

# “WHAT I WANT MY PEERS TO KNOW” RESOURCE

Insights from AOD, mental health, and harm reduction peer workers on working with people experiencing mental health and substance use.

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18 NOVEMBER 2025

# Acknowledgment of Country

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WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG PEOPLE OF THE KULIN NATION AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE MEET TODAY AND PAY OUR RESPECT TO THE ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING.

# Recognition of Lived Experience

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WE RECOGNISE AND VALUE THE KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE, THEIR SUPPORTERS AND THE PRACTITIONERS WHO WORK WITH THEM. WE CELEBRATE THEIR STRENGTHS AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION THAT THEY MAKE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES.



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# About the Alliances and LLEW Network

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# About NEMHSCA and EMHSCA

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NEMHSCA and EMHSCA are inter-agency mental health and wellbeing partnerships that work together to improve service coordination in the North East and Eastern Metropolitan Regions of Victoria.

## Vision

The communities we serve receive person-centred, timely and flexible mental health and wellbeing support through effective regional service coordination.

## Purpose

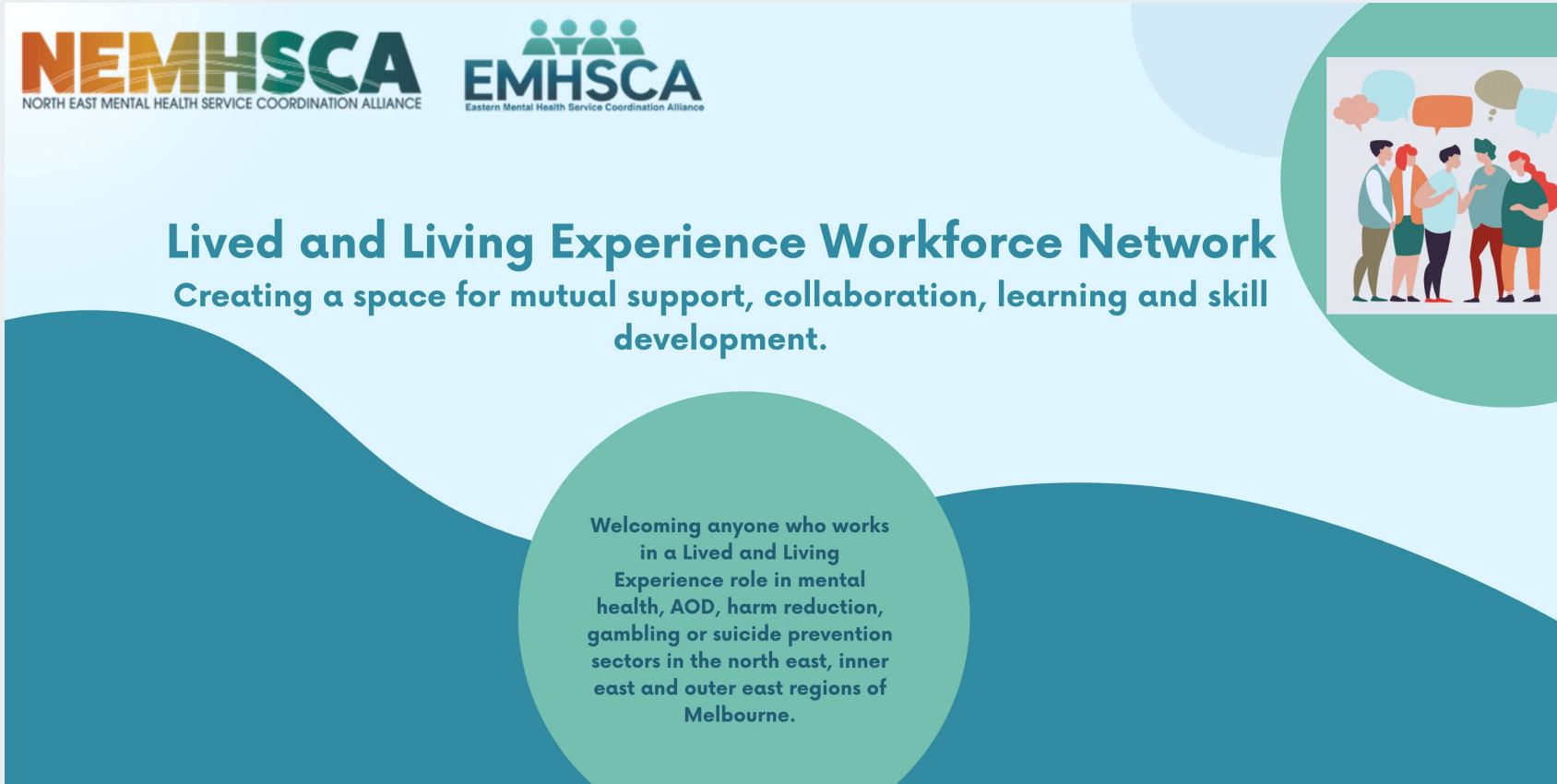
To enhance service integration and communication so that communities can access responsive and appropriate mental health, AOD and wellbeing support.

## Aims

- Improve, support and promote safe, recovery-focused, person-centred and collaborative practices across mental health sector.
- Promote structured and coordinated Lived Experience Leadership, and workforce development models.
- Support members to navigate mental health system reforms. Provide platform for consultation and information sharing.

