

## EMPOWERMENT, RECOVERY & SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP: A VALUABLE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

*Empoderamento, Recovery e Direitos Sociais: Uma relevante experiência australiana*

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper challenges service providers to consider the way they support people. It demonstrates powerful experiences, outcomes, and opportunities enjoyed by Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council Members, and encourages readers to consider whether every person accessing other services could enjoy similar positive outcomes. The ethical underpinnings of the Council are human rights, including the right to be responsible. Its work of contributing to improving services and subsequent outcomes for people positively impacts the unique self-improvement, self-respect, and growth of each member. Members report that their involvement and the respect afforded them build confidence, self-worth, belonging, hope, and pride. Each member is recognized as a valued, respected, and empowered citizen. Their experiences of trauma and mental health issues are viewed not as deficits, but as valuable lived-experiences used purposefully in the service of others. Council Members express the positive difference involvement in the Council has brought to their lives. They express how fulfilling it is to be contributing to the Council, services, and community. As they feel increasingly valued and encouraged, they are empowered in their work together and in their self-agency. Their recognition that they deserve to enjoy all human rights strengthens. Members have undertaken new challenges in their lives including study, volunteering, and employment. This paper demonstrates experiences, mechanisms, and outcomes the Council has had in the lives of Members. It demonstrates the empowering effects that can happen when people

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who have been ostracised and marginalized are invited to be contributing, responsible, social citizens, colleagues, and peers.

**Keywords:** Lived Experience. Citizenship. Peer Support. Empowered. Community.

**RESUMO:** Este artigo é um alerta para os trabalhadores de serviço de saúde sobre a maneira como as pessoas recebem apoio nos serviços. O artigo apresenta experiências, resultados e oportunidades de empoderamento dos membros do Conselho Consultivo da Comunidade Flourish na Austrália e incentiva os leitores a refletir sobre formas de organizar serviços que empoderam as pessoas criando experiências positivas. Os fundamentos éticos do Conselho são os direitos humanos, incluindo o direito de ser responsável. O trabalho contribuindo positivamente na melhoria dos serviços para as pessoas e conseqüentemente impactou no autoaperfeiçoamento, respeito próprio, e o crescimento de cada um. Para os membros do conselho o envolvimento e o respeito proporcionou a eles confiança, autoestima, senso de pertencimento, esperança e orgulho. Cada membro é reconhecido como um cidadão valorizado, respeitado e capacitado. As experiências de trauma e transtorno mental não são vistas como déficits, mas como experiências vividas valiosas usadas propositadamente a serviço dos outros. Os Membros do Conselho reconhecem que o envolvimento no Conselho trouxe para suas vidas experiências positivas. Eles expressam como é gratificante contribuir para o Conselho, os serviços e a comunidade. À medida que se sentem valorizados e encorajados, eles se fortalecem em seu trabalho de autogestão. Fortalece também o sentimento de que eles merecem gozar de todos os direitos humanos. Os membros enfrentam novos desafios em suas vidas, incluindo estudo, trabalho voluntário e emprego. Este artigo apresenta experiências, dispositivos e resultados que o Conselho teve na vida dos seus membros. Demonstra experiências de pessoas que foram condenadas ao ostracismo e marginalizadas e que ao ser empoderadas passaram a ter direitos sociais, colegas, suporte de pares e responsabilidades.

**Palavras-Chave:** Experiência Viva. Cidadania. Suporte de Pares. Empoderamento. Comunidade.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Flourish Australia is a large, community-managed, person-led specialist mental health service supporting over 9000 individuals a year in rural, remote, regional and metropolitan areas of Australia. The voice of lived experience leads all that the organisation does both in supporting individuals and in service-wide planning and production.

Flourish Australia are honoured to be considered leaders in the Australian lived experience and peer workforce movement (MEAGHER et al., 2018). The

organisation is known for championing the voice of lived experience in workplace wellbeing, human rights, service co-production, supporting people's recovery. A major focus is on people's feelings of belonging and increasing opportunities for people to contribute to the communities in which they live through their social citizenship.

The Flourish Australia Community Advisory Council is an important part of the services approach to the deep involvement of people with lived experience. Their role and purpose is to robustly advocate for service improvements and represent the people who access the service. The 24 Council Members (Members) are selected by a regional ballot and voted upon by the people who access that particular regional service. Each elected delegate (Member) has the responsibility for representing their particular region of services for a two-year period.

