Lifeline Australia Lived Experience Framework

Summary

Version 1.0 | July 2025



Acknowledgment of Country

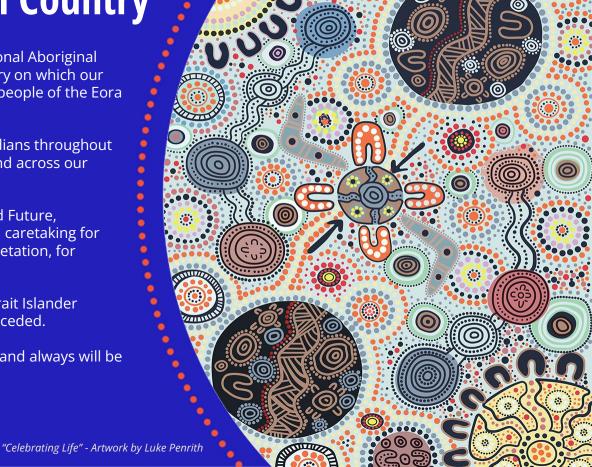
We, Lifeline Australia, acknowledge the Traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Custodians of Country on which our national office in Sydney is based, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

We extend our respect to all Traditional Custodians throughout Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations and across our national Lifeline network.

We pay our respect to Elders, Past, Present and Future, acknowledging their continued connection and caretaking for Country, Lands, Seas, Waters, Animals and Vegetation, for thousands of generations.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' sovereignty of this country was never ceded.

Wherever you are located today, it always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land.





Recognition of Lived Experience

Lifeline pays deep respect to people who have personal experiences of crisis and suicide.

They are the reason our organisation and services exist. We recognise the value that their experience and expertise brings to our work to ensure no one faces their toughest moments alone.





Acknowledgement to contributors

The Lived Experience Framework has been defined through a co-development approach.

Lifeline acknowledges the contributions of:

- · People with lived experience including:
 - o Members of the Lifeline Australia and Lifeline Direct Lived Experience Advisory Groups.
 - Former members of the DV-Alert and 13YARN Advisory Groups.
 - o Ambassadors and storytellers.
 - People involved in user testing and research.
- Lifeline staff across the organisation ranging from CEOs, executive, advisory group coordinators, and service design and delivery.
- Members across the Lifeline Network.
- Mental health and suicide prevention sector representatives, who provided insights on their organisations' approaches.

We also thank Nous Group for their close attention to ensuring all voices were heard and reflected in the framework and independent lived experience expert advisor Carrie Lumby who has provided insightful guidance throughout.

This is the first version of the Framework and represents a starting point. Lifeline looks forward to continuing to iterate the Framework to ensure it supports us to value lived experience perspectives and expertise across our activities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

LIFELINE NETWORK (LIFELINE)	The whole Lifeline federation, including Lifeline Australia (LLA), Lifeline Direct (LLD) and Members.	
PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE	People with lived or living experience of personal crisis or suicide, emotional distress or domestic and family violence (DFV). Lived experience of suicide is defined as having experience/d suicidal thoughts, survived a suicide attempt, supported a loved one through suicidal crisis, or been bereaved by suicide.	
	This includes people that have used Lifeline's services to seek support who may or may not identify as having lived experience.	



CONTENTS

Context	06
Framework	10
Approach	18
Implementation	22



Context

... Uifeline

Lifeline recognises the immense value the involvement of people with lived experience brings to our organisation and the work we do.

For more than 60 years, Lifeline Australia has been a leading player in advocating for an Australia free of suicide. We are proud to create and deliver services that provide support for those experiencing crisis or their supporters, so that no person in Australia must face their toughest moments alone.

We are committed to bringing in and incorporating the voices of people with lived experience to enhance outcomes for people seeking our services. The co-development of a Lived Experience Framework is an important step to document this commitment and ensuring all involved have a consistently positive experience across a range of engagement mechanisms available.

Why a Lived Experience Framework

We currently engage people with lived experience across storytelling, our Lived Experience Advisory Groups, and user testing and research with specific groups for service design and improvement.

The Lived Experience Framework will help us engage with people with lived experience in the best way possible by providing greater clarity and supporting a positive experience for all involved.

It builds on what we are already doing and is centred on improving outcomes for the people we serve. It outlines our approach to lived experience engagement for all current groups, and any new groups moving forward.





Lifeline Australia is passionate about bringing in voices of people with lived experience to enhance outcomes for people seeking our services.

