

AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT WITH LIVING EXPERIENCE

Living Experts Framework

The Center has developed an internal best-practice model rooted in the Living Experts framework, designed to strengthen continuity of care across child welfare and related service systems. This model centers living experience as expertise and provides a foundation for authentic engagement, organizational alignment, and system-wide impact.

This training series positions authentic engagement as a foundational approach to working with youth and families impacted by the child welfare system. Grounded in living experience, evidence-informed practices, and systems-level insight, each session equips professionals with practical tools to strengthen relationships, elevate living experts' voice, and support permanency efforts.

This series also includes an interactive, application-based learning environment where participants engage in real-world problem-solving. Through guided activities, peer learning, and reflection, attendees co-create strategies tailored to their organizational context.

The training is designed for multiple tiers within an organization, including executive leadership, direct service providers, and individuals with living experience.

We offer flexible training options designed to meet the unique needs of your organization. Trainings can be selected individually, combined or delivered as a comprehensive package for a full learning series for deeper skill-building and application. Additionally, all trainings can be customized and tailored to align with your organization's specific priorities, staff roles, and areas of focus, ensuring the content is relevant, practical, and directly applicable to your team's work.

Who Should Attend:

- Agencies serving youth and families (SSCCs, DFPS, CPA's)
- Adoption and permanency and staff
- Leadership teams and program directors
- Foster care providers and case managers
- Organizations interested in building or strengthening youth or parent advisory boards
- Frontline staff working with living experts

Delivery Options:

- 60–90 minute individual trainings
- Half-day or full-day workshops
- Multi-session training series
- In-person or virtual options
- Customized training based on organizational needs

Core Training Focus:

Authentic Engagement: Centering Voice, Choice, and Agency

In all the trainings participants will:

- Describe core principles that honor identity, support autonomy, and strengthen relational safety
- Learn best practices in decision-making and address hesitancy or resistance.
- Build strategies that foster connection, belonging, and trust
- Apply shared language and practical approaches that consistently center the voices of living experience.



Training Offerings

Authentic Conversations: *Supporting Youth in Adoption Discussions*

This training equips professionals with the knowledge and skills to engage youth in meaningful, developmentally appropriate conversations about adoption. Participants will learn how to center youth voice, build trust, and navigate complex emotions while supporting permanency outcomes.

Objectives:

- Understand the role of authentic engagement in adoption conversations
- Initiate and sustain honest, youth-centered discussions
- Apply trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate communication strategies
- Support youth in expressing preferences, boundaries, and expectations
- Guide families in maintaining open, ongoing dialogue

From Voice to Impact: *Building Effective Youth Advisory Structures*

This training focuses on designing and sustaining youth advisory structures that move beyond tokenism. Participants will learn how to engage youth as true partners in decision-making, program design, and system improvement. Participants will explore how to design and sustain meaningful youth advisory structures, including the adaptation of foster youth clubs and advisory structures.

Objectives:

- Understand the purpose and impact of youth advisory boards
- Differentiate between tokenism and authentic engagement
- Learn strategies to recruit, engage, and retain youth participants
- Apply frameworks for integrating youth voice into decision-making
- Explore approaches to compensating and valuing living experience

The Center Policy Framework: *Partnering with LEX in Practice*

This training focuses on six core policies developed and implemented by The Center to effectively integrate living experience into programs, policy, and practice. Participants will learn how to ethically engage, support, and partner with living experts using structured, best-practice. The training is anchored in the following **key pillars**:

- Safety & Strategic Sharing
- Co-Training with Living Experts
- Conference Engagement
- Engagement and Leadership Development
- Supporting Living Expert Employees
- Compensation and Aftercare

Objectives:

- Understand the six core policy areas developed by The Center to support the integration of living experience into practice
- Identify ethical approaches to engaging, compensating, and partnering with living experts
- Apply strategies that promote safety, strategic sharing, and meaningful collaboration
- Explore practical methods for embedding LEX across roles, including co-training, leadership development, and workforce integration

Best Practice Lab: *Designing Solutions Through Authentic Engagement*

This interactive, application-based workshop moves beyond learning into active design and implementation. Participants work collaboratively to apply authentic engagement principles to their own organizational challenges and build or refine internal policies, practices, and strategies tailored to their unique context. This lab is highly customizable and can be modified to support organizations in developing solutions that align with their structure, population, and goals.

Key distinction: This is a hands-on lab where organizations begin to build their own policies, using The Center's framework as a guide.

Objectives:

- Apply engagement principles to current practice challenges
- Identify gaps in services related to supporting those with living experience
- Co-create innovative solutions
- Explore cross-sector strategies for improving programs
- Develop actionable implementation steps