Members are of varying ages and backgrounds. Some have extensive work histories, others have never been in paid employment. Some have had the opportunity to gain a good education, while some Members struggle to read and write. Personal and equitable support ensures that all voices can contribute powerfully and equally.

This paper seeks to portray some of the unique, positive features and outcomes of the Council—and to demonstrate how enabling these opportunities are for people with lived experience. It demonstrates how powerful inclusivity of people with lived experience of mental health issues is in the co-design, co-production and co-evaluation of a mental health services. It also demonstrates that the intrinsic involvement of the voices of the people who access the service is fundamental to service quality. It will draw on Member narratives to demonstrate the value of such a Council in their own recovery and in the carriage of lived experience perspectives.

## **2 CLAIMING RECOVERY**

The Human Rights movement and concept of non-clinical 'recovery' for people with lived experience of mental health issues, has been championed by advocates in the Australian context for over three decades. The lived experience movement and Flourish Australia consider recovery as the individual making a life that has meaning, purpose and connection in spite of on-going 'symptoms'.

Claiming ‘recovery’, with or without ‘symptoms’, enables people with lived experience to engage with the ability and opportunity to see themselves as capable, contributing members of the services they attend, their families and the communities in which they live. A focus on ‘claiming recovery’ encourages people with mental health issues and distress to look beyond mere survival and existence while living with experiences that may be quite disabling (DAVIDSON, 2005; BONNEY;STICKLEY 2008; RAMON et al., 2007). Valuing their lived experience and claiming recovery encourages people to reframe their experiences, move forward and set new goals. It supports the view that people can build relationships and live lives filled with connection, purpose, meaning, contribution and belonging (JACOB, 2015).

### **3 INCLUSION AND EMPOWERMENT**

The World Health Organisation has recognised that the empowerment of people with mental health issues and carers ‘leads to tangible biological, psychological and societal benefits’ (World Health Organisation, 2010). Listening to and embedding, the perspectives of people with lived experience in service design and delivery has been shown to measurably improve outcomes for people using services (RESNICK & ROSENHECK, 2008).

Across Western society the ‘symptoms’ of anxiety and depression are understood and accepted more than they ever have been. However, hearing voices, delusions and disassociation are often feared, not understood or valued. Communities and services across all sectors commonly discriminate and marginalise people with mental health issues. People may also hold self-stigma pertaining to their experiences of trauma, psychological distress, mental health challenges and psychosocial disabilities.

*“I think it’s assumed by most people that people with lived experience can’t contribute to services or communities. However, the Flourish Australia Council, the Executives, the Board and the Inclusion Team who support us in our work, assumes that we can contribute; and expect us to.”*

S.G., Council Deputy Chair

This marginalisation of people with lived experience often leads to people’s rights, roles and responsibilities being stripped from them amidst the confusion

of a distressed mind and other's judgements, as to what individuals can or cannot do (NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION, 2020). People often see mental health issues and 'symptoms' as 'weakness' or 'brokenness'. However, Members are encouraged to reframe their experiences, to value, utilise and build on their lived experience and strengths.

### **3.1 The value and importance of the Flourish Australia Council**

The values held by Flourish Australia and the Council requires interactions to be mutually beneficial for Council Members and for the service. The Members are a diverse and inclusive group, comprised entirely of people who access the organisation's specialist services. They are paid for their time in line with a remuneration framework for government boards and committee (Flourish Australia Paid Contributions Policy). One of the main responsibilities of the Members is to provide an open communication pathway of information between their local services, communities, the Council, the Executive team and the Board.

Valued, empowered participation of people with lived experience is considered essential to improve the human rights of people who have experienced trauma, mental health challenges and who receive mental health services (BYRNE, 2017). The aim is for the Members' lives and the quality-of-service delivery to improve.

Member experience and guidance is sought in all aspects of service design. Some Members also sit on executive governance committees, such as the Finance Committee, the Measurement and Evaluation Steering Group and the People and Culture Committee. This supports the Council's contribution to the governance of the organisation and ensures the focus remains on the needs and recovery of people accessing services. As would be expected of any governance committee, members are expected to keep some information confidential. They are trusted to do so and they are signatories to a Code of Conduct and Ethics.

