The 'Dos and Don'ts' of working with people with Lived Experience as Advisors

DO

Create a meaningful connection from the start

- Clearly explain the role and expectations, and agree on timelines that work for the Lived Experience Advisor.
- Introduce them to each new person in the room, every time, and ask what they need to feel comfortable and confident.
- Regularly check-in, meeting in person when possible, and including them in all discussions when present.
- Ask how they prefer to receive and share information and documents, and offer alternatives like writing or phone calls.
- Provide hard copies of documents if needed, and deliver or post them to reduce costs on the Lived Experience Advisor.
- Be mindful of the emotional impact of sharing personal stories, offer debriefs, and allow thinking time before responding.
- Respect their time, and provide remuneration for it.
- Value their contributions, and encourage them to share input, especially if they are shy.
- Build mutual trust, believe and value their experiences, and have respectful conversations.

DON'T

Engage with Lived Experience Person as **a token gesture**

- Assume people know how to use technology (Zoom / Teams / chat / track changes etc.).
- Use jargon / acronyms without explaining what it means each time.
- Fail to acknowledge their contribution.
- Talk over or interrupt the person - it makes them stop talking and sit back.
- Assume they will easily adapt to your group or 'fit in'.
- Pressure them for an instant answer.

Collated by Dr Elizabeth Pritchard (Healthy Working Lives Research Group, Monash University) from information presented by Grainne Cruickshank (Lived Experience Advisor and Investigator – Workers' Voice Project, Monash University) as part of an ISCRR podcast recorded in August 2024.