



NCOSS Lived Experience Framework

Principles and practices for
Lived Experience partnerships

November 2021

© 2021 NCOSS - NSW Council of Social Service. This publication is copyright. Persons and organisations have permission to reproduce part of this book if the original meaning is retained, and proper credit is given to the NSW Council of Social Service.



NSW Council of Social Service

Phone: (02) 9211 2599

Email: info@ncoss.org.au

Level 3, 52-56 William St, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011

Contents

Acknowledgment	4
Thank you to our Lived Experience Advocates	4
About NCOSS	4
<hr/>	
1 PURPOSE	6
How we developed this framework	6
The purpose of the Lived Experience Framework	7
A Human Rights Approach	8
What we mean by 'People with Lived Experience'	9
Lived Experience Advocacy	9
Different types of advocacy	10
<hr/>	
2 PRINCIPLES	11
Principle 1: Participation – towards empowerment	11
Principle 2: Empowerment – elevate and amplify	13
Principle 3: Co-production – involve early and throughout at all levels	13
Principle 4: Respect – value expertise and provide support	14
Principle 5: Representation and Equity– be accessible and represent equitably	15
Principle 6: Self-determination and Autonomy – confront oppression	15
Principle 7: Dignity – challenge stigma and be strengths-based	16
Principle 8: Partnership and Accountability – build authentic relationships	17
<hr/>	
3 PRACTICE GUIDES	18
Practice 1: Cultural Safety	18
Practice 2: Engagement	20
Practice 3: Remuneration	21
Practice 4: Education and training	23
Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality	24
Practice 6: Media and other third parties	25
Practice 7: Relationships	26
Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation	27
<hr/>	
GLOSSARY	28

Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the spirit of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and accept the invitation to walk with First Nations people in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. This Lived Experience Framework supplements the work that needs to be done to ensure the commitment of the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) to Voice, Treaty and Truth. We respectfully acknowledge the sovereign custodians of the many lands on which this Framework was developed and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.

Thank you to our Lived Experience Advocates

NCOSS recognises that leading practice in community work has emerged from social movements led by people with Lived Experience. NCOSS specifically acknowledges and thanks Lived Experience Advocates (LEA) Amir Bodenstein, Maddy Humphries, Renna Gayde and Jayden Oxtan-White who directly engaged with the process of developing this framework. Their commitment to advocacy and social justice will continue to influence and shape a more just and equitable Australia.

About NCOSS

NCOSS is the peak body for health and community services in NSW.

NCOSS works to progress social justice and shape positive change toward a NSW free from inequality and disadvantage. We are an independent voice advocating for the wellbeing of NSW communities. At NCOSS, we believe that a diverse, well-resourced and knowledgeable social service sector is fundamental to reducing economic and social inequality.

Human Rights Approach



Participation



Accountability



Anti-Discrimination



Empowerment

NCOSS Lived Experience Framework

Principles

1. Participation

2. Empowerment

3. Co-production

4. Respect

5. Representation and Equity

6. Self-determination and Autonomy

7. Dignity

8. Partnership and Accountability

Practices

1. Cultural Safety

2. Engagement

3. Remuneration

4. Education and training

5. Intellectual property & confidentiality

6. Media and other third parties

7. Relationships

8. Reflection and evaluation



Purpose

How we developed this framework

This framework was initially developed through a joint initiative of state-based Councils of Social Service representatives and **Lived Experience Advocates** from a range of **advocacy groups** and social movements who brought much experience, expertise and skills to the process. Much of the content in the practice guides in this document was developed in response to advocates' individual experiences of partnering for advocacy purposes. This **co-production** process reflects our commitment to the practice of a Human Rights Approach.

Third Space consultancy contributed to the draft framework to apply a human rights lens to the principles and practice guides.

NCOSS will endeavour to evaluate this framework on an annual basis. Lived Experience Advocates and members of the community services sector are welcome to provide feedback for the inclusion of updated versions of future frameworks.

The purpose of the Lived Experience Framework

The purpose of this framework is to guide and support NCOSS to systematically, transparently and ethically develop partnerships with Lived Experience Advocates, groups and communities to advocate for systemic change, and to actively build capacities of people with Lived Experience to lead and advocate in their own right.

This framework can also be used as a resource for NCOSS members, the broader community services sector and for advocates and policy makers working in partnership with all members of civil society.

This document explains how the framework is informed by a **Human Rights Approach**. It then outlines the eight core principles NCOSS commits to when engaging Lived Experience Advocates and advocacy groups:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Participation | 5 Representation and Equity |
| 2 Empowerment | 6 Self-determination and Autonomy |
| 3 Co-production | 7 Dignity |
| 4 Respect | 8 Partnership and Accountability |

These are followed by eight practice guides that will support NCOSS to partner with Lived Experience Advocates respectfully, ethically and safely:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 Cultural Safety | 5 Intellectual property and confidentiality |
| 2 Engagement | 6 Media and other third parties |
| 3 Remuneration | 7 Relationships |
| 4 Education and training | 8 Reflection and evaluation |

NCOSS acknowledges, respects and extends on the work of existing partnership frameworks and engagement protocols. These include the protocols and requirements of working within specific cultural, geographic and communal contexts, developed by communities themselves. This framework is intended to work in conjunction with recognised community and cultural protocols.

