

Wellbeing Magazine



Welcome

We hope you enjoyed your walk around TikTok's wellbeing gallery, all focused around peer support. You collected enough gold coins to access this TikTok Wellbeing magazine.

Looking to recap on the deeper meanings behind each piece of art and learn more? Or perhaps you're here to look at what resources we offer as part of our Wellbeing Wheel of Support. Well, you're in the right place. This is your toolkit for Wellbeing and peer support at TikTok.



Our Peer Support Approach

You may end up supporting a peer because they approach you or because you notice some signs of concern in someone you work with. Our simple model – Peer2Peer Support – focuses on supporting the wellbeing of your peers through two key actions: Listen and Link

‘Listen’ is about active, empathetic listening. Making the other person feel heard and understood. ‘Link’ is about linking the person up with appropriate information, resources or support based on what they’ve shared with you. Knowing your resources in T&S is crucial here. In T&S we have access to both EAP support and T&S specialised care, both of which provide access to professional clinicians the individual can access free of charge.

Use your new skills to empathetically “Listen and Link”.



Our Wellbeing Wheel of Support.

Here you'll find the different resources available.

Wellbeing on Call

A 24/7 bot that consolidates internal and external wellbeing support.

Manager & Human Resources Business Partner) HRBP

Open and direct communication with your manager

T&S Specialized care

A private or group session by a Trust and Safety informed clinician.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Short term solution focused on personal and work-related concerns. Available to employees and their families 24/7.

Peer Support

Use your new skills to empathetically 'Listen' and 'Link'.

Health Care Providers

General practitioner, family doctor, local hospital or community services.

Telephone Hotlines

Available all around the world, to provide support and connect people to community services.



Trust and Confidentiality: Supporting Safely

Confidentiality can be central to peer support. Your peers need to trust that the personal and private information they share with you will not go any further. There may be times when you need to seek advice or guidance from another source; but often this can be done without breaking confidence.

In extreme circumstances, for example, if you believe an individual may be at risk to themselves or others, breaking confidence, seeking help, or escalating your concerns may be the best help you can do for a distressed colleague. If you are seriously concerned about the safety and welfare of a colleague, then you should escalate your concerns. This should be to your manager initially.

TikTok's Wellbeing Gallery

Did you know that most of the pieces of art you encountered in the gallery are related to theory? So, there is a lot of research and brain power behind each artistic concept. Now that you have seen our resources, let us look at the first one, A Helping Hand, looking at why peer support is such an important part of our Wellbeing Wheel of Support.



