

# ENGAGING PRESENTERS WHO ARE LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

## A TIPSHEET FOR NACC WEBINAR AND CONFERENCE SESSION PRESENTERS

NACC values authentic engagement of lived experience experts – those with experience as a child/youth, young adult, parent, or kinship caregiver in the child protection or juvenile legal system. We seek to offer webinars and conference sessions that are co-designed with, and feature lived experience experts as presenters. NACC is committed to the intentional and respectful inclusion of lived experience experts in our programming and offers this tipsheet as a guide to aid all presenters in these efforts.

- ❖ The first part of this tipsheet is geared toward presenters without lived experience and provides guidance on how to engage and work with lived experience experts.
- ❖ The second part is designed for presenters who are lived experience experts and offers planning and presentation tips.
- ❖ Finally, we outline NACC's role in the process and what presenters who are lived experience experts can expect from NACC.

## WORKING WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

### ABOUT THE NACC AUDIENCE

Some lived experience experts may not be familiar with NACC; therefore, it is important to explain who the audience is for typical presentations. Most NACC members are attorneys who practice in the child protection system, either representing children, parents, or the agency, but our membership also includes law students, judges, and other professional stakeholders in the system, including CASAs, doctors, and mental health professionals. NACC has approximately 2,000 members across the country.

### IDENTIFYING PRESENTERS WHO ARE LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

When identifying partners for a webinar or conference session, one effective method is to directly consult with a lived experience expert that you already know and have a relationship with. If that is not possible, there are other avenues to explore:

- ❖ NACC's National Advisory Council on Children's Legal Representation (NACCLR) is composed of young professionals with lived expertise in the child protection system. If interested in possibly partnering with an NACCLR member, please contact [Cristal Ramirez](#), NACC's Youth Engagement Manager.
- ❖ Many national [child protection organizations](#) such as FosterClub and the Jim Casey Initiative work with lived experience experts.
- ❖ Most states and jurisdictions have [nonprofits, youth boards, or foster care alumni associations](#) connected to youth pursuing statewide advocacy efforts.
- ❖ Colleagues or other professionals in the child protection arena may be able to connect you to lived experience experts that they know.

### ENGAGING LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

The presentation topic can help guide the engagement of lived experience experts. Consider how the

presentation topic has an impact on children, youth, parents, and families within the system and how framing the issue through the expert's lens and their articulation of personal experiences will bolster the presentation. For example, a presentation on the Family First Prevention Services Act could be co-presented with a lived experience expert discussing how access to, or lack of, prevention services impacted their experience, or a lived experience expert could be included in a presentation on high-quality legal representation to discuss their experience with attorneys.

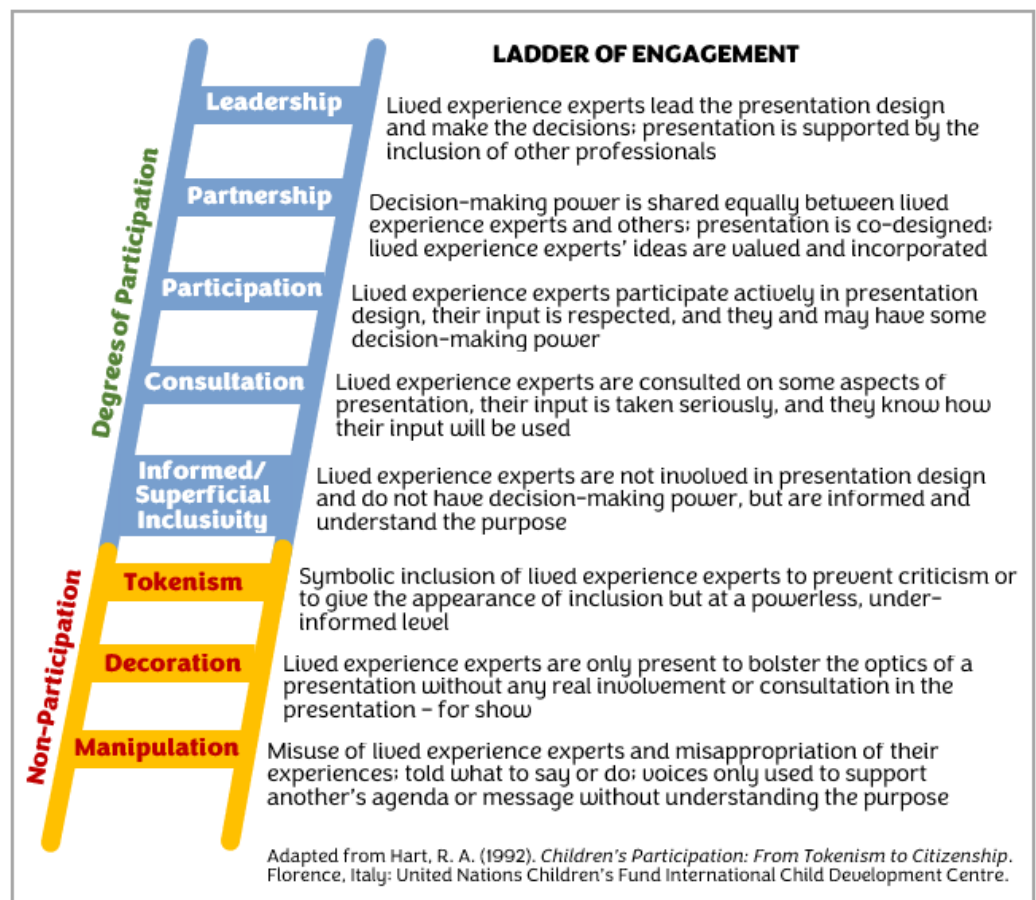
Regardless of the topic, **whenever possible, lived experience experts should be identified prior to the application for a webinar, conference session, or other presentation.** It displays more thoughtfulness to identify someone based on their expertise at this early stage of the process.