A Human Rights Approach

Human Rights are a set of standards which allow all people to live with dignity, freedom, equality and justice. Human rights are universal, interconnected, indivisible and inalienable; no right can be treated in isolation. The elements of participation, accountability, empowerment and anti-discrimination are key to applying a human rights approach.

A human rights approach is about:

- ensuring that both the standards and principles of human rights are integrated into all aspects of an organisation's activities, governance, policies, processes and programs
- supporting people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.

A human rights approach underpins NCOSS' Lived Experience Framework in promoting transparent, fair, equitable, responsive and participatory engagement, practice and governance.

Human Rights Key Elements



Participation

Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect them.

Participation must be active, free, meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and language which can be understood.



Accountability

Rights always trigger obligations and responsibilities.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that the standards of accountability for human rights are as high as possible.

Accountability requires transparency and effective monitoring of human rights standards as well as effective remedies for breaches.



Anti-Discrimination

All forms and multiple intersections of discrimination and barriers are prohibited, prevented and eliminated for engagement and participation to take place in culturally safe ways.

Recognise that some groups and communities are more vulnerable than others.

Prioritise those who face the biggest barriers to participation and realising their own rights.



Empowerment

Empowerment is the difference between wanting to act and being able to act.

People with Lived Experience should be fully supported to participate in activities and decision-making.

Achieving this requires the provision of appropriate and responsive support.

What we mean by 'People with Lived Experience'

Lived Experience is expertise gained from having a specific life experience and knowledge. This '*context expertise*' contrasts with academic or '*content expertise*'. Examples of people with such Lived Experience expertise include:

- First Nations peoples
- People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- People with disability, mental health issues or other chronic or severe health issues
- People with experience of poverty, unemployment, underemployment or unstable housing
- People with experience of violence or recovering from trauma
- People with different levels of literacy and/or education
- Younger people and older people
- One-parent families
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and gender diverse individuals and communities
- People living in rural and remote communities
- Any combination of the above groups.

Lived Experience Advocacy

A Human Rights Approach to advocacy puts into practice the principle that people have a right to influence cultural, social, economic and political changes that affect them. NCOSS partners with Lived Experience Advocates and advocacy groups, recognising and supporting their critical participation in designing, implementing and evaluating policies and programs that affect and impact them.

NCOSS and those involved in the development of this document recognise and respect the fundamental contribution that people-led social movements have made towards a more just and equitable society. These social change movements have forged the way for agencies like NCOSS to build on and progress this work.

As a state-wide peak agency in the social services sector, engagement is a pillar of all our work. NCOSS engages people with Lived Experience through:

- regular NCOSS policy and advocacy
- consultation with the sector
- seeking out opportunities and activities for partnerships
- direct approaches by advocates and advocacy groups.

NCOSS partners with:

- independent volunteers with Lived Experience engaged in **systemic advocacy**
- Lived Experience Advocates who represent an advocacy group
- people with Lived Experience who may hold formal roles within NCOSS
- people with Lived Experience who attend NCOSS activities and events
- member organisations who work with people with Lived Experience.

Different types of advocacy

Advocacy is a key method of engagement for NCOSS. NCOSS defines advocacy as strategic action that influences decision making to effect social, economic, and political change. Advocacy is focused on action, processes, and outcomes. Advocacy is a continuous process that can lead to changes in attitudes, behaviour, structures, and systems.

The different ways individuals and organisations can engage in and conduct advocacy are below:

Self-advocacy	An individual communicating their own interests, desires, needs and rights.	<i>"I have a right to participate and make decisions for myself"</i>
Individual advocacy	Supporting an individual to access information so the individual is able to make informed decisions.	<i>"I am accountable to the individual I am supporting"</i>
Systemic advocacy	Advocating for changes in systems and structures.	<i>"I work to change the system so that my community can participate"</i>
Policy advocacy	Focus on policy agenda and a specific policy goal.	<i>"I focus on policy to make systemic change."</i>
Social justice advocacy	Both individuals and organisations work on critical issues that directly affect people's lives and to change public attitudes, laws and policies.	<i>"I work to build a just and fair system where all people have access and can participate"</i>
Participatory Advocacy	Participatory advocacy puts people with Lived Experience at the centre of policy debates and decision making. It is founded on the belief that democratic governance is the task of citizens as well as governments. This type of advocacy aims to expand public space and citizenship.	<i>"I have lived experience and my knowledge is valuable"</i>



