

Summary:

National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines

Complete versions of the Guidelines documents are available for download from the National Mental Health Commission webpage:

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/lived-experience/lived-experience-workforces/peer-experience-workforce-guidelines/>

For information on designing Lived Experience roles and creating position descriptions, please refer to the companion document “Lived Experience roles: A practical guide to designing and developing Lived Experience positions”.

For training for *all staff* to learn the key concepts of the National Guidelines, go to Lived Experience Training (.org) <https://livedexperiencetraining.org/>

Purpose of the Guidelines

The Guidelines apply to all states and jurisdictions, providing a roadmap for funding bodies/policy makers, organisations and Lived Experience workers to facilitate effective development of the Lived Experience workforce across diverse position types and settings. Although the guidelines have been developed with a focus on mental health Lived Experience roles, there is applicability across other sectors such as disability, suicide prevention, and alcohol and other drug use or dependence.

The guidelines are inclusive of both the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces and provides detail on the similarities and differences of these distinct perspectives. The guidelines acknowledge the need for the Lived Experience workforce to be reflective of our diverse communities. The guidelines and associated resources:

Strengthen understanding and perceived value of the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces

Guide effective Lived Experience workforce development through all stages of development

Provide practical actions and resources for Lived Experience workers, funders, policy makers and organisations to support Lived Experience workforce development

Guide development of roles across diverse organisational levels and contexts that uphold the values and principles of Lived Experience work

Provide a roadmap for organisational leaders to establish governance and policies for development of the Lived Experience workforce

Inform sustainable ongoing development of the Lived Experience workforce

Contribute to transformational change

Acknowledgement and Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Perspectives and Priorities

It is critical that the guidelines embrace a commitment to honouring and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and promote alignment of Lived Experience work to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and practice. Australia's First Nations Peoples represent two distinct cultures: Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Within these broad cultural groups there is also great diversity of cultures, languages, kinship structures and ways of life.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lived experience is complex and based within a history of colonisation, inter-generational trauma, spirituality, cultural practices, and protocols. It is imperative that the opportunity for empowerment, choice and self-determined leadership comes from within communities. Lived Experience workers who are from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community align with culturally inclusive and culturally led responses.

There is need for service providers to have on-going conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities to explore what Lived Experience work involves and how it might be viewed differently within communities, considering the need for acknowledging potential conflicts of workplace expectations versus the communities' expectations, and concepts of social and emotional wellbeing.

Without intentional and specific inclusion of appropriate and respectful responses in our pledge and commitment to closing the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, these guidelines would not reflect the significant need for inclusivity and collaboration. The leadership, cultural practices, and expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across all parts of the Australian mental health and suicide prevention sector is critical to improving outcomes and building strong and powerful input to the Lived Experience workforce. This aligns with the foundational principles of the [Gayaa Dhuwi \(Proud Spirit\) Declaration](#).

Dedication

These Guidelines would not have been possible without the many hundreds of people who contributed their valuable time and expertise to help inform, shape, and refine the documents. Nor would they have been possible without the pioneers in the consumer movement who paved the way over many decades for the possibilities that exist today. Therefore, we dedicate this work to all people with a lived experience of mental health challenges, as well as their families and significant others. We stand in solidarity, with hope that anyone can go on to live a purposeful and meaningful life of their own choosing.

This Summary has been modified from the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines. The National Mental Health Commission remains the copyright holder of the work in compliance with their attribution policy.



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Priority and Benefits of Lived Experience Workforce Development

The guidelines were a directive of the Fifth National Mental Health Plan, recognising the value of the Lived Experience workforce and prioritising ongoing support and workforce development¹. Effective Lived Experience work is increasingly recognised for its unique and necessary contribution to the national reform agenda²³. Lived Experience work is particularly significant in contributing to service transformation in the areas of recovery-oriented and person-directed service delivery⁴.

The guidelines recognise the growing evidence that a well-supported Lived Experience workforce results in benefits for people accessing services, families, social networks, the broader community as well as organisations and colleagues in non-designated roles. Lived Experience work strengthens connection, resiliency, choice, and hope, improving the lives of individuals, and assisting to transform services.

Benefits for All

Social justice
Equality
Diversity
Increased value of lived experience
Increased hope and optimism – raising expectations of what is possible for people with lived experience
Greater wellbeing and inclusion
Improved culture for safe sharing
Challenge discrimination and prejudice

Benefits for Families, Carers & Social Networks

Lived understanding aids rapport and relationships built on connection and trust
More equitable relationships
Foster a sense of belonging/community
Focus on human rights/social justice
Living example of hope
Increased empathy
Advocacy
Mutuality

Benefits for People Accessing Services

Risk adverse approaches replaced by dignity of risk
Lived understanding aids rapport and relationships built on connection and trust
More equitable relationships
Foster a sense of belonging/community
Focus on human rights/social justice
Living example of hope
Increased empathy
Advocacy
Mutuality

Benefits for Organisations and Colleagues

Greater recovery understanding/orientation
Contribute to more person-directed approaches
Co-production leads to safer and more accountable services
Contribute to more inclusive, flexible, resilient work culture
'Bridge' of understanding between people accessing services and colleagues in traditional roles
Reduced need for ongoing formal support and hospitalisation
High return on investment

Adapted from Byrne, L., Wang, L., Roennfeldt, H., Chapman, M., & Darwin, L. (2019). *Queensland Framework for the Development of the Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce*. Queensland Government: Brisbane.