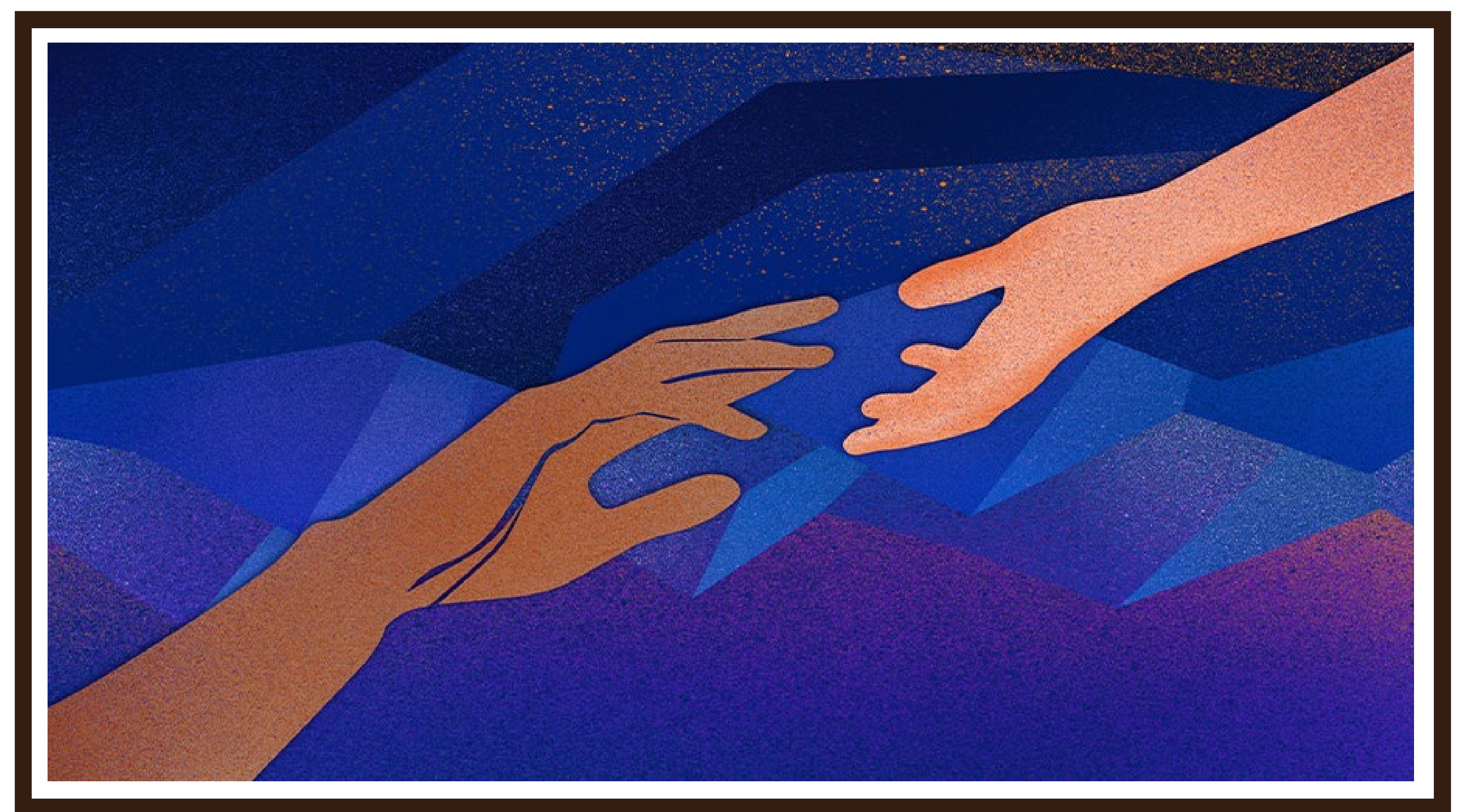
Why Peer2Peer Support Matters at TikTok