*“Through the building of relationships among Members, we learn to relate to others. Before the Council, I felt everyone was an enemy but learning to communicate with the Members has helped me to also relate with people outside the Council”.*

M.W., Council Chair

Members report that their involvement in the Council and the respect afforded them builds self-worth, belonging, hope, pride and further capabilities. Their experiences of trauma and mental health issues are viewed not as a deficit, but as valuable lived-experiences. These experiences are used purposefully in the service of others which informs the accountability, design, delivery and reviewing of services.

*“The Council is about acceptance, trust, empowerment, social citizenship and being ‘a part of’, rather than ‘apart from.’”*

S.G., Council Deputy Chair

Shifting the narrative of lived experience away from diagnosis and marginalisation can be challenging. It is common for Members to initially distrust the validity of being honoured, having their opinions and experiences respected, being seen as brave and being needed. It can take a while for Members to become confident they deserve the respect and appreciation the Council and Flourish Australia afford them. However, people begin to believe in their contribution and their recovery accelerates. Through their experience they reclaim their rights, social citizenship and their valued sense of self (ROWE; DAVIDSON, 2016).

Flourish Australia and the Council support people to reframe their experiences to that of being on a spectrum of common responses to trauma and forms of normal human experience. There is no diagnostic criteria for belonging on the Council; some may experience terrible anxiety or hear voices, while others do not.

*“The Inclusion Team have experience of the effects of ‘voice hearing’. They help us to explain, feel safe and be open about the effects the voices have on our concentration. This has helped me feel validated.”*

S.G., Council Deputy Chair

Common difficulties Members experience in the early stages of being involved in the Council include; thoughts of having ‘nothing of worth to contribute’; anxiety about what people will think if they hear and respond to their voices while in meetings; or if they have difficulty reading and writing. These can all play a large part in Members feeling ‘not worthy’ of serving on the Council.

However, Members are encouraged to explain what their fears, concerns and challenges are when carrying out their duties. This serves three purposes:

*1. Brings understanding, acceptance, respect and patience to the situation by all Members and the organisation.*

*2. Builds feelings of being valued, appreciated, understood, needed, heard, accepted and respected in spite of active ‘symptoms’*

*3. The Council and organisation receive the wisdom, understanding and ideas that may have been missed if the person was not afforded the time to express themselves, amidst the interjections of their voices and visions.*

Members support and encourage each other to reclaim what may have been lost to ‘mental illness’ in the past. Together, they become ambitious and hopeful for individual Members and the Council as a whole as they foster talents, confidence, knowledge and personal development. As a result of their growing confidence, many Members gain other roles within the Flourish Australia network. They also reclaim, or forge their social citizenship for the first time, by entering into study, gaining external employment, becoming volunteers in local community groups and starting new relationships.

The Members see the Council as a supportive, unique way of achieving goals for the group and individuals and as being a bridge into the community.

### **3.2 Liberty of Expression and Utilising Talents and Experiences**

Those whose lives have been impacted by the coercive nature of most psychiatric systems, know that people with lived experience are unique among groups in being 'policed'. However, the Council, with its liberty of expression and easy involvement with the organisation's executive leaders, operates in direct contrast to this. It demonstrates the empowering effects that can happen when people who have been ostracised are invited to be contributing, responsible, social citizens, colleagues, partners and peers.

*"I never thought I was going to have the opportunity to use my professional experience again. I contribute from my professional experience, as well as my lived experience. It is important to feel useful and valued."*

S.G., Council Deputy Chair

Council Members facilitate meetings and groups or participate in social activities in their local service, in order to be aware of local needs and positively influence outcomes. Their experiences in these groups, the discussions they have with people in their local areas are conveyed to the Council. Being involved in the local service groups also prepares other potential Council Members.

Council Members mentor and support each other both during meetings and between them through phone calls, emails and social media. They also support newly appointed Council Members, especially their successors.

In order for Council Members to stay connected after their tenure on the Council comes to an end, an alumni was developed. The Alumni Council Members connect regularly through closed social media pages. They are continued to be invited to sit on particular committees, focus groups and working parties. This ensures the experiences and wisdom gained during their tenure continues to be utilised and they continue to feel valued and needed.