Purpose of the Framework

The purpose for the Framework was developed through in-depth consultations and co-development sessions with a range of stakeholders, including people with lived experience who currently engage with Lifeline. The Lived Experience Framework is intended to ensure:

- A consistent and positive experience for people with lived experience who participate in engagements and for Lifeline staff who coordinate the mechanisms and opportunities.
- The perspectives of people with lived experience inform Lifeline's strategic decisions and service design and improvement through a range of engagement mechanisms.
- Continuous improvement of how Lifeline offers and facilitates lived experience engagement.
- Our strategy to "Transform the experience of Help Seekers" is realised.

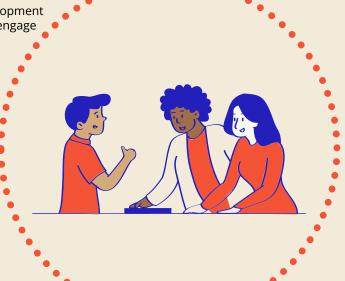
About this version of the Framework

This is the first version of the Lifeline Australia Lived Experience Framework, and it will continue to be iterated to ensure it supports Lifeline to value lived experience expertise and perspectives across its activities.

This version draws on insights from stakeholder consultations and a desktop review of best practice. This includes an exploration of the overarching purpose and principles for the Framework as well as workshops focused on how the current specific lived experience mechanisms do and should operate.

We believe that to develop a meaningful and sustainable Framework we need to take an adaptive approach, seek feedback during the implementation of the Framework and build organisational readiness to implement changes.

This is a starting point to continue conversations about the Framework, its direction and the shape it needs to take to meet our objectives.





This framework was developed based on discussions with a range of internal and external stakeholders.

50 STAKEHOLDERS

representing a range of perspectives and experiences

PEOPLE with LIVED EXPERIENCE

Including members from

- LLA Lived Experience Advisory Group
- LLD Lived Experience Advisory Group
- DV-alert Advisor
- 13YARN Advisors
- Lifeline Ambassadors
- User research participants



LIFELINE MEMBERS surveyed

ranging from CEO, executive, advisory group coordinators, service design and delivery

Scan of 30 FRAMEWORKS

SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS

Including research organisations, government bodies, and sector peers



Framework

Cifeline

We are united by a shared purpose

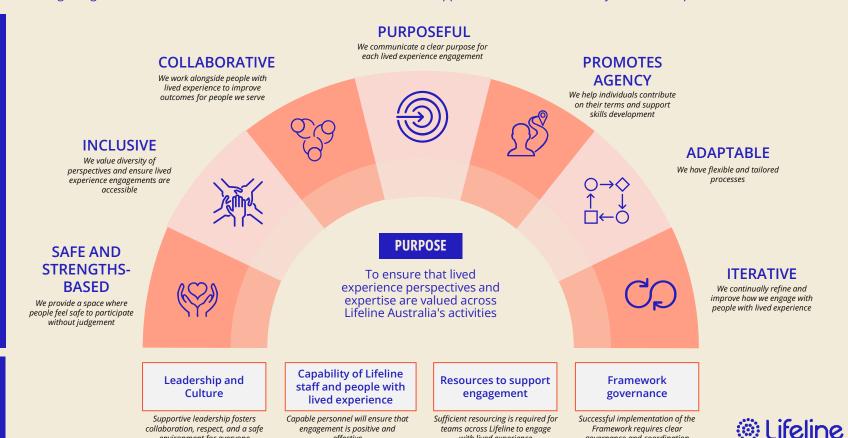
To ensure that lived experience perspectives and expertise are valued across Lifeline Australia's activities.



Lifeline Australia Lived Experience Framework

environment for everyone

The Framework aims to ensure a consistent, positive experience for participants and staff in all lived experience engagements, valuing lived experience and integrating it into Lifeline Australia's activities. It will serve as the overall approach to all current and any new lived experience mechanisms.



with lived experience

governance and coordination

effective

Seven guiding principles apply to lived experience engagement across Lifeline (1/3)

PRINCIPLE DESCRIPTION / COMMITMENTS WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LIFELINE? Processes and practices that support safety and respect for everyone We create a safe space for people with lived experience and involved in engagements This may include reciprocal commitments for Lifeline staff involved in lived experience engagement where people with lived experience and Lifeline staff. everyone involved feels safe, respected and able to participate without judgement. Processes and practices that promote diversity and support safety for priority groups, including people with lived experience of violence and We take a strengths-based approach to engaging people abuse and First Nations people. with lived experience. We focus on the abilities, knowledge STRENGTHS-BASED and expertise that people bring to engagements. Lifeline is responsible for ensuring a safe environment for all people involved in lived experience engagements. A range of engagement mechanisms that meet people's different needs We value diversity of perspectives and actively work to and preferences. ensure lived experience engagements are accessible and welcoming for all individuals. Practices and processes that are accessible and appropriate for people with diverse backgrounds and experiences, e.g. First Nations people, We value and are willing to listen to all stories, with no people with lived experience of violence and abuse, youth, CALD stigma attached to stories that are more challenging or not **INCLUSIVE** people, people from regional and rural areas. positive. Representational membership and inclusivity in lived experience engagement mechanisms. • A remuneration framework that supports consistent and fair remuneration for the capabilities and contributions expected across mechanisms.



