

PERSPECTIVES 2024

FINDING NORTH NETWORK LIVED EXPERIENCE E-SYMPOSIUM



DAY 1 PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024

Sharing Your Lived Experience Story
for Connection, Awareness & Change

DAY 1, SESSION 1: 12:30 - 1:50PM AEDT

12:30pm AEDT	Welcome, Introduction, Recognition of Lived Experience & Day 1 Overview	Ben Broadbridge
12:45pm AEDT	Acknowledgment to Country & Yarn	Tess Moodie
1:10pm AEDT	Keynote: Finding My Voice Through Art - A Conversation + Guided Activity	Estelle Hope

DAY 1, SESSION 2: 2:00 - 3:30PM AEDT

2:00pm AEDT	Challenging Stigma in Multicultural Communities	Ashanthi Jayasekera
2:30pm AEDT	The Appendix, the Breakdown & the Breakthrough: A Story of Hope & Resilience	Allison Li
3:00pm AEDT	How Recovery Story Telling Shaped My Journey as Consumer, Carer & Peer Worker	Kayla Van Der Heyden

DAY 1, SESSION 3: 3:40 - 5:00PM AEDT

3:40pm AEDT	Addiction & Recovery: A Power Greater than Me	Aoiffe McLoughlin
4:10pm AEDT	How My Lived Experience of Perinatal Mental Health Challenges Helped My Career	Megan Cassar
4:45pm AEDT	Day 1 Closing Reflections	Ben Broadbridge

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PERSPECTIVES 2024

FINDING NORTH NETWORK LIVED EXPERIENCE E-SYMPIOSIUM



DAY 2 PROGRAM SNAPSHOT: WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024

Embracing & Focusing Your Lived Expertise
for Connection, Awareness & Change

DAY 2, SESSION 1: 12:30 - 1:50PM AEDT

12:30pm AEDT	Welcome, Introductions, Day 1 Overview & Recognition of Lived Experience	Ben Broadbridge
12:40pm AEDT	Acknowledgment to Country & Yarn	Tess Moodie
1:00pm AEDT	Keynote: Lived experience Partnership & Leadership in the Victorian Reforms	Mary O'Hagan

DAY 2, SESSION 2: 2:00 - 3:35PM AEDT

2:00pm AEDT	Giving a Voice to the Elephant in the Room: Using Storytelling for Impact & Change	Tharindu Jayadeva
2:30pm AEDT	The 32YO Chairperson: How I Galvanised My Career Through Empowering My Lived Experience Voice	Kayla Schembri
3:00pm AEDT	Keynote: Ethical Engagement with Lived Experience	Tess Moodie

DAY 2, SESSION 3: 3:45 - 5:00PM AEDT

3:45pm AEDT	Reactions to Lived Expertise & How to Change Them	Michele Burnlar
4:15pm AEDT	Working from Multiple Lived Experience Perspectives & the Value This Brings	Mellisa Anne Rigter
4:45pm AEDT	Perspectives 2024 Closing Reflections	Ben Broadbridge



DAY 1: TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024

Sharing Your Lived Experience Story For Connection, Awareness & Change

DAY 1, SESSION 1: 12:30 - 1:50PM AEDT

12:30pm AEDT **Welcome, Day 1 Overview & Recognition of Lived Experience**

Ben Broadbridge, Master of Ceremonies

12:45pm AEDT **Acknowledgment to Country & Yarn**

Tess Moodie, Lived Experience Consultant

1:10pm AEDT **Keynote: Finding My Voice Through Art -
A Conversation + Guided Activity**

*Estelle Hope, Speaker, Singer, Songwriter, Visual Artist, Teacher &
Transformational Educator*

Estelle will share her story of finding her voice and breaking her silence to everyone in her life through the power of art and music.

She will challenge our notions of the gifted artist and reveal how we too can be empowered to speak up and find our voices through art. She will demonstrate how being reacquainted with our orphaned inner creative genius is a core human need and powerful healing modality.

Estelle's goal is to give hope and the possibility of healing to others through sharing her story of how her body has kept the score through illness and suffering, how she has been able to turn this wound into her purpose and how you can too.

DAY 2, SESSION 2: 2:00 - 3:30PM AEDT

2:00pm AEDT **Challenging Stigma in Multicultural Communities**

Ashanthi Jayasekera, Mental Health Advocate

While the stigma around mental health has somewhat diminished in Australia, there remain sections where stigma has not shifted.

