The evaluation findings will be published in the summer.



*Session 5:
Insights relay and merry-go-
round*

Insights relay

At the end of the day everyone was given a card to write their main 'take-away' from the Q Lab experience. This could be an insight, something they enjoyed, something they learned, an anecdote or anything else they wanted to share.

In small groups, the cards were passed around the table one space at a time and everyone was invited to share their thoughts and reactions with comments and stickers.

This provided an opportunity to reflect on personal experiences.

Appreciation of...

- Bringing together the 'right' people in order to learn from each other
- Bringing together many different voices with different experiences and views
- Bringing together like-minded people
- Self-challenge - the process has challenged people's fixed ideas about what they thought they knew
- The time to connect and reflect
- The Q Lab being a 'safe' space
- The different methods used
- The inspiration and encouragement to keep moving forward

One challenge often posed between individual to individual was...

- How do we keep this momentum going?
- How do we carry this on?

Insights merry-go-round

In pairs, we ended the day with an insights merry-go-round. We had 30 seconds to finish a sentence before moving on to the next person and sentence. These included “I’m looking forward to...”, “my hopes for the future are...”, “what I value about peer support is...”



Next steps

Next steps

The Q Lab work on peer support is coming to an end. Over the coming months you'll be hearing more about:

- The findings from the decision-making survey, that will be published in May alongside a series of essays on the Q Lab and our broader peer support learning
- National Voices are taking forward work on the evidence hub for peer support and we'll share information on how you can be involved in this project as it continues
- If you're interested in applying for funding for your peer support work through the Q exchange this launches on Monday 9 April
- How the Q Lab group will continue to benefit your work on peer support



Stay in touch

- Visit us online: <https://q.health.org.uk/>
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- Follow us on Twitter:  [@theQcommunity](https://twitter.com/theQcommunity) #QLabs