



The Victorian
Collaborative Centre
For Mental Health & Wellbeing

Working it out together

Concise Workbook

A concise workbook for
Lived Experience-centred
mental health and
wellbeing research
practice



wellways

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This project was completed by Wellways Australia for the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

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Acknowledgment of Country

The Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Collaborative Centre) acknowledges with deep respect all First Nations people and Traditional Owner groups within Victoria. We recognise their enduring connection to Country, Culture, and Kin, a connection that has been nurtured for thousands of years. We acknowledge government's role in the devastating impacts of colonisation, the displacement and dispossession of First Nations people, and the ongoing social, emotional, biological and political consequences. We pay our deepest respects to elders past and present, recognising their ongoing resilience, wisdom, and leadership. We acknowledge that this land was, is, and always will be Aboriginal land.

Recognition of Lived Experience

We acknowledge people with Lived and Living Experiences of mental ill-health and psychological distress and the experiences of people who have been, and are, families, carers, supporters and kin. We are grateful for their expertise and generosity in guiding the Collaborative Centre's work.

Some of the most powerful evidence of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System came from the personal experiences of people living with mental ill-health, their families, carers, supporters and kin. There has been extraordinary determination and courage as people have revisited painful memories in the hope of shaping a better future for themselves and others. The Collaborative Centre celebrates, values and welcomes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, religions, ages, bodies and abilities.

Dr Cat Commentary



Hi everyone, I'm Dr Catherine Brasier (you can call me Cat). I am a Consumer Academic and was the Project Lead for this toolkit and workbook. I've been an active member of the Lived Experience movement since 2006. Before I was a Consumer Academic, I was a community mental health worker. I'm now the National Manager of Evaluation and Research (Lived Experience) at Wellways Australia where we are pioneering participant and Lived Experience driven research. I have popped some of my reflections in this concise workbook, for more commentaries refer to the ['Working It Out Together'](#) toolkit and workbook. Each project is unique so feel free to use this toolkit flexibly.

How to use this workbook

This workbook aims to support Lived Experience-centred research by providing a structured approach for researchers and people with Lived Experience to “work it out together”. This workbook is a compilation of the workbook exercises from [“Working it out together: A toolkit and workbook for Lived Experience-centred mental health and wellbeing research practice”](#), please refer there for a full list of references. It is also supported by a report which details the background evidence. Together these documents provide a comprehensive resource to:

- 1. Articulate the critical value of Lived Experience-centred research.** An introduction to the pivotal and life-changing impact of engaging people with Lived Experience as the leaders and creators of research.
- 2. Present the “Working It Out Together” key tools.** Presents the key tools that underlie this toolkit including [Wellways six steps of the research life cycle](#), [Working It Out Together research Action list](#) and [Lived Experience Action Log](#). The full toolkit and workbook also contains a [Lived Experience-centred reporting guideline](#) (see [Appendix](#)).
- 3. Resources addressing how to implement Lived Experience-centred research.** This explores how to integrate Lived Experience throughout the research life cycle to “work it out together”.
- 4. Evaluating the impact of authentic Lived Experience-centred research.** How researchers can track and evaluate how they have engaged people with Lived Experience in their research project, and the degree to which this has been integrated into the research.



Although the [toolkit](#) is presented in a linear way, most teams will move back-and-forth or work on several Actions/workbook exercises at the same time. Each project is unique, so these tools and processes are designed to be tailored by the team. Research teams are encouraged to modify or add additional questions to these workbook exercises.