Seven guiding principles apply to lived experience engagement across Lifeline (2/3)

PRINCIPLE DESCRIPTION / COMMITMENTS WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LIFELINE? Practices, processes and governance structures that promote co-We work alongside people with lived experience to improve development and shared decision making. outcomes for people we serve. • Where co-development and shared decision-making is not required, We recognise power dynamics and build shared decisionpractices and processes for clearly defining the types of engagement making into our ways of working and doing and are and level of participation expected (e.g. utilisation of the IAP2 public transparent when this is not possible. participation spectrum or similar). We will be clear on the level of participation required to COLLABORATIVE reflect lived experience voices in our work. A clear intent and expectations for each mechanism and engagement We communicate a clear purpose for each lived experience communicated to participants in advance. This may involve defining an engagement to help participants understand what is engagement spectrum (e.g. IAP2 public participation spectrum). expected of them and how their expertise and time will be utilised. Exploration of the required capabilities and plan to support capability development. **PURPOSEFUL** Practices and processes that embed safety, respect and dignity, We support individuals to decide how and when they including: contribute to Lifeline. equipping people with lived experience with sufficient We support staff and people with lived experience to information so that they may make an informed decision on develop capabilities for effective engagement. whether they participate for each engagement and mechanism.

PROMOTES AGENCY



ensuring consent ahead of each engagement or every instance

where an individual's story will be used.

Seven guiding principles apply to lived experience engagement across Lifeline (3/3)

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION / COMMITMENTS	WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LIFELINE?
O→↓ ↑ □←O ADAPTABLE	We know that lived experience engagements can have a range of objectives and take many shapes and forms, and our processes need to be flexible and tailored.	A balance of whole-of-organisation foundational processes with tailored practices and processes for specific mechanisms and types of engagement as well as diverse cohorts and contexts.
ITERATIVE	 We are committed to continually assessing and refining how we engage with people with lived experience. We want to keep challenging ourselves to ensure that we have the right mechanisms to engage the right people at the right time and for the right reasons. We understand the importance of managing change well and will develop a staged implementation plan for the Framework to ensure the roll-out is supported and feasible. 	 Carefully-considered staged implementation and change process supported by a shared purpose and clear governance structures. Monitoring and evaluation strategy and associated processes with feedback loops. Embedded continuous improvement, including reviewing processes, practices and the current set of mechanisms against sector best practice and changing conditions.



The following enablers are important to ensure lived experience engagement is sustainable

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

Embedding lived experience insights, knowledge and expertise across Lifeline's service design and improvement will require supportive leadership and culture to create an environment which:

- Recognises and supports the expertise of people with lived experience, such as through shared decision-making.
- Views people with lived experience as important partners in achieving Lifeline's mission.
- Fosters reciprocal respect between people involved in lived experience engagement.
- Promotes a learning mindset to try new things and continually improve.

RESOURCING

Engaging with people with lived experience will require resourcing. Project planning needs to consider what is required including:

- Who will be accountable?
- When will engagement take place?
- What is the budget?
- What are the resource and time requirements?

CAPABILITY OF LIFELINE STAFF AND PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Everyone involved in lived experience engagements should be set up and supported to do this work safely and effectively. This includes:

- Investment in resourcing and capability development of both staff and people with lived experience.
- Ensuring recruitment processes clearly communicate capability expectations for Lifeline staff and people with lived experience.
- Targeted onboarding that ensure staff and people with lived experience understand the practices and processes in place to support them.

FRAMEWORK GOVERNANCE

Successful implementation of the Framework requires clear governance.

This includes establishing effective governance for the overall Framework, implementation of the Framework, and for each of the engagement mechanisms.



ICLUDES

There are common elements of what lived experience engagement at Lifeline should look like in practice across all mechanisms

Each type of engagement should be considered separately whether they be for a specific purpose or on-going engagements. These common elements provide a foundation and can be interpreted appropriately for the specific context.