¹ Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) (2017). The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan. Retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/0209d27b-1873-4245-b6e5-49e770084b81/Fifth-National-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-Plan.pdf>

² Productivity Commission (2019). Mental Health, Draft Report, Canberra. Retrieved from: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health/draft/mental-health-draft-overview.pdf>

³ State of Victoria (2019). Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Interim Report Summary, Parl Paper No. 101 (2018–19). Retrieved from: https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/download_file/view_inline/2179

⁴ Department of Health and Ageing. (2013). A national framework for recovery-oriented mental health services: Policy and theory. Retrieved from [https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/51A6107C8A3B0187CA2582E4007A5591/\\$File/recovpol.pdf](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/51A6107C8A3B0187CA2582E4007A5591/$File/recovpol.pdf)

Terminology and Definitions

Lived Experience workforce (also referred to as the peer workforce) is an umbrella term used to describe both the personal (consumer) and 'family/carer' workforces. However, it is recognised these are separate workforces and the role types have distinct ways of working, informed by different types of understanding/experience. Designated Lived Experience roles are found in diverse settings and position types and can exist at all levels of organisations/the sector and beyond, in industries such as higher education.

Personal Lived Experience roles are informed by first-hand or direct experiences of mental health challenges, service use, and/or periods of healing/personal recovery.

Family/carer roles are informed by experiences of supporting someone else through mental health challenges, service use, and/or periods of healing/personal recovery.

Non-designated roles are *not* designated Lived Experience positions. Many people in non-designated roles identify privately or publicly as having a lived experience and bring this valuable insight to the workplace. However, they are not employed to work from the perspective of their lived experience, instead their positions are informed by different priorities and/or disciplines. As a result, they are not part of the designated Lived Experience workforce.

Honouring **multiple perspectives** is a principle of Lived Experience work and personal recovery that includes the need to respect different views and acknowledge that each person's experience and preferences will be unique and individual to them including language and terminology choices.

Lived Experience Work

Lived Experience work focuses on how common experiences are understood and applied to benefit others. Relationships have less power imbalance than traditional service provider/service user relationships.

Key to qualification: experiences of loss of hope, understanding hope as essential for human life and ability to provide a living example of hope for others. The lived experiences were so significant they caused a major reassessment of life as they knew it, future plans and view of self.

Particularly for people in Lived Experience 'leadership' or senior roles (including management, education and research positions) it is critical to have worked previously in Lived Experience roles and/or demonstrate strong understanding and connection to the broader consumer movement and concepts.

Allies/Allyship

Allies are employed in non-Lived Experience roles and actively promote & support the Lived Experience workforce. Allies are essential to successful Lived Experience workforce development.

Allyship refers to the advocacy and ongoing action of allies. Allyship is needed at all levels of the sector/organisation, at all stages of workforce development and includes:

- Practical support through promotion, education and removing barriers to effective Lived Experience employment.
- Creative use of resources/investment in Lived Experience roles.
- Active opposition to discriminatory language, policies and practice.
- Proactive sharing of power and creating opportunities for Lived Experience leadership.

Co-production

Co-production describes the collaborative partnership between Lived Experience workers and non-Lived Experience workers.

Co-production occurs when Lived Experience workers are included at all stages of planning, initial design, development, delivery and evaluation.

Co-production provides equal status to Lived Experience workers and recognises the value of Lived Experience perspectives, knowledge and expertise.

Co-production acknowledges lived expertise in recovery-orientation, being person-directed, and better understanding the experiences and views of people accessing services.

Effective co-production occurs when all partners feel valued and have the skills and confidence to contribute fully.

Overview of the Guidelines

The guidelines are separated into two main sections:

Understanding the value of Lived Experience Work

Outlines values and principles informing Lived Experience work

This section outlines the underpinning values and principles of Lived Experience work and allows Lived Experience workers, funding bodies/policy makers, organisations, and others to understand authentic Lived Experience practice.

Understanding authentic Lived Experience work is essential for all aspects of Lived Experience workforce development and provides the foundational knowledge to progress to the next section - the Stages of Development.

Stages of Development

Outlines stages of development for building the Lived Experience workforce

This section details the recommended stages and steps to build a robust, effective, and well supported Lived Experience workforce.

The Stages of Development are divided into:

- *Early stages* - emphasising preparation
- *Intermediate stages* - focusing on embedding Lived Experience roles
- *Mature stages* - achieving systems transformation.

