

POLICY WEBINAR | NOVEMBER 2022

# Engaging Lived Experience in the Policy Making Process

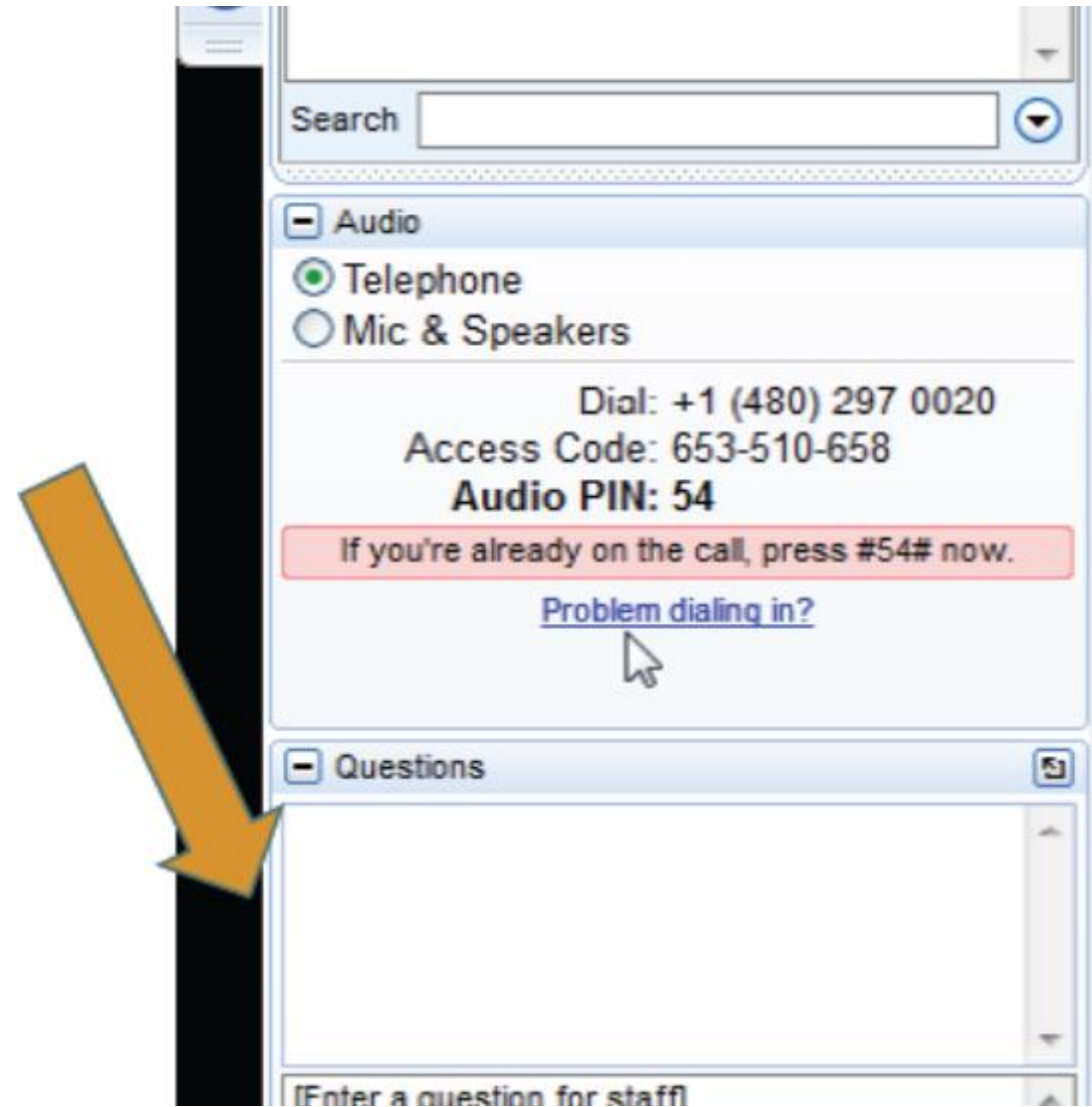
ALLIANCE  
*for* CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS



# Logistics

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- Webinar resources, including recording and supplemental materials, will be posted at <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/>
- All attendees are muted during webinar.
- Please submit questions using the “Questions” function on your GotoWebinar dashboard.



# Agenda

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Authentically engaging those with lived experience as subject matter experts in policy discussions & decision making

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Recommendations for authentic engagement

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# Presenters

- Taneil Franklin, Opportunity Youth Collaborative, Young Leader
  - Brisia Gutierrez, Alliance for Children's Rights
  - Jenn Rexroad, California Alliance of Caregivers
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## Advocacy Successes

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- *Emergency Childcare Bridge Program*
- *Emergency Caregiver Funding*
- *Caregiver Pandemic Assistance Payment*
- *Board of Supervisors Motions*



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## Lived Experience

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- Personal knowledge about the world **gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events** rather than through representations constructed by other people.



