



Limbs 4 Life Peer Support Program



Becoming an amputee is a challenging experience for each individual. Losing a limb can be a time of fear and uncertainty. One of the most important sources of emotional support can come from family and friends, however they may not always know the right thing to do or say. Like you, they are also trying to make adjustments and gain a better understanding of what lies ahead. A peer support visit can sometimes fill this gap. Limbs 4 Life peer support volunteers are all amputees who have lived with limb loss for a number of years and regained their independence.

The Limbs 4 Life Peer Support program was established to provide new amputees and their families with access to trained volunteers. The program matches new amputees - or those about to lose a limb - with a volunteer who has experienced a similar amputation. Speaking with a peer support volunteer can play an important part in a new amputee's recovery and rehabilitation. Peer support volunteers can offer encouragement, information

and guidance. They can help to alleviate feelings of isolation and, most importantly, provide an ear to listen. Whether the cause of your limb loss was diabetes, vascular disease, cancer, trauma or infection, it can be comforting to discuss your concerns with someone who has been in a similar situation.

Our program is based on a model of mentoring that has been used for a number of years for many different health and wellbeing issues. It complements the services provided by medical professionals. These people praise the program for its effectiveness in assisting patients and their families with adjusting to their new lives. Many amputees have reported that receiving a visit from a peer support volunteer was a rewarding experience, one that gave them the chance to speak openly about how they felt, to address their issues and concerns, and to alleviate the fear of the unknown.

Limbs 4 Life peer support volunteers participate in

a comprehensive training program. The program includes presentations, discussions and workshops dealing with effective communication, empathetic listening skills, organisational policies and the resources available to assist amputees and their families.

The Limbs 4 Life peer support program currently operates throughout Victoria and in parts of South Australia. Peer support volunteers are able to either visit new amputees in hospital and rehabilitation centres, or to conduct discussions over the phone using our free call number. Online support is also available to those living in remote or regional communities via the AMP-Link amputee forum on the new Limbs 4 Life website.

If you or someone you know would like to receive a peer support visit, or if you are interested in becoming a peer support volunteer, please contact Limbs 4 Life on 1300 78 2231 www.limbs4life.org.au