Understanding the Value of Lived Experience Work

What Informs Lived Experience Work

Lived Experience work is not only informed by a person's individual experiences, but also universal experiences of discrimination, marginalisation, exclusion and feeling powerless. Personal Lived Experience roles also commonly include experiences of loss of identity, human rights and citizenship.

Lived Experience work is informed by collective experiences and perspectives that are tied to the common values and principles of the consumer movement and shaped by the broader Lived Experience workforce. Shared Lived Experience views enable people to reframe their lived experience in ways that are healthier and more helpful - as part of a whole life - rather than the defining or limiting characteristic. Part of the work involves regaining a stronger sense of self by challenging unhelpful and damaging messages or beliefs and creating a new identity/belief based on ideas that empower and build hope.

Lived experience roles are diverse; however, all roles are characterised by a commitment to using lived experience to benefit others, uphold human rights and contribute to systems change.

Lived Experience work is based on common experiences, some of which can be traumatic or draining for workers to remember and engage with. Employers need to consider this emotional cost in work planning and allocate time for processing, debriefing and ensuring access to Lived Experience supervision (internal or external) and networks.

The Uniqueness of Lived Experience roles

The starting point for understanding the uniqueness of Lived Experience work is the recognition of its specialist knowledge and experience base.

Unique knowledge, abilities, and attributes

Profound life-changing mental health challenges that have led to a new life direction and concept of self

Or: Life-changing experiences while supporting someone with mental health challenges that have profoundly impacted their life/world view

Personal identification with and experiences of service use and/or advocating for someone using services

Understanding experiences of marginalisation, exclusion, discrimination, loss of identity/human rights/citizenship

Willingness to purposefully share experiences and parts of personal story in work role

Understanding both experiences of hopelessness and the critical need for hope - how to move from a position of hopelessness to one of hope

Willingness to use emotional understanding and knowing as key to work role

Willingness to be vulnerable and publicly 'out'

Understanding the personal impact of experiences of trauma

The degree of empathy and what they are able to understand and empathise with

Greater equality and efforts to reduce power imbalances with people accessing services, including no involvement with coercive or restrictive practice of any kind

Being an advocate/change agent

Level of awareness about self-care and skills/strategies to prioritise it

What makes Lived Experience work effective?

Applying lived expertise: not just having a lived/living experience but what has been learned through that experience and how it's applied

Links with and understanding of the wider consumer movement and concepts

Work that is values-based and authentically lived experience-informed, person-directed and aligned with recovery principles

A social justice and fairness focus informed by understanding power imbalances

Significant understanding and ability to use personal story effectively and appropriately, for the benefit of the other person or system/service reform

Convey or inspire optimism and hope

A bridge between organisations and people accessing services/supporting people accessing services

Understanding of intersectionality (overlapping identities and experiences) and the impacts of culture and identification

Trauma-informed: awareness of the role/impact of trauma and how to respond sensitively and appropriately

Resilience in the face of discriminating, prejudicial and disempowering attitudes, practices, and policies

Focus on the relationship

Greater flexibility and scope in practice and ability to be responsive to the person, rather than be driven by a prescribed agenda

Specialisation may be useful depending on the context and experience e.g., people from the Deaf community, youth, people with experiences of family violence etc.

Values and Principles Informing Lived Experience Work

Ultimately, Lived Experience work is distinguished not so much by what Lived Experience workers do but how they do it. The 'how' is guided by Lived Experience values and principles.

Values are important for both personal Lived Experience and family/carer workers. Values are central to Lived Experience work and inform Lived Experience practice.

The following lists of values and principles were developed using existing literature and engagement with the Australian Lived Experience workforce.

Core values	What does it mean?
Hope	Belief in people's fundamental capacity to overcome challenges
Equality/Equity	Working from a place of common humanity and vulnerability. Actively working to minimise power imbalances
Mutuality	Being in a relationship with another person where both people learn, grow, and are challenged through the relationship. Sharing responsibility in relationships
Empathy	Understanding another's experience from a point of common experience and genuine connection
Choice	Acknowledging and respecting each person's choices, dignity of risk and boundaries. Acknowledging that the person is the expert of their own experience
Respect	Honouring another's view and experience without judgement or making assumptions
Authenticity	Integrity, being open, honest, trustworthy, and transparent in work practices and relationships. Valuing the use of lived experience and vulnerability in the service of others transforms these from what may have been perceived as weaknesses into strengths
Belonging/Inclusion	Respecting and understanding the value of inclusion and impact of exclusion. Recognising intersectionality and valuing diversity culture, spirituality, membership in chosen groups and community
Interdependence/interconnectedness	Recognition that we exist in relationships and that the relationships with families and/or social networks are often impactful in our lives and important to healing
Justice/Human Rights	Understanding the impact of social justice/inequity on identity and opportunity e.g., race, culture, sexual orientation. Recognising that equal access to resources and support is an important factor in everyone's recovery and healing. Recognising the consumer movement as a response to the history of social injustice and discrimination towards people with lived experience. Recognising how Lived Experience work is connected to the human rights movement and upholding the human rights of people with lived experience