What role do you think those with lived experience should play in policy discussions?

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Authentically Engaging  
Subject Matter Experts in  
Policy Development & Decision Making





# Engagement





# Engaging Subject Matter Experts

# Engage Authentically

What are your expectations when policymakers engage you in discussion?

*“Policymakers should be intentional [and more personable] when speaking to foster youth. They should be listening and respectful. Understand that [lived experience] is much needed, so they should compensate [us] for our lived experience because we provide expertise.”*

# Engage Holistically

Which voices are not being heard?

*“Oftentimes, the ones that are directly affected by certain legislation or policies are the ones that are not a part of the decision making process. So I would argue that former and current foster youths' voices are not being heard.”*

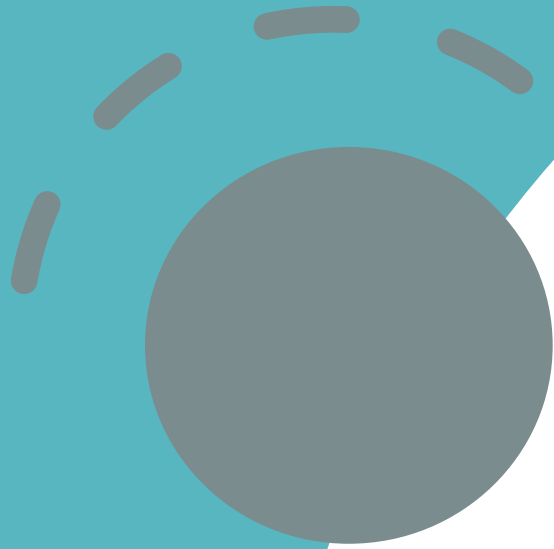




# Engage Consistently

What do you caution policymakers and advocates NOT to do when engaging with those with lived experience?

*“Do not tokenize them. What works for one will not work for all. Every single person impacted by the child welfare system should have their experience validated.”*



# Engage Equitably

“ . . . the consumers of potential policies know best what supports their need.”



# Ladder of Participation

## 8) Youth-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults

This happens when projects or programs are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared between youth and adults. These projects empower youth while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

## 6) Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth

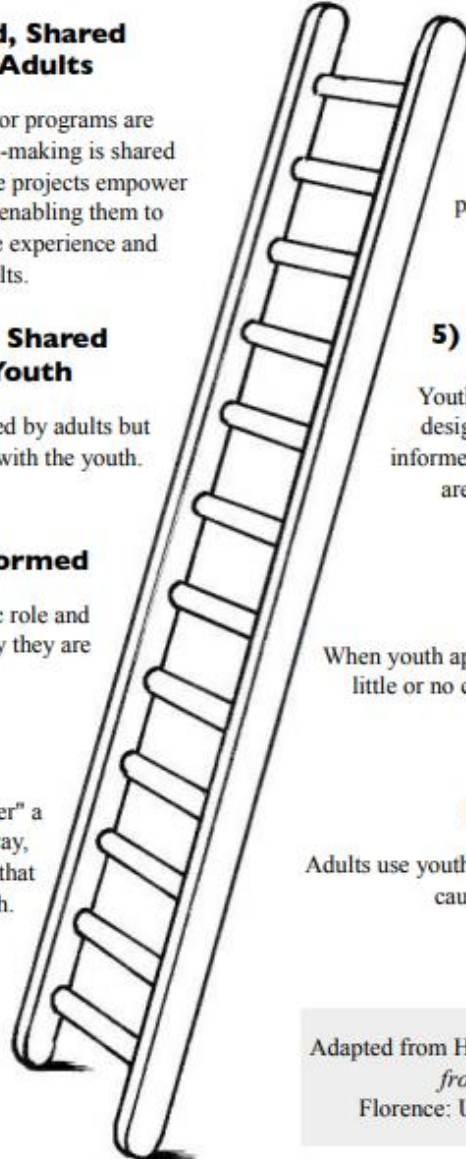
Projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the youth.

## 4) Assigned but Informed

Youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

## 2) Decoration

Youth are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth.



## 7) Youth-Initiated and Directed

Youth initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved in a strictly supportive role.

## 5) Consulted and Informed

Youth give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The youth are informed about how their input will be used and are told the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

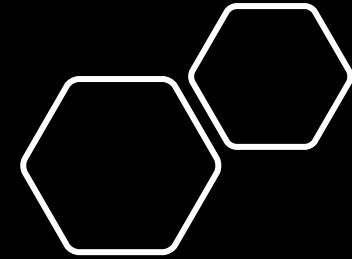
## 3) Tokenism


When youth appear to be given a voice but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.

## 1) Manipulation

Adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth.

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship*.  
Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre




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# Engage Genuinely

What advice would you provide to policymakers or advocates when engaging those with lived experience?

*“Use language that the person can understand. Explain why the person is needed and what they can contribute. They should feel valued and accepted.”*

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# Engage Honorably

What role do you think those with lived experience should play in policy discussions?

