



Developing Authentic
Engagement with
Persons w/Lived
Experience

AGENDA

Learn how to foster authentic engagement of individuals with lived expertise in programs, system design, and advocacy efforts. Presenters will share the significance of diversity and genuine power-sharing practices, and explore the overall benefits they bring. This session provides an opportunity for you to gain insights into effective strategies for meaningful involvement of individuals with lived experience, empowering you to enhance your own engagement practices, and create more inclusive and impactful initiatives.

- About Your Presenters
- Community Guidelines
- Understanding the Importance of Honoring Lived Expertise
- Fostering Authentic Engagement
- Embracing Diversity and Power-Sharing
- Guided Conversation
- Contact Information

About Your Presenters

Jae Lange (They/Them)

- Chief Community Organizer of Base Foundation
- Direct Service Specialist
- Community Strategic Team
- Circle Facilitator
- Mental Health First Aider

Stanley Sorrell Jr. (He/Him)

- Community Nutrition Education Coordinator, San Antonio Food Bank
- Community Strategic Team with National Alliance to End Homelessness

Camryn Bosko (She/Her)

- Direct Service Specialist, Marsha and Marians Neighbors
- MSW
- Circle Facilitator
- Mental Health First Aider

Alicia O. Collins (She/Her)

- Program Services Coordinator, Visitation House Ministries
- Program Services Coordinator, Single Mothers Support Services Program
- Certified Life Coach

**Who else is in the room? Add your
name/title/or what you do!
Scan this QR code to let us know!**



Community Guidelines

- 1. Safe Space:** Create a safe and supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences. This includes maintaining confidentiality and respecting personal boundaries.
- 2. Active Listening:** Encourage active listening. Participants should listen to understand, not just to respond. Avoid interrupting or dismissing others' experiences.
- 3. Empathy and Understanding:** Promote empathy and understanding. Encourage participants to put themselves in others' shoes and consider their perspectives.
- 4. Respectful Dialogue:** Foster respectful dialogue. Differences in experiences and opinions should be acknowledged and respected, not debated or dismissed.
- 5. Inclusivity:** Ensure inclusivity. Make sure that everyone, regardless of their background or experiences, feels included and valued.
- 6. Support and Validation:** Provide support and validation. Acknowledge the courage it takes to share personal experiences and validate the emotions and challenges associated with these experiences.
- 7. Scan this QR code to submit your own community guidelines**



Understanding Lived Experience



1

Definition and Importance

Lived experience refers to the firsthand knowledge and insights gained from navigating a particular challenge or circumstance.

Incorporating the perspectives of those with lived experience is crucial, as it ensures that solutions are informed by the real-world needs and perspectives of the people they aim to serve.



2

Role in Systems, Programs, and Advocacy

Individuals with lived experience possess invaluable knowledge and expertise that can inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of systems, programs, and advocacy efforts. Their input can help identify gaps, address pain points, and develop more effective and inclusive solutions.



3

Unlocking Hidden Value

By actively engaging with people who have lived experience, we can unlock a wealth of knowledge and perspectives that have often been overlooked or undervalued. This can lead to more holistic and impactful solutions that better address the root causes of the challenges faced by these communities.

Authentic Engagement



What is Authentic Engagement?

Authentic engagement goes beyond simply including individuals with lived experience in decision-making processes. It involves actively listening to their perspectives, valuing their expertise, and equipping them with the tools they need to be equal partners in shaping the solutions that impact their lives.



Why is it Important?

Authentic engagement fosters trust, builds stronger relationships, and ensures that the solutions developed are truly responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. It also empowers individuals with lived experience to become active agents of change, rather than passive recipients of services.



Fostering Authentic Engagement

Key strategies for fostering authentic engagement include adequately paying those with lived experience, create safe spaces for open dialogue, provide adequate resources and support, and actively addressing power imbalances to ensure equitable participation and decision-making.

Diversity and Power-Sharing



1

Importance of Diversity

Authentic engagement requires a diverse range of perspectives and experiences to be represented. This helps ensure that the solutions developed are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all people.

2

Understanding Power-Sharing

Power-sharing involves actively redistributing decision-making power and resources to individuals with lived experience, ensuring they have a meaningful voice and influence in the processes that affect their lives. This equips them to be equal partners.

3

Benefits of True Power-Sharing

When power is truly shared, it empowers individuals with lived experience to become active partners in shaping solutions, leading to more effective, sustainable, and equitable outcomes. Shared power leads to more innovative solutions, stronger community buy-in, and greater ownership - resulting in sustainable, impactful change.



Diversity of Perspectives



Diverse Representation

Ensuring a diverse range of perspectives, including those with lived experience, is crucial for developing effective and inclusive solutions.



Collaborative Approach

Fostering a collaborative environment where all voices are heard and valued is key to authentic engagement.



Empowerment

Empowering individuals with lived experience to be active partners in decision-making processes is essential for true power-sharing.



Building Trust

Establishing trust and creating safe spaces for open dialogue are critical for facilitating authentic engagement.

Strategies for Authentic Engagement

1

Intentionally Include those with Lived Experience

Proactively identify and engage with individuals and communities with lived experience, ensuring their voices are represented in the process.

2

Provide Resources

Allocate adequate resources, such as funding, training, and support, to enable meaningful participation and contribution from individuals with lived experience.

3

Foster Inclusive Spaces

Create safe, inclusive, and welcoming spaces that encourage open dialogue and empower individuals with lived experience to share their perspectives.

Barriers to Authentic Engagement

Power Imbalances

Existing power structures and hierarchies can create barriers to authentic engagement, as individuals with lived experience may feel marginalized or intimidated in decision-making processes.

Lack of Resources

Insufficient resources, such as funding, time, or support, can hinder the ability of individuals with lived experience to actively participate and contribute to the process.

Organizational Resistance

Organizational cultures that are resistant to change or unwilling to share power can make it challenging to implement authentic engagement practices.

Measuring Success

Increased Representation

Individuals with lived experience are actively involved in decision-making processes.

Shared Power

Power and resources are equitably distributed, with individuals with lived experience having a meaningful voice and influence.

Improved Outcomes

Solutions developed through authentic engagement are more effective, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

Strengthened Relationships

Authentic engagement fosters trust, collaboration, and stronger relationships between individuals with lived experience and other stakeholders.



LET'S TALK...

A FACILITATED CONVERSATION



Get in touch with us....



**Jae Lange
(They/Them)**

**BASE Foundation:
yourbasefoundation
@gmail.com**

**Marsha & Marians
Neighbors:
langej4@vcu.edu**



**Stanley
Sorrell Jr.**

**Email:
ssorrell@safoodbank.org**



**Camryn
Bosko**

**Marsha and
Marians
Neighbors:
boskocrf@vcu.edu**



Alicia O. Collins

**Visitation House Ministries:
alicia.collins@amormeus.org**