

The Role of Unions in Lived Experience Workforce Development

Another emerging direction influencing Lived Experience Workforce development is the current and potential role of unions.

As a grassroots member-led movement, the development and history of unions has parallels to the consumer movement.

Potential benefits of unionisation are:

- Assistance in developing whole-of-workplace policies that support mental health and wellbeing in the workplace and specific policies to support Lived Experience workers
- Advocacy for workplace conditions. This may include concerns about fair treatment, discrimination, workplace adjustments (also known as reasonable accommodations) or the impact of the emotional toll of Lived Experience work and re-traumatisation
- Support to develop industry awards or enterprise bargaining agreements that support the development of the Lived Experience Workforce within mental health and other sectors.

Currently there is no union dedicated to the Lived Experience Workforce. There are many unions in Australia that specialise in providing support and

representation according to workers' occupation, industry, employer and/or location. Unions charge different membership fees and may have different ways of providing support and advocacy.

For an example of how pivotal union support can be to the introduction and sustainability of Lived Experience roles in an organisation, read the summary of our recent paper which examines the introduction of Mental Health Advocate roles at Energy Queensland.

[Click here to go to the summary](#)

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