Contents

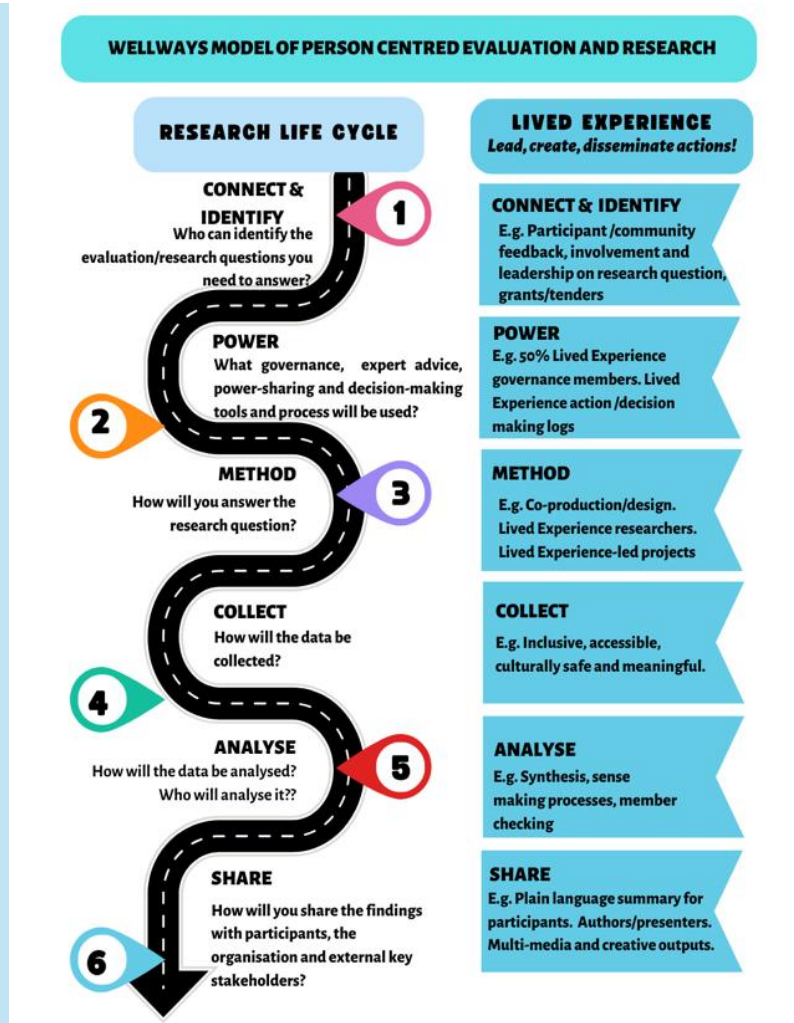
How to use this workbook.....	5
Contents	6
Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle”	8
Working It Out Together Research Actions.....	9
Lived Experience Action Log	11
Language	12
Workbook Exercises.....	14
Research Stage One: Connect and Identify.....	14
✓ Action 1. Create a Lived Experience intention and impact statement.....	15
✓ Action 2. Harness community and industry relationships	16
✓ Action 3. Identify a research question and validate that it is important to your community	17
✓ Action 4. Form a Lived Experience-centred research team	18
Research Stage Two: Power and decision-making.....	19
✓ Action 5. Embed Lived Experience and intersectional expertise throughout the project	20
✓ Action 6. Create a plan to ensure that your research project is accessible and inclusive	21
✓ Action 7. Create a Lived Experience-centred research culture and processes that unites the team.....	22
✓ Action 8. Create a plan to support the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the research project	23
✓ Action 9. Create a plan detailing how the research team shares power and makes decisions	24
Research Stage Three: Method	26
✓ Action 10. Develop a research method that is rigorous and Lived Experience-centred.....	27
✓ Action 11. Explore Lived Experience and participatory research methods.....	28
✓ Action 12. Explore Expert Advisory and Decision-Making Groups, committees and governance groups	29
Research Stage Four: Collect.....	30
✓ Action 13. Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan	31
Research Stage Five: Analyse	32

✓ Action 14. Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan	33
Research Stage Six: Share	34
✓ Action 15. Creating a Lived Experience-centred dissemination plan	35
✓ Action 16. Report your research project in a way that is Lived Experience-centred and rigorous	36
✓ Action 17. Evaluate the impact of engaging people with Lived Experience as leaders/contributors in your research project	38
Conclusion	41
Appendix	43
✓ Lived Experience-centred research reporting guidelines	43

Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle”

This workbook is based on Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle”. [Click here](#) to check out more information about this.

Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle



Working It Out Together Research Actions

These Actions build upon Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle”. [Click here](#) to check out more information about this.

STAGE ONE: CONNECT & IDENTIFY

Action 1. Create a Lived Experience intention and impact statement

Action 2. Harness community and industry relationships

Action 3. Identify a research question and validate that your research question is important to your community

Action 4. Form a Lived Experience-centred research team

STAGE TWO: POWER & DECISION-MAKING

Action 5. Embed Lived Experience and intersectional expertise throughout the project

Action 6. Create a plan to ensure that your research project is accessible and inclusive

Action 7. Create a Lived Experience-centred research culture and processes that unites the team

Action 8. Create a plan to support the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the research team

Action 9. Create a plan detailing how the research team shares power and makes decisions

STAGE THREE: METHOD

Action 10. Develop a research method that is rigorous and Lived Experience-centred

