



# TV production: Engaging people with lived experience

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People with lived experience are experts in their own issues. Their wisdom and insight are unique. When engaging them, it's vital to remember that it's not your story, it's theirs.

Sharing stories may put participants in a difficult and vulnerable position and any engagement needs to be sensitive to this and give sufficient time to be conducted appropriately.

## Reasons to engage people who are expert by experience

- Research for a drama, documentary or news piece (e.g. modern slavery, refugee journeys, homelessness)
- Prior to using their story for a documentary or news piece
- Understanding potential risks and how to mitigate or address them effectively in unscripted entertainment (e.g. mental health issues)
- Understanding issues that may be encountered when filming any genre (e.g. discrimination)

## How to engage

- Engage early and throughout, including at final edit, to ensure the process is not exploitative of people's stories
- Aim to empower contributors in how they tell their story, ie place final decision-making in their hands as far as practicable
- Provide an ability to respond within the production, e.g. if they disagree with aspects of the final edit, include that within the programme

Key aspects to consider	
DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarify roles and expectations</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Address barriers to participation and any related issues, such as the need for childcare or support to use IT</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undertake a needs assessment to ensure equal standing</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conduct a wellbeing assessment each time you engage – the wellbeing of potentially vulnerable people can change over time</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure trust is built up and maintained</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recognise that people with lived experience could be vulnerable</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Make a group agreement together to establish ground rules</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure a balance of power and continuously assess this</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Constantly reassure on what you can/can't do in terms of outcomes and support</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure sensitivity in how you tell their stories</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Include them in the editing process</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embrace inclusivity and promote anti-discriminatory practices</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consider getting expert support to facilitate your engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Only engage those people for whom it is easy to participate</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engage in order to get 'sign off' for something already decided</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Start from a position of disrespect or prejudice towards your stakeholders</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ignore the internal engagement required to take on board the outcomes of engaging those with lived experience</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Send your most junior staff to conduct the engagement</li> </ul>

With thanks to [Migrant Help](#) for the insights they provided