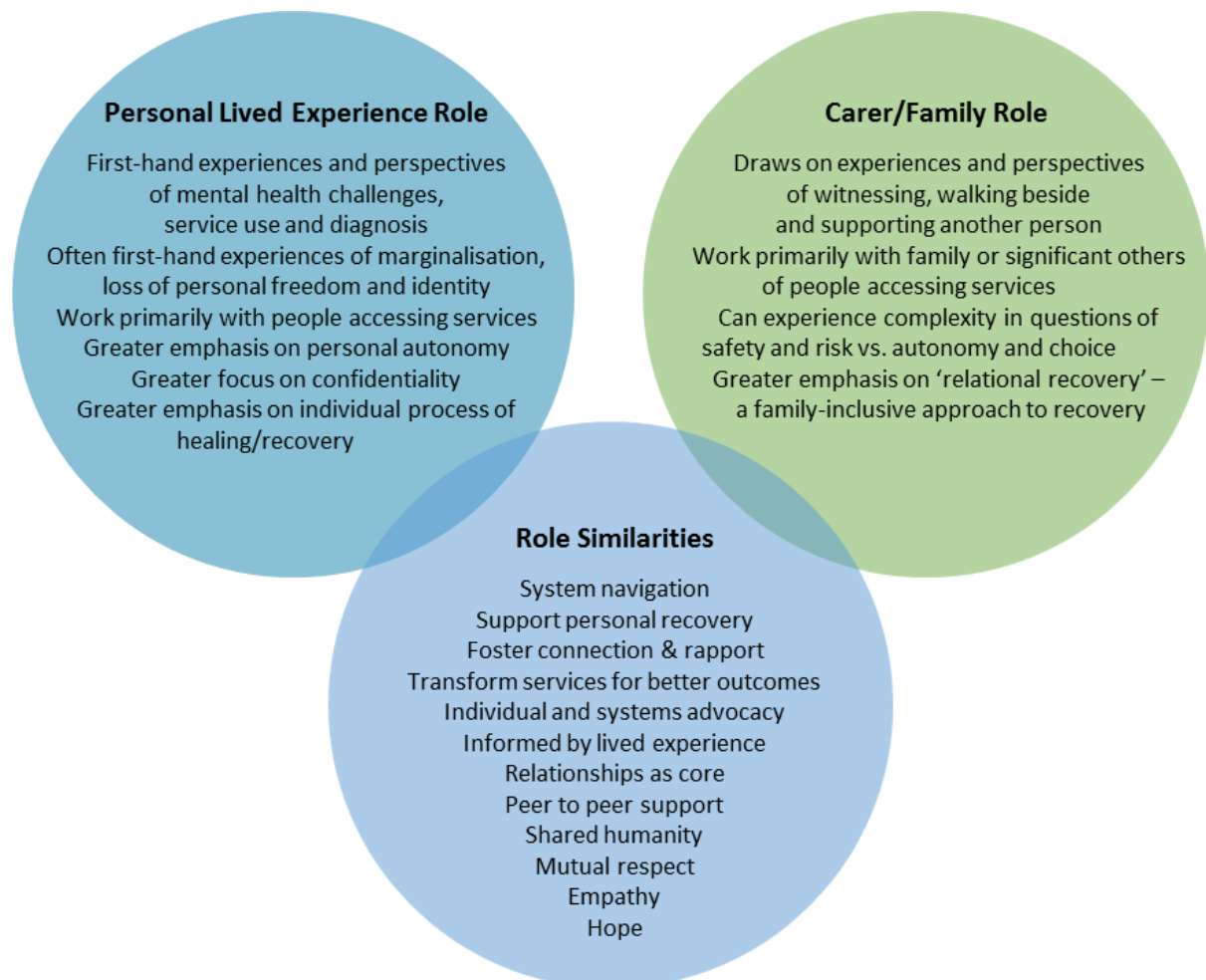
Guiding **principles** flow from values and shape how Lived Experience work is practiced. In essence, principles embody the 'character' and philosophy of the Lived Experience workforce. Principles also guide and inform funders and organisations in the development of Lived Experience roles, programs, and policies across all governance levels.

