# The Staff Semi-Structured Interview Guide

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.

The **Staff Semi-Structured Interview Guide** includes questions from the Staff Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder surveys that may prove beneficial when conducting semi-structured interviews to enhance understanding of survey results. Transcripts from all interviewees **should be confidential to the evaluation team** and can be evaluated using thematic analysis to identify helpful supplemental data.[1] *This guide does not include the additional questions for human resources, operations, and executive staff that are essential to understanding an organisation's engagement practices; it is intended to be used alongside the surveys that are targeted to HR, operations and leadership.*

Please note: The Meaningful Engagement Toolbox does not currently include detailed instructions for planning, conducting, and analysing transcripts for semi-structured interviews. **This tool should be used by individuals with experience conducting semi-structured interviews or in partnership with an experienced evaluator to plan for a trauma-informed, lived experience-centred interview that plans for confidentiality.**

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 Preparatory 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, Staff 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 time.

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[1] A tutorial on the basics of thematic analysis using a simple word processing programme can be found in the YouTube video "Qualitative coding and thematic analysis in Microsoft Word" by Qualitative Researcher Dr Jarek Kriukow at https://youtu.be/XOYhkUC21wQ?si=shblUgSFUtVgMR-9.

# Staff Semi-Structured Individual Interview Guide[2]

Organisation or Team: _____ Interviewer:
_____ Date: _____

Facilitators: Please review best practices for conducting semi-structured interviews before beginning this process. Ensure that a comprehensive and clear consent form is provided to all participants prior to scheduling the interview that includes information about who will conduct the interview, how anonymity is preserved, privacy of data, how long transcripts will be saved, and what the planned use of interview data is.

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the interview:
- Ask if the respondent if they have any questions about the consent form that was provided and, if not, verify that they have signed it.
- Let them know that their interview responses are intended to be anonymous and will not be linked to them in any way.
- Explain to them that all questions are optional and no one at the organisation will find out if they declined to respond to a question in whole or in part.
- If you stop responding to the questions at any point you will still receive any compensation or incentive you have been offered to participate.

Please contact _____ at _____ if you have any questions or concerns about this survey.

## INFORM

1. Do you consider the public-facing materials of the organisation – including websites, newsletters, social media, and impact reports – to be written in plain language, with acronyms or terms explained?
   a. Which materials are most accessible?
   b. Which need improvement and why?
2. Would you say there is any bias or stereotyping in the organisation's public-facing materials? If so, please explain.
3. Would you say the organisation's public-facing materials use sensationalised or dehumanising imagery or words? If so, please explain.

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[2] Note: The abbreviated Lived Experience Inclusion Ladder assessment was developed to allow organisations that do not have capacity to administer a larger assessment.

**ASK**

4. Would you say that grievance and safeguarding policies are clear, easy to find and understand, and implemented fairly?
   a. For participants?
   b. For staff and subject matter experts?
5. Does the organisation regularly offer surveys or other opportunities for existing participants and partners to share feedback on their experiences with the organisation?
   a. If not, or if not consistently, what do you think are the barriers?

**INVOLVE**

6. If your organisation has an advisory board or panel of impacted people, do you feel their input is taken seriously?
   a. Is it helpful and actionable? If not, what knowledge about the organisation's operations or logistics might help them to provide more actionable feedback?
7. Are the members of the advisory board included in staff development opportunities?
   a. If not, are there staff development opportunities you think might be beneficial?

**COLLABORATE**

8. Are there any ways in which staff with lived experience of trauma or oppression are required or expected to share personal details of their trauma or oppression experiences as part of their jobs?
   a. If yes, can you share an example?
9. Has your organisation advanced diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice efforts into the organisational culture?
   a. What have they done well?
   b. What could they still improve?

**EMPOWER**

10. Does your organisation implement trauma-informed organisational practices?
    a. Are all staff, including those with lived experience, expected to learn and practise them?
11. What could the board do differently to better support, develop, and empower people with lived experience who are in (or aspire to) leadership positions.
12. What could the executive leadership do differently to better support, develop, and empower people with lived experience who are in (or aspire to) leadership positions?

**STRUCTURES**

13. When engaging staff and subject matter experts with lived experience, does the organisation plan for feedback from a diversity of people with lived experience of the organisation's issue?
    a. If not, what groups need to be better represented in the feedback process?
14. Do impacted people have workloads that are similar to other staff and subject matter experts?
    a. If you feel their workloads are either heavier or lighter than other staff, please explain.