



CLEW: COMMUNITY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE WORKERS WORKSHOP 5 - HOW TO HOST A PARTICIPATORY MEETING THE SOCIAL SPACE (BELONG), MOOROOKA | 26 JUNE 2019

In our second last workshop, we honoured all of the work that had gone before, committed to meeting in a participatory way, and learned a new decision making process - using it make key decisions about CLEW and how we continue. We welcomed back familiar faces and welcomed Danielle and Val for the first time. Some of us courageously stepped up to host and harvest parts of the workshop, practising our meeting hosting skills.

Karalee welcomed us, spoke an Acknowledgement of Country, and shared the purpose of the workshop. Nathan hosted us in a Woosh and name game to introduce ourselves and warm up. Lara hosted us in a check in, and Claire hosted the check out - sharing a movement and sound about how we were feeling at the end of the workshop.

Claire, Nathan, Lara, Karalee, Brett, Danielle and Koda-Jo shared hosting and harvesting of the Generative Decision Making process, and everyone created proposals to bring forward. It was a good example of shared leadership. We also reflected on the practice and suggested some tips for hosting.

In check in, a few of the things we said were most important to learn about hosting CLEW meetings going forward was:

- Courage to step up and ask questions, and go through the process
- Solid platform to continue the process and be present in that
- To ensure it's a respectful and safe space for people to bring what they've learned and continue the journey
- Courage and momentum and revisit those things, to have the courage to take steps forward
- Courage to take this on for ourselves - us stepping up is preparing us.

How do we want to run our CLEW meetings from now on?

We reflected on things we've learned over the past 3 months about how to host powerful meetings, paying attention to these things:

- Need & Purpose
- How I show up matters - the Four Fold Practice
- Relationships are important
- The Art of Invitation
- Powerful questions and co-created agenda
- Harvest

And the meeting itself:

- Good welcoming before the meeting begins
- Space, timing
- Acknowledgement of country
- Welcome framing
- Activity: Physical Name / whoosh. Physical movement
- Check in & check out (**Circle practice**)
- Clear processes that enable all to contribute in different ways





Making decisions together

How do we make wise decisions? Here are a few principles to begin with:

- Decisions are 'good enough for now - safe enough to try'. Practice the art of not being too attached to my way, the best way.
- Decisions can be reviewed at any time. New solutions can be raised by anyone: it is everyone's responsibility to raise new proposals or solutions if we see them.
- We always hold the purpose and principles of CLEW central to our decisions - Is it in the best interest of our members?
- We speak up, and speak our truth with kindness.

We were introduced to a process known as **Generative Decision Making**. We got a chance to practice straight away, with Jen bringing a proposal. We then got into small groups, and using the conversation harvest from previous workshops, we created proposals, coming back together to make decisions together. We shared roles and practiced making proposals, hosting the process and harvesting the reactions to support the proposer. We made the following decisions together:

An updated purpose

CLEW: A place of connection and support for lived experience workers

Why, where and when do we meet?

2 types of meetings

- Social connection - every 2 months
- Professional development and networking - every 2 months (alternate)

Communicating with each other between meetings

Welcoming new CLEW members well

A structure of teams and shared leadership for CLEW

Core team: made up of at least 1 member from each working team.

Teams to set their own way of working. We established teams at the end of workshop 6.

Proposal: Who is a CLEW member?

CLEW membership is for those with a personal lived experience of mental health, who are working in paid or unpaid roles.

What are we celebrating about CLEW, and taking with us into the future?

WORKSHOP 6: CELEBRATION AND STORYTELLING

We invited Red Thread Stories Playback theatre troupe to help us listen to, and celebrate, our stories of our CLEW journey.

In Playback theatre the audience stories and experiences are the content of the show. Jen, as the conductor of the performance, asked the audience questions about their connection to CLEW, significant moments and CLEW's impact. The actors, Olga, Franki, Amber and Emma Che and Kris, the musician, improvised and played back our stories and experiences using movement, voice and music.

