Experts by Experience in Mental Health Research

Co-production

Leading research - known as survivor-led or peer-led studies
Steering or advisory groups
Attending meetings and discussions
Working with academics
Reviewing funding applications
Working with researchers equally on research projects

"It's important that we do research that matters to us. It's important we shape the research questions, that we do the right research, so that we do good research and so that we do relevant research and influence policy and practices"

"Without lived experience, research isn't as real or relevant… It gives a voice and power to those the research will affect in the future. It's really important we are addressing what is happening to real people right now"

"This has given me courage. I've met people who have had similar experiences to mine and have felt a sense of community and connection, and a safe space to turn our lemons into lemonade."

"There are quite a lot of ways to get involved with mental health research, especially for people from minority backgrounds, as I feel we are not heard enough within research."

"I would recommend this to anybody who is interested in lived experience research work. It's a great way to re-frame your experiences."

What is lived experience involvement in mental health research?

Lived experience involvement in research can look like (but isn't limited to):

- Co-production
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Co-production

Tips for co-production:

- Start small and find opportunities that suit you
- You don't need to lead a study the first time you do this (unless you want to!)

How/where to get involved

- Contact your local NHS Trust
- Sign up to the McPin Foundation involvement network, NSUN bulletin, SRN (Survivor Researcher Network) and other mental health charity opportunity listings
- Check out PeopleInResearch.org
- Take a look on Twitter for terms like #LivedExperience #MentalHealthResearch #LEAPS (lived experience advisory panels) #YAGS (youth advisory groups) #CoProduction

Tips before you begin:

- Be aware of what you are comfortable sharing with others. There's no need to share everything about your mental health story. Your viewpoints and expertise are more than that!
- There are times when research can be quite stressful and overwhelming. It's important to be honest with yourself when you need to take a step back, or extra help or support. Good research teams will be understanding of this.
- Be honest with yourself when you need to take a step back, or extra help or support. Good research teams will be understanding of this.
- It may be nerve-wracking joining a research project for the first time, but it is definitely rewarding!

Why get involved?

- Empowering
- Using experience for good
- Meaning and purpose
- Gain skills
- Make research relevant
- Get rewarded

Planning projects, writing projects, co-author with researchers
Creating guides/materials

Lived experience in research can take many different forms as people actively use their experiences to shape mental health research.

#MentalHealthResearchMatters