Principles	What does it mean?
Lived Experience as expertise	The expertise that arises from a lived/living experience is of equal value to other types of expertise, including academic qualifications
Self-determination	Respecting individual choice and personal agency
Recovery-focused	Recognises that individuals can define what recovery/healing means to them, and each person can create a life that is meaningful for them. Interactions underpinned by hope
Person-directed	Service access and individual recovery planning/journey is directed by the person themselves and recognises the person as the expert of their own experiences. Respects where each individual happens to be in their journey of recovery/healing, and recognises that goals, values, spirituality, beliefs, and choices will be unique to each person
Strengths-based	Identifying and drawing on existing strengths to support growth, recovery and healing. Recognising the value/learning that can come from experiences of crisis
Relational	Relationships are the basis of practice and connection is used to build relationships of trust. Relationships are also critical to the effective embedding of Lived Experience workers within multi-disciplinary environments
Trauma-informed	Acknowledges the impact and prevalence of trauma, negative experiences and loss of control and power. Emphasises the need for physical, psychological, and emotional safety. Creates opportunities for empowerment and for people to take an active role in their own healing/recovery. This is also captured in the Lived Experience conviction that it is better to ask 'what happened to you' not 'what is wrong with you'
Humanistic	The relational nature of Lived Experience work is recognised for its effectiveness to engage people through human connection and a holistic focus
Voluntary	Participation is always voluntary (not coercive), and Lived Experience workers often take an active role in working towards eliminating forced treatment and restrictive practice

Similarities and Differences between Personal Lived Experience and Family/Carer Roles

There is little written about family/carers work and the similarities and differences between roles that are informed by personal and family/carers perspectives. Building this knowledge base is key to understanding these distinct workforces and supporting people in both role types to maintain the authenticity of their identified perspective.

Lived experience roles informed by personal, or family/carers perspectives have some shared features and some differences. Both roles place relationships as central to how they work, and both are informed by lived experience. The roles are also different as they are based on different types of experiences, resulting in different perspectives. The respective roles predominantly work with people who have similar experiences and perspectives, e.g., personal Lived Experience roles with people accessing services and family/carers roles with family, friends and significant others. The following table provides additional detail on the identified similarities and differences.



Multiple types of experience

Many Lived Experience workers have experiences of both first-hand service use/diagnosis/challenges and experiences supporting others. Most people gravitate to the job type that reflects whatever experiences were most significant or life-changing for them.

Combined Roles

Roles that combine both *personal* and *family/carer* perspectives are uncommon, not well understood and currently not advised as working from both perspectives could cause confusion, issues with boundaries and conflicts of interest. It is recommended that organisations seek advice from both personal (consumer) and family/carer Lived Experience leaders and peak bodies if they are considering combined roles.

Lived Experience Specialisations

Lived Experience roles reflect the broad range of skills, experiences, backgrounds and identifications of Lived Experience workers and people accessing services. Specialist roles recognise particular knowledge and skills in relation to specific experiences. Examples of specialisations are experiences of domestic or family violence; eating disorders; perinatal and postnatal mental health; experiences of suicide, alcohol and other drug use or dependence; homelessness; involuntary treatment, and involvement with the criminal justice system. Specialisations may also include specialised skill sets, such as roles within training and academia.

People accessing services from diverse cultural backgrounds and identifications also benefit from the greater relevance, understanding and knowledge of specialised Lived Experience work. This includes specialised roles for: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; members of the Deaf community; people with disability; veterans; youth; older persons; and people who identify as neurodivergent or LGBTQIA+.



Stages of Development Model for the Lived Experience Workforce

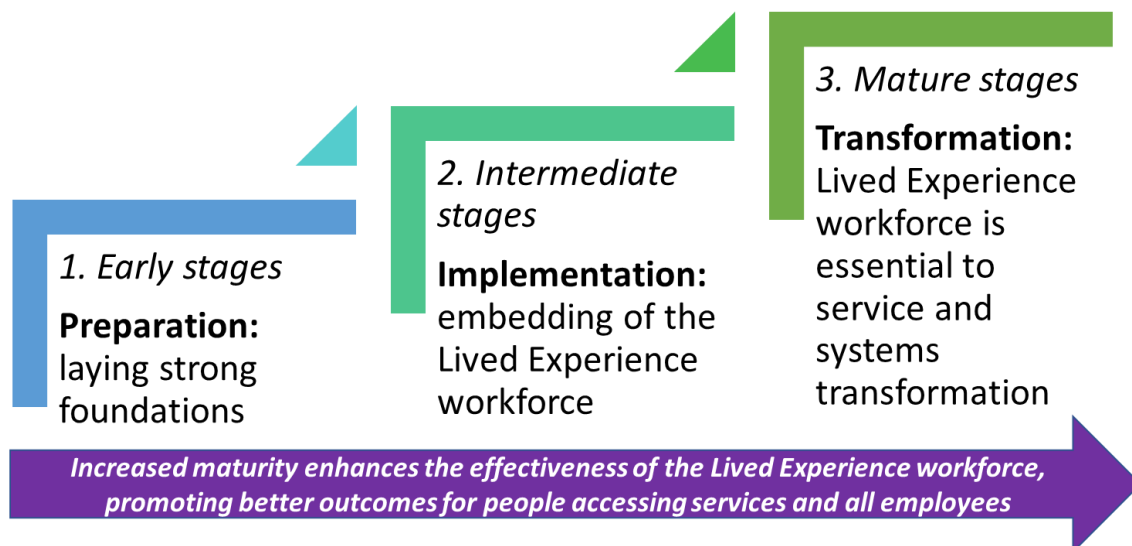
A three-stage model is outlined to enable Lived Experience leaders, funding bodies/policy makers and organisations to follow actionable steps to co-create a governance structure and environment that supports sustainable and effective Lived Experience workforce development. This is achieved by incorporating evidence-based strategies underpinned by Lived Experience principles, e.g., embedding mutual responsibility for the success of the workforce, facilitating organisational commitment, and developing accepting workplace culture.

