

# Networking: People With Lived Experience

*Housing Equity Strategists: James Lee, Jianna Hopkins-Israel, Tyra Thomas, John Brady*

---

## Overview

This session is for Intersectional Professionals (formerly People with Lived Experience) to meet, greet, and connect. Built for Zero (BFZ) Housing Equity Strategists will introduce themselves and discuss their respective work in their communities and with BFZ, with the majority of the time open for all to connect with each other and share their learning.

## Additional Details

The purpose of this session is to ensure that those who have present and past lived experiences of homelessness can connect with one another in a venue that may be new, overwhelming, and exciting. This session is about connecting, creating, and celebrating relationships so that those who attend can build a network of support.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

It takes deliberate effort to build relationships in this complex and challenging work. Time to connect and network acknowledges our collective humanity and honors our universal need for connection and support.

We should always ensure those who identify as Intersectional Professionals feel supported, seen, and valued in this work.

Those who identify as Intersectional Professionals should not feel "othered" or stigmatized but should be welcome to present themselves as their whole selves in building community.

## Considerations for Equity

We will discuss multiple ways to ensure community building and that there is value in facilitating connections outside of more traditional means (e.g., business cards and happy hours).

- Relational: The core of the work is focused on establishing and cultivating meaningful, authentic relationships. These relationships are fundamental in creating a sense of connection and aim to promote the active involvement of individuals from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of the work. By prioritizing relationships, the aim is to foster an environment where all voices are heard and valued.
- Social Justice Framework: The approach is centered on recognizing the intrinsic link between individual experiences and the broader impact on systemic change. There is a strong commitment to enhancing the quality of services and overall outcomes for individuals who access these services, as well as for their families and caregivers. The incorporation of lived experiences is deeply rooted in a framework that upholds rights and social justice, ensuring that the focus remains on empowering individuals within this context.