



Meaningful Incorporation of Lived Experience into SUD/OD Response

Foundations for a Framework

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WHAT IS LIVED EXPERIENCE?

Lived experience can be defined as “representation and understanding of an individual’s human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one’s perception of knowledge”¹ based on one’s own life. For the purposes of this poster, Lived Experience specifically refers to the above definition as it relates to experiences with opioid use disorder (OD), overdose, or substance use disorder (SUD). Examples could include but are not limited to persons diagnosed with OD or SUD (including those in recovery); persons who have experienced an overdose; and family members/friends who have been impacted by the OD, SUD, or the overdose of a loved one.

Why Engage People with Lived Experience?

How can Lived Experience Be Meaningfully Incorporated Into SUD/OD Response?



CDC’s Overdose Data to Action and SAMHSA’s State Opioid Response are actively funding peer support programs at the state and local levels. Federal, state, and local initiatives for using lived experience to improve research, policy, and practice are also occurring.

Engaging people with lived experience yields benefits or impacts at the following levels:

- Individual**
 - increased self-efficacy and empowerment, strengthened community connectedness, and a better understanding of federal programs and agencies
- Program/initiative**
 - increased representation and engagement of priority populations in the design, implementation, and evaluation services and programming
 - improved ability to deliver responsive services, programming, training, and technical assistance
- Organization**
 - contributed to new or improved federal policies and practices, including directing funding and resources toward the needs of the priority communities
 - enhancing service and delivery infrastructure, including mechanisms for ongoing and sustained engagement of lived experience experts.

Level of Engagement*	Definition	Examples
Lived Experience Provider	Roles that directly support communities with SUD.	Peer Support Specialist; Clinician
Gaining Insight	Working with lived experience populations to gain valuable insight and perspective regarding OD/SUD.	Storytelling; Interviews; Surveys; Focus groups
Consultation & Partnership	Utilizing lived experience expertise to gain in-depth and focused information on an ongoing basis	Consultant; Technical assistance Provider.
Advisory Leadership	Incorporating lived experience into leadership groups	Board/Committee Member; Advisor
Organizational Leadership	Senior executives and governing board members who use their lived experience lens to influence their organization’s policies and programs.	Agency or Department Director; Political Appointee.
Staff	Organizations directly seek out and welcome employees with lived experience. Employees would then use their lived experience to influence organizational work.	State or Federal Health Department Employee; Nonprofit or Private Employee.

*click each level for real world example

How can we support the engagement of individuals with lived experience?

- Provide Appropriate Infrastructure and Resources**
Example: Prioritize dollars to support the engagement of people with lived experience
- Prioritize Equity and Access**
Example: Provide diverse engagement opportunities and adequate resources to support individuals with varied types of backgrounds and lived experience.
- Use Thoughtful Engagement Practices**
Example: Build in enough time to allow people with lived experience to engage meaningfully
- Enact Policies and Protocols**
Example: Clearly define expectations, roles, & limitations through policies and procedures



EVIDENCE & RESOURCES

- Methods and Emerging Strategies to Engage People with Lived Experience
- Communities are attempting to tackle the crisis’: a scoping review on community plans to prevent and reduce opioid-related harm
- Lived Experience Toolkit. Suicide Prevention Resource Center
- SAMHSA Bringing Recovery Support to Scale Technical Assistance Center (BRSS TACS) Strategy: Peers

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