The Stages of Development are divided into:

1. **Early stages** with an emphasis on preparation/how to get started.
2. **Intermediate stages** focusing on implementation/embedding Lived Experience workers.
3. **Mature stages** demonstrating Lived Experience workers as part of achieving systems transformation.

The stages model is designed with the knowledge that different organisations, sectors and jurisdictions are at different stages of Lived Experience workforce development. The tasks can be addressed at different times and in alternate orders, according to the needs and current state of development in individual jurisdictions and organisations. Organisations are encouraged to familiarise themselves with all stages of development regardless of where they anticipate their development currently sits, to ensure strong foundations for meaningful future development.

Information across the stages has been grouped under themes: workplace culture and strategies; policies and processes; training and development. In each stage, the themes reflect different levels of maturity, i.e., early stages are focused on preparation, intermediate stages on implementation/embedding, and mature stages on transformation. A condensed summary of these stages and themes follows:



Detailed Information

Throughout the stages there are specific tasks for Lived Experience leaders, funding bodies/policy makers and organisations. In the guidelines document, greater detail is provided on these tasks, including the 'why' and the 'how'. There are also action lists with specific actions for the different groups.

There are key actions that support the sustainable development of Lived Experience workforces. These are grouped in the Guidelines as Workplace Culture and Strategies, Policies and Practices, Training and Development. A more comprehensive three-page breakdown of key areas at different stages of development, including a plain language explanation of the tasks, is provided on the following pages or further detail is provided in Chapters 2-6 of the Guidelines.

Workplace Culture and Strategies	Policies and Practices	Training and Development
<p>Lived Experience literacy and ongoing learning for senior leaders, to build understanding, valuing and acceptance of Lived Experience</p> <p>Develop whole of workforce commitment to Lived Experience by building philosophical alignment, financial investment and staged plans for development, and communicating these effectively throughout all levels and areas of the organisation</p> <p>Building relevant relationships to strengthen understanding of and guidance from Lived Experience and Diverse perspectives</p> <p>Pro-actively create leadership and meaningful co-production opportunities for Lived Experience</p>	<p>HR and other policies are aligned to and support authentic Lived Experience practice</p> <p>Lived Experience sources help to inform effective recruitment processes including position descriptions</p> <p>Lived Experience roles are employed at all levels of the organisation to have authority for impact, provide role clarity supervision, career progression, and contribute to reform priorities</p> <p>Recovery-orientation is prioritised and progressed by the employment of Lived Experience workforce</p> <p>Additional considerations for Lived Experience Workers in involuntary settings are planned for and include Lived Experience guidance and strategies to assist the move towards eliminating these practices</p>	<p>Whole of workforce training from orientation on (periodically revisited) for and about Lived Experience principles and practice</p> <p>Whole of workforce education on: the value of diverse perspectives including cultural capacity building, trauma-informed approaches, human and consumer rights, and (where relevant) the rights of people in involuntary settings</p> <p>Education and promotion of Lived Experience work to all people accessing services, their families, friends and significant others</p> <p>Timely provision of Lived Experience supervision for all Lived Experience workers</p> <p>Training for non-designated line managers on how to support Lived Experience roles effectively</p> <p>Professional development opportunities for Lived Experience workers including networking, role specific training and attendance at CoPs, seminars and conferences to share and build knowledge</p>

Early stages: Preparation

Regardless of where organisations currently are in their development process, it is never too late to review and address the early steps that lay the foundations for effective workforce development.

