

# Successful Engagement with People Who have Lived Experience

## Part 2:

- Identify Who
- Consider Culture
- Discover Diversity



As Title V programs expand their reach to the people they serve, engagement with people from new and different communities is critical. It is only through these relationships that equity will be achieved. This is the second in a three-part series of videos exploring aspects of successful engagement with people who have lived experience. These videos accompany a workbook that can be accessed at the link provided.



# Where are we?

This workbook is divided into three sections:

## **Preparing**

1. Definition
2. Shared Understanding
3. Organizational Readiness
4. Identify Who
5. Consider Culture
6. Discover Diversity
7. Your Ask

## **Asking**

8. Relationship
9. When
10. Effective Connections
11. Self Determination
12. Support

## **Engaging**

13. Strengths and Assets
14. Trust
15. Collaborative Process
16. Commitment
17. Sustain Engagement

The workbook, Successful Engagement with People who have Lived Experience can be found at the link below on the National MCH Workforce Development website. For this video, we will be discussing the chapters four through six about preparing for engagement.



## Identify Who



Sometimes staff in an organization have lived experience, but they may not feel able to share their personal stories at work. It's possible that their opinion may be biased, out of date, or reflect a conflict of interest. Whenever possible, it is best to include additional representatives from the community who do not also work in the field.

There is a tendency to rely on staff in a program who also have lived experience to speak on behalf of their community. It is important to identify and engage with people from the community who do not also work in the field, their opinions and ideas will not be impacted by their employment status.



## Identify Who

- Race / Ethnicity
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender / Sex
- Age
- Additional Considerations
- The history people with lived experience have with the program or service.



Historically programs have turned to the usual suspects when seeking input from the people they serve. For example, the CYSHCN program has engaged with parents of children with special health care needs. To address issues of equity, it is imperative to explore whose voices are missing from that group. Think about different races or ethnicities, a variety of sexual orientations, diverse genders, various ages, etc. when selecting people who have lived experience to engage.



## Case Examples Identify Who



### **Case 1: CYSHCN – Transition to Adult Health Care**

- Homeless, transgendered youth
- Youth with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities

### **Case 2: Internal Workforce – Addressing Equity**

- Staff who represent the state’s various cultures
- Staff with different backgrounds and are at different stages in their careers

Throughout these videos, two case examples will be offered to illustrate how to apply these concepts.

For the first group, a CYSHCN program addressing youth health transition, it would be natural to initially think about inviting teens to talk about this transition in their life. But what about inviting the voice of homeless, transgendered youth or those with intellectual or developmental disabilities. They may have a different perspective to offer.

For the second group, an internal office workgroup, rather than simply asking for volunteers to participate, it might be helpful to invite participation from staff who represent the state’s various cultures or ages, or stage of their career.



## Consider Culture



Relationships with community members are more positive when their culture is known and honored. This includes acknowledging current culture as well as historical culture.

In order to really improve equity in services and programs, culture needs to be thoroughly considered. To honor someone's culture, one needs to understand that culture.



## Consider Culture

- Learn about the populations with whom you will be building a relationship.
  - Current and historic values and beliefs
  - The history of the relationship between your agency and different communities
- Reflect on your agency's culture
  - Past dynamics
  - Government culture
- Opportunity for growth
  - Create dialog with people from cultures other than your own
  - Social events, community circles, and community cultural events

There is an abundance of resources available to learn about different populations and their cultures. It is everyone's responsibility to learn about current and historic values and beliefs. It is also important to learn how the agency or program has interacted with the community in the past.

That leads to also thinking about the agency culture. What behaviors or culture are shared among people who work for this program that need to be considered and tailored for successful engagement with people in the community.

The work in bridging cultures is truly an opportunity for personal and professional growth. To create programs that are more equitable, relationships need to be forged and developed with people from cultures other than your own.



