Recommendations for Integrating Expertise by Experience into Housing Services and Homelessness

1. Involving Experts by Experience in Service Planning, Development and Decision-Making

- Experts by experience should be involved in the planning, development and evaluation of services from the earliest stages of preparation.
- The participation of experts by experience should also be ensured in the planning of housing units, including their activities, operational practices and spatial design.
- Steering and management groups should include experts by experience as members, with genuine opportunities to influence decision-making.
- The involvement of experts by experience should be continuous and structurally embedded, rather than limited to occasional consultations.

2. Integrating Expertise by Experience into Service Delivery

- Expertise by experience should be utilised in peer support activities, orientation and induction, support person services, and guiding people towards appropriate services.
- Experts by experience can act as bridges between service users and professionals, helping to build trust in services.
- Expertise by experience should be utilised particularly in supporting people during the initial stages of housing, clarifying service pathways, and developing support for everyday life.
- Expertise by experience can be integrated into multidisciplinary collaboration to help resolve conflicts and challenging situations, as well as to support cooperation and dialogue.

3. Expertise by Experience as a Resource for Staff and Organisations

- Experts by experience should be involved in staff training, mentoring, and the development of working methods.
- The knowledge gained through lived experience complements the professional expertise of social and healthcare professionals and should be recognised as a form of expertise.
- Organisations should ensure that the language and working practices used in collaboration are understandable, accessible and equitable for all parties involved. Staff should also be provided with information in advance about the role, effectiveness and added value of expertise by experience and peer support work within the organisation.

4. Structures and Resources for Expertise by Experience

- Clear operating models, responsibilities and objectives should be established for the involvement of experts by experience.
- Experts by experience should receive appropriate and equitable compensation for their work.
- Compensation systems should be transparent and designed to ensure that participation does not negatively affect participants' income or financial security.
- Experts by experience should be provided with adequate orientation, training, professional supervision and support to carry out their roles.

5. Expertise by Experience as a Driver of Attitudinal Change and Social Advocacy

- The knowledge, skills and lived experiences of experts by experience should be utilised in efforts to reduce stigma and prejudice.
- Experts by experience can act as advocates and contribute to educational institutions, training programmes and public discussions.
- Expertise by experience can help increase understanding of homelessness, its associated challenges, the need for services, and the importance of social inclusion and participation in society.

6. Principles for Integrating Expertise by Experience

- The participation of experts by experience should be genuine, meaningful and equitable.
- Experts by experience should be involved at a sufficiently early stage to ensure that their perspectives can genuinely influence the outcomes.
- The integration of expertise by experience should be based on collaboration, mutual respect and trust.
- The perspectives of experts by experience should be concretely reflected in service development and decision-making.
- Experts by experience should be recognised as equal members of the work community, entrusted with responsibilities, and valued for their expertise and ability to carry out their work.

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