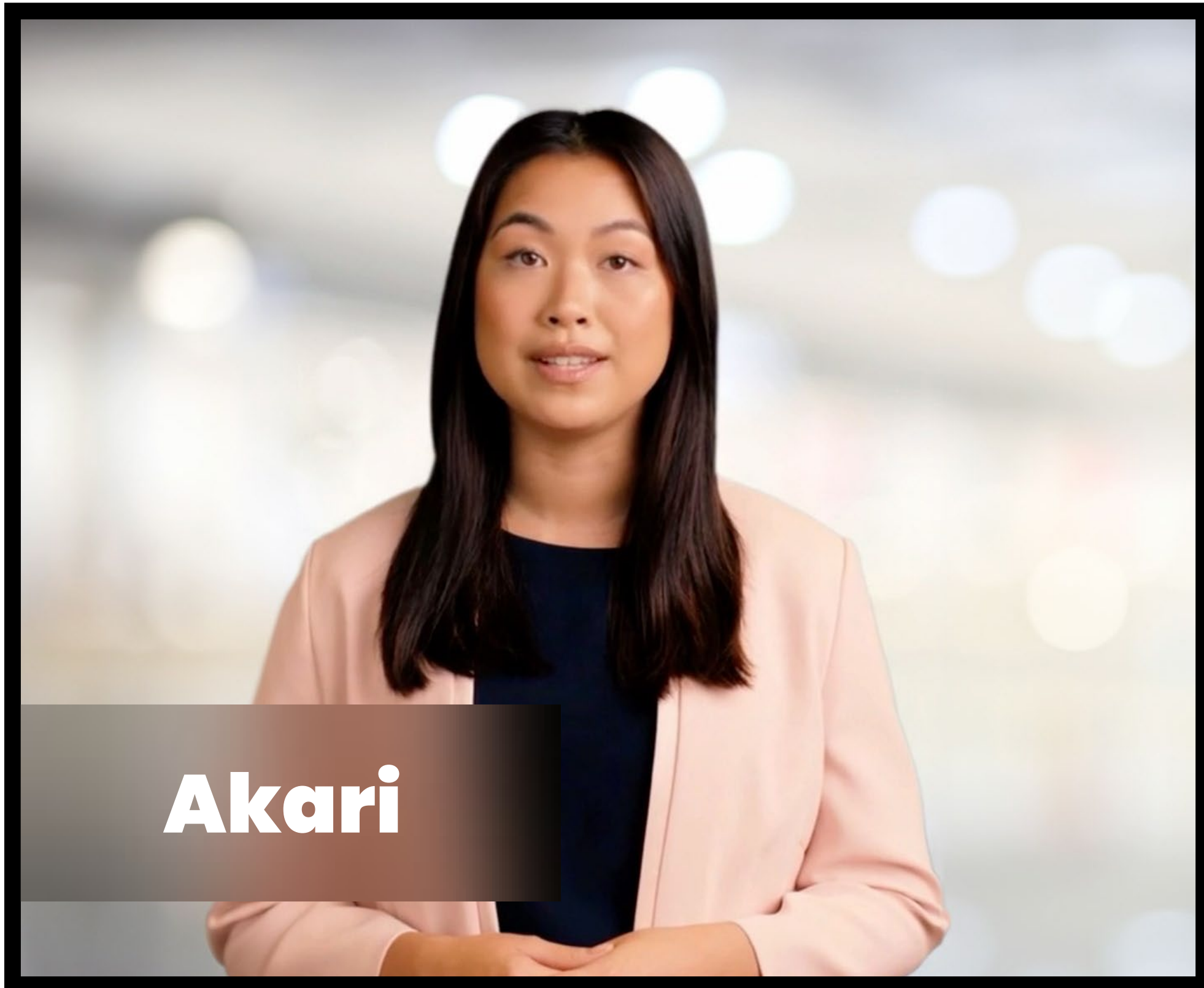


A Helping Hand