Action 11. Explore Lived Experience and participatory research methods

Action 12. Explore Expert Advisory and Decision-Making Groups, committees and governance groups

STAGE FOUR: DATA COLLECTION

Action 13. Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan

STAGE FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS

Action 14. Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan

STAGE SIX: SHARING

Action 15. Creating a Lived Experience-centred dissemination plan

Action 16. Report your research project in a way that is Lived Experience-centred and rigorous

STAGE SEVEN: EVALUATION & IMPACT

Action 17. Evaluate the impact of engaging people with Lived Experience as leaders and active contributors in your research project

Lived Experience Action Log

Below is a copy of the of Lived Experience [Action Log](#) (with example content), we used this in our Expert Advisory Groups. It can be used in any meeting to track Lived Experience in-put and how it is used. Please see our Case Study and [click here](#) to check out more information about this.

Date	Meeting/ Feedback source	Action	Recommendation/ reflection	Person/team accountable	Action Progress	Outcome – Part A	Outcome – Part B – Complete for all items that were not actioned with a brief explanation
E.g. 2.2.25	EAG 1	Co-create power and decision-making plan	Are we missing any key voices (e.g. First Nations)	Project Leads	In progress		
E.g. 5.6.25	EAG 2	Recruit Consumer Co-Chair for EAG	This project should have a consumer and family/carers/supporter/kin Co-Chair	EAG Meeting Chair	Consumer Co-Chair to attend next EAG	Complete	NA
E.g. 2.7.25	EAG 3	Add a phase 3 literature review	This project should explore an additional literature review	Project Lead and EAG Chair	Partially addressed	Future recommendation	This does not fit the scope of this project, we recommend it for future projects

Language

Let's begin by looking at some key terms and language that we use in the "Working It Out Together Concise Workbook". A key part of research is defining your key terms and concepts. In such a diverse and fluid space this can be very challenging. Feel free to define your key terms differently – there are many perspectives and every project is unique.

What do we mean by 'Lived Experience'?

Lived Experience refers to a significant and life-changing direct experience of mental health challenges, distress or trauma that is experienced by a person. It acknowledges the unique insights and awareness that comes from these experiences of adversity and healing. It encompasses experiences of: i) accessing mental health and wellbeing services (i.e. consumer Lived Experience); and ii) supporting someone who experiences of mental health challenges, distress or trauma (i.e. family, carer, supporter and kin Lived Experience).

What do we mean by designated Lived Experience roles?

There are many ways of thinking about this, here is one example:

1. Lived Experience **designated** roles/perspectives (All in! All the time!)
2. People who may be **informed** by personal experiences but may also draw on other disciplines/role requirements/professional codes of conduct (etc.)
3. People who have had personal experiences relating to mental health but whose work is **not intentionally informed** by this or does not speak to it
4. People who **do not have a Lived Experience** that speaks to the research question

What is Lived Experience expertise?

In this workbook when we talk about Lived Experience Expertise and Lived Experience designated roles/perspectives we specifically mean people who are demonstrating a deep understanding of the following elements to drive their input:

1. Their own personal experience of mental health and/or caring
2. Their understanding of other people's Lived Experiences
3. Lived Experience values and practices
4. The history of the Lived Experience movement – including the impact of the systemic and social factors

Dr Cat Commentary



It's really important that we are clear and transparent about "how we know what we know", this is a part of how we establish trust and integrity. It's great to role model and support people to express how they are using their Lived Experience in a way that feels right for them.

Workbook Exercises

Research Stage One: Connect and Identify



Connect & Identify Research Life Cycle Stage: 1

Key Question:

Who do you need to collaborate with to identify your research question and create an exceptional research team?

For more information about this research stage refer to the Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle” on [page 8](#).

Dr Cat Commentary



Peer reviewed literature often holds an inherent bias and unknowing that can be stigmatising and disconnected from people’s real-life experiences. Connecting to people with Lived Experience in the community can help you create research that reflects their needs, experiences and priorities.

✓ Action 1. Create a Lived Experience intention and impact statement

Workbook Exercise 1. Creating a Lived Experience intention and impact statement



Creating a Lived Experience intention and impact statement

Gather as a project team and explore these questions:

1. Why is Lived Experience important to this research project?
2. What roles and input will people with Lived Experience have at each step of this project?
3. What would we not know or miss out on if people with Lived Experience were not integrated into this research project?
4. Whose voices and experiences are missing? What is the impact of this?
5. How will this research project help people with Lived Experience in their day-to-day lives?

Are there any questions that your team would like to add?

