

# Journey companion: transitions



## Possible challenges

## Suggested approaches/strategies

When organisations are trying to support young people wishing to transition from service-user to taking on a role within an organisation...

They may be unsure how best to do this

Organisational processes may present barriers to being able to employ young people into desired roles

They may be nervous about having to work in new ways

- Seek out advice and support from individuals/services with more experience of supporting young people through transitions and learn from their processes, procedures and reflections

- See if it's possible to work with colleagues in HR to adapt existing policies, or develop new ones that remove barriers
- Work with the potential employees to try and resolve other issues that may be impeding their employability

- Be open to embracing the challenges and opportunities that may come from supporting young people in this way and take the time to reflect and capture learning for ongoing practice and process improvements

## Possible challenges

Staff without lived experience...

May be unsure when a service-user/ young person is in the right place to transition into a different role within an organisation

Can feel anxious about working in a different way, particularly if individuals have complex needs

May be unclear about the role and value of lived experience

## Suggested approaches/strategies

- Explore what 'readiness' might mean in the specific context (see also our 'Seeing things from Both Sides' comic)

- Remember that any member of staff can face difficulties or challenges in their lives which may impact their work at times
- Map out collaboratively with young people their needs/requirements and work together to identify support structures and resources that can be put in place to help meet these

- Share relevant research and resources or invite organisations in to talk about their experiences of centering lived experience, to help staff to understand the importance of including lived experience perspectives
- Illustrate its value through developing equitable terms and conditions across staff teams and by investing in development and training for those with lived experience



## Possible challenges

Young people with lived experience...

May feel that they are not being fairly compensated for their time

May not have the confidence to initially 'jump in' to a new role - or may feel overwhelmed

Can feel there's an expectation for them to share their lived experience

## Suggested approaches/strategies

- Create transparent and equitable pay structures and explore the range of options when thinking about compensation and reward and the role they are taking on (see also our 'Valuing Participation' comic)

- Offer shadowing and observation opportunities for young people before they step into a new role
- Consider ways of gradually building up responsibilities attached to a role

- Clarify that there are no expectations for young people to share their lived experience ever



## Possible challenges

Young people with lived experience...

May feel that they are reliant on their personal experiences of harm rather than on broader expertise of the system and issue

May need greater levels of support at different times

May, if they're ex-service users of the organisation, find it difficult to adjust to new relationships with staff

## Suggested approaches/strategies

- Commit to providing ongoing training and personal development opportunities around the issue of childhood sexual violence to support young people to have a wider understanding and awareness of the issue may help expand what young people can draw on in their work

- Plan out and put in place different options for support e.g. internal supervision and mentoring, access to external clinical supervision and counselling, personal development and coaching sessions
- Consider how to pro-actively encourage self-care e.g. flexible working hours to enable access to classes and meetings that support wellbeing

- Put in place the ability to access external support



## Possible challenges

Young people with lived experience...

May feel that they are holding different identities in the workplace (ex-service user, survivor, young professional) which might be a challenge to navigate

May be triggered through the work

May, like staff without lived experience, feel emotionally burnt out in the role

## Suggested approaches/strategies

- Support young people to explore how these different identities - personal and professional - may collide at certain times during certain activities and work together to unpack that


- Support young people to set clear boundaries over how they draw on and share their personal experiences and ensuring that they have a range of support in place

- Model good work/life balance as a wider team and support boundary setting around contact time and clear understanding of the parameters of the role



## Possible challenges

## Suggested approaches/strategies



Young people with lived experience...

May find it challenging, particularly in a peer mentor role, to balance being a 'confidante' with safeguarding responsibilities

May feel 'different' to other staff members if their careers have developed in different ways

May feel they're not developing and/or need support to attain certain qualifications

- Provide ongoing training to young people around safeguarding and support them to practice how they communicate these responsibilities to other young people sensitively and openly

- Consider the feasibility of bringing on board more than one colleague with lived experience as a potential way to add an additional layer of support

- Support young people to acquire qualifications as part of the role e.g. through study assistance programmes
- As part of supervision, support young people to develop a plan for training and skills building

This companion was informed by two primary pieces of research:

Walker, K., Warrington, C., and Howard, K. (2025) *Transitions - what's next for us?: Pilot research exploring transitions from accessing services due to experiences of childhood sexual violence, to working as a volunteer or professional within the sector*. Luton: University of Bedfordshire.

Cody, C., Bovarnick, S. and Peace, D. (2020) *Peer support for young people who have experienced sexual violence - tensions, challenges and strategies: Briefing paper four*. Luton: University of Bedfordshire.