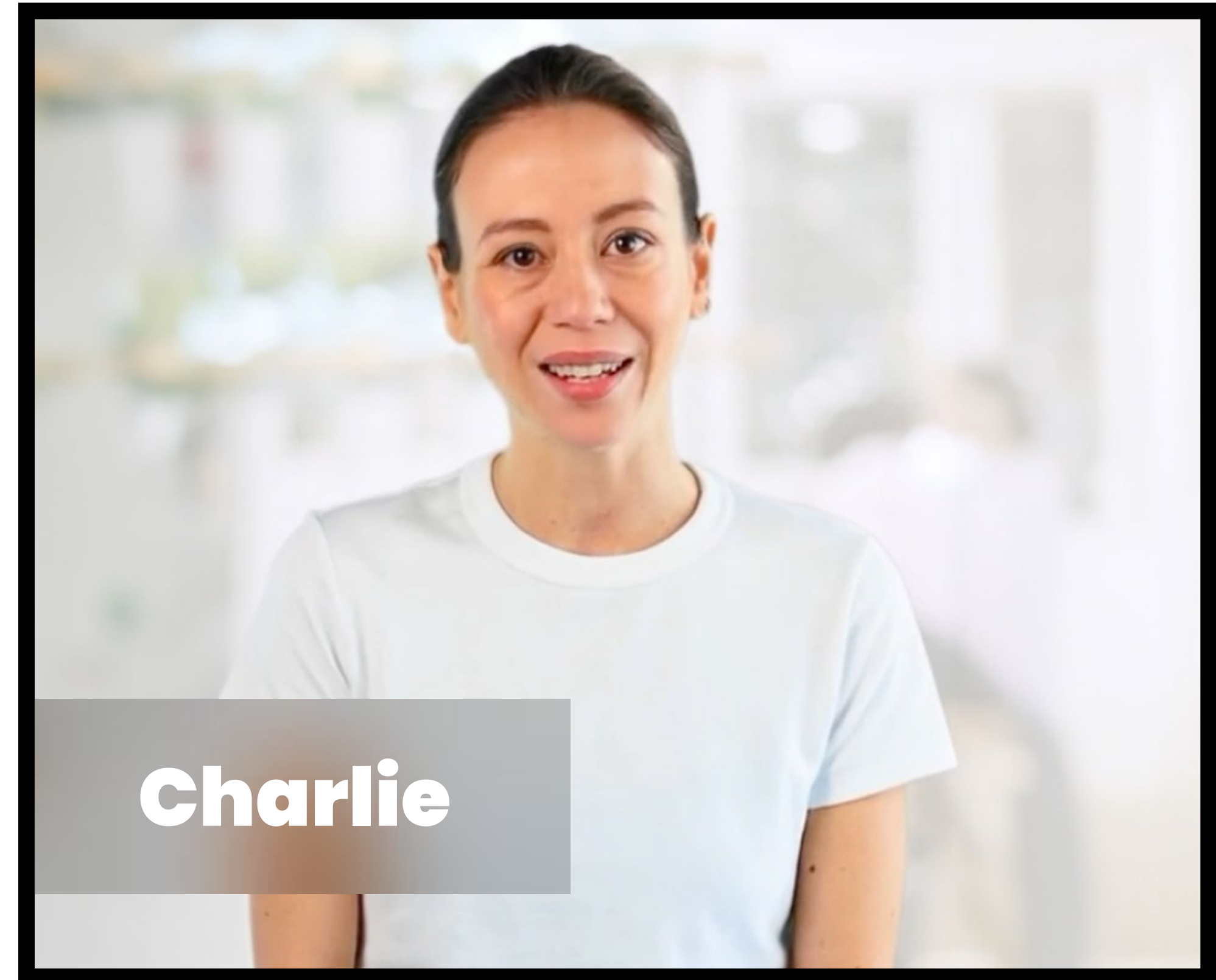
Topic: Why Peer2Peer support matters at TikTok.