Our celebration was a delight - full of tears, joy, laughter, affirmation and acceptance. Its difficult to convey the connection experienced. Here is a brief summary:



In the beginning of the performance we all shared brief moments and feelings. We welcomed our guests Zoe and Elizabeth, who came just for the celebration came because they were curious and for the 'joy of witnessing sharing of people's story that captures people's hearts'.

The conductor, Jen, then invited people to come out to the tellers chair and share stories of the impact CLEW had on people's lives. In Playback we talk of the themes that run through the stories as being the red thread of a performance.

Our first story was about **opening the door and peeking in**. Our teller was researching whether there was a need for CLEW while knowing from personal experience the importance of support. He also questioned whether he belonged here.

"Sometimes I identify, and not always, I don't want to always climb into a box. I loved when someone came along to CLEW saying I was unsure whether I didn't feel well enough today to come along and others feeling 'too well' to be in CLEW. Do I fit, or not? I like that tension, and people decide to come along anyway and enjoy themselves."

The next story highlights what can happen when we **step fully through the door** and acknowledge and valuing ourselves.

Our teller had been a peer worker, helping others through their own experience, for many years. However due to stigma she often did this in secret, not telling colleagues and friends how she was feeling.

"The thing with CLEW has been meeting other people who are lived experience workers and feeling completely accepted from day one... I now tell people I'm a peer worker and the kind of work I do, I value myself. In CLEW I feel very much supported."

The third story shows how self acceptance leads to **being a light for others**. From being diagnosed and labelled and presented with limiting beliefs of what couldn't be, the teller, after many challenges, now lives a full and satisfying life and works as a peer worker. Over time she has found enormous value in her experiences and through her example shows what people can do.

Then we told stories of what we were taking into the future and our last story reinforced the theme when a newcomer to CLEW told her story of her eyes being opened today by the stories she heard and connections made... **I want to become a peer worker**.



Our next steps

After the celebration we collectively decided on our next steps for CLEW.

Establish teams

- Core team: made up of at least 1 member from each working teams
- Welcome team: for inviting members and new members **Lara, Claire**
- Comms crew: Organising tools and preparing materials **Danielle, Nathan**
- Hosting team: to host future meetings (membership will change over time) **Karalee**
- Logistics team: venue, food etc for future meetings **Julian**

Who else from CLEW would like to be a part of these teams? It would be good to have 2-3 people on each to support each other and share tasks and learn together.

theMES conference 27-29 August Lara and Karalee will present on CLEW with Brett, Brisbane South PHN have three passes for CLEW members and it was decided that Julian, Alison and Claire would receive them.

What's next for CLEW? Brisbane South PHN is hoping to put out an Expression of Interest for ongoing support for CLEW.

iNAPs Claire suggested a connection with iNAPs - International Association of Peer Supporters <https://www.inaops.org/>. An invitation to take a look.

Next meeting A Friday afternoon. Danielle to send out doodle poll to everyone with dates in August



Check out: What's your greatest learning from the CLEW journey?

- There's more to life than mainstream things
- Other people have the same passion, and I have people to connect with
- How supportive and welcoming a group can be even when I come late. The importance of a support network
- To be back in a group of people and be relaxed
- This is really nourishing work. Authenticity lives here
- Organisations are starting to see the value of Lived Experience Workers and are putting resources behind it
- Realising a network existed for Lived experience Workers!
- It's so much better not to work along
- That people are so willing to connect. The diversity of people, of Lived experience Workers we've seen here - that excites me.
- My journey started today. My eyes have been opened to a lot more jobs
- A lot more skills that I realised, and this has helped to bring those skills forward

What are my next steps?

- I don't know!
- Make an effort to keep coming and committing to CLEW
- Learn participatory hosting
- Moving house
- Harvest these workshops
- Fully participate in making sure this support group is sustainable
- A step forward for our organisation to have dedicated peer workers
- It's a fantastic time, with lots of opportunities for lived experience workers, now and in the future. My next step is to broadcast those opportunities
- Applying for peer jobs
- Pestering Mel for a list of emails :)



Thank you

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Thank you to all CLEW members - for stepping up with courage and for bringing your gifts. You've made it so much fun!

Jen, Mel and Pam, Campfire Co-op and Red Thread Stories

VISIT THE CLEW WEBSITE: bit.ly/clewproject



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