

LIVED EXPERIENCE @ WORK: MAPPING COMPETENCIES THAT MATTER

Workers with lived experience, and the people who work with them, let us know the most important skills, knowledge, attributes and behaviours Peers* bring to their work, and how these competencies contribute to services organizations offer to clients.

Skills of Inclusion

- Be and create safe spaces
- Build bridges and fill gaps[^]
- Demonstrate flexibility
- Facilitate trust with openness
- Listen, and share stories when helpful
- Problem solve in real time
- Speak their language[^]
- Understand how asking for help can be hard

"I can talk to anybody"

Knowledge of Complexities

- Apply many types of knowledge
- Be self-aware about the role
- Integrate personal and professional experiences[^]
- Know when to push and when to back off
- Navigate intersecting systems[^]
- Promote health and harm reduction
- Recognize stigma and shame
- Understand structural reasons for struggle

"This wasn't just someone who wanted to chat, there was more going on"

Authentic Leadership Attributes

- Challenge assumptions and stereotypes
- Debrief, reflect and move on[^]
- De-stigmatize stigmatizing services
- Draw from hardships and resolutions
- Identify and mobilize community ties
- Represent message while delivering message
- Transform programs to meet emerging needs
- Put others at ease by validating them[^]

"Lived experience is what gave me the empathy and the interest"

Client Service Behaviours

- Advocate to get stuff done
- Be accessible within boundaries
- Foster relationships without assumptions[^]
- Interpret words and situations
- Manage anger and conflict
- Offer creative, practical responses
- Provide comfort
- Resist telling people what to do[^]

"Go with the flow"

[^] Priority Competency

*In this project, 'Peers' reflect the variety of roles across organizations that bring a deep understanding of and expertise about the lived experience of those supported by an agency, formally or informally. We recognize that organizations and Peers use and prefer a variety of different terms to describe roles that centre a person's lived experience.