Before going to the gallery, some of our team members met up to discuss a little more about why peer support matters so much at TikTok. Let's find out what they have to say about Peer2Peer support and how we could best offer someone a helping hand.

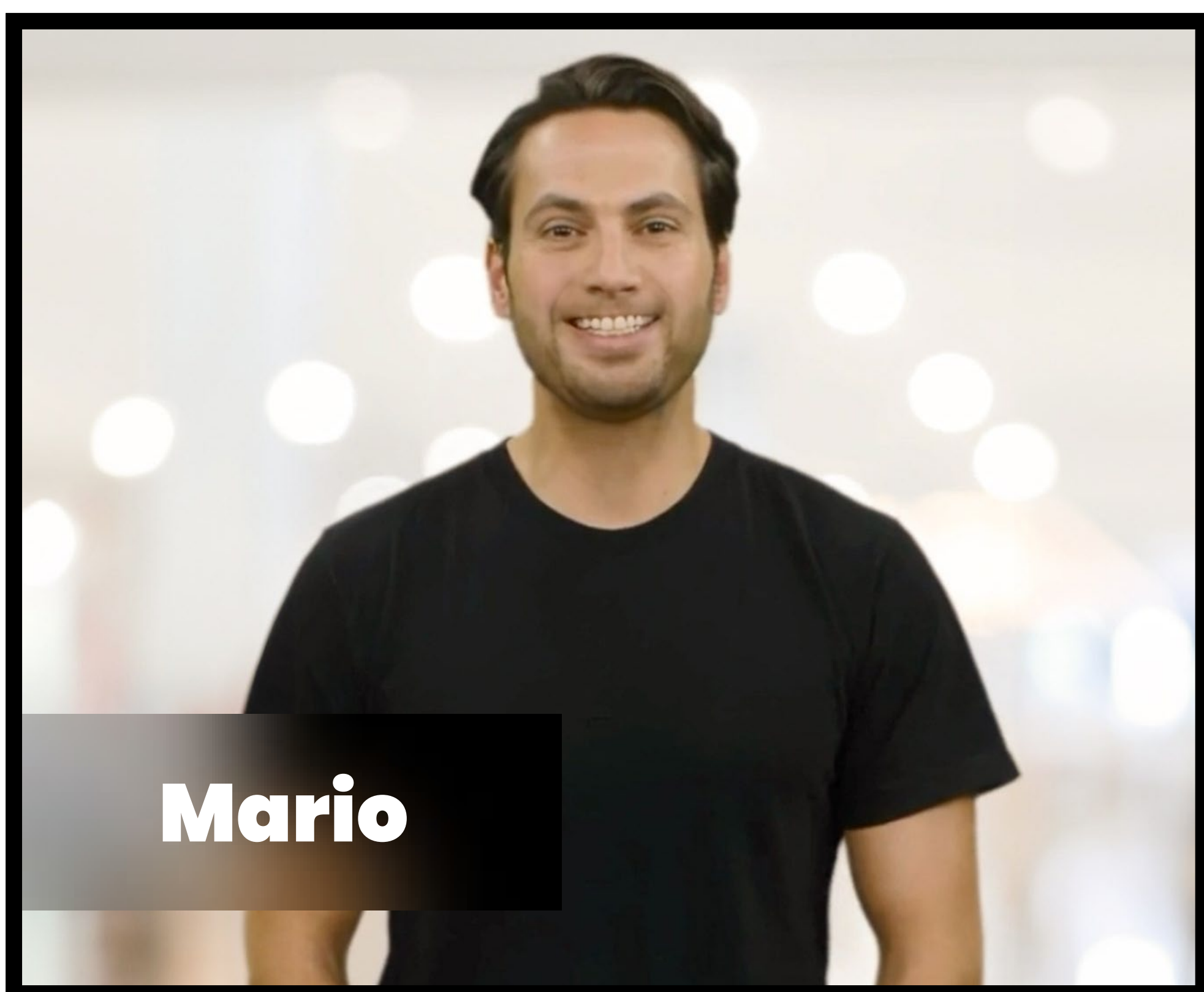




Akari mentioned how she was approached by several colleagues who felt they needed support, but she wasn't sure she had the right skills or even information to link people to the right resources.



Charlie highlighted the importance of listening more carefully to our peers, and being more empathetic, whilst also remembering our own boundaries, and checking in with ourselves.



Mario said he was aware that some people in the office could need a helping hand and believes that by spreading the word about Peer2Peer support, we could all become more knowledgeable and offer support if we wanted to.



Annie highlighted the importance of listening and linking to resources. Listening with intention and having awareness of the different options available to link up our peers is crucial.

“It’s not about fixing someone’s problems.

It’s about listening and linking peers to appropriate support and resources when they need that helping hand.”



Understanding Peer Support

Informal peer support occurs naturally within the T&S space. Employees connect with their peers, relationships are formed, and naturally, individuals turn to their peers to support their wellbeing during times of need. This natural support is important to build upon, given the known increase in challenges that are associated with working with potentially harmful content and the need for agility within the fast-moving pace of T&S work.

Research highlights there is no single 'right way' or 'how to' guide for peer support. Some of the key characteristics of peer support are that it's shaped by the individuals involved, adapts to the needs of individuals and the group as ideally it should be "peer-owned", but what does peer support really mean and how is it achieved?



