

Living Experience- Practice and Learning

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Background/Approach: PEACE Multicultural Services has been working innovatively in lived/living experience space and has designed and delivered different projects & programs over the years leading to capacity building of participants sharing their stories. These projects have also led to strengthening the service delivery by co-designing services with people with living experience.

Analysis/Argument: There is power in sharing stories and learning from them. There is huge power that sits with living experience and the will and ability to utilize that innovatively in more ways than one, has greater potential of making greater impact. There are certain set practices in the sector of gaining from lived experiences, while we agree that it works within most scenarios there are limitations to that specifically when working within Culturally and linguistically Diverse communities' context. Utilizing the experiences innovatively and differently while building capacities of participants leads to much more fruitful and long-term outcomes.

Outcome/Results: The Program has co-designed several programs over the years including Women's Lounge, CARE group, Shared Voices etc. Groups in which participants gather sharing their knowledge and skills, learning from experts, from each other and supporting one another along the journey.

A Peer Support Skill Set training was designed and conducted and participants were from all walks of life including many who were BBV positive. The course led to capacity building and many of the participants have successfully gained employment as a result.

Another young person living with Hepatitis B has been helped to gain skills and be trained in Peer Support and utilize her experience to educate community members. She is from Afghan background and will be accompanying the presenter generously sharing her living experience.

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Conclusions/Applications: There is great strength in living experience and utilizing that creatively can have greater impact. Co-designing services by keeping living experience at the centre is more effective and powerful.

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