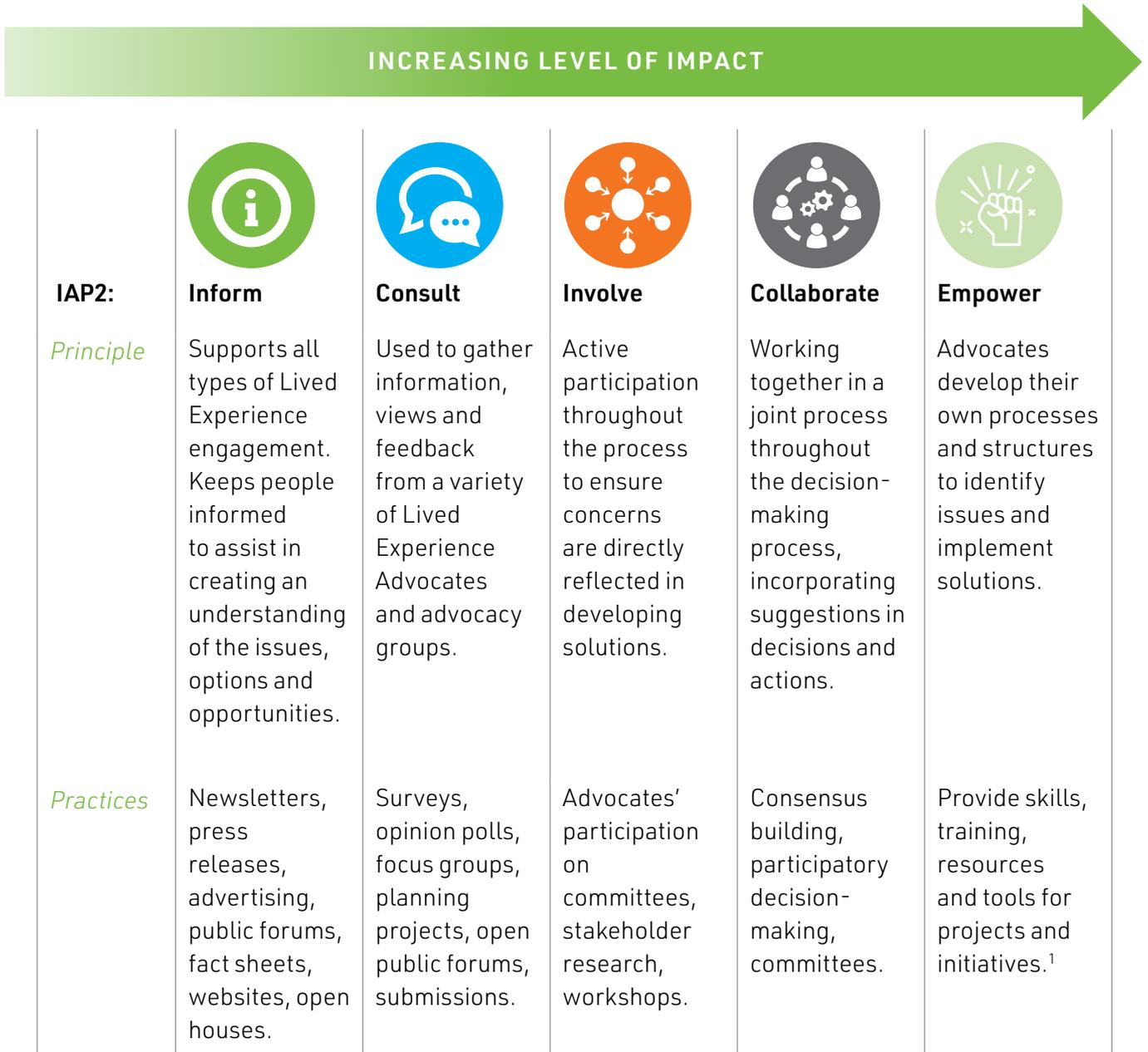
Principles

Principle 1: Participation – towards empowerment

Why this is important	How NCOSS can do it
<p>Participation is a key element and forms the basis of the NCOSS Lived Experience Framework.</p> <p>Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect them.</p> <p>Participation must be active, free, meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and language which can be understood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Practice 1: Cultural Safety· Practice 2: Engagement· Practice 7: Relationships· Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Different levels of participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of public participation distinguishes different levels of participation that are all important, each building on the previous. The higher the level, the closer it aligns with the principle of **self-determination**.



Principle 2: Empowerment – elevate and amplify

Why this is important	How NCOSS can do it
<p>Lived Experience advocacy plays a critical role in shaping social, cultural, economic and political life, enabling a just and equitable society. Using our position of influence, NCOSS can make room at decision-making tables for Lived Experience perspectives. NCOSS aims to place Lived Experience Advocates at the forefront of policy and program co-production, elevating their voice to speak for themselves and supporting them to build internal capacity to further self-advocate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 3: Remuneration · Practice 4: Education and training · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 3: Co-production – involve early and throughout at all levels

