THE HEILOO DECLARATION

PEER AND LIVED EXPERIENCE LEADERSHIP

The experience of living with and/or supporting loved ones with mental health and/or substance use results in specialised and unique expertise, knowledge and abilities critical to leadership in recovery, wellness, autonomy, authorship and human rights.

Lived and living experience leadership is to be valued and respected. Our expertise is to be used globally to transform systems, services, and societies to unlock the potential of recovery-based approaches and initiatives. We contribute to improving the lives of all who are impacted by challenges to their mental wellbeing, and hold a lens of ensuring citizenship for all impacted by mental health and substance use challenges.

Lived experience leadership inherently recognises cultural perspectives to recovery and wellbeing as an authentic knowledge base which embraces opportunities for developing, valuing and respecting people from different cultural backgrounds to practice through the worldview of their lens. This enhances system transformation.

It is a global imperative to recruit, train, nurture and support authentic lived/living experience leadership throughout all design, delivery, policy development, and evaluation/research efforts.

Lived and living experience leadership must be supported and visible throughout all levels – from individuals leading their own recovery journeys to senior leadership positions to smash through the bigotry of low expectations.

There is an essential need to support leadership among diverse and marginalised populations including indigenous communities, people of colour, ethnic groups, youth, 2SLGBTQI+, rural, veterans, women, people with disabilities, refugees/ migrants, and others.

Leaders with lived and living experience lead with the critical principles of empowerment, mutual support, rights protection and advancement, respect, and social change. They lead with whole person approaches, and a belief in resilience, wellness, accountability, self-determination/choice, and social inclusion. They lead, using a strengths-based approach, with the recognition that there are many pathways, and the importance of hope as the catalyst of the recovery journey.

We invite all to join with us in the support of lived and living experience leadership across the globe.



The above was drafted and accepted by participants from 12 nations at the June 24-25, 2024 Peer and Lived Experience Leadership Match sponsored by the Global Leadership Exchange. We acknowledge that we do not represent all voices of lived/living experience and honour the leadership of past generations that have created the foundation on which our efforts stand.