

Breakout Session:

Elevating Decision Making Power



Effective Partnerships Essentials

1. **Building Trust & Relationship**: In order to do this work, our team had to **spend deliberate time getting to know each other, cultivating trust on multiple levels**, including between staff and the advisors, between the advisors, and as a group.

“This is long term work and important to start.”

“You want to be valued and need to be seen as of value. If we’re valuable, than you need to put us on the hearth. Make sure we are seen. We are a lantern and a lighthouse to people.”

2. **Respecting & Honoring their Stories**: we must **make time and space for advisors to share their story**.

“I got to share some stuff about my life and haven’t shared with my family. I have added things to the narrative to help people...When you took what I said, and I saw it on the paper, I knew you respected it.”

“[You] had to understand the value of our story. Lived experience wasn’t there. Housed people were trying to tell unhouse[ed] people what to do. It’s traumatic, it takes a lot of energy...The story is integral to why I do this work. That story guides me every step of the way.”

Effective Partnerships Essentials cont'd

3. **Empathy and Trauma Informed Approach:** in order to do this we need to **lead with empathy** and be **trauma-informed**.

“It’s traumatic, it takes a lot of energy.”

*“Our body keeps the score and in the midst of doing this work, memories come back, it can be traumatizing.
It’s okay to take a moment and be silent and let our minds process it.”*

4. **Leaning into Discomfort:** we had to ask, at times, **intrusive questions** which lead to **discomfort in the conversation** or be confronted with **reality that the work was not progressing** as we had hoped.

*“We are using us to try to change. You gotta know something about me to know the way I talk the way I do.
We want people to know us and why we do this work, that there is no ulterior motive.”*

“[You] can't gloss over it. I'm speaking truths. I hope it hurts in a positive way. We got to keep chipping away.”

Effective Partnerships Essentials cont'd:

5. **Balancing Paternalism and Adequate Support:** this work involves time and requires resource support since those most impacted are very rarely able to participate or asked to participate. We needed to be flexible while constantly probing our intentions to ensure we weren't becoming paternalistic in our work while meeting people where they are.

“How are you supporting PLE to utilize those talents? You need devices, a locker, phone service, internet. How are you supporting PLE to have access to the tools to participate and finding one's pathway home?”

6. PLEH **must be equitably compensated:** Time and time again the significance of equitable compensation comes up in our partnership. This is one means of honoring the value of advisor's expertise and advancing equity.

*“Must have strength around you and compensation. In another workgroup, the pay was too low and the hoops to jump through were too much trouble than it was worth.
That's when I felt the token and belittled.”*