Across their involvement						
Connection with a consistent point of contact		Access to appropriate support				
Recruitment	Onboarding	Pre-engagement and Engagement	Post-engagement and offboarding			
Outreach, informational sessions, etc.	Orientation, training, resource provision, etc.	Preparatory material, advisory meetings, etc.	Debrief sessions, feedback sessions, exit interview etc.			
 A clear description/definition of the opportunity (e.g. role description), expectations and capability requirements. Clear communications outlining how to express interest and the recruitment process. 	 Contract or agreement setting out scope of work, remuneration, and length of engagement. A safe and accessible environment that supports everyone. Sufficient information for people with lived experience to make an informed decision on whether to participate. 	 Adequate time to review materials relevant to engagement. Clear scope of each activity. Person-centred engagement and wellbeing planning when required before new engagements. 	 Loop back(s) on the progress or impact of their contribution Formal offboarding process Post-engagement check-in and an opportunity to provide feedback on the specific engagement. 			

Minimum standard contracting requirements should also be put in place as appropriate.



Approach

Cifeline

Lifeline Australia has a tailored approach to lived experience engagement

Lifeline Member advisory groups

Aims to ensure the voices of people with lived experience are included throughout Lifeline Member activities

People with lived experience will bring community expertise and geographical connection

Lifeline Member groups*

Other Member mechanisms

Lifeline Australia service user input

Aims to equip those shaping Lifeline's products and services with a deep understanding of users, potential users, and community members, while quickly generating actionable insights to guide user-informed decisions

People with lived experience will bring relevant experiences or needs



Lifeline Australia advisory groups

Aims to ensure the voices of people with lived experience are included throughout Lifeline Australia's activities

People with lived expertise will provide strategic advice based on systems level understanding of suicide prevention and the needs and experiences of people with lived experience.

Lifeline Australia public communications programs

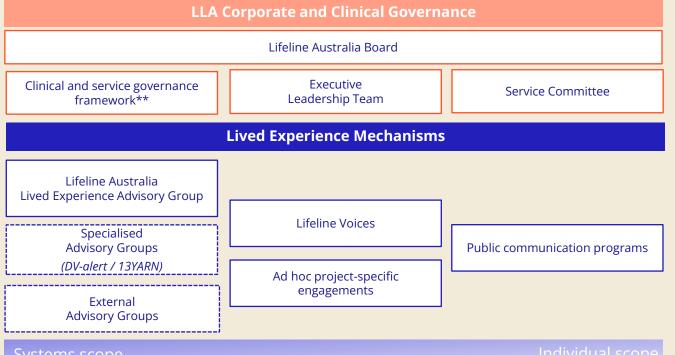
Aims to support storytelling to reduce stigma, show the impact Lifeline can have and motivate people to access support

People with lived experience will bring a willingness to share their story



How does the Distributed Model of Lived Experience fit into Lifeline Australia's governance?

Lifeline Australia's lived experience mechanisms work to bring advice and input from different levels, from the system and sector down to individual's stories. Lived experience advice is a key input into decision making alongside the perspectives of crisis support staff, research, clinical governance, and organisational priorities; depending on the type of decision to be made.



Lived experience reporting lines

Meeting summaries and key insights from LLEAG meetings, Lifeline Voices, and public communications programs are reported to the ELT and Service Committee.

Systems scope

Individual scope



Lifeline's lived experience engagement mechanisms can complement each other to effectively inform Lifeline's activities

Lived experience engagement mechanisms will often work together to inform areas such as Lived Experience Framework activities, service design and refinements, marketing programs, communication campaigns and research programs. The following factors were highlighted as important to consider:

Establish and maintain clear Understand **Provide support** definitions of roles and where each for groups to responsibilities for each group to mechanism complement prevent overlap and confusion, adds value each other such as through an organisational chart that sets out each Lived mechanism, the different types of experience engagement, and how they fit into mechanisms various levels of Lifeline. complement each other It is the role of Lifeline mechanism coordinators to communicate with each other and report back **Ensure mechanisms** where relevant on how the information provided by each mechanism has been used and how other mechanisms have been involved.

Ensure sufficient resourcing is allocated for coordinating activities across all engagement groups to facilitate smooth collaboration.

Establish a robust governance framework to oversee communication protocols and ensure that communication is structured and consistent.



Cifeline

Implementation

Framework implementation will be considered over three key horizons that focus on set up, culture and capability gaps, and embedding the Framework

Horizon 1

What does success look like?

