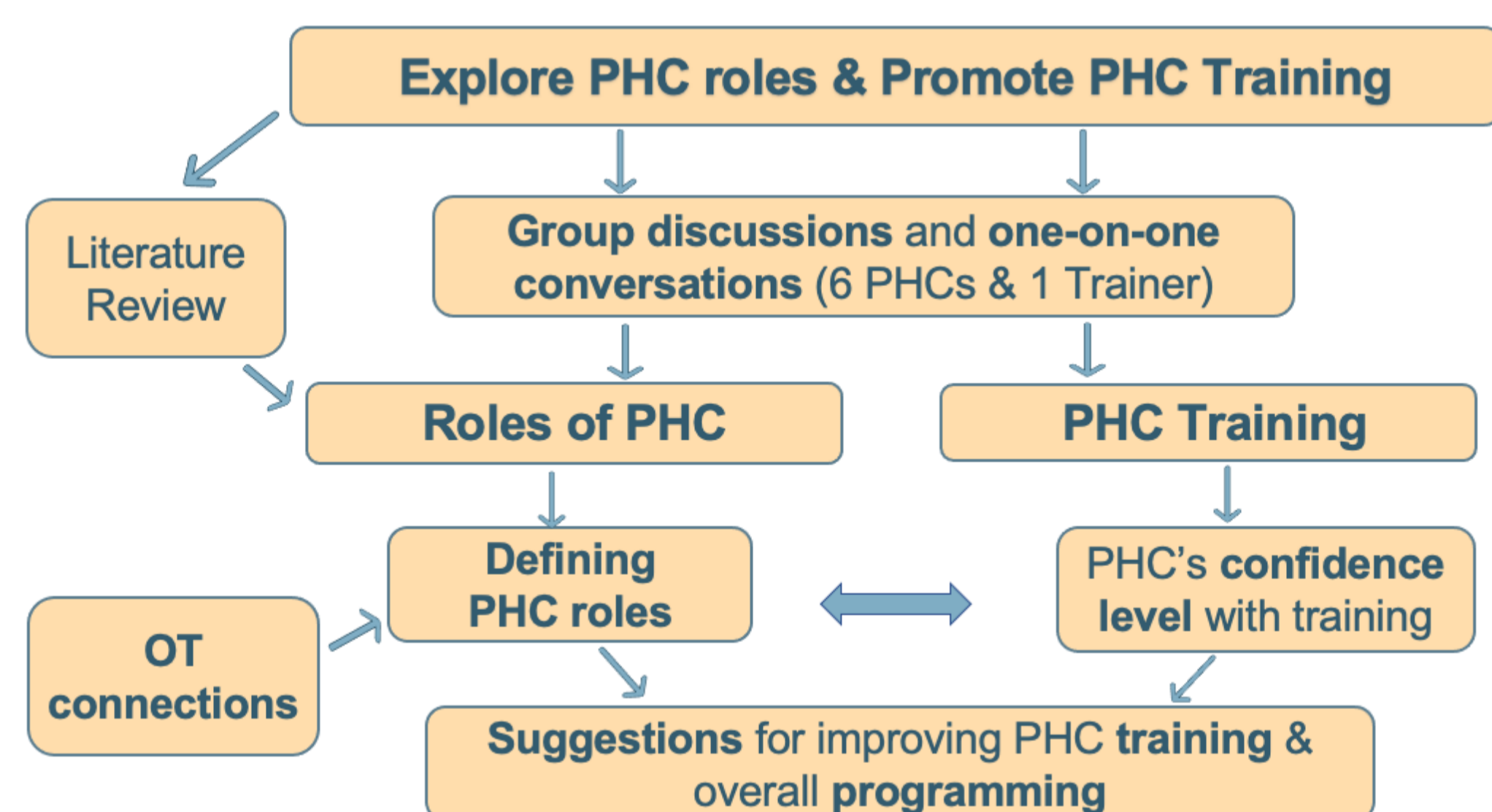


## Background

- **296,000** people in the US are living with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)
- **30%** require re-hospitalization within 1 year post discharge (NSCISC, 2021).
- Individuals with SCI are at higher risk of developing **secondary health issues**, many of which can be prevented or managed by health management knowledge & strategies (Houlihan et al., 2017).
- **Gap:** Services, resources, & self management tools in the community are **inadequate** for individuals with SCI (Allin et al., 2020).
- **SCI&U:** online health management program utilizes **SCI-Peer Health Coach (PHC)** & has shown potential to improve self-efficacy, quality of life & ability to address secondary SCI complications (Allin et al., 2020).
  - **International cooperation** between UToronto & United Spinal Association. Research approved through **REB** of Utoronto.
- The **SCI PHCs** can play a powerful role in promoting health management are **trained** to support peers as they adjust to life changes & manage health challenges (Skeels et al., 2017).
  - Health management is a newly added **occupation** in Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (**OTPF4**) (AOTA, 2020)
- **Aims:**
  1. Describe the **PHC role** in relation to traditional roles of “peer” & “peer mentor”
  2. Evaluate current **PHC training** process within SCI&U.

## Methods

- Investigator observed **24 PHC team meetings** to build relationships with the team & inform training evaluation as well as specific PHC roles.