✓ Action 2. Harness community and industry relationships

Workbook Exercise 2. Helpful friends – Connect to the knowledge, skills and expertise you need to excel



Helpful friends – Connect to the knowledge, skills and expertise you need to excel

Who do you need to connect to build the relationships key to your project?

Table 1. Mapping helpful connections

	Skills	Knowledge/ Expertise	Capabilities
Lived Experience			
Research			
Service delivery/design			

✓ Action 3. Identify a research question and validate that it is important to your community

Workbook Exercise 3. Defining your research gap according to Lived Experience priorities, needs and values



Defining your research gap according to Lived Experience priorities, needs and values

In research we are always trying to show that we are doing something novel and valuable to fund. This exercise establishes this and connects it to Lived Experience and/or the experience and impact using a mental health service.

Gather as a team and discuss – this can become a key planning document:

1. Our research question is important to people with Lived Experience/who use mental health services because...
2. Existing research on this topic tells us that...
3. Research on this topic has (or has not) addressed the priorities and expectations of people with Lived Experience by...
4. Therefore, our research project is important because we will respond to this gap by answering this question...
5. I am confident that this project has the resources and Lived Experience expertise/experience/project staff to complete this project because...
6. Then describe how you will validate your research question. What steps will you take to verify that your research question is important to your community?

Are there any questions that your team would like to add?

✓ Action 4. Form a Lived Experience-centred research team

Workbook Exercise 4. Articulate how you will integrate Lived Experience and intersectional expertise throughout your research project



Articulate how Lived Experience and expertise is integrated throughout your research project

Write a reflexivity statement. Consider the following:

1. Are members of the research team working from a designated Lived Experience-perspective (i.e. all contributions are in line with Lived Experience values and practices – all the time)?
2. How does the Lived Experience researchers in the team reflect a deep understanding of a personal journey, the experience of the broader Lived Experience community and is underpinned by Lived Experience values and history as a social movement?
3. What other life experiences in the research team may impact/bias the study (e.g. discipline/training, reasons for doing the study, values, biases, benefits of doing the study etc.)?

Are there any questions or reflections that your team would like to add?

Research Stage Two: Power and decision-making



Power Research Life Cycle Stage: 2

Key Question:

How will your study implement Lived Experience-centred power and decision-making processes?

For more information about this research stage refer to the Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle” on [page 8](#).

Dr Cat Commentary



Our scoping review noted that there should be a critical mass of Lived Experience in the project. For me this is not just about the number of people with Lived Experience in a research team – it also thinks about the critical distribution of power and privilege, and the degree to which this will impact decision making. Understanding people’s context is important to addressing power.

✓ Action 5. Embed Lived Experience and intersectional expertise throughout the project

Workbook Exercise 5. Mapping opportunities to integrate Lived Experience and intersectional leadership and wisdom throughout the research project



Mapping opportunities to integrate Lived Experience and intersectional leadership and wisdom throughout the research project.

Gather as a team and discuss these questions. This is an important step in gaining clarity around the Lived Experience and intersectional relationships that will underpin how you answer your research question.

1. Our research question directly asks about the experiences/impact of services on:
 - b) Mental health consumers
 - c) Mental health families, carers, supporters and kin
 - d) Both mental health consumers **and** their families, carers, supporters and kin
 - e) Intersectional communities and experiences
2. Within this Lived Experience cohort (consumer/families, carers, supporters and kin) our research question has a specific focus on (*respond to any that relate*):
 - f) A specific form of distress/caring (e.g. responding to trauma, psychosis, depression, etc.)?
 - g) Intersectional experiences/perspectives
 - h) Location (e.g. country, state, catchment/service area)
 - i) Type of mental health service (e.g. public/private, residential, outreach or youth, adult, older adult)
 - j) The specific program, service, support, organisation, system (e.g. the specific program being evaluated)

Are there any questions that your team would like to add?

✓ **Action 6. Create a plan to ensure that your research project is accessible and inclusive**

Workbook Exercise 6. Articulate how you will embed access and inclusion throughout your project



Articulate how you will embed access and inclusion throughout your project

Gather as a team to workshop the following questions:

1. What are organisational, industry and government guidelines about access and inclusion that should inform your research project?
2. What resources and expertise are available to enact these principles and guides?
3. Have you included expertise addressing this in your research team?

Are there any questions that your team would like to add?

