

“Peer navigators offer hope for the future to people living with HIV. No matter how much I talk about the potential to live long and healthy lives, the power of meeting and learning from another person who is doing just that is invaluable.”

Mary Petty
Social Worker

John Ruedy Immunodeficiency Clinic (IDC)
Saint Paul's Hospital

No one understands the reality of HIV better than someone who lives with it every day. Peer navigators – specially trained and educated members of the community who are living with HIV – support others who are learning to cope with the daily challenges of living with HIV. Peer navigators give clients someone to turn to who has already “been there”.

BRIDGING THE GAP

The Role of HIV+ Peer Navigators in HIV Care, Treatment and Support

**POSITIVE
LIVING
SOCIETY**
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Accompanying your package are some examples of resources available to your client or patient. To learn more about this program, make a referral or order more of these resources and others, contact:

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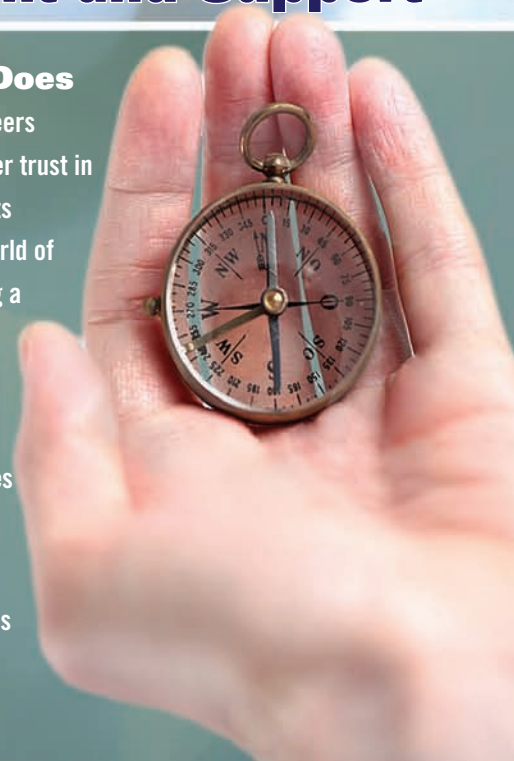
e glenb@positivelivingbc.org

IDC pager

What a Peer Navigator Does

As members of the health care team, peers promote treatment adherence and foster trust in the health care system. They help clients navigate the sometimes intimidating world of HIV treatment and services by providing a range of support activities that include:

- Explaining the basics of HIV/AIDS and self-care to the newly diagnosed
- Connecting people with needed services
- Assisting with appointment reminders and transportation arrangements
- Accompanying clients to appointments
- Acting as a liaison between clients and their care providers



“The peer navigators lifted a great weight off my shoulders. They showed me a life different than what I imagined living with HIV would be. It is not the end.”

“I want to talk to you but I don't want to be seen going into your AIDS building.”

“I can talk to a peer about things I can't talk about with my doctor or social worker.”

Past HIV+ clients of the Peer Navigation Program

For people living with HIV/AIDS, the realities of treatment and self-care can be overwhelming. Through shared background, culture, language, and knowledge of the community, peers can relate to clients in a way that health care workers often can not do. Peer navigators offer encouragement and emotional support by:

- Listening to clients' concerns and sharing similar experiences
- Offering strategies for incorporating medications and diet changes into a client's daily routine
- Serving as a “voice of experience” by proactively addressing and discussing shared medical issues
- Modeling healthy self-management behaviors
- Facilitating support and education groups

Peers are an empathetic and understanding shoulder to lean on, reminding clients that they're not alone.