Why this is important	How NCOSS can do it
<p>NCOSS recognises the critical role individuals and communities play when designing, implementing and evaluating policies and programs that affect them. We support individuals to be strategic partners in addressing structural disadvantage. Advocates aspire to full engagement throughout co-production of programs and policies. Where possible, advocates and advocacy groups engage from inception, including the development of terms of the partnership. NCOSS also aims to include the voice of Lived Experience in internal organisational processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 4: Respect

– value expertise and provide support

Why this is important	How NCOSS can do it
<p>NCOSS values and respects the experiences, intellectual labour and other contributions of Lived Experience Advocates, including their contribution to the priorities and strategic direction of NCOSS. This expertise deserves recognition, ownership, remuneration and celebration.</p> <p>NCOSS aims to enable and empowers advocates to contribute in a meaningful way through relevant supports, training and development opportunities. We aim to provide a safe, trauma-informed environment for partnership work, ensuring people feel safe, comfortable, respected, heard and able to raise concerns. NCOSS aims to negotiate supports required by Lived Experience Advocates prior to activities and respects confidentiality.</p> <p>NCOSS respects the rights of Lived Experience Advocates to withdraw consent from participation and in processes and activities at any time.</p> <p>NCOSS provides information on the complaints and dispute resolution process to Lived Experience Advocates at the start of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 3: Remuneration · Practice 4: Education and training · Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality · Practice 6: Media and other third parties · Practice 7: Relationships · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 5: Representation and Equity – be accessible and represent equitably

Why this is important	How we can do it
<p>Lived Experience Advocates come from diverse communities such as those from the First Nations, LGBTI, culturally and linguistically diverse and disability communities, who experience historical and ongoing barriers to inclusion. NCOSS recognises and values diversity, and works to create partnership opportunities that are accessible and inclusive, with flexibility and a range of options for Lived Experience partnerships.</p> <p>NCOSS further recognises the experience of each individual is unique and contexts of each individual can determine how they experience disadvantage. Inequity can be intersectional and the support responses need to integrate diverse voices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 3: Education and training · Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 6: Self-determination and Autonomy – confront oppression

Why this is important	How we can do it
<p>It is the choice of Lived Experience Advocates whether to partner with NCOSS, to shape the partnership and to exit at any time. NCOSS respects the agency and autonomy of Advocates, their chosen identity and story, and supports how Advocates choose to express.</p> <p>Lived Experience Advocates are often impacted negatively by oppressive use of power and privilege due to social, cultural, economic and political structures, including stigmatisation of Lived Experience and paternalistic policy and programs. Power and privilege also exist in Lived Experience partnerships. However, NCOSS will make every effort not to reproduce existing power dynamics by dominating partnerships, nor will they take paternalistic actions that reduce autonomy or self-determination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality · Practice 7: Relationships · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 7: Dignity

– challenge stigma and be strengths-based

Why this is important	How we can do it
<p>Every Lived Experience Advocate has a right to be treated with respect. NCOSS approaches all aspects of advocacy and community work with openness, warmth, respect, empathy, acceptance and authenticity. NCOSS adopts a strengths-based approach, recognising the inherent skills, strengths, and expertise of people with Lived Experience.</p> <p>NCOSS commits to actively promoting the dignity of people with Lived Experience. NCOSS represents the stories of people with Lived Experience in a dignified manner, and we advocate for dignified representation and respect of all people with Lived Experience. NCOSS seeks to challenge the stigma around lived experience where it arises, and to shift the narrative to focus on the structural and systemic disadvantage rather than on the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 3: Remuneration · Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality · Practice 6: Media and other third parties · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Principle 8: Partnership and Accountability – build authentic relationships

Why this is important	How we can do it
<p>Working in partnership with people with Lived Experience is fundamental to a human rights approach to policy development and program delivery.</p> <p>NCOSS seeks to engage with Lived Experience Advocates as genuine partners. Partners approach the relationship with openness, warmth, respect, empathy, acceptance, authenticity and fairness. All Lived Experience advocacy partnerships and activities are purposeful and have transparent, accountable outcomes with clear evaluation criteria by which success can be measured. Partnerships provide effective feedback and dispute resolution processes.</p> <p>NCOSS will identify and explain the purpose and process of partnership activities including the likelihood to influence outcomes. Partnerships operate in a professional manner, with mutual respect for confidentiality, communication, resourcing, decision-making and timing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Practice 1: Cultural Safety · Practice 2: Engagement · Practice 3: Remuneration · Practice 4: Education and training · Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality · Practice 6: Media and other third parties · Practice 7: Relationships · Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation



Practice Guides

Practice 1: Cultural Safety

Cultural Safety as a theory and practice was developed in the health sector by Maori nursing professionals in Aotearoa, led by Maori scholar Dr. Irihapeti Ramsden.

NCOSS recognises the knowledge developed by First Nations people in building an environment that is 'spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of a person's identity of who they are and what they need'¹. This is crucial to the Lived Experience Framework.

¹ Williams, R 1999, 'Cultural safety - what does it mean for our work practice?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol.23 iss.2, pp213-214.

