

# LIVED EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT

## Things to Consider

### **Treat the process as a listening conversation between equals.**

Treat the process as a listening conversation between equals. Though life may not have afforded some people qualifications or professional experience, people with Lived Experience have lived through difficult circumstances and have unique insight in to the system. They have lived with the often catastrophic consequences of failures of services, policy and the system through no fault of their own. They are the experts.

### **Share power and decision making for the best outcomes**

People should have a say in how their lives are effected. If you truly listen to what people say and need, the answers are often obvious. Respect their insight enough to allow them to decide how to solve the problems with your organisation and the system. This is both more efficient and results in better outcomes for everyone, a true partnership

### **People are too complex to categorise with simple labels**

Being homeless for example may involve mental illness, disability, chronic health problems, histories of family violence, persecution of sexual identity/ race/religious minorities. Accept people as they are and don't assume they will fit into categories or boxes.

### **Be kind, be patient, be respectful. Ask do not tell**

People with Lived Experience have usually endured a lot of trauma. This will often come up in discussions. Doing this kind of work can be retraumatising. Aim to do no harm by being kind, patient, and respectful. Ask people what they need rather than telling them.

### **Pay people for their expertise and be flexible in how you pay**

Pay an amount that is fair and be prepared to cover more time than you imagine. This process may not be quick but it will provide better outcomes in the long run. Ask how people want to be paid and have multiple options available. Payment using supermarket vouchers prevents impact on government housing or benefits, which can have disastrous consequences.

### **Always aim to engage a diverse range of people and experiences**

Some common experience will exist but diverse experience offers insights missed by others. There is as much diversity within groups as between them.

### **Leave your judgements at the door**

Everyone is vulnerable to becoming disabled or homeless. It is common now, even for people who are working to not be able to find rental accommodation. If you are on a low income, or no income, it is often impossible. At least a million home owners do not have insurance. Many people are one illness, accident, fire, flood or financial loss away from homelessness or disability. If you became disabled and lost your income, how would you pay rent or your mortgage?

# Are You Prepared For Changemaking?

## Questions for Organisations

Organisations and academics often consult people with Lived Expertise to make sure policies and processes don't leave us behind or cause us harm. But too often what we say is used as proof of 'consultation' or even 'co-design', but there is no real change. frequently the only outcome is another report, or a resource that doesn't represent our voices or address the challenges we face. Over time this breaks trust. We disengage with services because, unless changes are made, those services remain inaccessible, not inclusive, and often unsafe. Safety is physical, psychological, social and cultural.

### Lived Experience Expertise

What are the underlying principles of your organisation?

What forms of KNOWLEDGE and EXPERTISE do your organisation preference over others?

### Community Connections

How do you currently work with people in the community?

Are you prepared to talk to people in your local community to ask what they need?

### Intersectionality

Does your organisation understand that many people are impacted by multiple and intersecting forms of Lived Experience?

### Trauma informed

Does your organisation have an understanding of trauma-informed ways of working and why that is so important?

### Beliefs and assumptions

What stories and assumptions do you hold about people with different sorts of Lived Experience?

What judgements are you making about the people you are working with?

What stories and beliefs are your practices and policies based on?

# Are You Prepared For Changemaking?

## Questions for Organisations



It may seem logical to begin consultation once a research project has been outlined, designed, and work has begun.. .....(LEAG to discuss wording about why that can cause problems?)

### Shared Decisions

How is power distributed when working with those whose expertise you seek based on our Lived Experience?

Are you prepared to share power and decision making?

### Accommodating Access Needs

Are you prepared to ask those you work with what they need in order to participate, and to keep that conversation ongoing?

Are you aware that access needs, supportive resources, and capacity to participate may change over time?

Are you prepared to ask, "What do you need?" and "How do we do it?"

Is it safe to ask for what we need?

### Setting a Shared Agenda

Are you prepared to involve the people whose expertise you seek as active participants - right from the beginning when the agenda is set, through to evaluating outcomes?

### Flexibility

Are you prepared to make changes to accommodate the access needs of those whose expertise you seek, even when that means changing how you usually work - the pace, timeline, methods of communication?

### Just Remuneration

Are you prepared to pay Lived Experience advisors for their time and expertise?

### Meaningful Change

Are you prepared to take action and / or advocate for change based on what you learn?