In Ashanthi's Sri Lankan community it remains taboo to speak about mental illness and about mental health issues publicly. There's little awareness of what mental health issues look and feel like and all too often this leads to poor health outcomes for vulnerable people. Her life purpose is to shift the narrative and show that mental illness has many faces and is very common.



Ashanthi will discuss some of the unique challenges multicultural communities face when dealing with mental health, the diversity within culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the importance of awareness, education and early intervention.

Additionally, she will share her journey of healing as a young migrant woman with little experience of the health system, no family support and her suicidality.

2:30pm AEDT

The Appendix, the Breakdown & the Breakthrough: A Story of Hope & Resilience

Allison Li, Mental Health Advocate, Peer Educator, Public Speaker

For decades, Allison experienced the mental distress of complex trauma and BPD and had lost hope. In 2021 she “started to emerge from an agoraphobic cocoon” and felt hope and direction for the first time in a decade. But then a medical emergency changed everything.

Following life saving surgery, Allison was confused and distressed and fell into a deep depression and unbearable anxiety. But in the mess, there was a message. She was finally connected with psychologists who taught her how to reframe her distress, and experienced a breakthrough the moment she met her first peer worker. After a lifetime of feeling isolated and unheard, Allison finally felt seen and understood.

My message is this: there is hope for everybody, including in the very darkest places, and that tomorrow will always be worth it. All you have to do is reach out.

3:00pm AEDT

How Recovery Story Telling Shaped My Journey as Consumer, Carer & Peer Worker

Kayla Van Der Heyden

Kayla grew up riddled with stigma, isolation and fear with a parent with mental illness and what this meant for her as a young carer.

At 14, she found herself sitting around a camp fire with other young people who had parents with mental illness where she heard from peer workers about their story. This was life changing.

Through the power of storytelling, Kayla has redefined her consumer and carer journey; “Story telling allowed me to be the author of my life experiences”. And through writing and sharing her story, Kayla started to heal within.

Kayla shares her journey with the hope of empowering others to understand how they can use recovery storytelling to benefit themselves and others.



DAY 1, SESSION 3: 3:40 - 5:00PM AEDT

3:40pm AEDT Addiction & Recovery: A Power Greater than Me

Aoiffe McLoughlin

Aoiffe will share her lived experience story of drug and alcohol addiction, the challenges she faced, and her hope and gratitude.

Aoiffe will share how she keeps herself mentally, physically and spiritually well by working a program of recovery by surrender, connection and enjoying the gifts of life. Her aim is to increase awareness that addiction knows no boundaries, but that recovery is possible.

4:10pm AEDT How My Lived Experience of Perinatal Mental Health Challenges Helped My Career

Megan Cassar

Becoming a mother was not the experience Megan thought it would be. After giving birth to her first child, Megan experienced postnatal anxiety and depression. She found her birth experience to be traumatic and as a result, she also suffered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Megan found herself thinking things would never get better but, when her child was 18 months old, she sought help and in less than a year after that, she started to feel like her old self again. What she didn't expect was how this experience would not only change her life but change her career.

Megan's experience made such an impact and she couldn't simply forget about it and carry on. She found PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia) and joined as a volunteer, and over four years she shared her lived experience story.

When a paid position at PANDA came up, Megan jumped at the chance to lead a large national volunteer program for people who have experienced perinatal mental health challenges. Her passion for PANDA and lived experience was considered a benefit to the role. This was the step up in Megan's career that she wasn't looking for at the time, but she knew she couldn't miss the opportunity.

Megan will share how her lived experience of perinatal mental health challenges helped her career and how she looks after herself while leading and supporting people to share their lived experience stories.

4:45pm AEDT Day 1 Closing Reflections

Ben Broadbridge, Master of Ceremonies



DAY 2: WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024 Embracing and Focusing Your Lived Expertise

DAY 2, SESSION 1: 12:30 - 1:50PM AEDT

12:30pm AEDT **Welcome, Day 2 Overview & Recognition of Lived Experience**

Ben Broadbridge, Master of Ceremonies

12:40pm AEDT **Acknowledgment to Country & Yarn**

Tess Moodie, Lived Experience Consultant

1:00pm AEDT **Keynote: Lived experience Partnership & Leadership in the Victorian Reforms**

Mary O'Hagan, Executive Director Lived Experience, Victorian Department of Health

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System reported in March 2021. The report highlighted the need for lived leadership in the future system, and the growth of lived experience led services and workforce. Victoria now has the authorising environment and the resources to expand the contributions of lived experience.

