



The Staff Abbreviated Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder Survey

Part of The Meaningful Engagement Toolbox by Collective Threads Initiative

This document is part of the toolbox that accompanies *The Meaningful Engagement Handbook: A guide for understanding, measuring, and increasing lived experience leadership across the spectrum of engagement*, written by Chris Ash and Sophie Otiende for Collective Threads Initiative. You can access the handbook and all accompanying tools at www.collectivethreads.org.

Staff Abbreviated Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder Survey: This is an abbreviated version of the comprehensive all-staff survey that we developed so that smaller or newer organisations that wish to evaluate their progress will have a more accessible survey instrument they can use. ***This survey does not include the additional questions for human resources, operations, and executive staff that are essential to understanding an organisation's engagement practices and is thus designed to be used in partnership with the Human Resources and Operations survey.*** Also note that we have left questions on the all-staff survey that concern protocol (such as whether or not there is a consistent [grievance protocol](#)) rather than including them only on the HR survey to ensure all staff can share their perspectives.

Related tools include:

- **Meaningful Engagement Quick Start Guide** - A tool to determine concrete ways to get started and take manageable steps towards better engagements.
- **Meaningful Engagement Organisational Foundations Self-Assessment** - A self-assessment tool to help your organisation better prepare for responsivity when impacted people are staff and collaborators.
- **A Note on Evaluation** - A page on the Collective Threads Initiative website that outlines basics of how to use [evaluation](#) to improve meaningful engagement.
- **Analysis Tools for the Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder Survey** - Detailed instructions and tools to help you analyse your results on the surveys in this toolbox and develop a plan for next steps. We also have a Google Spreadsheet that can help calculate these more easily for you.
- **The Full Comprehensive, Staff Comprehensive, Full Abbreviated, Participant, and Human Resources and Operations Ladder Surveys** - Prebuilt surveys to help you assess your organisation's level of engagement and track it over

Abbreviated Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder¹

Organisation or Team: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: For each, row check circle 0 for no, 1 for some/sometimes, 2 for yes. Circle X for “unknown” if you do not know the answer to this question based on your experiences with this organisation.²

Set a regular schedule for re-assessing and developing a plan for improving the areas that are low or stagnant.

INFORM	N	S	Y	U	Note
1. Our public materials (websites, newsletters, social media, and impact reports, for example) are written in plain language, with acronyms or terms explained.	0	1	2	X	
2. We provide information in an easily understandable way about how any reports, positive feedback, or complaints from people with lived experience are addressed.	0	1	2	X	
3. We consistently provide overall project updates to subject matter experts.	0	1	2	X	
4. We have safeguarding/protection/complaints policies that are equitable and easy to access externally. They are easy to understand and inform people how complaints are addressed.	0	1	2	X	Remember that a clear and accessible policy is useless if not implemented.
5. Our public materials avoid perpetuating stereotypes or bias against people with lived experience or using sensational imagery that dehumanises them.	0	1	2	X	Remember that repeated violent or frightening imagery may desensitise your audience to the violence of trafficking. In lieu of this question, consider hiring experts from impacted communities to assess.

¹ Note: The abbreviated Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder assessment was developed to allow organisations that do not have capacity for a larger assessment to use.

² Note to evaluators: Exclude responses with X circled from calculation of average scores.

6. Our public materials utilise impacted people's stories or images only with the consent and only as necessary to tell the story of our organisation.	0	1	2	X	When possible, consider using composite stories to protect privacy and mitigate power dynamics. Remember that written narrative is only one form of storytelling and explore alternative approaches.
7. We have a process for people to revoke consent later on if they no longer want their stories or images used.	0	1	2	X	
8. We use trauma-informed storytelling .	0	1	2	X	Remember that excessive detail in trauma stories may make it difficult for people with lived experience to engage with your content, and can leave audiences less able to understand your content.