Some tips to consider when engaging presenters who are lived experience experts:

- ✓ Engage lived experience experts as soon as possible!
  - ❖ Lived experience experts should be consulted as early as possible in the brainstorming and planning stages of a webinar or conference session so they can be a part of the decision-making process.
  - ❖ If presenters are not engaged from the very beginning, they should be briefed on the plans and decisions that have already been made and asked for their opinions regarding their role and participation in the webinar or conference session.
  - ❖ Presenters should be able to modify presentation plans within reason based on the expertise and insights they bring, as well as their preferences on how to share their insights/expertise.
  - ❖ Presenters should be briefed on anything that does not make sense to them, including attorney practice or legal jargon, in order to promote inclusivity and equality of understanding.
- ✓ Consult with lived experience experts on the dates and times of presentations and any preparation meetings.
  - ❖ Ensure that there are no conflicts with work, school, or other commitments, including times outside standard business hours.
  - ❖ Ensure that they can be present for the entire presentation (not just for their section) as well as any preparation meetings, as applicable.
  - ❖ Schedule ample time for preparation before and debrief after the presentation.
- ✓ Although those involved in session design may have an idea as to what they would like lived experience experts to speak about, ensure that they are comfortable sharing certain pieces of information in the format that they choose (orally, slides, pictures, video, etc.).
- ✓ Lived experience experts should be regarded as more than just their lived experience and as full and equal experts/partners. Recognize that no person with lived experience represents all people with lived experience, and not all lived experience is the same.
  - ❖ Ensure lived experience experts are equal participants with an opportunity for an equal amount of time to present/share, equal opportunity to add to and edit content, and equal decision-making power.
- ✓ Develop meaningful presenter roles with lived experience experts.
  - ❖ Lived experience experts should not be given a script or told what to say.
  - ❖ Lived experience experts should not be “added on” at the end.
  - ❖ Lived experience experts should be valued for their professional experience and expertise, as well as lived experience.
- ✓ Do not use video or other forms of media citing or telling the story of lived experience experts without their permission. This includes media that may exist publicly but that you do not have specific permission from them to use.

- ✓ Ensure there is a plan in place to compensate the lived experience expert and an agreed upon, competitive rate from the beginning of the process. For more guidance on compensating lived experience experts, reach out to NACC's Youth Engagement Manager.
- ✓ Fully prepare or ensure the lived experience experts feel fully prepared and supported, both in what they plan to share as well as the presentation format and topical areas as a whole.
  - ❖ This includes preparing for how to support lived experience experts if someone in the audience asks an inappropriate/uncomfortable question (e.g., facilitating difficult conversations in the moment, offering panelist peer-to-peer support, etc.).
- ✓ Do not expect lived experience experts to share intimate details about their time in care.
  - ❖ Get consent from lived experience experts when sharing their stories or discussing sensitive topics that involve them.
- ✓ Debrief the experience with the lived experience expert and provide space for feedback and to process anything that may have come up for them. Invite feedback from the lived experience expert about how the presentation went for them as well.
  - ❖ Feedback that is positive and constructive can be very helpful to the lived experience expert's professional development, as well as the professional development of the other presenters.
  - ❖ Do not be afraid to give constructive feedback while preparing or debriefing. Lived experience experts want to be seen as equal professionals and this is part of the important process of gaining professional experience. Be encouraging and respectful, but give feedback to the lived experience expert on how they could improve their parts of the presentation as you would for any other panelist.

✓ Be mindful of the fundamental framework of authentic engagement. There are many models of engagement to explore – the figure included here has been adapted for this tipsheet and shows the most inauthentic levels of engagement at the bottom and more inclusive, authentic forms of participation and engagement going up.