	Areas of focus	What does it mean?
Workplace Culture and Strategies	Leadership understanding of Lived Experience work	Expose leaders to Lived Experience work and perspectives to develop their understanding and broaden perceived value of lived experience
	Build whole-of-workforce commitment to Lived Experience	Leaders commit to Lived Experience work and communicate it as essential and core to business throughout the workplace
	Financial commitment	Leaders plan and commit to sufficient long-term, sustainable financial investment to allow effective development of the workforce
	Build Lived Experience relationships and literacy	Build relationships and gain guidance from Lived Experience sources to improve understanding of roles/benefits and how to best support the Lived Experience workforce
	Build understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and priorities	Build relationships and gain guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sources to work respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
	Build awareness of diverse perspectives	Build understanding of diverse perspectives to increase motivation to create a workforce that meets the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and identifications
	Build awareness of the value and unique challenges in regional, rural and remote areas	Understand the unique challenges for people working in regional, rural, and remote areas. Consider how Lived Experience roles can be introduced/sustained in these areas
Policies and Practices	Review HR and other policies	Policies and procedures reflect Lived Experience concepts. Plan for increasing co-creation with Lived Experience workers
	HR policies for flexibility and workplace adjustments	Flexibility and workplace adjustments are easily accessible and available for all employees
	Develop position descriptions and recruitment processes	Position descriptions and recruitment processes are co-produced with/informed by Lived Experience: ensuring the creation of meaningful and authentic roles
	Lived Experience leadership roles	Lived Experience leadership positions help guide workforce development. People in these roles must have prior experience, connection and understanding of the wider consumer movement
	Coercive or restrictive practices and Lived Experience roles	Policy is clear that Lived Experience workers must not be involved in the use of coercive or restrictive practices, and it is inappropriate for clinicians to request Lived Experience support in implementing these practices
	Involuntary settings, considerations for Lived Experience workers	Consider and seek advice from Lived Experience sources on how Lived Experience values and principles are upheld in involuntary settings
Training and Development	Whole-of-workforce education about Lived Experience roles	Ongoing whole-of-workforce, Lived Experience-led training to strengthen understanding and acceptance of Lived Experience workers/work and reduce discriminatory and prejudicial attitudes
	Education and promotion of Lived Experience to people accessing services, families/significant others	Lived Experience workers and colleagues promote and broaden awareness of the value of Lived Experience roles to people accessing services, families and other stakeholders
	Education to increase understanding of the value of cultural diversity	Provide training to help staff see the value of diverse perspectives and cultures within the workplace, <i>e.g., cultural capacity building</i>
	Ensure appropriate supervision for Lived Experience roles	Prepare and train line managers in Lived Experience concepts and practices. Seek external, Lived Experience-led role supervision when internal provision is not yet available
	Provide Lived Experience apprenticeships /traineeships	Plan to provide paid Lived Experience apprenticeships and traineeships for useful on-the-job training and coaching

Intermediate stages: Implementation

With the preparatory groundwork laid in early stages, the intermediate stages focus on *embedding* Lived Experience workers. Rather than integrating Lived Experience workers to simply ‘fit in’ to the existing workplace culture and structure, embedding empowers the benefits and positive changes that can result from Lived Experience employment.

	Areas of focus	What does it mean?
Workplace Culture and Strategies	Allyship with the Lived Experience workforce	Allyship/championing by people at various levels helps to provide advocacy and practical actions to embed Lived Experience work and gain whole-of-workforce support and collaboration
	Create a Lived Experience workforce development strategy	Guidelines and other resources assist to develop a Lived Experience workforce strategy with key performance indicators (KPIs) and timelines. Sector wide evaluation and external auditing provides information on what has been achieved and what needs to be done for effective Lived Experience workforce development
	Mission statements recognise Lived Experience work as core business	Lived Experience work identified as core to business within the mission statement/other key documents to reinforce commitment
	Opportunities for co-learning with other organisations	Connection and co-learning with other organisations: develop inter-agency networks and communities of practice to share knowledge, gain information, and stay motivated
	Strengthen commitment to diversity and inclusion	Actively support diversity, e.g., recruit Lived Experience workers with diverse experiences, identifications and backgrounds, build relationships with diverse communities, respect culturally significant traditions, holidays and customs
	Development of Lived Experience workforce for regional, rural and remote areas	Develop strategies to support and retain Lived Experience workers in regional, rural, and remote areas, i.e., provide adequate technology, networking opportunities, timely line management, leave
Policies and Practices	Additional considerations for Lived Experience workers in involuntary settings	To maintain the integrity of Lived Experience roles in involuntary and secure settings, provide both Lived Experience workers and the wider workforce additional supervision, support, role clarity and opportunities to explore tensions
	Career progression	Employ Lived Experience leadership roles if not already. Lived Experience leadership roles provide career pathways, influence change and provide in-house, Lived Experience-led supervision
Training and Development	Training for intermediate/implementation stages	Whole-of-sector training on trauma-informed practice and human rights. Include these topics in higher education across all relevant disciplines. Provide timely orientation for Lived Experience workers. Training for Lived Experience and non-designated Lived Experience staff to develop mutual understanding of the different role types
	Training for Lived Experience workers and whole-of-workplace in involuntary settings	Training for the Lived Experience workforce on mental health laws, the rights of people in involuntary settings and coercive practice. Training within involuntary settings for whole-of-workforce on the role of Lived Experience in these settings
	Training and development issues for Lived Experience workers in regional, rural and remote areas	Offer scholarships and local provision of Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work. Provide regular Lived Experience specific training opportunities and ensure options for career development and progression
	Prioritise professional development and improving connections with Lived Experience networks	Provide funds to allow access to external professional development and enable broad opportunities for Lived Experience workers to gain and share knowledge/resources/best practice and build networks

Mature stages: Transformation

At mature stages authentic and supported Lived Experience practice is assisting the sector and individual organisations to achieve transformational change within service design and delivery. This assists realisation of national reform priorities through better understanding and implementation of recovery-oriented and person-directed approaches. Additionally, at mature stages greater whole-of-workforce benefits are evident, with safe sharing and more accepting work culture for all staff.

