



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

HOW TO: recruit the right people to an individual initiative

There are a number of factors to consider when selecting people to participate in suicide prevention activities.

Four primary considerations are:

- 1 Recruit for purpose
- 2 Recruit for diversity of perspective
- 3 Recruit for level of expertise
- 4 Readiness to be involved (see HOW TO: ensure people with lived experience of suicide are ready to contribute)

Recruit for level of expertise

It is important to recruit the level of expertise required for the specific task/role. There is a vast difference between being able to safely and appropriately share your lived experience of suicide personal story, and having extensive and varied experience in bringing key insights and learnings from your lived experience, as well as the perspectives of others, in a knowledgeable way. Different tasks require different levels of sophistication and expertise in lived experience. Each is equally as valuable in the appropriate context and for the right purpose. When the level of lived experience expertise is not matched appropriately, it is to the detriment of all involved and desired outcomes may not be met.

Recruit for purpose

Clarity of purpose when recruiting people with lived experience of suicide into a project or initiative is paramount to engaging the right expertise, and in establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships. It is important to be clear throughout the recruitment process as to why you are engaging lived experience expertise, and over what time period - is it a one-off event or activity; a co-design process or an ongoing advisory group?

Ask yourself - whose voices/perspectives must be heard in order to determine and then achieve key outcomes?

Matching the relevant lived experience of suicide to the purpose of the task, project or role is critical. Not all lived experience is the same. For example: when seeking to develop a lived experience informed service for people who have made a suicide attempt, we need to recruit people who have made an attempt on their life. When requiring lived experience involvement in the analysis of evaluation data related to the impact of suicide deaths, people bereaved through suicide need to be recruited.

Recruit for diversity of perspective

Diversity of perspective relates to the various aspects of the lived experience of suicide, as well as diversity within a particular nature of the lived experience. Things to consider:

- Recruit the full spectrum of lived experience of suicide to ensure representation of multiple perspectives - suicidal thoughts, suicide attempt, carer, bereaved.
- Consider cultural protocols and engage with relevant organisations and communities to assist with recruitment.
- Engage people from various demographics, geographical locations, groups disproportionately impacted by suicide, and various underlying factors contributing to the lived experience of suicide (financial pressures, relationship breakdown, mental illness, etc).
- Invest time and effort to find people who will not engage with the health system as a result of past traumatising experiences within the system.
- When recruiting people who have experienced suicidal thoughts and/or an attempt on their life, look for various perspectives including underlying factors, frequency of thoughts, number of previous attempts, and in some very specific projects even the method chosen may need to be recruited for.
- When engaging people with a lived experience of suicide bereavement perspectives will differ depending on the relationship with the deceased (parent, sibling, child, friend), the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the death, the age of the deceased, and the intergenerational legacy left by suicide.
- When recruiting people with lived experience of supporting a loved one through suicidal crisis and /or attempt, the different perspectives gained from short- or long-term supporter roles are important, as are the various relationship to the person - partner, spouse, child, parent, friend, etc.