Building Solid Support Structures

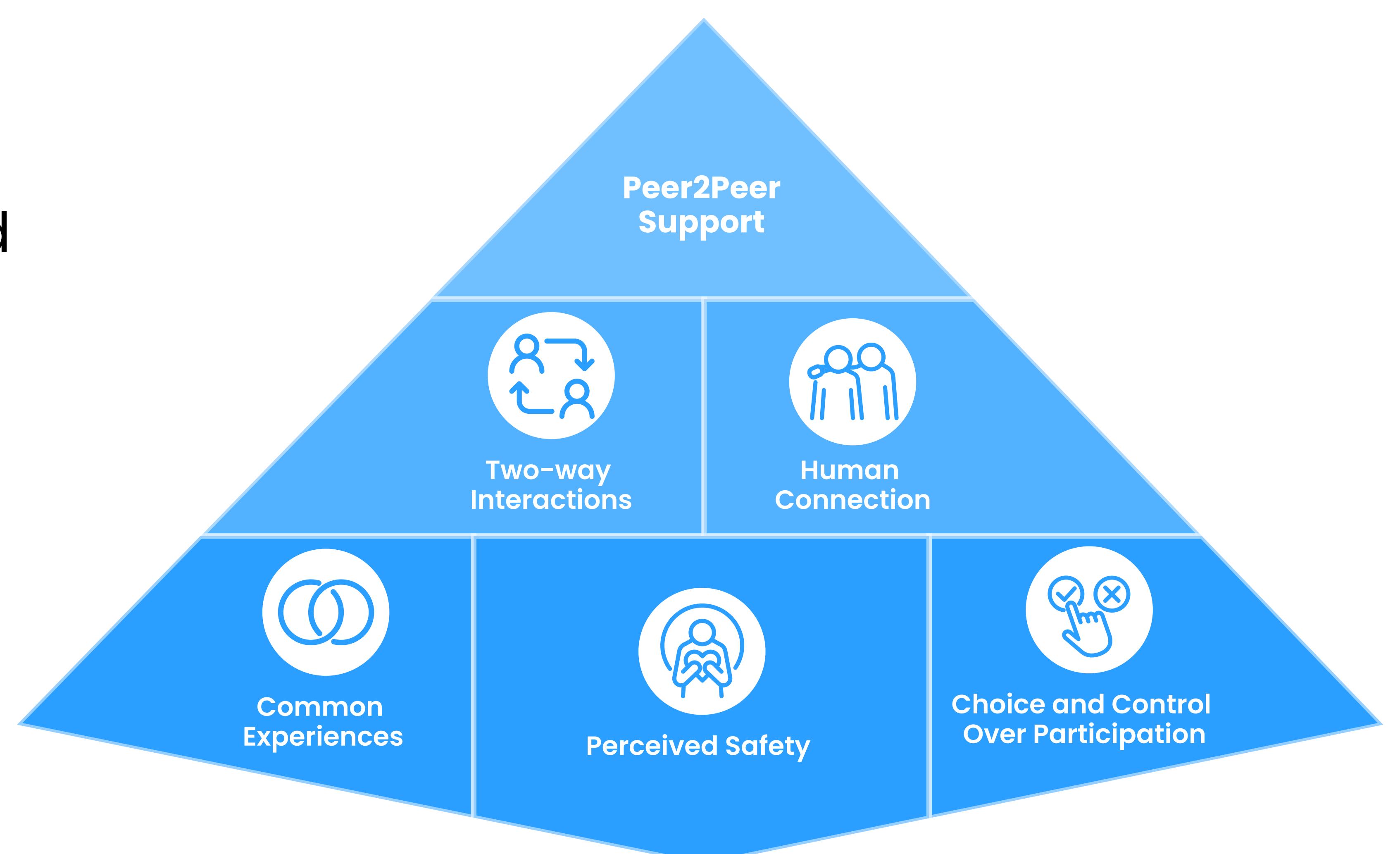
How are solid support structures built?

In the workplace, peer support means employees offering help and understanding. The idea is the layers depend on the previous layers being achieved.

Commonality of experience, safety and supporting one another creates a supportive environment which fosters psychological health and wellbeing, growth and productivity.

There are different types of peer support models depending on the industry or setting, but in general all models of peer support aim to achieve the following foundational principles.

In the unique job role working in the T&S space, peer support is not just about helping someone who may be stressed or in distress; it's being able to offer support proactively at an earlier stage too, to foster a sense of belonging and community within T&S.



The Positive Impact of Peer2Peer Support

Developing workplace peer support can help foster empathy, reduce isolation, improve belonging and potentially job retention.

How Does This Positively Impact the Work We Do?

Top 3 supporting outcomes from the evidence:

- Social support is associated with a range of positive health and wellbeing outcomes
- A sense of belonging is vital for good mental health
- Social support helps us build resilience, dealing with challenges and setbacks more effectively
- Access to peer support is recommended for those working with potentially harmful content (HSA)

Now we know why it matters, let's move on to our next piece of art.



The Three Core Conditions of Peer Support



The AGE of Acceptance, Genuineness and Empathy

One of the main tasks of peer support is building a safe and trusting relationship with the other person by relating to them. This is not always easy, both for the supporter and the person receiving support.

Before supporting peers, it's important to understand the three core conditions of effective peer support - **acceptance, genuineness, and empathy** ('informed by Carl Rogers' Core Conditions). These conditions create a climate in which a person feels safe and is able to discuss and explore their thoughts, without the fear of judgement. These conditions ensure a sense of equality and connection amongst peers.

Acceptance

- Authentic
- Straightforward
- Truthful
- Sincere
- Open and clear

Empathy

- Caring to understand what's really going on
- Asking relevant questions about a person's circumstances
- Thinking, acting and feeling in the person's interest
- Refraining from making assumptions or judgements

Genuineness

- Being non-judgemental in your approach
- Actively listening to their experience
- Being attentive
- Keeping confidentiality (where appropriate)

Self Awareness: Taking the Other Person's Perspective



Self awareness

The way we understand other people, our surroundings and situations is hugely influenced by our own values, cultural upbringing, education and many other things that make us who we are. If we are aware of our own personal beliefs and feelings, we are better able to ensure that we do not impose them on others or allow them to dictate how we respond. It helps us to take the other person's perspective and be objective.