# North East Metro LLEW Network

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The graphic features a light blue background with dark blue wavy shapes at the bottom. In the top left, the NEMHSCA logo is displayed in orange and green, with the text 'NORTH EAST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE' below it. To its right is the EMHSCA logo in green, with the text 'Eastern Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance' below it. In the center, the title 'Lived and Living Experience Workforce Network' is written in a bold, dark blue font, followed by the subtitle 'Creating a space for mutual support, collaboration, learning and skill development.' in a smaller, regular dark blue font. On the right side, there is a circular inset containing an illustration of five diverse people standing and talking, with speech bubbles above them. At the bottom center, a green circle contains the text: 'Welcoming anyone who works in a Lived and Living Experience role in mental health, AOD, harm reduction, gambling or suicide prevention sectors in the north east, inner east and outer east regions of Melbourne.'


**NEMHSCA**  
NORTH EAST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE

**EMHSCA**  
Eastern Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance

## Lived and Living Experience Workforce Network

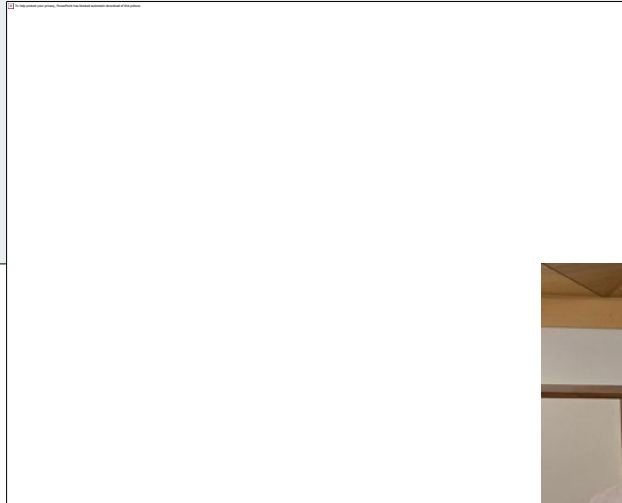
Creating a space for mutual support, collaboration, learning and skill development.

Welcoming anyone who works in a Lived and Living Experience role in mental health, AOD, harm reduction, gambling or suicide prevention sectors in the north east, inner east and outer east regions of Melbourne.



# LLEW “Networking with Purpose” Forums

Global Peer Worker  
Day celebration



LLEW and Clinical Staff Collaboration  
Forum

LLEW Leadership Forum



**NEMHSCA** **EMHSCA**  
NORTH EAST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE Eastern Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance

## LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCE WORKFORCE NETWORKING FORUM

**BUILDING CONNECTIONS FOR  
WELLBEING**

Do you work in a Lived and Living Experience role in mental health, AOD, harm reduction, gambling or suicide prevention sectors in the north east, inner east and outer east regions of Melbourne?  
Don't miss out this opportunity to connect with your peers.



**9.30am - 1.30pm**  
**29 August 2024**  
Lunch provided



**Banyule Community Health**  
**21 Alamein Rd, West Heidelberg**

**Let's come together to:**



Network with other LLEW in the region



Take time out to pause



Find out how to enhance wellbeing



Develop solutions to challenges

LLEW Wellbeing Forum



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## What I Want My Peers To Know

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# LLEW Integration Forum



To build the confidence, capability, and connection of mental health and AOD LLEW in supporting people with co-occurring AOD and mental health needs, through peer-led sharing, practical integration examples, and cross-sector networking.

## Panel discussion:

- Lucy Schrader, AOD Peer Support Worker, Access Health and Community
- Simon Coleman, AOD Peer Support Worker, Access Health and Community
- Helene Lee, Family & Carer Peer Worker, North East Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect
- Fatima Muhammad, Peer Worker, Whittlesea Mental Health and Wellbeing Local
- Shaun Mulder, Senior Consumer Peer Worker, ICYMHS Early Psychosis Team, Eastern Health
- Amelia Berg, Fuse Initiatives Coordinator, Harm Reduction Victoria

# The Heart of the Resource



Change comes from the person – meet them where they are.



Behaviours are coping, not weakness – look beyond the substance.



Connection heals – trust, relationships, and community support recovery.



Recovery is unique – holistic, not one-size-fits-all.



Relapse is learning, not failure – respond with empathy.

**“Connection is the opposite of addiction” – Johann Hari**

# Practice tips

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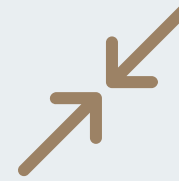
Listen with compassion  
– trauma-informed, non-  
judgmental.



Build trust slowly –  
safety, rapport, and  
collaboration first.



Focus on feelings, not  
beliefs – support  
through validating  
feelings.



Use harm reduction &  
strengths-based  
approaches – meet  
people where they are.

**“Slow down, take time to build the rapport, and take the scenic route –  
rapport and trust may be the shortcut.”**

# The Role of Language

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**Use non-stigmatising, respectful language – words matter**

Instead:

- Junkie, druggie, drug user, drug abuser
- Drug habit
- Suffering from addiction



Use:

- Person who uses or has used alcohol or other drugs
- Person with a dependence on drugs, person with a dependence on alcohol
- Person experiencing addiction

# Key messages

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Recovery is personal,  
relational, and holistic.

Connection, trust, and  
curiosity are central.

Harm reduction and  
non-judgmental spaces  
create opportunities  
for growth.

Peer workers plant  
seeds of hope, even if  
growth is slow.

Respect dignity of  
choice, not just “risk.”

**“Know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a human soul, be just another human soul.” – Carl Jung**

# Invitation to use the resource

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The resource is available on [Tuesdays with Nexus website.](#)



Use it in team discussions or supervision.



Reflect on “What do my peers want me to know?”

# Get in touch

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