

Pillars for Engaging Lived Experts in Systems Change Work

See and value the lived expert in their full humanity – and let go of the rest.

- See the person’s inner value (first, often, and actionably), rather than focusing on professionalism
- Resource lived experts for the full value they bring (i.e., we can’t succeed without their contribution) and the level of emotional labor they carry
- Share growth areas (ie work behaviors that the individual needs to grow in) rooted in validation of inner value and tied to their sense of purpose
- Intentionally name and notice what must be let go of based on standard expectation
- When the lived expert shares from their experience, they have agency in when and how

Work together ongoing for the lived expert to be and feel successful.

- Establish a clear and actionable role that is influential to the work and aligns with the lived experts strengths
- Develop highly relational, trusted partnership (ie - with supervisor, role mentor) to sustain the emotional labor of the work
- Create space for frequent check ins focused on success first and areas of growth second
- Protect space for the lived expert to give authentic feedback about their experience, even if its imperfectly delivered
- Intentionally consider how to balance the tension of allowing free and open sharing with the potential for creating a negative vibe in the process
- Work in the growth edge or discomfort zone is intentional, supported, and driven by the individual’s pace

Actively and intentionally work to dismantle (including in ourselves) the barriers that would get in the way.

- Staff prioritize creating conditions for the lived expert to be and feel valued, heard, and connected (ie - this is not an “equal party” experience)
- The team directly working with the lived expert are actively engaged in a racial equity pathway and willing to hear and take action on feedback
- The team surrounding the lived expert allows emotion to be present in the conversation without judgement