In promoting cultural safety as practice in a Lived Experience Framework, it is people with lived experience who decide whether they feel safe in a community setting or a workplace.

Unsafe practices include any behaviours, action and attitudes that diminish, demean, harm and disempower people with Lived Experience and their communities.

The focus of cultural safety is to examine professional practice and to transform the systems and processes that we work with and within, so we build spaces and settings that are culturally safe and responsive.

People with Lived Experience are the ones who identify the changes that need to be made for their participation to be empowering and safe.

It is not those with power in an institution or in an encounter who determine cultural safety.

The following questions are a guide to checking in on power:

- What power do I have in this role/situation?
- How does it change in different contexts?
- What actions can I take to ensure this is equitable?
- How am I contributing to power imbalances in the organisation?
- Whose voices are being heard and whose are being left out?
- Whose needs are being met and whose are sidelined?
- Who are the most important people in this process/decision/activity?
(Am I getting in the way?)
- Is power imbalance affecting consent or agreement in this decision-making process?
- Am I taking action with consent?
- Am I remembering that consent and agreements are not always fixed, are conditional, and that these decisions need to be revisited regularly?

Practice 2: Engagement

Engagement is a method that connects organisations and public bodies with communities and people with Lived Experience. A critical approach to engagement is concerned with how people with Lived Experience participate in an activity, project, campaign or issue. The aim of engagement is to develop and sustain respectful and reciprocal working relationships between public bodies, workers and people with Lived Experience.

Reciprocal.

NCOSS both identifies opportunities for partnership with Lived Experience Advocates throughout all aspects of their work and Advocates approach NCOSS with opportunities for partnerships. NCOSS uses this framework to plan partnerships, seeking co-production opportunities at the earliest stages of an activity. This allows Lived Experience Advocates to make an informed choice about participation and to shape the activity. There will be a range of participation options, recognising that people with Lived Experience may want to participate at varying levels.

Advocates are provided with tools and information about a potential partnership activity, including a briefing on this framework, before deciding to engage (see *Practice 4: Education and training*).

Co-production and co-design.

NCOSS encourages co-production and **co-design** partnerships with Lived Experience Advocates. This can include co-designing the purpose, intended outcomes, participation opportunities and any expectations such as timeframe and schedules. Co-production includes implementing the Lived Experience partnership activities and evaluating outcomes. NCOSS also ensures that Lived Experience Advocates actively contribute to the priorities and strategic direction of NCOSS processes (e.g. strategic plans).

Representative.

NCOSS recognises the dimensions and intersections of social and cultural diversity of communities and perspectives of people with Lived Experience. We work towards ensuring that this complexity is represented when developing opportunities to partner. This might include engaging multiple voices on one issue. NCOSS considers diversity in its own organisation, encouraging participation from people with Lived Experience in governance and other strategic processes, adopting internal policies around equity, diversity, inclusion and ensuring recruitment processes are accessible to applicants from Lived Experience backgrounds.

Lived Experience Advocates are invited to identify how they intend to contribute i.e. whether they represent a group, a community or themselves as an individual. NCOSS values relationships with state-based advocacy groups. Where individual advocates are not connected to an Advocacy Group, NCOSS will facilitate engagement and network building through the provision of information and referral.

Responsive.

To provide responsive engagement, NCOSS will work to ensure that Lived Experience Advocates are provided with appropriate support where possible, including a range of formats and platforms, aids and equipment, resources, adaptive technologies, interpreters and note takers.

Other strategies that can be used are:

- Employing multilingual staff
- Providing additional notice time
- Being flexible about meeting time of day and duration
- Adapting the location or setting of an engagement
- Making resources for transport available
- Calibrating language and structure of meetings to be inclusive i.e. less bureaucratic and jargonistic
- Centring and being responsive to cultural protocols and practices
- Providing child-care and resourcing the attendance of support workers.

NCOSS also recognises that Lived Experience Advocates may have multiple community responsibilities and cultural obligations that they must attend to. NCOSS will plan for and be flexible to ensure participation and engagement of people with Lived Experience is supported.

Resourcing.

NCOSS will source the required skills and resources for the activity. Resources may include technology, internet, transport, food or specific skills development. NCOSS and Lived Experience Advocates may identify any gaps in resources and how to fill those gaps prior to the activity commencing, ensuring advocates are supported and equipped to adequately prepare for activities.

Practice 3: Remuneration

NCOSS values the time and contribution of Lived Experience Advocates and remunerates appropriately wherever possible. NCOSS negotiates **honorariums** and **in-kind payments** with advocates prior to activities, based on the level of participation, complexity of the activity and the level of skills and experience required. If significant preparation is required for the activity, NCOSS commits to paying for preparation where possible. Equally, NCOSS will remunerate Lived Experience Advocates at a minimum hourly rate, for a minimum of two hours. By negotiation and with mutual consent, certain activities may attract a different, one-off or pro-rata payment structure; for example, participation in short phone interviews or short surveys.