### **3.3 Stepping Outside of the Comfort Zones**

Importantly, Members are encouraged to take on challenges they would like to undertake and are outside of their comfort zones. A good example of this is the important work of presenting at conferences and talking publicly about their work. This can be frightening for many people at the best of times. However, this fear can be increased when the speakers know they will be presenting a new dynamic and one that may be contentious. An example of this was a panel



workshop offered to delegates at an international conference about the importance and process of co-producing the Flourish Australia Co-design Guidelines (FLOURISH AUSTRALIA, 2019) and Policy (FLOURISH AUSTRALIA, 2019b).

The Council Members and two lived experience staff members presented the new approach in co-design forged by Flourish Australia, knowing that there was a great likelihood that a number of delegates would find it confronting and challenging.

However, the Council, staff and executives, believed it was an important and powerful philosophy and way of engaging in true co-design that needed to be shared beyond Flourish Australia. Their hope, in doing so, was to influence other mental health and related service providers, to engage in deep and respectful co-design with people who access their services. In order to do this the panel discussed the co-design process and decisions made that eventuated in the inclusive wording of the Flourish Australia Co-Design Guidelines and Policy including a list of co-design stakeholders.

During the writing of the guidelines and policy, the co-design group formulated a list of possible stakeholders. One of the Council Members expressed their desire to include 'people from other dimensions' and another believed we should include 'beings from other galaxies'.

There was excited discussion and a considerable degree of concern about what external collaborators, partners and funders might think of these inclusions and about the validity of the Council. After considerable debate and discussion, the working party, consisting of Council Members, staff and Executive members, reached a strong consensus that to, not include these beings, stakeholders and influencers, which are such an integral part of some people's lives, would be to send a message that the organisation does not accept people's ideas, experiences, opinions, their realities or them as individuals.

While most of the guidelines are reasonably standard for a person-led service, the paragraph below quotes 'Accountability 8' from the Co-design Guidelines which was the passage inclusive of these new perspectives.

**Accountability8:** *Co-design processes and outcomes must have a local focus but be aware and respecting of regional, national, global, intergalactic, all other dimensions, unique views, beliefs and realities.*

**Footnote:** *The passionate desire to include such a strong statement which may usually be seen as ‘alternative’ or ‘bizarre’ was respected during the writing of these Co-design Guidelines. This inclusion demonstrated to the people involved in the co-design of the guidelines, that they were valued, their beliefs and experiences respected and accepted, and that Flourish Australia is an inclusive, person-led service. This bold step was not taken light-heartedly.*

As predicted a number of the audience were quite affronted at the idea of including such ‘stakeholders’ in their co-design processes. There was considerable but expected passionate debate about the validity of the inclusion.

The experience of presenting such a shift in approach was challenging for all of the presenters. However, each used their individual talents and capabilities to meet each challenge both within the group, who were under considerable pressure, and those expressed by the audience.

One of the panel members was a person who had had periods of not communicating before joining the Council and now managed to speak great words of wisdom amidst the profound stutter that he is also valued for. Another member had very low literacy skills and crippling fear of public speaking. He is a great logical thinker and narrator. Perhaps our strongest orator in the team, was basically reclusive until joining the Council. The Council was blessed to gain not only this gentle man's voice but also the voices of the beings that accompany him in all his thoughts. The fourth had been unwell for so long that he felt he had nothing of value to offer anyone. He is probably our most gifted writer on the team.

With the support of the Inclusion Project Officer, and another staff member who was part of the co-design team, the presenting panel held their own, conquered their fear, inner voices and anxiety and convinced the audience of the importance of truly valuing lived experience. It was obvious to the audience that all members of the panel were equal. All had gifts, strengths and capabilities that together made a great team producing outstanding results. The staff were not

dominating or patronisingly supporting the panel members they were there to support and to contribute if needed. True equality and deep respect for each person in the team was evidenced.

By the completion of the workshop, a large percentage of the audience recognised that true co-design includes valuing lived experience and all experiences of the people involved.

The recognition that the panel had forged a new understanding of the paradigm shifts needed to ensure true co-design, was deeply rewarding for each individual, the Council as a whole and for Flourish Australia.

To live with the often crippling effects of trauma and subsequent mental health issues; to be included, valued and equal partners in such important work. Co-producing mental health and psycho social supports for our communities, is a beautiful and powerful way of exploring and gaining social citizenship and influencing the human rights of all people with lived experience.

