



EFFECTIVELY RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SUICIDE TO A PROJECT/INITIATIVE

HOW TO: reach and engage people with lived experience of suicide who are not confident accessing health services

This is about trust more than anything. The stakes are also very high, as it is the people who won't generally reach out that we must hear from if we are to co-design and co-produce services and supports these people will actually have the confidence to connect with.

A safe and supportive environment must be created for people with a lived experience of suicide always, and this is especially true for those who have been hurt and harmed by the system. It requires the process to be led by people with a lived experience of suicide who are experienced in managing the very real power

imbalances that exist. In the same way, it relies on creating spaces and opportunities where people can speak their truth away from those who have, or represent a system that has caused harm. The best intentions of good people go a long way, but fundamentally there are people with lived experience of suicide who simply won't engage because the organisation/ structure/ service/ system that a person is aligned to is not trusted. An independent lived experience of suicide organisation with expertise in engaging and supporting people with lived experience of suicide can support the engagement of these most critical voices. Partnership is key here.

HOW TO: conduct a recruitment process

A thorough recruitment process consists of several touchpoints designed to progressively build trust and safety for the person with lived experience of suicide, including:

- 'Readiness to be Involved' reading material with built in reflection activities to support the person make an informed decision about getting involved.
- Expression of Interest form (often online but able to be printed) with carefully chosen questions to ensure safety for those who may be completing it while at home alone - do not ask for in depth descriptions of their lived experience at this stage.
- Readiness call - a one-on-one personal conversation (usually takes about 30 minutes) where key questions about readiness to be involved are explored together.

A series of recruitment questions need to be carefully formulated. Some examples:

- Do you feel this is a good time for you contribute?
- What is your preferred way in which to contribute? How can we support that avenue of engagement?
- What can you share with me about information you may need to make an informed decision about whether you engage in this discussion/ project?