## Consider Culture

- Holidays and rituals
- Communication styles
- Behaviors



When thinking about culture, one simple step to take is to be respectful of other's holidays and rituals and not plan meetings that conflict with these events. Considering the communication styles that exist within different cultures is also important. People from some cultures speak freely at meetings while others hold back. Even greetings can be different based on one's culture and need to be respected in order to build those relationships. There are many behaviors that take place in meetings that can vary by culture. The place one sits in a meeting may be reflective of their culture, or how comfortable they are with personal space. There are an abundant factors to consider when developing respect for other cultures.





## Case Examples Consider Culture

### Case 1: CYSHCN – Transition to Adult Health Care

- Avoid talking about teens as if they are all the same
- Listen to teens more than you talk to them

### Case 2: Internal Workforce – Addressing Equity

- Don't schedule meetings on holidays
- Notice and adapt to cultural differences in meetings



Returning to the case examples.

In the first scenario, when working with teenagers, it is important not to talk about them as if they are all the same. Although there are cultural traits that are shared by teenagers, they certainly have a huge amount of unique characteristics. It is also important to listen to teens more than talking at them. In our culture, teens are used to having adults talk at them, but for engagement to be successful, that table has to turn and the teens need to be respected as the authority of their experience.

In the second scenario, where an agency is working to improve equity in the workplace, it is critical to avoid meetings during holidays and holy days. And this is a nice opportunity to reflect as an agency on what behaviors or culture has been established as the norm in meetings and whether or not that is inclusive of all cultural behaviors and comforts.



## Discover Diversity



Even within sub-groups, diversity still exists (intersectionality). It is important to hear from a variety of people impacted by programs, decisions and policies.

- What types of diversity will you need to consider?
- What adaptations may you have to make?

Although diversity and culture are related, it is important to think through both. Whereas culture looks at the norms of a group of people, diversity is thinking through the individual personal identity and intersectionalities of the people in a group. What types of diversity will you need to consider, such as, gender identities, religions, languages, disabilities, incomes, etc. And, what type of adaptations will you need to make, such as, the use of interpreters, translation, pronouns, accessibility, closed captioning, etc.



# Discover Diversity

## What do we know about different identities?

- What amount of space is needed for personal comfort?
- What shared values do they have?
- How do they view authority, family, or elders?
- What strengths have they developed over their lifetime?
- What do they experience from others when they leave their home?



Please note: the examples given are not necessarily relevant to everyone in the group.

When thinking about supporting diversity of a group, one can consider questions such as

- what amount of space is needed for personal comfort?
- what shared values do they have?
- how do they view authority, family, or elders?
- what strengths have they developed in their efforts to survive?
- what do they experience from others when they leave their home?

Stereotyping can surface when thinking through these factors, so always be on the look out and don't allow that to happen. Although there are some shared characteristics within a given identity, not everyone who shares that identity will have all of those characteristics.



## Case Examples Discover Diversity

### Case 1: CYSHCN – Transition to Adult Health Care

- Use people's pronouns
- Set aside time in meetings for communication devices

### Case 2: Internal Workforce – Addressing Equity

- Be aware of non-verbal communication and how it is interpreted
- Recognize power differentials



And we return once again to the case examples.

When working with teenagers possibly more than other groups, using everyone's pronouns demonstrates respect and acceptance. For teens who may use a communication device, or rely on interpreters, including sign language interpretation, meetings will need to be structured to allow for the extra time that will be needed for communication.

When meeting with people from a work unit or section, non-verbal communication should be observed, and careful steps must be taken when interpreting those behaviors. When personal identities are not being acknowledged, there may be subtle changes in non-verbal communication. It is also critical to recognize power differences that exist in a workplace. Even the favorite and most accommodating supervisor is still a supervisor who inherently has more power than other staff.



# Thank you for listening!



- For more information, please proceed to Part Three in our series, *Successful Engagement with People Who have Lived Experience*.
- For more information, please read the companion workbook, "*Successful Engagement with People with Lived Experience*", available at [mchwdc.unc.edu](http://mchwdc.unc.edu).

Thank you for watching this video, part 2 of 3 addressing successful engagement with people who have lived experience. The workbook contains additional information about successfully engaging with people who have lived experience.