Objectivity

Objectivity refers to the quality of being unbiased, impartial and fair in considering information, situations and issues. It involves logical reasoning rather than personal feelings, opinions or biases. The best way to be objective is to try to meet the person where they are at and try to walk in their shoes.

"Look at that beautiful butterfly... how stunning!"

"A butterfly? That looks like two skulls from where I'm standing!"

The **'Lens on the world'** concept shows the range of things that can influence how we see the world and interpret the things around us. Everything is filtered through our personal frame of reference or Lens on the World. Consider what influences your lens on the world.

Examples include:

- Birthplace
- Gender
- Family situations
- Aspirations
- Age
- Chronic illness
- Education
- Mental health
- Hobbies/interest

Recognising this helps us to see the other person's perspective, without imposing our own. This is central to conveying empathy.

Listening With Empathy

All Ears

The ability to listen is probably the most valuable skill in communication and is at the heart of peer support. Yet, we're rarely taught how to listen well. People sometimes just need somebody to listen and truly hear them in order to feel better.

It's important to listen to everything that's being said and the way it's being said to fully appreciate what someone means. This helps to avoid making assumptions about what has been said and conveys empathy.



Let's take a look at each point.



Open questions

Open-ended questions prompt the beginning of a longer conversation by asking questions starting with "why," "how," and "what if?" Closed-ended questions can be answered with single word answers, such as "yes" or "no."



Clarifying

Sometimes an individual may gloss over an important point or they may say something you don't understand. By asking questions, we can help them clarify points for themselves and check our own understanding. If you're not sure what the other person meant or think it would be useful to know more, ask a clarifying question such as "Did I understand you when you said ".



Summarising and Reflecting

Summarising pulls together the main points of a discussion and organises them. Summaries can serve a variety of purposes, including to:

- Prioritise and focus scattered thoughts and feelings
- Close the discussion of a particular theme
- Begin a further discussion
- Begin to consider ways forward

Reflecting is a very important tool used to mirror the meaning and feelings of what someone has said.

Usually, it just involves repeating the words of what was heard directly back to the person. This communicates an understanding of a speaker's point of view but also allows the person to hear back what they have said out loud. E.g.

"You feel that your manager was not fair in her decision"

"You've been dealing with a lot of emotional as well as practical challenges since your mother passed away"



Responding with empathy

We need to show that we have listened and understood by reacting and validating their feelings. To convey empathy, it's useful to respond non-judgmentally with observations, acceptance, and encouragement, rather than with any advice, opinions, or judgment about what they said. Try phrases such as...

"Thank you for trusting me with this, it can't have been easy to share"

"I'm sorry to hear that"

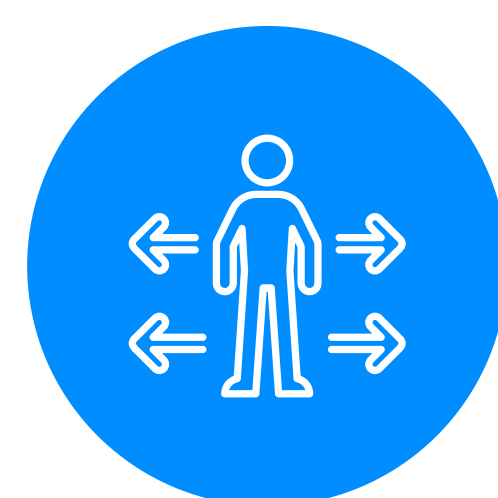
"It sounds very difficult for you right now"

"It's understandable that you would feel that way"



Silence

Silence is often avoided in conversations, but it actually serves many purposes; most importantly, it gives the other person time to think, gather their thoughts and reflect. Sitting with a person in silence often conveys deep, empathic understanding. It's useful to remember that a period of silence is never anywhere near as long as it feels. You could try giving someone an extra 2-3 seconds after they've stopped talking before you say anything. This signals that you're truly listening rather than just waiting for your turn to talk. People often have more to say when you give them space.



Body language

Positive body language can help to show you're interested in what the other person is saying.

Try to:

- Maintain soft eye contact
- Nod as they talk
- Sit at the same level and side by side if possible
- Use open hand gestures
- Lean forward slightly
- Mirror their body language
- Avoid having any physical barriers between you, such as a desk or computer.

