

## INSPIRE's Community Engagement Learning Network

Session #13: Making it matter — How to have inclusive and productive conversations about data and outcomes with people with lived experience (and everyone else)

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Every month, the Community Engagement Learning Network brings together a nationwide team of community engagement (CE) professionals and people with lived experience to host group discussions about improving CE efforts, present best practices for launching and maintaining CE initiatives — drawn from experts in the field — and foster community-building among participants.



### Key takeaways

- Engaging people with lived experience in conversations about measurement, evaluation, and quality improvement helps ensure that organizations are measuring what actually matters to the communities they serve.
- Conversations about data and outcomes can feel intimidating or inaccessible because of technical language, abstract concepts, and power dynamics. Thoughtful facilitation and intentional framing can make these discussions more inclusive and meaningful.

- People with lived experience can help organizations re-center discussions on community priorities, especially when technical debates overshadow the larger goals of improving care, services, or outcomes.
- Community engagement around measurement is strengthened when organizations connect data to shared goals, clearly explain why a measure matters, and focus on how information will be used to improve outcomes.



## Action steps

### Prepare for inclusive measurement conversations

- Consider what representation and “lived experience” mean in the context of your work. Whose voices and perspectives should be included in the conversation?
- Offer preparation meetings for participants who may be new to conversations about measurement or new to the work in general. Discuss context, purpose, roles, and define common terminology that may be used.

### Strengthen facilitation practices

- Agree on conversation practices or community norms that support intellectual inclusion, such as asking participants to avoid jargon, encouraging and naming different perspectives represented in the room.
- Use open-ended, reflective questions that encourage discussion about impact, implementation, and lived experience.
- Intentionally create opportunities for quieter participants to contribute.
- Provide multiple ways for participants to engage, such as verbal discussion, chat participation, written reflections, or breakout conversations.
- Rather than centering conversations on abstract data points, facilitators can help participants understand:
  - Why a measure exists,
  - What information is being collected,
  - How the information will be used, and
  - How outcomes relate to community priorities.
- Be attentive to power dynamics and create space for community members to challenge assumptions or redirect conversations toward community priorities.

### Debrief & reflect

- Offer debrief sessions to collect feedback from participants and provide an additional opportunity for questions and comments they may not have been able to or comfortable sharing during the meeting.

- Regularly gather feedback from participants about whether engagement activities are meaningful and accessible by asking questions such as:
  - “Was this worth your time?”
  - “What’s one thing you learned today?”
  - “What are you hoping to take back with you?”

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“It matters what language we use and how we connect whatever it is that we’re measuring, collecting, or assessing back to shared goals.”

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## Resources for additional learning

- [Measuring and evaluating your work with PWLE - INSPIRE](#)
- [What We Measure Matters: Centering Lived Experience in Developing Behavioral Health Quality Measures - Center for Health Care Strategies](#)
- [Engaging People with Lived Experience of Inequities: Meeting Facilitation Guide](#)

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### Organizations



### People with lived experience