ASK	N	S	Y	U	Note
9. We regularly offer surveys or other opportunities for our existing participants or partners to share both positive and critical feedback.	0	1	2	X	Offer options for participants to share feedback anonymously. This question can be left off the staff survey if it is included in the HR/Admin survey.
10. We have a clear and accessible grievance policy and protocol for reviewing and addressing grievances from current participants, employees, and partners.	0	1	2	X	
11. All existing documents, plans, policies, and programmes that were created without collaboration with impacted people have been reviewed by multiple subject matter experts with lived experience of our issue(s) and (ideally) familiarity with policy or programming.	0	1	2	X	

INVOLVE	N	S	Y	U	Note
12. We engage organisation, programme, or project-specific lived experience advisory teams that provide input at key stages throughout the work or project.	0	1	2	X	For grassroots organisations or organisations that have lived experience embedded throughout every level, this question may be less relevant as your advisory group may be internal and embedded among your staff.
13. Participants with lived experience are offered good opportunities to learn skills they might need to have more opportunities to participate at the “Involve” level.	0	1	2	X	Note: If administration indicates that this is offered but staff indicate it is not available, this points to a need to explore barriers to participation or access.
14. Participants for advisory positions are selected/invited based on both knowledge and interest, rather than solely because they have lived experience of human trafficking.	0	1	2	X	Remember that knowledge, skills, and experience can come from unpaid experience, professional development, and education outside of formal degree programmes.
15. We create project team practices and procedures that are trauma-informed and reduce the risk of re-traumatising participants.	0	1	2	X	Note: This question is about team practices on advisory groups, boards, etc., not about service delivery to current programme participants.

COLLABORATE	N	S	Y	U	Note
16. Staff with lived experience of trauma are not required or expected to share personal details of their lives, including their trauma experiences, as part of their job.	0	1	2	X	Because of the traumatic impacts of recounting one’s prior trauma, positions that are based primarily on sharing a trauma story (whether as a public speaker, subject matter expert, or peer mentor) can lead to unethical or economically-pressured engagement.
17. Our team members and staff with lived experience of our issue hold a variety of identities, types of experience with our issue, and perspectives on work to address our issue.	0	1	2	X	Consider: Race/ethnicity, global region, gender/orientation, adult/child engagement with the issue, type of engagement with the issue, etc. Please note: Trauma-informed organisations do not mandate disclosure; if included in your survey, answer this question to the best of your ability.

18. Our organisation has advanced equity in our work and has demonstrated a willingness to change the way the organisation operates to be inclusive and equitable. (0=No, 1= this is in progress, 2=we are well along our journey)	0	1	2	X	By “equity” we mean the full range of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice initiatives that strive to ensure that staff and potential hires have a fair shot at hiring as well as fair workplace experiences.
19. All staff have access to adequate paid onboarding as well as ongoing mentoring and professional development to build their competence towards their professional goals.	0	1	2	X	If leadership says this is available and frontline staff say it is not, consider exploring what the barriers to access are.
20. Our organisation considers potential power imbalances that may exist with organisations we partner with and has ways of working together fairly to share decision-making and financial power.	0	1	2	X	

EMPOWER	N	S	Y	U	Note
21. All staff, including those with lived experience, are expected to learn trauma-informed and compassionate organisational practices.	0	1	2	X	
22. Our board and executive leadership demonstrate a commitment to support, develop, and empower any people in leadership positions who have lived experience.	0	1	2	X	This question should only be included if the survey is administered anonymously to the majority of staff, and the results should only be included in the results shared with staff (including leadership) with a high enough level of participation to ensure anonymity.

STRUCTURES	N	S	Y	U	Note
23. Our organisation or programme uses the highest level of engagement that is possible for each programme or project based on staffing and the interest, expertise, and strengths of people with lived experience in our networks.	0	1	2	X	
24. When a programme or project does not have people with lived experience on staff as part of the project team, people with lived experience are engaged at the “Ask” or “Involve” level to fill gaps in knowledge.	0	1	2	X	
25. When the people with lived experience on a project team or programme do not reflect a diversity of identities, experiences, or perspectives, impacted people are engaged at the “Ask” or “Involve” level to fill gaps in knowledge.	0	1	2	X	
26. Lived experience expertise is engaged in the development of initial programme/project design, implementation, and evaluation.*	0	1	2	X	Lived experience input must be incorporated in the design, envisioning, and development of programming to prevent an expectation of impacted people “rubber-stamping” the design.
27. Our organisation ensures staff who have disclosed lived experience have workloads similar to those who have not disclosed lived experience in similar roles and are not expected to take on extra work or unpaid overtime.	0	1	2	X	
28. All employees and contractors are educated on their workplace rights and know who to ask if they have additional questions.	0	1	2	X	