- Shared understanding of how the distributed model will work, including how the different mechanisms will complement each other, and how each works in practice, and can be accessed.
- Clearly defined accountabilities, outlining key roles and responsibilities.
- Visible examples of how the Framework has led to changes to show it is making a difference.

Horizon 2

What does success look like?

- Increased shared understanding of the value of lived experience and increased understanding of how to engage with lived experience, evidenced by Lifeline Australia staff proactively seeking advice from people with lived expertise.
- Well functioning lived experience mechanisms.
- Key learnings on lived experience engagement shared across the network.
- A broad diversity of people with lived experience involved in LEAGs and other mechanisms

Horizon 3

What does success look like?

- Lived experience embedded across Lifeline's activities, with clear expectations established.
- More purposeful, systematic approach to lived experience engagement, with mechanisms complementing each other.



HORIZON 1

Set up implementation, communicate Framework, and action quick wins



HORIZON 2

Identify and address critical culture and capability gaps across Lifeline



HORIZON 3

Embed the Framework across Lifeline

First 6 Months

Second 6 Months

Second Year



Lived Experience Engagement Framework Program Logic

Goal: Lived experience perspectives and expertise are valued and purposefully incorporated into Lifeline Australia's activities.

ACTIVITIES

Develop internal and external

LLEAG uplift including revised

Develop process for reporting

engagement to governance

framework and mechanisms.

outlining support options for

staff and lived experience

Understand minimum data

protection and privacy

requirements and

communications plan.

Terms of Reference and

recruitment processes.

Develop lived experience

engagement guide.

on lived experience.

Develop evaluation

Develop support guide

structures.

participants.

obligations.

 Develop detailed implementation plan.



OUTPUTS

• Implementation Plan.

· Communications Plan.

Reference.

processes.

Template.

Learning plan.

support guide.

Data and privacy

activity.

Guide.

· Revised LLEAG Terms of

Revised LLEAG recruitment

Revised Service Committee

Updated Board Reporting

· Monitoring, Evaluation and

Lived experience engagement

requirements understood,

gap analysis and remediation

Terms of Reference.

Lived Experience Engagement



- Staff are aware of the Framework and apply it to their work.
- Staff understand the difference between LLA lived experience groups and functions
- Staff and lived experience contributors understand, experience and reflect the LE Framework principles in their work
- The process about how to engage with lived experience are clear, straight forward, and everybody knows about them
- The Framework increases engagement in work that directly impacts members of the public, help seekers and service users
- LLA staff know of and have access to tailored support options for themselves and lived experience contributors
- LLA staff have the minimum mechanisms in place to store and protect lived experience data in their areasf have the minimum mechanisms in place to store and protect lived experience data in their areas.

MEDIUM

 LLA staff genuinely understand and advocate for lived experience engagement in Lifeline's activities

OUTCOMES

- LLA staff have the skills and capabilities to effectively engage with lived experience
- LLEAG are highly engaged and have a strong working relationship between members and with Lifeline Australia staff
- Lived experience engagement systems and processes enable lived experience contributors to provide Lifeline Australia with high quality, actionable advice and insights
- LLA Network and broader sector understand and value Lifeline's context-specific contribution to LE engagement
- Lived experience contributors are provided with opportunities to enhance their capability and skills to support their role in achieving the mission of Lifeline.

LONG

- Lived experience input enables us to remove barriers for those who need us most.
- Distributed model of Lived Experience is embedded into BAU and effectively informs decision making across Lifeline Australia.
- LEx Framework supports organisational empathy towards people we service in every team and every level at LLA.
- The dichotomy between expert/lived experience is broken down. LLA values and learns from different sources of lived experience insights and expertise (e.g. internal staff, systemic advocates, "ordinary" community voices).
- Systems are in place to seamlessly manage data in a comprehensive way across the organisation.
- Systems are in place to seamlessly manage data in a comprehensive way across the organisation.
- LLA staff desire other people's input, feedback, challenges and ideas, coming with a learning mindset of curiosity and humility.

1 1

ASSUMPTIONS

- Lifeline is committed to ensuring staff are well-equipped to facilitate lived experience engagement safely and effectively.
- Lifeline is united by a shared purpose to ensure that lived experience. perspectives and expertise are valued across Lifeline Australia's activities.

EXTERNAL FACTORS & INFLUENCES

- How Framework implementation work is prioritised relative to other Lifeline activities.
- · Available resources.
- Staff capability to effectively implement and sustain Framework implementation.
- Level of governance over process.
- Level of appetite for change and leadership buy-in.
- Changes to national policy and sector environment that shift priorities.

: Lifeline