✓ **Action 7. Create a Lived Experience-centred research culture and processes that unites the team**

Workbook Exercise 7. Create a Lived Experience and participant-centred research plan



Lived Experience and participant-centred research plan

Gather as a project team and address how the team will:

- ✓ Create a translational plan (i.e. Lived Experience, research, service delivery/development) that details how the project team will embed this wisdom throughout the project; this should be complimented with an accountability tool
- ✓ Start a collaborative communication and work plan that outlines how the project team members will work together that is inclusive, accessible and honours cultural integrity
- ✓ Create a power sharing and decision-making process for the project team
- ✓ Co-create safety and cultural integrity principles and practices
- ✓ Confirm the function of any Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group, Governance, Committee or external expertise in the development and completion of the project

Are there any stages or tasks that your team would like to add?

✓ **Action 8. Create a plan to support the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the research project**

Workbook Exercise 8. A mental health and wellbeing plan for the research project members



A mental health and wellbeing plan for the research project members

Gather as a project team and write a plan of how the team will address this. Consider when and how this will be reviewed throughout the project.

A 'whole of person' approach to support the research team's wellbeing could include:

- ✓ Psychological safety
- ✓ Mental health supports
- ✓ Lived Experience specific supports
- ✓ Cultural integrity practices
- ✓ Accessibility and practical supports

Are there any areas that your team would like to add?

✓ **Action 9. Create a plan detailing how the research team shares power and makes decisions**

Workbook Exercise 9. Understanding how power impacts your research team



Understanding how power impacts your research team

Acknowledging the legacy of current and historical power differences, and how they impact your research project is important. Sit down with your team and reflect on how this might effect your research. You may like to consider:

1. Lived Experience (including dual consumer and family, carer, supporter and kin experiences/perspectives)
2. Intersectional experiences (e.g. First Nations, cultural/language diversity, etc.)
3. Accessibility (e.g. neurodiversity, physical health differences, etc.)
4. Other forms of marginalisation, stigma and exclusion
5. Forms of explicit and implicit privilege/power (e.g. role in the research team, organisational clout, gender, age, seniority, etc.)

Are there any areas that your team would like to add?

Case Study 1. How did the Working It Out Together project team develop power sharing and decision-making processes?

Step 1 – We developed a transparent power sharing process with our key stakeholders to ensure that we were accountable for how we included the input of our Expert Advisory Groups. This process was shared on an info sheet with the Expert Advisory Group members and discussed in the first meeting.

Step 2 – All actions, reflections and recommendations were recorded in the Lived Experience Action log during the meeting as a part of minute-taking. Here is a snapshot of the headings we used in the Lived Experience Action Log:

EAG	Actions, recommendations and reflections - summary	Person/Project team accountable	Action progress	Outcome – Part A	Outcome – Part B – Complete for items that were not actioned – state reason
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Step 3 – After the Expert Advisory Group meeting these actions, reflections and recommendations were compiled, reviewed and summarised by members of the project team and the Lived Experience Project Lead. This was then shared with the key stakeholder and Expert Advisory Group members as a part of the meeting minutes, see below:

EAG	Actions, recommendations and reflections - summary	Person/Project team accountable	Action progress	Outcome – Part A	Outcome – Part B – Complete for items that were not actioned – state reason
EAG 3	Co-design/co-production and way of working together are important	Project Lead/Team	Partially addressed	Future treasures	This is introduced in the toolkit/report but worthy of a separate deep dive/tools
EAG 3	The importance of relationships in the research team and sharing/learning from each other in EAG	Project Lead/Team	In toolkit and report	Complete	
EAG 3	Negotiating what participants and researchers wanted from coproduction, what are the limits/boundaries/time/resources	Project Lead/Team	In toolkit and report	Complete	

Research Stage Three: Method



Method Research Life Cycle Stage: 3

Key Question:

What methods and research processes will you use to answer your research question in a Lived Experience-centred way?

For more information about this research stage refer to the Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle” on [page 8](#).

Dr Cat Commentary



As you may have noticed I have not used words like co-production or co-design much in the toolkit so far, instead I tend to describe the process or actions itself. I get really frustrated and confused when people use co-design or co-production as “black hole” words instead of telling me what it is that they are actually doing. I see this in grants all the time and I always note it in my comments.

✓ **Action 10. Develop a research method that is rigorous and Lived Experience-centred**

Workbook Exercise 10. Lived Experience-centred method – Brainstorm



Lived Experience-centred method – Brainstorm

*Get together as a team and brainstorm 5 things that you have developed in the **Actions** which should be reported in the **Methods** section:*

Add your examples here:

✓ **Action 11. Explore Lived Experience and participatory research methods**

Workbook Exercise 11. Co-production, co-design and participatory methods – Our top 3 examples!



