

Lived Experience Leadership in Agencies & Systems

This tool should stimulate reflection of your organization's progression to meaningful inclusion of lived experience leadership.

Definition: A Family Leader is someone who has personal experience in using resources or services to strengthen his or her family and speaks and acts from their perspective as a family member. (Parents Anonymous Inc.)

The first step of meaningful lived experience leadership engagement is to examine your readiness.

Reflect on these questions from an individual lens, and from the perspective of your agency / system:

- ✓ Do you see families in a strength-based manner?
 - ✓ Can you identify why it is important to have a person with lived experience on your team?
 - ✓ Do you want honest feedback? Are you ready to hear where your system or service can improve?
-

Answer the following questions from the perspective of your organization/agency.

1. Currently as an organization, in what ways do you meaningfully engage Family Leaders?

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, what is your organization's level of interest in meaningfully engaging Family Leaders at *all levels*? Circle a number below.

Not At All Interested 1 2 3 4 5 Very Interested



3. What resources does your organization need to support meaningful leadership of individuals with lived experience?

4. In what ways can your organization increase meaningful family leadership? Specific examples are listed below for reference, but brainstorm your own ideas as well.
-
-
-

Direct Service

1. Work with a family to develop a service plan.
2. Support families with referrals.
3. Support a family to coordinate their services.
4. Provide a list of local support groups available in the area.
5. Offer classes on self-empowerment, literacy, finance, conflict resolution, etc.

Agency Opportunities

1. Work with local Family Leaders to develop a community forum or training.
2. Provide space in your building for families to have support group meetings.
3. Feature a positive story about a family making a difference in your community and post it on your website, Facebook page, or newsletter.
4. Include families in developing feedback mechanisms.
5. Sponsor a resource fair for families.
6. Provide Q&A forums to exchange ideas with families.
7. Identify a Family Leader from your community to serve as a liaison with other families.

Systems Change

1. Empower Family Leaders to recommend policy changes as a result of surveys/assessments.
2. Provide/Offer leadership development opportunities for families to develop their skills and increase their content knowledge.
3. Include Family Leaders on your Quality Improvement team with clear expectations.
4. Provide funding for families to attend trainings.
5. Prepare talking points with Family Leaders to deliver at legislative hearings.
6. Provide continuous access to mentoring.
7. Assure your budget supports all levels of family engagement.

