

Trauma Informed Principles in Research

Travel Tips for researchers for collaborating with people with lived experience on the research journey



SAFETY

Safety is an important principle of trauma informed research. Throughout the research journey, all members of the research team, including community researcher and advisors should feel physically and psychologically safe. To apply this principle throughout the research journey, interactions between researchers with and without lived experience can promote a sense of safety by being culturally sensitive, listening to and respecting others.

TRUST

Safety and trust are closely related principles of trauma informed research. Research design and operations conducted with the goal of building and maintaining trust within the team will ensure that all team members feel respected, valued and safe. Building trust can take time. Conducting research with transparency, consistency and honesty are important to facilitate trust within the research team.

DIVERSITY

Diversity should be respected when guiding interactions between a lived experience participant, caregiver or family member and researcher or clinician. This can include the diversity among people with respect to culture, religion, spirituality, disability, authority, community, gender and sexual identity, and socioeconomic factors. It is important to allow for curiosity in what values the person identifies. Make sure you consider intersectional viewpoints in partnerships to reduce the risk of power imbalance.



CHOICE

Throughout the research journey community researchers should be supported to make their own choices. Allowing choice can reduce power imbalances amongst the research team. Choice is particularly important when engaging with people who have experienced trauma as it helps them to have control over their involvement and how they share their experience.

EMPOWERMENT

Ensure throughout the research process your partnerships give the lived experience participant, caregiver or family member a sense of autonomy and control of their narrative. This is in order to strengthen, empower and build upon their experience. Doing so can allow the participant, in some cases, to reshape or redefine their trauma.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration with community researchers ought to be genuine and consistent through all stages of the research. Collaboration can help to further reduce power imbalance within the research team when all team members recognise that they are doing something with, not for, persons with lived experience. Community researchers should be able to act and engage on research that affects them.



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APPLICATIONS

CHOICE

When inviting a community researcher to collaborate, ensure they are given enough freedom to contribute to the decision-making in all stages of the research project, for example: research questions, how participants are engaged, and how information is disseminated. Community researchers should be given a choice for how they would like to be compensated, if at all, and to use whatever method of communication suits them best.

TRUST

When developing research topics and selecting methods, developing ethics applications and considering ethical implications for lived experience researchers, setting up check-in opportunities and support throughout the journey and when negotiating authorship prior to manuscript development.

SAFETY

Ensure safety throughout the research journey by empowering and valuing all researcher viewpoints, developing cultural competence, respecting boundaries, considering ethical implications and potential emotional risk, and ensuring mitigation strategies are in place.

COLLABORATION

Expectations of the research team should be made clear from the start of the collaboration. Creating a written document together as a research team, including community researchers, prior to commencing a project is recommended to ensure everyone is in agreement about the goals of the research and the conduct of the research team.

EMPOWERMENT

Keeping participants well informed throughout the entire process, choosing the right time and allocating enough time to talk through lived experience in order to minimize the risk of tokenism.

DIVERSITY

Allocate protected time to introduce all members of the partnership, get to know each other and continue to acknowledge what you have learnt throughout the entire research process.



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