Co-production, co-design and participatory methods – Our top 3 examples!

Identify the three best examples of co-production, co-design or participatory research that relates to your research question. You may like to use peer reviewed literature, grey literature or other sources:

1.

2.

3.

You don't have to stop at 3 – are there anymore examples you think are important?

✓ Action 12. Explore Expert Advisory and Decision-Making Groups, committees and governance groups

Workbook Exercise 12. Articulate how you will develop and support any Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Groups that are a part of the research project



Articulate how you will develop and support any Expert Advisory/Decision making Groups that are a part of the research project

This section explores some Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group essentials that you might like to consider. It is ideal to co-create this! Consider following questions:

1. What is the purpose of your Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group?
2. Will members be contributing to decisions (i.e. Expert Decision-Making Group) or only providing advice (Expert Advisory Group)?
3. How will you invite members to join your Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group?
4. What pre-reading and preparation is needed (e.g. pre-reading, agenda, remuneration and support information)?
5. How will you approach running an ongoing Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group?
6. How will you conclude your Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group? How will you share your findings and future opportunities?

Are there any questions that your team would like to add?

Research Stage Four: Collect



Collect Research Life Cycle Stage: 4

Key Question:

How will Lived Experience values and methods inform how you collect the information to answer your research question?

For more information about this research stage refer to the Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle” on [page 8](#).

Dr Cat Commentary



I did a randomised controlled trial for my Ph.D so that I could learn more about quantitative research because I did not see many people with Lived Experience in this space – I felt quantitative research was important to understand and transform. I think there are lots of people with Lived Experience who are drawn to technical roles like data analysis. Spread the word that we need them and they are welcome!!

✓ Action 13. Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan

Workbook Exercise 13. Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan



Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan

Gather as a project team and explore the following questions:

1. What are five ways (or more!) that people with Lived Experience could be active members and leaders in this projects' data collection? What roles could they play in:
 - The development of data collection processes and data collection questions (e.g. for surveys, focus groups, etc.)
 - Lived Experience-led data collection and/or co-facilitation
 - Creative and unconventional forms of data collection (e.g. artwork, poetry, etc.)
2. What support, mentoring and training will be required so that the Lived Experience contributors/co-researchers can complete high quality data collection? For example:
 - Co-mentoring
 - Training
 - Skill share programs

Are there any more supports that your team would like to add?

Research Stage Five: Analyse



Analyse Research Life Cycle Stage: 5

Key Question:

How will you make sense of the information that you have collected and decide what it means? Who will be involved in checking that this interpretation reflects the perspectives of the research participants?

[Click here](#) to check out more information about this research stage.

Dr Cat Commentary



I think lots of people have the aptitude to learn a range of research skills. For example, peer workers bring great engagement skills that can help us make sense of our data and develop great translational recommendations.

✓ Action 14. Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan

Workbook Exercise 14. Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan



Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan

Gather as a project team and explore the following questions:

1. What are 5 ways (or more!) that people with Lived Experience could be active members of our data analysis? For example, what roles could they play in:
 - The development of data analysis processes
 - Data analysis, theming, contextualising the results
 - Validating that the results are interpreted in line with Lived Experience values and concepts (e.g. facilitating member checking and engagement with Lived Experience peak bodies)
 - Contextualising the results in light of what we know about people's real-life experience of distress, supporting others and using services
2. What support, mentoring and training will be required so that the Lived Experience contributors/co-researchers and broader project team can support data analysis? For example:
 - Reflective practices
 - Workshops
 - Community based activities (e.g. site visits, key stakeholder and community leader engagement, etc.)

Are there any more stages/tasks that your team would like to add?

Research Stage Six: Share



Share Research Life Cycle Stage: 6

Key Question:

How will you share the findings and recommendations from your research project with study participants, the community and other key stakeholders?

For more information about this research stage refer to the Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle” on [page 8](#).

Dr Cat Commentary



During my PhD, I heard a Professor say “Research unpublished is research UN-DONE!” How we communicate about our research project is essential to rigorous research and is an important opportunity for us to demonstrate our understanding and respect for the people who are impacted by our research question.

[Click here](#) to check out the Lived Experience-centred reporting guideline that we developed.

✓ Action 15. Creating a Lived Experience-centred dissemination plan

Workbook Exercise 15. Create a dissemination plan



Create a dissemination plan

Gather as a project team and consider the following questions:

Who will we share our findings with?