*“Every role! ... We should be asking people with lived experience HOW to best communicate/interact with those currently in care and actively seek out their input.”*

# Authentic Engagement Recommendations

# Engagement Recommendations

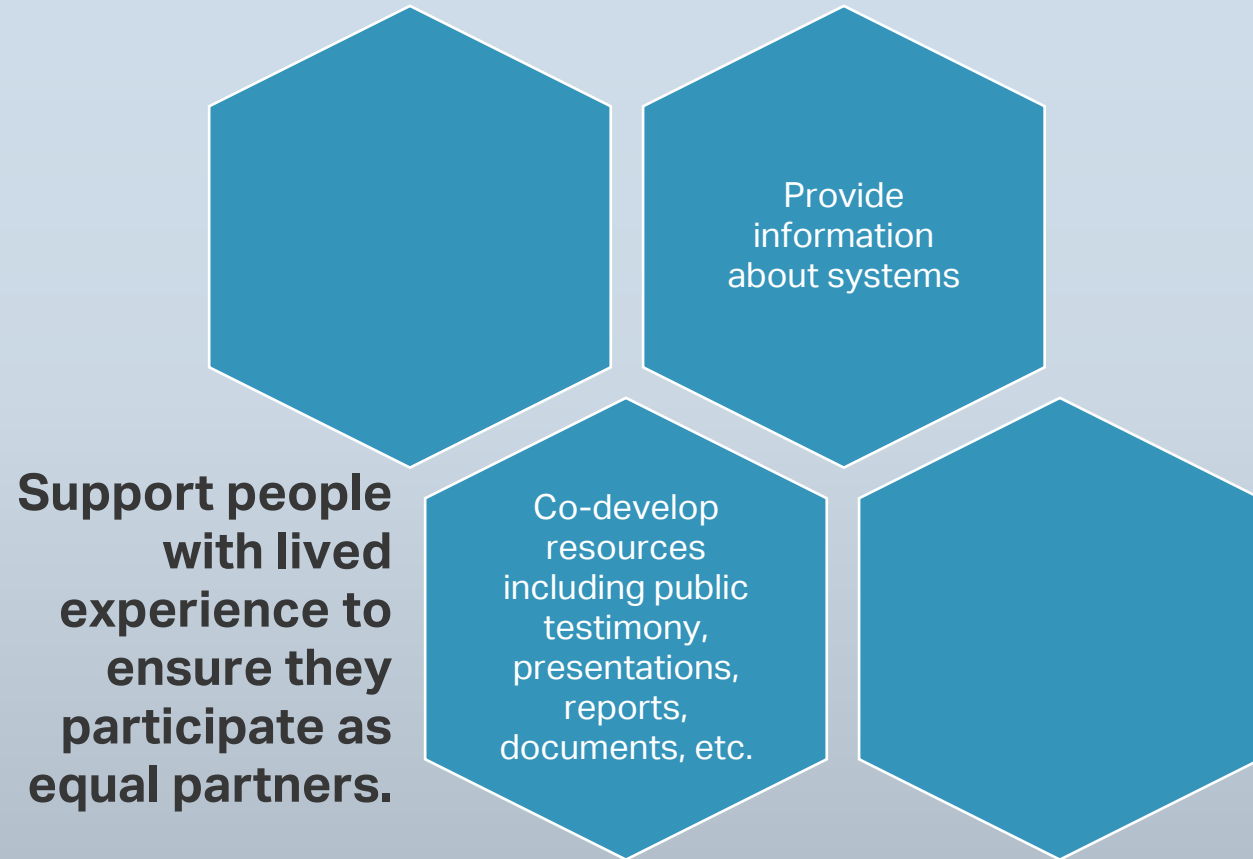
- **Identify goal(s) and anticipated outcome(s).**
- **Identify how you will use information/insights** from people with lived experience to achieve goal(s).
- **Identify and recruit community members** impacted by the issue.
  - **Consider how issues of race, culture, class, LGBTQIA+ identity, etc. may impact engagement** and be thoughtful in selecting the individual to perform outreach.
  - **Consider reaching out to service providers, advocacy organizations, etc.**
  - **Clearly communicate expectations:** goals, time commitment, processes, etc.

# Engagement Recommendations

- **Use a variety of methods to connect** (small groups, surveys, listening sessions, one-on-one interviews) **and acknowledge and resolve barriers to connection** (access to internet, available resources to attend meetings, etc.).



# Engagement Recommendations





# Engagement Recommendations

*Jointly identify the issues  
and co-design solutions.*

## Engagement Recommendations

**Offer fair compensation** for time and knowledge.

**Periodically and collaboratively re-evaluate roles, responsibilities, and continued engagement.**

**Support growth of skills** including facilitating meetings, public speaking, etc.

A modern office interior with large windows, glass partitions, and a round table with chairs in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

What advice would you offer to policymakers or advocates when engaging those with lived experience?



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**THANK  
YOU**



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