

Emerging Minds Families

FACT SHEET

Tips for getting involved in lived experience work

Here are some ways families have found lived experience work:

- Contacting an organisation that works in the field you have lived experience in (such as mental health, drugs and alcohol, domestic violence, disability, migrating as a refugee) and talk to them about working or volunteering.
- Researching different organisations locally and nationally and asking if they have a lived experience program and if they are currently seeking participants.
- Searching online for 'peer work certificate' in your local area.
- Searching online for 'peer work jobs' in your local area.

Ensure you are provided with enough information

If you are offered an opportunity to share your lived experience, you might like to ask about:

- What is the role of the organisation you will be partnering with?
- What is the purpose of the task or activity they are asking you to contribute to?
- How will you contribute? What is the time commitment? What are the limitations of the project? How much of a say will your voice have?
- What is the confidentiality process?
- How will you be supported in your role? Is there support for disabilities, different literacy levels or other needs?

- Will you be paid for your time or compensated for any travel required and what is the process for this?
- What should you do if you have difficulties with the work or want to withdraw?
- Who are the relevant staff members and how can you contact them?

Ask yourself: Is this the right thing for me to do at this time?

- Are you at a point in your life where you feel ready to do this?
- Do you have good support from family, friends or professionals?
- How might you being involved impact your family?
- Will talking about difficult things be OK for you?
- Are you under stress or in a time of crisis? Or do you already have a lot of family or other commitments?
- Do you have the time to commit to the process?
- Do your values align with the organisation's values?

Thinking about these questions might help you decide if now is the right time to get involved.

Family confidentiality

Also consider confidentiality. This not only includes your own privacy, but also your family's privacy, especially of any children. Sometimes lived experience work involves sharing some family details publicly. It may be important to discuss these issues with your family and ask your family's consent. You may also need to consider the privacy of other third parties, such as services, health professionals, schools, and so on.

Remember that you should never feel pressured to share family details publicly, and there are lots of ways to do lived experience work that doesn't include this.