NCOSS may not always be able to remunerate adequately for the participation and contribution of Lived Experience Advocates but is committed to building capacities as well as negotiating in-kind payments that align with Advocate aspirations. This may include fee-free training, leadership opportunities or other creative options that are negotiated prior to the activity (see *Practice 4: Education and training*). Lived Experience Advocates should not be remunerated through unpaid 'work experience' or 'internships', to avoid the potential exploitation of their labour.

Current Social Security legislation in Australia requires that all honorariums, rewards or gifts be reported as income within 14 days, with consequences for non-compliance. NCOSS will ensure adequate information is made available to Advocates to make well-informed decisions.

NCOSS Lived Experience Advocate payment scale²

LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT					
Type of activity	General Attendee	Sponsored Attendee	Active Participant	Advisor	Consultant
Forums, consultations, workshops or focus groups	General attendance.	Sponsored attendance (registration, travel, meals provided).	Specifically invited to attend.	Co-design and co-produce.	Engaged to lead forum, consultation, workshop or focus group.
Committees or Groups with Terms of Reference	N/A	N/A	Member of service, system or strategic level committee.	Strategic level committee or sitting governance member.	Engaged to provide impartial guidance, knowledge or expertise.
Recruitment or Selection panels	N/A	N/A	N/A	Member	Chair
Other projects	N/A	N/A	Special projects or duties.	Special projects or duties.	Engaged to lead policy, procedure, or resource development.
Media Interviews	N/A	N/A	Media interview for print and/or radio.	Media interview for print and/or radio.	Media interview for television.
Conferences	General attendance	Sponsored attendance	N/A	Member of planning committee.	Speaker (assume 1 hr prep time).
Payment	No payment	No payment.	\$35 per hour minimum	\$70 per hour minimum	\$100 per hour minimum

Reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses

Regardless of remuneration arrangements, Lived Experience Advocates are reimbursed for **out-of-pocket expenses** such as travel and parking or other incidentals. This ensures that no Advocate is left out of pocket or in distress after attending an activity that they have been invited to. Refreshments will be provided, including meals where appropriate.

This **reimbursement** includes short-notice NCOSS activities such as a media or other advocacy requests. Reimbursement also covers short-notice cancellations where the Advocate has not received adequate notice that they are not required to participate in an activity or event.

² May be negotiated and may include in-kind payments. This payment scale should be indexed according to the Australian Wage Price Index annually.

Practice 4: Education and training

Induction, support and de-briefing

Advocacy is a complex and involved activity that requires preparation. Lived Experience Advocates should feel supported so that they are able to participate throughout the process.

Induction.

NCOSS provides an induction process for Advocates for every activity, informing Advocates of relevant organisational policies and procedures. Engaged Advocates will be informed of their NCOSS contact person and familiarised with the context and expected process of an activity including the support and development opportunities available to them.

Preparation and support.

Lived Experience Advocates may need support to prepare for participation and to assess the risks and impacts of sharing their story. Even the most experienced and resilient Advocates can experience re-traumatisation when repeating and sharing their Lived Experience with others. NCOSS will ensure that skilled people are available throughout an activity and ideally be adept in culturally-responsive, strengths-based, trauma-informed support practice.

Independent supports.

Lived Experience Advocates will be paired with an NCOSS employee who is separate from the partnership activity. They will act in an impartial role for the Advocate to access if they choose. Advocates may also choose to be represented by an advocacy group or individual of their choice to act in an impartial support role, if they choose.

Supervision and debriefing.

Recognising the impact and benefits of **reflective practice**, NCOSS commits to providing **supervision** and debriefing to the Lived Experience Advocate during projects, after activities and upon exiting (see *Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation*).

Referral.

Many Lived Experience Advocates are well connected in their own lives. However, if an Advocate expresses a desire for an external referral for relevant support, NCOSS will facilitate this. This may include the option to access the NCOSS Employee Assistance Program if available, or another support pathway.

Training and other development opportunities

NCOSS takes every opportunity to invest in professional development and leadership opportunities for Lived Experience Advocates and advocacy groups where possible. NCOSS aims to ensure organisational recruitment also encourages people with Lived Experience to apply.

Lived Experience Advocates may be interested in a range of training, including media, government processes, policy development, leadership, public speaking, communications and social media, and

organisational policy. NCOSS can offer a range of opportunities for discussion and development with advocates, including:

- offering free in-house training opportunities
- leveraging off wider stakeholder relationships to provide free training opportunities
- invitation to relevant organisational professional development.

Other creative opportunities are encouraged as identified by Lived Experience Advocates.

Practice 5: Intellectual property and confidentiality

Negotiated.

The **intellectual property** of Lived Experience Advocates includes personal stories, media, podcasts, videos, and written resources. NCOSS will negotiate the terms and conditions of the use of Advocates' existing intellectual property prior to it being used as part of the activity and/or being distributed. These could include:

- Lived Experience Advocates being consulted and having the final say in the editing process, ensuring that the integrity is not compromised during editing
- notifying Lived Experience Advocates prior to the publishing of stories
- checking in with Lived Experience Advocates after the activity or publication
- Lived Experience Advocates being provided with the right to the withdraw at any time
- co-authorship for documents that are created together.