- ✓ The community (including First Nations and intersectional communities)
- ✓ Research participants
- ✓ Mental health service users and their families, carers, supporters and kin
- ✓ Lived Experience investigators and contributors
- ✓ Peer workers, other front-line workers, organisational and executive staff

How?

- ✓ Open access peer reviewed publication
- ✓ Written report
- ✓ Poster/multimedia/social media

When? Please describe

Are there any areas/stages that your team would like to add?

✓ **Action 16. Report your research project in a way that is Lived Experience-centred and rigorous**

[Click here](#) to check out our **Lived Experience-centred reporting guideline**.

Workbook Exercise 16. A plan to develop Lived Experience-centred reporting



A plan to develop Lived Experience-centred reporting

Gather as a project team and consider the following questions:

1. Which guidelines and standards should inform how your research team reports and communicates?
2. How will your research team tailor your reporting so that consumers and families, carers, supporters and kin feel respected, heard and valued? E.g. What are some of the terms, languages or concepts that should be used? And what are some of the terms, languages or concepts that should not be used?
3. What are three good examples that could guide your research team?

Are there any more questions that your team would like to add?



Evaluating the impact of authentic Lived Experience-centred research

Key Question:

How will you make sense of the information that you have collected and decide what it means? Who will be involved in checking that this interpretation reflects the perspectives of the research participants?

Dr Cat Commentary



This section asks researchers to demonstrate where, when and how were people with Lived Experience were part of your research project? What did your research do differently in response to their input and leadership? Is your research project truly Lived Experience-centred?

✓ **Action 17. Evaluate the impact of engaging people with Lived Experience as leaders/contributors in your research project**

Workbook Exercise 17. Articulate how Lived Experience was integrated throughout your research project



Articulate how Lived Experience was integrated throughout your research project

Gather as a project team and consider how you track and evaluate the impact of Lived Experience contribution throughout your research project.

Complete Table 2. This table is based on the [Actions](#) listed in the toolkit.

Table 2. Evaluating how Lived Experience was integrated throughout a research project

Research project stage	Lived Experience contributor/s (role)	Details of contribution (E.g. What, when, where, how)	What Lived Experience values, concepts and methods were used
STAGE ONE: CONNECT & IDENTIFY			
Action 1. Create a Lived Experience intention and impact statement			
Action 2. Harness community and industry relationships			
Action 3. Identify a research question and validate that your research question is important to your community			
Action 4. Form a Lived Experience-centred research team			
STAGE TWO: POWER & DECISION-MAKING			
Action 5. Embed Lived Experience and intersectional expertise throughout the project			
Action 6. Create a plan to ensure that your research project is accessible and inclusive			
Action 7. Create a Lived Experience-centred research culture and processes that unites the team			
Action 8. Create a plan to support the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the research team			
Action 9. Create a plan detailing how the research team shares power and makes decisions			

STAGE THREE: METHOD			
Action 10. Develop a research method that is rigorous and Lived Experience-centred			
Action 11. Explore Lived Experience and participatory research methods			
Action 12. Explore Expert Advisory and Decision-Making Groups, committees and governance groups			
STAGE FOUR: DATA COLLECTION			
Action 13. Create a Lived Experience-centred data collection plan			
STAGE FIVE: DATA ANALYSIS			
Action 14. Create a Lived Experience-centred data analysis plan			
STAGE SIX: SHARING			
Action 15. Creating a Lived Experience-centred dissemination plan			
Action 16. Report your research project in a way that is Lived Experience-centred and rigorous			
STAGE SEVEN: EVALUATION & IMPACT			
Action 17. Evaluate the impact of engaging people with Lived Experience as leaders and active contributors in your research project			

Conclusion

Dr Cat Commentary



Thank-you for joining me on this Lived Experience research journey. I hope that the tools and resources that the Working It Out Together team and I developed have been a meaningful and helpful way to explore your project.

[Checkout our collection of other Lived Experience and research toolkits, and explore our other resources and references.](#)

As you prepare for your next adventure take some time to reflect on the things you and your team learned by Working It Out Together!

I'd love to hear how about your journey – how did you customise the definitions, workbook exercises and explored additional information to work for your project? What lessons, workbook exercise or processes will you use again?

So, what will you do today to show people that we can change the lives of consumer, family/carers/supporters/kin and the community by working it out together?

