

IMPROVING SYSTEMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LIVED EXPERTS

Child Dependency Courts

No one understands the child welfare system better than those who have experienced it. By genuinely involving youth, parents, and caregivers who have firsthand experience with the child welfare system, the process of shaping child welfare reform efforts is co-created, rather than solely influenced by courts and partners. To promote equity, cultivate a culture of inclusion, and show gratitude for their efforts, Lived Experience Experts (LEE) should be included from the start and be paid for their time and services.

A “lived expert” is a person with experience dealing with a challenge related to child welfare.



LEE Values

- Openness
- Radical Vulnerability
- Authenticity
- Equity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Accountability
- Power Sharing

How to Share Power with LEEs

One of the LEE values is sharing power. Power sharing is a deliberate approach to partnering with LEE for improved system change. When systems leaders share power with those they serve, they enhance participation, encourage open communication, fully benefit from combined expertise, counteract compassion fatigue and build spaces of belonging.

Impact of Power Sharing

Enhance Participation: LEEs more likely to show up and stay engaged.


Encourage Open Communication: People are comfortable sharing, and with diverse perspectives solutions are easier to find.

Benefit From Combined Expertise: Providers are experts in their roles and LEEs contribute expertise from navigating the system, resulting in better outcomes.

Counteract Compassion Fatigue: Reinvigorate system culture by solving problems together.

Build Spaces of Belonging: Combat stigma and meaningfully include perspectives of people disproportionately impacted by child welfare systems.



 [What’s Sharing Power Got to Do With Trauma Informed Practices?](#)