



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

HOW TO: ensure people with lived experience of suicide are ready to contribute

Encourage people with lived experience of suicide to:

- Reflect on how sharing their lived experience makes them feel, how it impacts them before, during and after sharing.
- Determine their time availability and if they have the energy to give so much of themselves to others.
- Be clear as to why they wish to engage, understanding that sharing for shock value can be harmful to others, and untethered anger and frustration leads to closed doors. The most impactful contributions are made through sharing safely and with purpose.
- Consider the other 'characters' in their lived experience story, have any necessary conversations about what is theirs to share and the impact their sharing may have on all concerned, and make a decision regarding their involvement based on these additional layers of consideration.
- Determine where they wish to focus their engagement – individual engagement, advocacy and support, service and organisational change, service design and/or delivery, public speaking, lobbying and/or strategic systems and policy levels.
- Review their current level of skills and capacities to engage and contribute, and align these with appropriate engagement opportunities.
- Identify what additional training or information they need for any given engagement initiative.
- Understand what other skills (beyond their lived experience of suicide) they can offer during the engagement.
- encourage them to lean into their self-care rituals and scaffolding of support.
- Identify other lived experience of suicide networks and supports they can access to support their engagement, and draw on the experiences and knowledge of others for broader perspectives.
- Think about the likelihood of being exposed to different views and experiences of other people with a lived experience of suicide and how they will respectfully work together.

It is important to ensure, as best as possible, that people are ready to contribute from their lived experience perspective. This is done by facilitating a process by which a person can make an informed decision about their personal readiness to be involved, and a mutual decision can be made as to the person's ability to contribute in a safe, effective and impactful way.

Key considerations:

- Consider the nature of questions asked at different stages of the recruitment process which ought to be determined by understanding the environment and situation in which a person will be answering them.
- Provide comprehensive information about the purpose and desired outcomes of engagement so people can make an informed decisions as to whether it is the right type and time for engagement.
- Provide Roses in the Ocean's '[Readiness to be involved](#)' reflective reading.

In the event that a person decides they are not ready to participate, offer them the opportunity to remain in contact with the project and potentially involve them in other ways that are more appropriate for their current situation, as determined by them.

Occasionally, a situation may arise when you may have concerns about a person's readiness, perhaps where the applicant is very recently bereaved by suicide or has recently acted on their thoughts of suicide. It is important to have a conversation with the person to address these concerns and work together to determine if it is the best time for them. Together, additional supports could be arranged to enable them to participate. Ultimately the decision lies with the person with lived experience. They know themselves better than anyone else.