Peace,

Dr Cat

Appendix

✓ Lived Experience-centred research reporting guidelines

This build on the “Working It Out Together” research [Action list](#) and [Wellways “Six Steps of the Research Life Cycle”](#). This tool requires researchers to be accountable for how they have integrated Lived Experience in their research project and how they communicate this. This tool is an important guideline for reports, publications and grants for both research teams and assessors/funders. This reporting guideline mirrors the structure of peer reviewed paper/research report and should be used in conjunction with the workbook exercise and “Evaluating how Lived Experience was integrated throughout a research project” which summarises the impact of Lived Experience across the stages and actions present in this toolkit.

Supplementary Table 1. “Working it Out Together”- Our Lived Experience-centred research reporting guideline

Section/Topic	Item No	Checklist item	Reported
TITLE & ABSTRACT			
Title and abstract	1a	Acknowledges how people with Lived Experience have contributed to the design and delivery of the research project in the abstract (e.g. design, methods, results and conclusions).	
Background and objectives	2a	Articulates the value and importance of Lived Experience by connecting this to the study’s rationale.	
	2b	Establishes how this research responds to the experiences, priorities and preferences of people who have experienced mental distress and/or families, carers, supporters and kin.	
	2c	Reports and outlines underlying conceptual frameworks and their relationship to Lived Experience, including any limitations/contradictions.	
	2d	Reports aims, objectives or hypotheses as Lived Experience-centred.	
Project life cycle	3a	The description of the research method specifies how Lived Experience knowledge, engagement and expertise was utilised throughout the study. The role/contribution of people with Lived	

		Experience is reported authentically throughout the research project life cycle including:	
	3b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the identification and validation of the research question. 	
	3c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the formation and membership of the research team. 	
	3d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership, power and decision-making processes. 	
	3e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of research and project methods (including the use of participatory/co-design/co-production methods). 	
	3f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection. 	
	3g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis, sensemaking and validating the findings. 	
	3h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge sharing, authorship and dissemination. 	
	3i	Description of other research processes that supported Lived Experience engagement and leadership (e.g. regular project meetings, mentoring, research training and support, community partnership, etc.).	
	3j	Description of how intersectionality, accessibility and inclusion were supported within the research team/project.	
	Lived Experience in Governance, Committees and Expert Advisory Groups	4a	Utilised Lived Experience Experts (i.e. in addition to study participants).
4b		Details the timing, frequency, delivery (hybrid/face-to-face) and other key details of these meetings.	
4c		Details the support available to the Expert Advisory/Decision-Making Group/Lived Experience Experts (including family/carer/supporter/kin, and consumer specific peer support).	
4d		Details how these roles/participation were remunerated.	
4e		Describes the selection process for these roles.	
4f		Details the mechanisms (e.g. Terms of Reference) underpinning the governance/committee/advisory group that promoted or limited power and decision-making in the group, and on the broader project.	

	4g	Reports the membership including any Lived Experience and intersectional designated roles (Culturally and linguistically diverse, disability, First Nations, etc.).	
	4h	Reports who Chaired/Co-Chaired the meetings and if they were Lived Experience designated roles.	
Research team – Reflexivity statement	5a	Identifies if members of the research team are working from a designated Lived Experience-perspective (i.e. all contributions are in line with Lived Experience values and practices).	
	5b	Reflects the on how the Lived Experience in the research team contributes a deep understanding of a personal recovery journey, the experience of the broader Lived Experience community and is underpinned by Lived Experience values and history as a social movement. Noting any appropriate limitations or strengths.	
	5c	Reflects on other life experiences experienced by the research team that may impact the study (e.g. discipline/training, reasons for doing the study, values, biases, benefits of doing the study, etc.).	
	5d	Details how Lived Experience members of the team will be supported (e.g. access to peer support/debrief, cultural integrity, access and inclusion).	
	5e	Identifies the strengths (e.g. Lived Experience training, leadership experience, previous Lived Experience contributions and community involvement) and limitations (e.g. starting late in the project, limited diversity or accessibility, lack of peer support) of the team as a whole.	
Results	6a	The results are reported in a way that is respectful of people with Lived Experience and aligns with Lived Experience values.	
Translating research into practice	7a	The findings are contextualised in relation to Lived Experience values, principles and priorities.	
	7b	Establishes how the research can improve the real-life outcomes for consumers, family/carer/supporter/kin.	
	7c	Establishes how this research can be translated to improve mental health services, systems and supports.	
	8a	Establishes the conclusion that directly addresses the research question and how the findings impact on consumers and family/carer/supporter/kin.	



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