Existing.

An initial understanding is that any and all existing intellectual property remains under the Lived Experience Advocate's ownership and can only be used with the Advocate's permission for the express purposes of an agreed activity. Any further use of the intellectual property by NCOSS should not occur without express permission from the Advocate in writing (e.g. email, letter or contract). NCOSS will ensure that the Advocate is provided with the necessary support for this to happen.

Newly created.

If there is an expectation that the Lived Experience Advocate will create new intellectual property expressly for or during the activity, the Advocate and NCOSS negotiates and agrees on the ownership of this intellectual property, and any future use. An initial understanding could be that this work is procured by NCOSS and is owned by NCOSS, with creation credit given to the Advocate (if they desire) and the Advocate is adequately remunerated.

Confidentiality.

NCOSS agrees that anything said of a personal nature by others in the process of NCOSS work is kept confidential by peers, organisations and stakeholders unless otherwise agreed to prior and with due consideration of the limitations of confidentiality.

Practice 6: Media and other third parties

Third parties – referring, linking and supporting

Request and referral.

Where appropriate, NCOSS commits to elevating the voice of Lived Experience Advocates and advocacy groups to self-advocate or represent themselves. When a third party or the media approach NCOSS seeking people with a Lived Experience to engage with, NCOSS refers the request to a relevant advocacy group where available, appropriate and safe.

Linking and supporting.

When such a request is passed on to an individual Lived Experience Advocate, NCOSS encourages them to be linked in with and supported by a representative of an advocacy group of their choice. NCOSS also promotes the use of this framework to third parties to enhance consistency and safety across the social services sector.

Media – prepare, support, plan, address risks and stigma

Prepare.

Lived Experience Advocates who engage with media need to be adequately briefed and prepared. To ensure consistency of media outcomes, NCOSS provides advocates with media training and mentoring where possible.

Support.

NCOSS support for Advocates negotiating with media will include emphasising self-care, doing post-activity check-ins and providing access to counselling support (e.g. NCOSS Employee Assistance Program), regardless of whether an Advocate uses the services.

Media plan.

NCOSS develops an agreed media plan with Advocates (and third parties, where appropriate), for a media activity to identify the goals of the activity for each party. These include their media preferences (e.g. radio, print, TV), media strengths (previous experience, training, or confidence / passion on specific issues), key messages, potential risks or unintended consequences and the level of identification or anonymity to protect individuals.

Manage risks.

Engaging with media to tell a story in the public forum involves risks and potential consequences. The public has increasing access to information, and people sometimes publish without regard to consequences for individuals. NCOSS identifies and manages risks of engaging with media for Lived Experience Advocates. If a risk is identified, the goals, safety and integrity of Advocates is prioritised over activities and outcomes. Prior preparation and support including media training is offered where this occurs.

Confront stigma.

NCOSS upholds the dignity of people with Lived Experience by actively challenging stigma in the media. NCOSS is committed to the use of strengths-based, dignified language in its own media activities.

Practice 7: Relationships

Capability.

NCOSS invests in staff training in a range of Lived Experience capabilities, including cultural safety, privilege, anti-oppression and structural disadvantage, support and debriefing techniques, human rights, strengths-based, and trauma-informed approaches.

Growth opportunity.

Partners approach the relationship with respect, empathy, acceptance authenticity, and in the spirit of growth and learning. Lived Experience partnerships are representative and respectful of diverse perspectives and encourage robust discussion. Feedback and disputes can provide opportunities for growth and development, for Lived Experience Advocates, advocacy groups and for NCOSS. Each partner is encouraged to raise concerns as early as possible with an openness to opportunities for learning and change.

Freedom of expression.

The Lived Experience Advocate is free to express their views and to challenge any partnership activity without fear of repercussions. They are informed about and have access to complaints and feedback processes during and after work activities. These can include post-activity check-ins on intellectual property, media exposure and evaluation.

Dispute resolution.

NCOSS acknowledges the inherent power imbalance between NCOSS and advocates. NCOSS has complaint and dispute resolution procedures that are trauma-informed and respect principles of **natural justice**. These provide access for both parties to a support person and to an external third-party representative if internal mediation does not resolve the dispute.

Voluntary exits.

Lived Experience Advocates engage in partnerships with NCOSS at their voluntary discretion. Advocates retain the right to exit a partnership or activity anytime. If the Advocate feels the activity is not meeting agreed outcomes, they can reconsider their level of participation. They are also invited to access the complaint and dispute resolution process if appropriate.

Accountable record-keeping.

To ensure accountability, NCOSS has financial and human resources record-keeping procedures. These will cover the records of engagement and remuneration of Advocates. In compliance with privacy standards, records will be kept for the required time periods and be available for Advocates to access information about themselves.

Practice 8: Reflection and evaluation

Reflection.

