



SUPPORTING THE ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SUICIDE

HOW TO: support the integration of lived experience of suicide

As people with lived experience of suicide are integrated into projects, initiatives, teams and organisations it is important to consider what is needed to support the lived experience informed culture change that is being embarked upon.

Key considerations for existing staff:

- There will undoubtedly be existing staff with lived experience of suicide (some of whom may be comfortable disclosing it, while others will not).
- Existing staff may not be comfortable, ready, or equipped for being exposed to the authenticity of lived experience insights.
- Suicide literacy within the organisation is likely to be varied and quite often low.

Suggested supports and training programmes to upskill existing staff include:

- Lived experience of suicide capacity building workshops.
- Lived experience informed suicide literacy training.
- 'Putting Principles into Practice' workshop and open discussion forum.
- Critical Lens Workshop - 'Exploring the lived experience of suicide Language & Imagery Guidelines'.
- Access to independent external supports with reputable knowledge of lived experience of suicide.

Key considerations for existing staff with an undisclosed lived experience of suicide (who may disclose to HR or a line manager):

- Grant access to independent external support from a respected organisation that works in suicide prevention, and has expertise supporting people with a lived experience of suicide, to guide them through their feelings, questions or concerns.
- Connect them to a suicide bereavement counsellor or Postvention service (if bereaved).
- Connect to their employee assistance programme – requesting a specialist in suicidality.
- Provide SP CARE Companion Warmline number 1800 777 337.
- Provide suitable and reliable local and regional resources.
- Connect them with Roses in the Ocean's Lived Experience Engagement & Integration team on 1300 411 461 or enquiries@rosesintheocean.com.au



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HOW TO:

support the integration of lived experience of suicide (continued)

While it shouldn't be assumed that people with lived experience of suicide will require special support, it is important for it to be available before, during and after an engagement activity. Sometimes just knowing that support is available can be enough for people to feel supported.

PRIOR TO ENGAGEMENT

Afford choice and control to people with lived experience of suicide to determine their needs.

Invite people to articulate what they need to feel comfortable and safe participating.

Provide engagement details and resources to help people gauge, articulate and support their ability to effectively and sustainably contribute to an initiative including:

- the nature of engagement (in person/virtual/ 1-on-1 or group);
- the number of other people with lived experience engaged;
- structure of engagement based on other stakeholders;
- pre-reading including history of project, project specific language, acronyms.

Ensure it is understood that disengagement from project at any time will be supported.

DURING ENGAGEMENT

People with lived experience of suicide are involved in creating environments reflective of what constitutes safety for them.

Make it clear people are invited to contribute as much or as little as is appropriate for them.

Explore what a safe and supportive environment looks like whilst participating in the engagement, including promoting the principles of confidentiality, non-judgement, and respect for difference of experiences, identities, and perspectives.

Discuss the use of safe and appropriate language, and why method of suicide attempt or death is not discussed (unless the specific nature of the engagement requires it and has been disclosed prior to engagement).

Discuss the importance of self-care during the engagement and provide support information.

AFTER ENGAGEMENT

Remind people of the importance of self-care and encourage them to engage in a short self-care activity before returning to the day's activities.

Provide a follow up call by trained lived experience mentor who understands the impact of utilising lived experience.

Ensure an open invitation to provide feedback about the session/project.

Ensure remuneration for time and expertise is commensurate with other stakeholders.

Enable people to have access to supports that are appropriate to people with lived experience as determined by them, before, during and after engagement.

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Offer access to Lived Experience of suicide Mentor before, during and after engagement.