	Areas of focus	What does it mean?
Workplace Culture and Strategies	Sustained commitment to funding and resourcing the Lived Experience workforce	Reliable funding sources enable sustainable roles and access to professional development and training for workers at all career stages. Funding prioritised to develop industrial relations bodies and equitable Lived Experience work conditions across the sector
	Sustained commitment to growing a Lived Experience informed evidence base	Ongoing research led by or co-produced with Lived Experience researchers, continues to develop evidence/evidence-based practice, and explore theoretical underpinning of Lived Experience work. Dedicated funds provide Lived Experience research scholarships and fellowships for Lived Experience researchers across all career stages
	Challenging remaining workplace cultural barriers for Lived Experience workers	Explore the impact of existing corporate culture on Lived Experience roles. Nurture an inclusive corporate culture which embraces different ways of being, including fewer formal approaches
	Lived Experience roles represent diverse cultures and perspectives	Diversity across the Lived Experience workforce is embedded. Practice and policies reflect deep understanding of intersectionality and the diverse needs of specific experiences/identifications/cultures
	Safe sharing of lived experience is prioritised and more available for the whole workforce	The role of Lived Experience in influencing and changing workplace culture, including attitudes towards people with lived experience, can be used to help create a culture of safe sharing for all employees
Policies and Practices	Lived Experience roles are employed at all levels of the sector	Lived Experience roles are employed at all levels including executive governance, funding bodies and boards. Lived Experience roles at various levels routinely contribute to decision-making
	Progress towards eliminating coercive and restrictive practices	Create opportunities for Lived Experience roles to contribute to the sector goal of eliminating coercive and restrictive practices
	Person-directed and recovery-oriented service delivery and practice are increased	With significant progress achieved towards long-term reform goals, continue to make clear the role of Lived Experience in achieving/ensuring these goals are maintained. Regular auditing, feedback and evaluation of reform and Lived Experience workforce development are continued to maintain systems transformation
Training and Development	Education to continue to grow the Lived Experience workforce	Sustained access to professional development and training for Lived Experience workers across all career stages. Additional qualifications are supported by scholarships and organisationally provided study support
	Training and development are ongoing	All training identified in earlier stages continues to be revisited to ensure knowledge and practices are cemented and gains are not lost
	Lived Experience workers are benefiting from a range of effective supervision	A mature supervision system offers a range of flexible and timely supervision options and supports effective, authentic roles. Access to external Lived Experience supervision is supported by sector wide resources including registers of external Lived Experience supervisors
	Progress Lived Experience workforce development in regional, rural and remote areas	Explore additional ways to increase service access and choice in regional, rural, and remote areas through train-the-trainer workshops, localised training, and exchange programs with Lived Experience workers from metropolitan settings

Ongoing Development

In addition to the progress that has already been made, the Guidelines indicate significant areas for further development. Detailed actions for Lived Experience leaders, funding bodies/policy makers and organisations have been provided throughout the guidelines.

There are also overarching areas for further consideration which align with the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's Mental Health inquiry and the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

A systemic approach to investment in the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces, including a sector-wide national workforce strategy and KPIs, is vital to ongoing development. Investment must be sufficient, sustainable, and long-term. It must be informed by Lived Experience-led sources and best practice evidence.

Investment needs to encompass whole-of-sector education on the uniqueness and value of Lived Experience work and improve practical and philosophical support for expansion of the Lived Experience workforce.

Specific tasks to achieve this require Lived Experience leadership and/or meaningful co-production and take a whole-of-system approach. Tasks include:

Requiring funders, sector leaders and executive organisational staff to be educated in the value and contribution of the Lived Experience workforce, with responsibility to then embed this learning in orientation programs and annual workplace training

Requiring all mental health disciplines to embed understanding of the uniqueness and value of Lived Experience work, personal recovery, and person-directed approaches in all accredited and ongoing professional development and tertiary qualifications

Evaluation and auditing mechanisms to measure success and opportunities for ongoing development. Collect benchmark data and continue to expand the knowledge/evidence-base, with particular emphasis on diverse perspectives and those in regional, rural and remote areas

Implement networking, professional learning and development opportunities, expand career pathways and provide a wide range of education and training options while maintaining multiple pathways to employment

Widespread systems and organisational change that enables enhanced supportive structures, including industrial relations development, the funding of national peak bodies for the personal and family/carer Lived Experience workforces, appropriate supervision, and policies that protect the authenticity of the work