Lived Experience: What It Is and How to Include It

Video:

In this brief video, Leah Harris, MA, a suicide attempt survivor and trainer with the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, starts by providing a brief explanation of “lived experience”:

“We are experts by experience—people who have lived with mental health conditions, people who've been suicidal, people who are trauma survivors. That is just as valuable as the kind of academic credentials that people earn. And it’s incredibly important that we work together as partners.”

She then describes the benefits of involving people with lived experience to guide service design and delivery. Consider the benefits for your situation, and identify the next steps you can take to incorporate lived experience.

Recommended Resources

The Way Forward: Pathways to hope, recovery, and wellness with insights from lived experience [1]

This guide offers information on how to create a sustainable program for survivors of suicide attempt.
**A voice at the table** [2]

This documentary highlights the need for the voices of individuals with lived experience to inform suicide prevention planning, policy, and training.

**United Suicide Survivors International** [3]

This organization and website help people who have experienced suicide loss, suicide attempts, and suicidal thoughts and feelings—and their friends and families—to take action through leadership, collaboration, and advocacy.
Engagement informed by lived experiences [4]

In this three-minute video, Leah Harris, Director of Communications & Development at the National Empowerment Center, shares her thoughts about...

The role of peer support services in caring for those at risk of suicide [5]

This webinar explains the role of embedding lived experience into the Zero Suicide initiative and includes examples of how to do so.
Engaging Suicide Attempt Survivors [6]

In this four-minute video, attempt survivor and community mental health provider Barb Gay shares how survivors of suicide attempts can help us improve prevention, transform care, and save lives.

Links within this resource