Reflective practice involves critically reflecting on and throughout processes and outcomes, sharing stories and any possible unintended outcomes, and seeking additional support where necessary. Participants only share what they feel safe and comfortable sharing in recognition of autonomy over their advocacy and personal stories. NCOSS and Advocates explore how to incorporate learning into improved partnerships, activities and outcomes in ethical and safe ways.

Evaluation.

Evaluation of activities should be participatory, culturally appropriate, ethical, mindful, and driven by Lived Experience Advocates. Evaluation is a process that must be embedded in all aspects and stages of the project, incorporating feedback and learning throughout the life of the project. People with Lived Experience should be supported to co-develop the indicators, metrics and methodologies for collection, and be informed about how the data will be used. In a rights-based approach, all work should be linked to the achievement of shared goals. This demonstrates how progress can be tracked at the project level, but also towards achieving social change at the structural level.

Lived Experience Advocates are supported to participate in and contribute to gathering, analysis and presentation of evaluation data. These reflection and evaluation processes form part of reporting processes, including ensuring that outcomes are reported back to Advocates, informing them and relevant advocacy groups of and acknowledging the influence and importance of their work.

Completion.

At the completion of a Lived Experience activity, the exit process includes the opportunity for both NCOSS and the Lived Experience Advocate or advocacy group to reflect on the process and activities. This includes aspects that worked and opportunities for learning. The Advocate or their advocacy group will be notified regarding any known outcome or follow-up of their work. NCOSS recognises the importance of closing the feedback loop with Advocates and advocacy groups. Significant learnings will be incorporated into future partnerships and this framework.

Glossary

Advocacy Group.

Organised groups of people affected by, and aiming to influence, policy, services, laws and systemic injustices, including consumer organisations and people-led social movements (e.g. disability, mental health, unemployed workers or anti-poverty).

Agency.

The thoughts and actions taken by people that express individual or group power.

Autonomy.

The right of a group of people to govern itself or to organise its own activities.

Co-design.

Jointly planning and testing services with people (community members, community groups, service-users, service-deliverers and service-procurers) who will interact with a service. This does not always involve these people in the delivery of the service.

Co-production.

Jointly and actively shaping, delivering and evaluating services in an equal, power-sharing relationship with participants (community members, community groups, service-users, service-deliverers and service-procurers).

Honorarium.

An honorary reward for voluntary services.

Human rights approach.

A human rights approach is about ensuring that the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into all aspects of an organisation activities, governance, policy, processes and programs.

In-kind payment.

Free training, free leadership opportunities or other such creative and useful items that are negotiated prior to the activities commencing.

Intellectual property.

Someone's idea, invention, or creation that can be protected by law from being copied by someone else. In the context of advocacy work, this may be but not limited to stories, experiences, media, art, and/or resource development.

Intersectionality.

A theory and framework that addresses and analyses how multiple modes of oppression and inequity including racism and colonialism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disability, citizenship status, and so on enable and produce social and political inequality.

Lived Experience Advocate.

People with Lived Experience draw on and from their experience to inform and take action to reform and transform systems, economic, social and political structures that impact them, their peers and communities. They may also be a representative of an Advocacy Group.

Natural justice.

A duty to act fairly with a right to a fair hearing and the avoidance of bias.

Out-of-pocket expenses.

Costs such as travel, parking and incidentals that Lived Experience Advocates pay out of their own cash in order to carry out activities as agreed with COSS.

Paternalistic.

Thinking or behaviour by people in authority that results in making decisions for other people that prevents people and communities from exercising autonomy and being able to take responsibility for their own lives.

Power.

The capacity of an individual to influence outcomes, decisions and the conduct or behaviour of others. The term 'authority' is often used for power that is perceived as legitimate by the social structure.

Privilege.

This operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favours, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of other groups.

Reflective practice.

Critical self-reflection on actions for continuous learning, paying attention to the values behind actions.

Reimbursement.

The act of covering someone's costs to the value of expenses they have incurred as the result of engaging in an agreed activity.

Remuneration.

Payment for time spent doing agreed activities or providing a service.

Self-determination.

The right of a group of people to have full power over all aspects of their own lives.

Structural disadvantage.

Disadvantage experienced by individuals or groups resulting from the inequitable distribution of power and resources.

Supervision.

Staff can review, reflect on and evaluate their work through discussion, reporting and observation with a peer, or a professional supervisor.

Systemic advocacy.

The process of representing and advocating for the needs and interests of a group of people for improvements in services, government policies and community.

Systemic disadvantage.

Where a set of policies or features of the overall system itself give someone or something an advantage over others.

1 Adapted from Pei, N. & Wilcox, J. 2018, Case Study: Authentic Engagement: A Learning Journey, Tamarack Institute, viewed 28 February 2020, <<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/case-study-authentic-engagement-a-learning-journey>>





NSW Council of Social Service

Phone: (02) 9211 2599

Email: info@ncoss.org.au

Level 3, 52-56 William St, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011

www.ncoss.org.au