There is no other jurisdiction we know of in the world that matches Victoria's commitment to lived experience development. Mary will outline these developments and focus on the work of the Lived Experience Branch in the Department of Health, particularly our work on partnership and our Lived Experience Leadership Strategy.

DAY 2, SESSION 2: 2:00 - 3:30PM AEDT

2:00pm AEDT **Giving a Voice to the Elephant in the Room: Using Storytelling for Impact & Change**

Tharindu Jayadeva, Lived Experience Storyteller

Tharindu will share a snapshot of his story as a young man of colour with a lived experience of an eating disorder, and what the impact of safe storytelling can have upon young people when done with authenticity and respect.

Tharindu says "As a young person I rarely, if ever, saw myself reflected in the dialogue around mental health." He hopes to showcase why diversity and representation matters, and how embracing lived experience is an act of power and resilience.



Tharindu will share examples of how you and organisations you are connected to, can embed lived experience and youth participation into programming and decision-making.

Lived experience leadership has the power to influence, and can have significant impacts on self and community. You'll walk away with information to empower either your own storytelling journey, or that of your organisations.

2:30pm AEDT

The 32YO Chairperson: How I Galvanised My Career Through Empowering My Lived Experience Voice

Kayla Schembri, Chairperson, Non-Executive Director, 4x Governance Top 100 Finalist

Kayla will share how lived experience expertise is powerful and valuable, using her career and trajectory as an example of how she leveraged her perspective, as well as the positive impact this has had on her career, professional identity and sense of self.

Kayla aims to inspire you to reconsider lived experience (mental health and otherwise) as a barrier and reframe it into an asset. She will share how the scope of 'what she wanted to be when she grew up' broadened exponentially when she finally understood that she wasn't limited by short-term, survival-mode options. She will also share how she got in the trenches with her existential dread, answered the tough questions she asked herself, and reverse-engineered her pathway to 'what legacy do I want to leave on the world?'

Kayla says 'I didn't just get my foot in the door, I am now leading [a] board and I achieved that at 32 years of age against not just all personal odds, but also against every known barrier in traditional governance and leadership spaces – with a huge contribution from embracing my lived experience.'

Kayla key message is that lived experience was a large contributor to fortifying her place in the governance space, and that this is available to you via whatever channel you want.

3:00pm AEDT

Keynote: Ethical Engagement with Lived Experience

Tess Moodie, Lived Experience Consultant

Tess will delve into what ethical and authentic engagement with lived experience looks like including:

- Levels of lived experience participation;
- Managing power imbalances in the work; and
- Reflections on working with victim-survivor advocates and managing PTSD in the work.



DAY 2, SESSION 3: 3:45 - 5:00PM AEDT

3:45pm AEDT **Reactions to Lived Expertise & How to Change Them**

Michele Burnlar

Michele spent eight years experiencing mental distress so extreme, she was unable to work, was heavily medicated, and was told she would not improve.

Michele then met a Lived Experience practitioner who suggested she study a Diploma of Community Services. On graduation, she began volunteering and then working in the mental health space. Over this time, Michele has worked as a recovery support worker, recovery facilitator, peer group facilitator, NDIS access supporter, psychosocial recovery coach, manager in an NDIS organisation, and a project training officer.

Throughout her career Michele has witnessed a range of responses to disclosure of lived experience., ranging from neutral to highly critical, even being asked, "is that safe?", and valued - to a point.

Michele will explore suggestions for raising awareness about the validity and usefulness of lived expertise, embodying curiosity and compassion with an openness to differences in opinion, whilst recognising the immense contributions of those with lived expertise.

4:15pm AEDT **Working from Multiple Lived Experience Perspectives & the Value This Brings**

Mellisa Anne Rigter

Melissa has faced a range of mental health challenges and has found value in sharing those vast perspectives of lived experience with consumers.

Melissa will speak about stepping into all lived experience perspectives, and share insights gained as a Senior Consumer Peer Worker to pose valuable considerations to people working in Lived Experience roles. Such as peer worker "trip hazards", knowing when you're ready for peer work, deciding when the time is right and distinguishing when your disclosures are benefiting you and not the consumer.

Melissa aims to help other peer workers embrace their lived expertise and explore how they can navigate that in a clinical setting.

4:45pm AEDT **Perspectives 2024 Closing Reflections**

Ben Broadbridge, Master of Ceremonies