## SCI&U Peer Health Coaches Characteristics

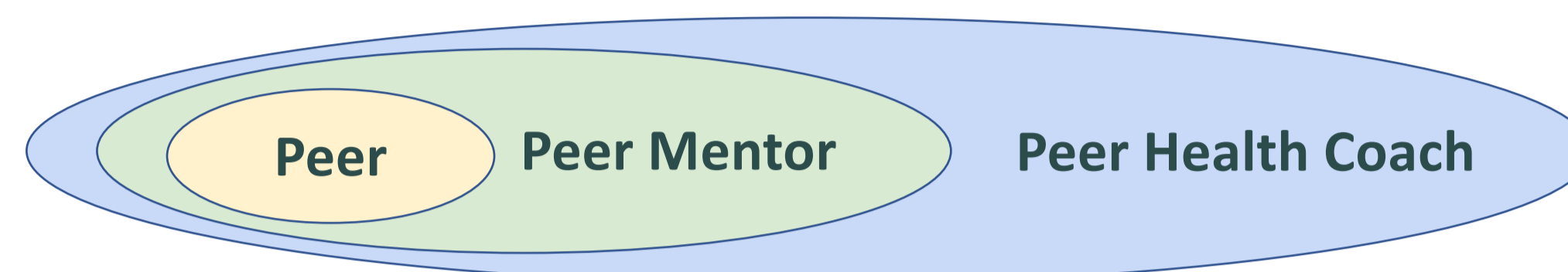
- All 6 living with **SCI**
- **Varied** in age, gender, ethnicity, years of injury, level of SCI, educational level, etc.
- All had **peer mentoring experience**
- Ranged from **4 to 28 years** (average of **16 years**)
- All received over **6 months** of **evidence-based training & certification**
- Participated in **weekly** team meetings.

Peer

Peer Mentor

Peer Health Coach

## Results & Discussion



All Peer Mentors are Peers; **All Peer Health Coaches are Peer Mentors & Peers.**

	Peer	Peer Mentor	Peer Health Coach
<b>Training &amp; Certification</b>	N/A	~ 6-8 hours training	6 months of in-depth training with certification**
<b>Roles*</b>	SCI-Peer	SCI-Peer, Supporter	SCI-Peer, Supporter Advocate, Coach
<b>Relationship</b>	Unintentional & unstructured	Intentional short-term & unstructured	Intentional long-lasting & structured
<b>Focus</b>	Empathizing	Information Sharing to address immediate needs	Develop skills for long-term Behavior Change
<b>Tools &amp; Skills</b>	Share lived experience	Share lived experience SCI related knowledge & management skills	Share lived experience, SCI related knowledge & management skills Language-based/defined professional skill set

### \*PHC Roles & Gear Shifting

- PHCs **switch** between roles **naturally** to meet specific needs of peers.
- **Training** is the ‘gear stick’ that allows a PHC to **recognize & shift** into different modes as needed.

### P (Park)

*The very beginning:*  
Focus on listening & establishing relationship  
Roles: SCI-Peer, Supporter



### D (Drive)

*Moving forward:*  
BAP, instructing, working towards a goal  
Roles: SCI-Peer, Supporter, Advocate, Coach

### N (Neutral)

*In-between sessions:*  
Peer not ready for a change  
PHC defaults to supporting  
Roles: SCI-Peer, Supporter, Advocate

### L (Low gear)

*When come across challenges:*  
Solving problems, Challenger, Advising  
Roles: SCI-Peer, Supporter, Coach

### R (Reverse/Back-up)

*When peer is overwhelmed:*  
Peer needs to regroup  
Supporting, Motivating  
Roles: SCI-Peer, Supporter, Advocate, Coach

\* **Therapeutic modes** from Renee Taylor’s *The Intentional Relationship: Occupational Therapy and The Use of Self* was referred to inform **PHC modes shifting**. (Taylor, 2020)

### \*\*PHC Training Materials & PHC’s Confidence Level [average score/10]

Interpersonal/ Interactive skill base	Professional skill base/ Certification***
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relationship building [8.9]</li> <li>○ Shared story [9.2]</li> <li>○ Affirmation statements [8.8]</li> <li>○ Reflective listening [9.2]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brief Action Planning (BAP)*** [9.1]</li> <li>○ Mental Health First Aid*** [8.3]</li> <li>○ Identifying Support Systems [7.7]</li> <li>○ Resource Review [8.2]</li> <li>○ In-between call/text support [9.5]</li> </ul>

### PHC Training Perspectives:

#### Pros

- “Training is what makes you a **peer health coach**.”
- Training is “**infinitely important**” in building **professionalism & confidence**.
- PHC Training is helpful both in the **job/role & personal life**.
- Training provides “a good **structure**” for sessions & “gives us the **language**”.
- “Training let me know what to **expect**.”

#### Cons

- Situations that PHC felt **unprepared for**, e.g., topics of mortality.
- **Time lags** between different training items.
- Some of the training items **not specifically** designed for the needs of **SCI**.
- Challenging & time-consuming to **navigate health-care system & find resources** in different states.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

### SCI-PHCs are:

- People with **SCI** who **use their lived experience & training** to interact with & support peers in developing skills, strategies, & solutions to improve & maintain physical, emotional, mental, & social health.
- Unique & powerful part of the rehabilitation team who serve as **messengers** between peers & healthcare workers.

### PHC Training Recommendations:

- PHCs were **confident with & effectively used** training to support coaching
- PHCs suggested the following recommendations for improving the training to further support PHC roles:
  - **Condense** training timeline.
  - Meet **support professionals** early, i.e., psychologist & rehab nurse
  - **Review** training items on regular basis (in-services/ workshop)
  - **Tailor** training specifically to SCI with **trauma informed care, substance misuse, traumatic brain injury, SCI-related health information**
  - **Note-taking** skill training & tools.
  - Create **Tip booklet** & record **training videos**
  - Build **resource library** to include safety net services, community services, healthcare system information, & related resources

## Contacts/Acknowledgements

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PHC Infographic



References

