



# Checklist

## for planning inclusive and accessible events

### LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

During the 2014 Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference in Vancouver, a group of individuals came together with a common goal: to ensure that individuals with lived experience<sup>1</sup> received equitable representation alongside service providers, researchers, policy makers, and others, so that we can better understand and tackle the problem of homelessness.

The Lived Experience Advisory Council (LEAC) has produced this checklist to assist event organizers in planning events that are inclusive and accessible to people living in poverty and people with lived experience of homelessness. This list is meant to be used in combination with our “Nothing about us, without us” principles, available at: [www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs](http://www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs).

The recommendations included here are based on our own experiences with travel and participation in conferences, including CAEH. We encourage event organizers to consult with local lived experience consultants and other experts on accessibility well in advance of the event, and to adapt this list as appropriate.

## HOST TERRITORY / INDIGENOUS

- ✓ As far as possible in advance, make connections and build relationships with Indigenous Peoples of the host territory. Follow protocols to seek permission for the gathering, and ensure appropriate Indigenous host involvement in planning and in the event itself.
- ✓ Consult with people with lived experience from the territory to find appropriate Indigenous cultural elders to provide a welcome from the host territory.
- ✓ Consult with people with lived experience and the homeless communities from host territory to ensure they feel included from the beginning and not like a token afterthought.

## REPRESENTATION

- ✓ Engage and compensate Lived Experience consultants in event planning and promotion.
- ✓ Have LE consultants represented as fully as possible in all aspects of the conference/event: on panels, in plenaries, as keynotes, or MCs.
- ✓ Instead of lived experience sessions, consider including people with lived experience in every session.
- ✓ Ensure that people with current lived experience with poverty and homelessness are being represented – not only those who now live comfortably.
- ✓ Actively involve youth, especially those who are street-involved.

- ✓ Engage and compensate local Lived Experience hosts as conference support staff and guides.
- ✓ Engage and compensate local LE hosts to help visiting lived experience consultants navigate LE issues (e.g., if the conference is in a food desert, how do we find snacks in a way we are accustomed to?), local travel, etc.
- ✓ Dedicate as much funding as possible to lived experience inclusion. Without us, there would be no need for a conference / meeting / event on homelessness.
- ✓ Implement dedicated funding sources for lived experience inclusion, such as a fixed additional charge on each registration fee.
- ✓ Plan to include a “critical mass” of diverse lived experience leaders and participants in your event. People with lived experience should make up a large portion of attendees for visibility, comfort and to feel included, and to have influence on the atmosphere and content of the event.

## FINANCES / TRAVEL

- ✓ Invite Lived Experience consultants many months in advance of the event.
- ✓ Negotiate all details of funding and compensation to be provided well in advance. Be transparent, ensure arrangements are clear, and consider equity – that is, delegates with different abilities and experiences may require different levels of support in order to participate equally.
- ✓ When possible, plan for LE to travel together and to have other LE meet them upon arrival.
- ✓ Ensure that funds for travel and compensation will not impede the LE consultant’s income source (for example, issue funds in cash, and / or classify them as honoraria, to ensure that they are not clawed back from welfare and disability benefits).
- ✓ Learn the rules about income supports and additional income in the provinces that LE consultants are coming from – they differ in every jurisdiction.
- ✓ Ensure that the funds needed for travel arrive at least two weeks in advance of planned travel, to enable consultant to make necessary arrangements at home.
- ✓ Send travel funds in an appropriate form (for example - sent to an agency or ally that the person trusts, if requested).
- ✓ Perhaps send funds needed for travel (childcare and elder care, costs of travel to and from airport and train station, per diem for day of travel, etc.) in advance, and arrange to give conference expense funds on arrival.
- ✓ Ensure that per diem amounts allow LE consultant to network with peers and have appropriate food for their personal health needs.
- ✓ Ensure that the event venue / hotel has a list of who not to ask for a deposit/credit card to access rooms.
- ✓ Have some options to deal with travel food issues (for example – include cost of a meal when purchasing plane tickets since airplane food can only be purchased by credit card).

## VENUE AND FACILITIES

- ✓ Ensure that the meeting venue and accommodations are barrier-free.
- ✓ Consult local accessibility experts and Lived Experience consultants well in advance to ensure all accessibility needs (childcare, sign language interpretation, attendants, etc.) are addressed.

- ✔ Select a meeting venue and accommodations with the needs of LE attendees in mind. For example, many conference centres are located in business districts that are “food deserts” where healthy affordable food is not available for purchase.
- ✔ Consider locating meeting in close proximity to areas of the city where there is an LE community and homelessness services / organizations – where LE attendees can feel welcomed and at home.
- ✔ Ensure any known language issues are addressed. Perhaps have a ‘VIP’ station so that LE consultants are not intimidated when attempting to obtain equipment needed to participate.
- ✔ Provide a quiet/decompress room with healing tools such as blankets and soft music, and a support team.
- ✔ Provide a lived experience hang out room AND separate meeting spaces where we can plan our revolutions. This will enable Lived Experience delegates to hold meetings without taking over the hang out room.
- ✔ Engage and compensate local Lived Experience hosts to staff the LE hang out and meeting spaces to welcome participants and provide support.

## HARM REDUCTION

- ✔ Have information available for the host city’s compassion clubs, access to needed ‘medications’, address for the Safe Consumptions Site (if there is one), any Harm Reduction Support Services, access to abstinence support as appropriate (AA, NA, etc.).
- ✔ Provide directions to any Tent Cities or Micro Housing Villages.
- ✔ Have a dry space for social functions so those in recovery are supported and feel welcome.

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## ABOUT THE LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Lived Experience Advisory Council is a group of leaders from across Canada who share lived experience of homelessness and poverty. Our mission is to ensure the leadership and inclusion of people facing homelessness in all efforts to end it. Email us at [leac.canada@gmail.com](mailto:leac.canada@gmail.com) or find us on Facebook.

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## HOW TO CITE THIS DOCUMENT

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[www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs](http://www.homelesshub.ca/NothingAboutUsWithoutUs)




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1. In this document we use the term “lived experience consultant,” “LE consultant” and “LE” to mean people facing homelessness, poverty, marginalization and exclusion.