Language to Avoid

1

Making comparisons to your own or others' situations. Their experience may be very different.

"My sister went through a divorce last year and it all turned out Ok".

2

Saying you know what they're going through. Even if you've experienced something similar, their experience is unique to them.

"I know exactly how you're feeling, the same thing happened to me recently"

3

'At least' comments, which can invalidate the person's feelings about what actually has happened.

"At least she's at peace now"
(when someone has died)

Try something neutral like "I'm so sorry to hear that" instead.

"At least you didn't lose your job"
(in relation to a work incident.)

4

Comments which convey judgment. Whilst often well intentioned, these sorts of comments suggest the person shouldn't be feeling the way they are.

"Don't get upset"

"Oh, it's not that bad".



Managing Your Own Emotions

It can be challenging when someone shares a tough or emotional experience with you and it's very natural to feel your own emotions building and changing during the conversation. This could be because something resonates with you, you may have had a few emotional conversations, or something might just get to you. It's important to try to convey a sense of calm to the other person, even if you don't feel entirely calm yourself! This is a key part of being empathetic.

The following might help you check in and manage your own emotions in the moment:



- Think about your voice – are you keeping it clear and slow and using a calm tone?



- Move slowly, avoid any sudden movements and try not to fidget around



- Don't forget to breathe! Take intentional deep breaths if you notice you are holding your breath or breathing very fast.



- Try to take the pressure off yourself – you don't need to fix things or come up with an answer; the action of sitting alongside the person and listening is often more impactful than the words you use.



- If you think your own emotions are coming across, don't worry, just gently try to re-centre and focus in on listening to what the other person is saying.

The next section focuses more on you, and your wellbeing. Can you remember which saying represented our next piece of art?



Looking After Yourself and the Culture at TikTok

An Empty Cup

And the saying is...“You can’t pour from an empty cup”, which inspired this final piece of art.

We love that expression, as we feel it perfectly communicates the importance of looking after ourselves, in order to be able to help others. Boundaries and practicing self-care are key.



Healthy Boundaries: Keeping Safety in Mind

Boundaries are the limits and expectations that we set for ourselves and others in a relationship and are an important consideration for peer support. Interactions and levels of responsibility differ according to the nature of our relationships. For example, we relate very differently to people in our workplace than to our close friends or family members.

Setting boundaries involves defining our personal space, knowing our levels of comfort, and clarifying what we can (and cannot) offer to others. Boundaries are there to protect both parties and ensure that conversations remain appropriate and within the remit of workplace peer support. Certain situations can arise that may be unclear and might test a person’s appropriate boundaries.

Top Tips for Maintaining Boundaries When Supporting Your Peers

- Be clear about your role in supporting someone.
- Remember you aren't there to offer any ongoing support or therapy. Listening and signposting are key.
- Establish boundaries around the time available for supportive conversations with peers.
- Be responsible for choosing places to meet peers (e.g. choose a public place during daylight hours, ideally in the workplace. Do not go to a pub or someone's apartment etc.).
- Avoid giving advice and trying to solve problems. Encourage peers to be responsible for their problems, decisions and actions.
- Be aware of personal limitations and knowledge and know when to seek help.
- Seek personal support if you're impacted or stressed by helping a peer.
- Be careful when sharing your own personal experiences. This can help to build trust, but only share what you're really comfortable with.



Self Care: Protecting Your Compassionate Energy

The reverse of the golden rule applies here: peer supporters should do unto themselves what they try to do unto others. This means you should listen carefully to your own feelings in an accepting and nonjudgemental manner and be sure to practice good self-care.

Proven strategies to protect your compassionate energy include:

- Maintain emotional boundaries.
- Learning to psychologically detach after work.
- Prioritising and protecting time for activities that you find restorative and relaxing, e.g., hobbies and interests, moving your body, meditation, socialising etc.

Are you feeling more prepared to Listen and Link?

We hope this magazine will be a useful tool for you to use in the future if you find yourself in a situation where a peer has reached out for help. Maybe it's got you wondering more about your own listening style, or empathetic approach. Don't forget, if you ever want to brush up on your skills for Peer2Peer support, you could always visit the Wellbeing gallery – our doors will always be open.

Spread the word about our Wellbeing Wheel of Support and Peer2Peer Support model by sharing this course and resource with your team and co-workers!

