Lived Experience of Homelessness

People with Lived Experience of Homelessness (PWLEH) offer crucial insights into the daily struggles of securing shelter, accessing basic needs, and navigating social services amid stigma. Individuals facing homelessness often feel isolated and vulnerable, highlighting the emotional toll of their situation. Their perspectives are vital for informing policymakers, emphasizing the need for engagement to create effective and compassionate housing solutions. Ultimately, their voices are key to translating good intentions into meaningful action in housing policy.

Why Center Lived Experience in Homelessness Advocacy?



Including voices of those who have experienced homelessness ensures that policies are created with real-world challenges in mind. They know best what resources are needed, what systemic gaps exist, and what solutions work. Organizations and policymakers are increasingly recognizing that sustainable housing solutions must involve those with lived experience.

Empowering Lived Experience in Decision Making



More housing organizations and community groups are adopting advisory boards comprised of individuals with lived experience. These boards provide direct input on housing policies, ensuring that solutions are community-driven and reflective of actual needs. This approach leads to more compassionate and practical outcomes.

Examples of Effective Programs

Several programs across the country are successfully integrating lived experiences in their decision-making. From peer-support initiatives in shelters to community-driven housing policies, these programs are showing positive results in reducing homelessness and improving service accessibility.

Example 1

Detroit Advisor's Group (DAG) and Youth Action Board (YAB)

In Detroit Michigan, the DAG and YAB were essential in supporting the CAM transition. Both groups regularly work within our homelessness service system offering their expertise to craft a system that better serves PWLEH.

Example 2

Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC)

In Denver Colorado, the DHFC engages people with lived experience to shape its housing policies, resulting in better long-term housing outcomes. For more information on DHFC, visit www.csh.org/resources/denver-housing-first-collaborative

Call to Action

Empathy alone isn't enough, action is required. By listening, learning, and taking action, we can create a future where housing is a right for all.

Sources

What is lived experience?, National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
Centering Lived Experience, HUD
https://www.michigan.gov/mcteh
Stakeholder Engagement and Advancing Equity, HUD
www.csh.org/resources/denver-housing-first-collaborative