*“In the Council, I found purpose again. Being voted Chair, being on other committees and speaking at conferences, has added great value in my life. The Council shows that my opinion matters and is worth listening to. There have been some strong discussion and debates, but I have learnt that’s ok, because people have differences of opinion and we are always in a safe environment in the Council.*

*I was part of the Co-design Team that presented our work at an international conference. I was really anxious but we did really well. The main remark I remember was: “This is the best presentation I’ve been too!” The Council has given me so much and has changed my life. Although I continue to experience mental health and severe chronic pain, every day I have hope and confidence. I have even started a local social group.”*

M.W., Council Chair

### **3.4 Lived experience voices in everything we do**

During 2020, the Council has been involved in the planning and actions taken to transform Flourish Australia service delivery to meet the needs of the

people, demands and regulations of the Australian Health Department and State Governments to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The agile and successful responses of Flourish Australia to COVID-19 and the natural disasters so prevalent in Australia such as drought, bushfires and floods, which included the advice given by the Council, has demonstrated that the Council is not, in any sense tokenistic. When restrictions on holding face to face meetings commenced, an Interim Council consisting of alumni and current Members, was quickly established. This led to ensuring the guidance and co-decision-making processes around the pandemic response, and that the delivery of services were truly led by lived experience.

The Members utilised online conferencing platforms, to assist them to meet in real time during the unfolding emergency situation. The speed with which the Interim Council was assembled and trained in the use of technology by the organisation, speaks to the essential nature of the Council's voice in service delivery in a time of national crisis.

*“We were active participants in the development of the response to COVID-19 and the fires. Traditionally, in other services, people are consulted tokenistic ally. This is not the case with Flourish Australia”.*

S.G., Council Deputy Chair

Since COVID-19 Council meetings have, out of necessity, been more frequent. Monthly online meetings with Executive team members have ensured important time sensitive and agile responses to the crisis. The Council's capacity to provide guidance to the organisation, to ask pertinent and often challenging questions, to give voice to the people accessing the services during difficult times, has kept the focus on keeping people connected and supported.

*“We talk about difficult situations and turn negative situations into positive ones. The Council is such a good thing; even when our term ends it will always be a part of our lives.”*

M W., Council Chair

#### 4 SUPPORT

As with all Councils, behind the scene support is needed for its successful operation. The Inclusion team, consisting of the General Manager and the Project Officer provides this support. Drawing on their own personal lived experience ensures peer relationships, reciprocity and mutuality develops quickly between the staff and Council Members. They embody acceptance and value of lived experience, hope and recovery. The mutual experiences shared by staff and Members break down fear and distrust. While these positions are not official Peer Worker positions, they do offer peer support which has been proven to benefit recovery (BARRY, 2010).

*“The Inclusion Team mentors and provides the support to improve our leadership skills and reassurance. Without their support we might lose members. Council work can be very hard, especially in the beginning. We need to have them there to bounce ideas and concerns off.”*

S.S., Alumni Member

*“For those who haven’t had much education, some of the information the Council receives can be hard to read or understand. The Project Officer, Inclusion is there to support us. She is the glue that keeps it all together.”*

M.W., Council Chair

The Inclusion team offers administrative support, as well as mentoring and education about services, the lived experience movement, advocacy, governance. They ensure Members feel knowledgeable and empowered. They often support and encourage individuals through times of self-doubt and challenging personal experiences.

*“The Inclusion team provides continual learning; how to be advocates and to think strategically. To be leaders even with our challenges and to consider how others are feeling. Why people are responding in the way they do and to be inclusive. You don’t get that opportunity anywhere else in the community”.*

S.S., Alumni Member

Members express how fulfilling it is to be contributing to the Council, services and community. As they feel increasingly valued, encouraged and empowered in their work with the Council, their private lives and self-agency improves. Over a surprisingly short time their contribution to the Council and community becomes stronger, as does their recovery journeys.

*“I found that with the Council and staff believed in me. This was when my sense of confidence to keep working, learning and contributing started. Before I got sick, when working, I didn’t think about what I was doing, I just had confidence and did it. I got the job done quickly and efficiently. But when I became unwell I lost my ability and self-confidence. I’m not at the stage that I was before, but I can do more than I used to and I feel valuable again. The Council has made me stop and think “Why am I questioning myself?” The Council’s belief in me and knowing that people listen to me has given me self-belief again.”*

M.W., Council Chair

The Members’ recognition that they deserve to enjoy all human rights also strengthens. Their engagement with the Council has led to Members undertaking new challenges including study, volunteering, employment, travel, choosing where they live and relationships. Many express they would not have thought these endeavours and dignified risks possible previous to being on the Council.