## PLANNING AND PRESENTATION TIPS FOR LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

- ✓ Ask for what you need to make the presentation, and your participation in it, comfortable and successful.
- ✓ If you do not feel comfortable, you do not need to go along with what is being said or done. It is okay to disagree. Decline questions you are not comfortable answering. This can be done simply by stating you are not comfortable or having an “exit strategy.”
  - ❖ For example, if you are on a panel and asked a question you do not want to answer and are unsure if someone else is comfortable answering, you can state, “I’m not comfortable answering that. Maybe my co-presenter would like to answer, or we can take a different question.”
  - ❖ You can “pass” on questions you don’t have enough information on.
  - ❖ Exit strategies do not necessarily mean you have to outright reject a question – although you reserve that right. You may also reframe your answer in a way that makes you more comfortable. For example, someone may ask you to share your experiences, but you can answer more generally stating, “The experiences of many foster youth I know include...” or “The data shows...”
- ✓ Discuss your boundaries and any sensitive topics with your co-presenters as well as the person who is hosting or moderating your presentation (NACC staff). Co-presenters and moderators can help reinforce your boundaries and off-limit topics if raised by the audience.
  - ❖ A boundary might be that you would not like to be asked specific information about your time in care.
  - ❖ A sensitive topic could be anything discussed by any presenter that may activate emotions or feelings related to trauma (e.g., homelessness, family separation).
- ✓ Ask and prepare for the anticipated audience size.
  - ❖ It is okay to feel nervous; if you are comfortable, discuss those feelings with the moderator and co-presenters to ensure you feel prepared and supported.
  - ❖ Practice as much as you need to in order to best show up, especially if there are areas where you can enhance your expertise.
- ✓ Be mindful of strategically sharing your lived experience. You do not need to share your lived experiences to validate your expertise.
  - ❖ Avoid oversharing as this can be harmful to your wellbeing or the wellbeing of members of the audience by retraumatizing or triggering self or others.
  - ❖ It is not appropriate to “trauma dump.” Trauma dumping is the unsolicited, one-sided sharing of traumatic or intensely negative experiences or emotions with people who are unprepared or unwilling to listen.
  - ❖ Provide trigger warnings when appropriate.
  - ❖ It can be helpful to share an experience in third person to distance yourself. For example, “I know someone who experienced [xyz]...” can be a powerful statement and also not directly self-identify with that experience.
- ✓ Make a plan to ground yourself when emotions come up while you are sharing.
  - ❖ Feeling overwhelmed when sharing parts of your lived experience can be expected, and many emotions may also come up unexpectedly.
  - ❖ Know what strategies help to ground you in real-time when feeling emotions (e.g., deep breathing techniques).
- ✓ Do not share personal or identifiable information (e.g., names) about another person’s experience without their consent.

- ❖ This includes siblings, children, or other members of your family. Not everyone is comfortable sharing their experience and it is important to get consent to share personal/identifiable information, and/or stay away from speaking for others.
- ❖ For example, you might share the reasons you were separated from your parents, siblings, or children because that is your experience. But without permission, you should not share identifiable details about your parents, children, or siblings, and should not share their individual experiences.

✓ Speak from your own experience; avoid blanket statements and do not speak on behalf of any group.

✓ Be aware of the intersectionality of your identities and how that might show up for you. This figure is an intersectionality wheel which has examples of core identity traits within the inner circle, as well as many potential identity traits on the outer circle based on life experiences, views, or statuses. Any or all of these may impact your perspectives and the perspectives of others.



## NACC'S ROLE

NACC is committed to elevating the voice of lived experience experts. We take our role in encouraging successful presenter partnerships seriously and we believe those partnerships result in exceptional content. Here is what presenters who are lived experience experts can expect NACC to do:

### Provide Compensation to Lived Experience Experts

NACC recognizes the time and effort it takes to plan, prepare, and present at a webinar or conference session. For webinars, presenters with lived expertise will receive a \$75 stipend within 30 days of the conclusion of the webinar. Conference presenters with lived expertise receive full scholarships for conference registration.

### Record the Webinar or Online Conference Session

NACC records all webinars and online presentations for later viewing by our members and registrants. It is important to remember that what you're sharing (including handouts) can be viewed for an indefinite period of time. Lived experience experts should only share information that will not cause them to feel uncomfortable in the future.

### Moderate the Webinar or Online Conference Session

Please tell the NACC moderator during the dry run or pre-broadcast:

- ❖ How you would like to be introduced (name/nickname, current title/position, student status, pronouns, etc.).
- ❖ If there are certain topics or questions that you do not feel comfortable answering, as well as preferred language, guidance, or approaches for asking about generally sensitive topics.

### Gather Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback! Please tell us about your experience as a presenter. NACC staff are available to schedule a debrief with interested presenters. NACC also collects presentation evaluations from participants and can share that feedback with presenters upon request.