*“This is my second time on the Council. I was worried when my first tenure came to an end my confidence would decline into how it was before the Council. However, I have been involved in training staff, running groups, sitting on committees, speaking at conferences and writing papers. The Council got me started and I have kept going. It’s a great experience because it allowed me the confidence to put my foot into the mental health employment world. I have been studying and am now working.”*

S.S., Alumni Member

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Services need to intrinsically include the voices of people they support in all decisions that will impact them (ROPER et al., 2018; VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, 2019). Those who have had their roles and responsibilities removed by others, need to feel they can contribute and are valued.

*“I was very quiet and didn’t like to speak up when I first joined the Council. With encouragement from staff, I started to come out of my shell. They told me what I contributed was valuable and that made my self-esteem, confidence and contribution increase each time the Council met.*

*I also became friends and felt a part of a family with some of the Members and through sharing our personal stories and journeys, it helped my recovery. I realised that there were other people who were experiencing similar situations as me.*

*I am now much more comfortable speaking in groups. The fact I felt I was helpful with my opinions and suggestions meant that I was growing as a person. My recovery journey is still continuing and I am grateful for the opportunities the Council has given me to share my stories. I like that I am becoming a much better Member who is valued by Flourish Australia.*

*I have also gained employment now. I like having the responsibility of a job and colleagues.”*

H.C., Council Member

With the right support, a Council of people who access a service is one of the most valuable resources an organisation can have. The individual outcomes surpass the expectations Members, their families, clinicians and support workers previously held. The growth in their abilities to be contributing Members of the Council, their families and communities is enormously rewarding and valuable.

Organisations that utilise the voices and representation of people with lived experience enable win-win, processes and outcomes (MARTIN et al., 2019). It is vitally important in pursuing human rights (United Nations, 1966), recovery and social citizenship (FLOURISH AUSTRALIA, 2020). These approaches should be at the forefront of all mental health and other human services.

Flourish Australia continuously endeavours to improve the way in which people with lived experience participate in the service design, delivery, evaluation and reporting. The organisation’s continuing commitment to ensuring that the voices of lived experience are included in all that it does ensures the service is



focused on; and provides what the people need to improve their lives, support their recovery and claim their social citizenship.

The experience outlined here provides a challenge to all services committed to mental health reform and ensuring the human rights of the people they support and serve. Flourish Australia and the Community Advisory Council challenge services to provide 'person-led services' with the voices of lived experience at all levels and stages of service design, production, review and reporting. The principles of 'person-centred services' rarely lead to the services developing processes and outcomes that truly meet the needs of the people they serve. 'Person-centred services' are often established and managed by multiple professions including clinicians, nurses, financial managers and bureaucrats, who have not had experiences of needing the services they govern.

'Person-led services' ensure that the voices of lived experience, including the people who utilise the services, and staff in designated lived experience roles, lead on, and are intrinsic to, all service design, decision making, production, evaluation and reporting. These services are open and prepared to listen and respond to the different perspectives that people with lived experience bring to decision-making, services and communities.

Person-led services that truly listen to the voices of the people they support in every interaction they have, will proactively and purposefully respond to each person's individual needs. Person-led services will also recognise that 'the personal is the political' and will formalise a deeply respectful and strong partnership with people accessing their services through such mechanisms as the Community Advisory Council.

Person-led services celebrate with the people they support as they see them engage with their communities and families. They celebrate as they enrol in colleges and universities; as they become volunteers and gain paid employment in field of their choice. They celebrate as people gain self-agency, self-respect and self-confidence. They walk beside a person as they claim their social citizenship and recognise that they deserve to enjoy all human rights.

Person-led services are attentive to the individual voices of the people they support. They employ strong, passionate lived experience staff at all levels of service delivery. They deeply value the partnership, advice and leadership offered through their formalised lived experience and service user committees,

steering groups and councils. Person-led mental health and human services truly meet the needs of the people they support. Will your service become ‘person-led’?

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