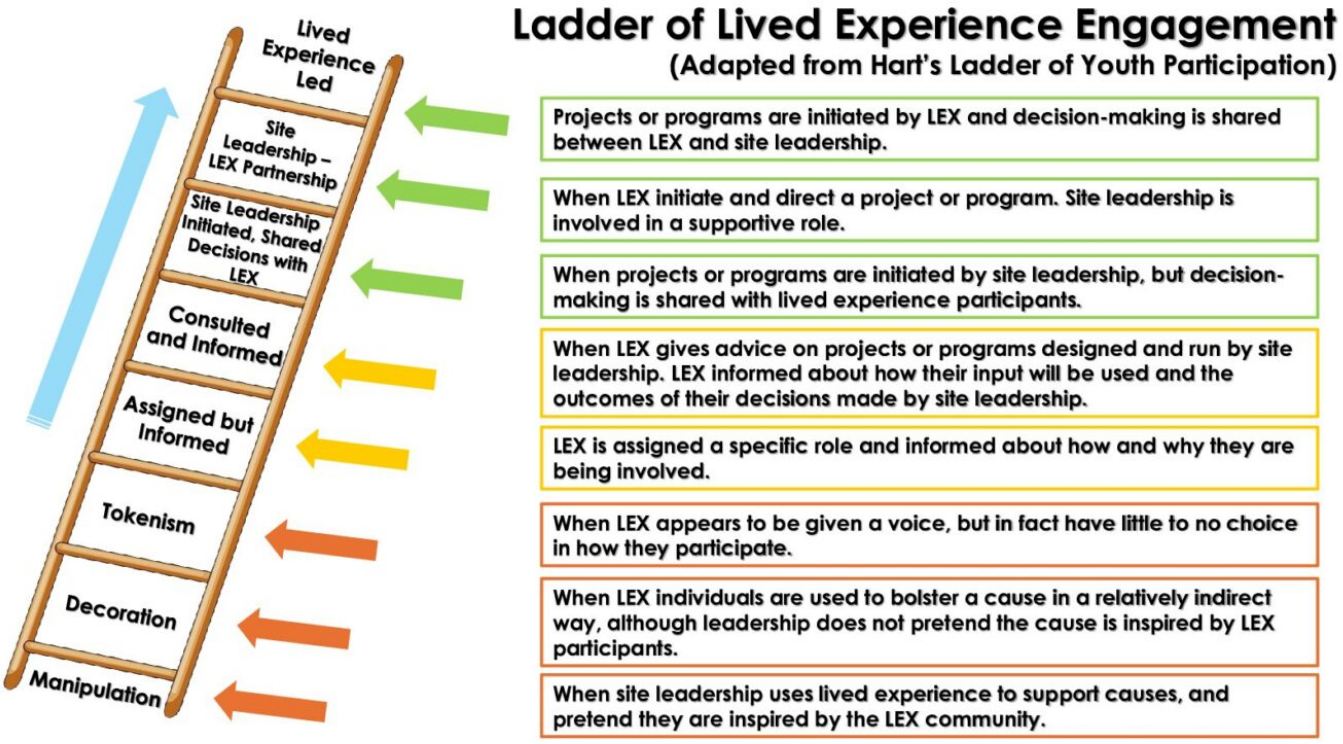
Ladder of Lived Experience Engagement (Adapted from Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation)

Engagement of Lived Experience · https://bridges4mentalhealth.org/hub/youth-family-engagement/ladder/

Ladder of Lived Experience Engagement (Adapted from Hart’s Ladder of Youth Participation)

The document explains levels of lived experience (LEX) engagement in projects, from initiation to tokenism, emphasizing decision-making roles.

- Projects initiated by LEX involve shared decision-making, with site leadership in a supportive role, or LEX leading with site support.
- When site leadership initiates projects, decision-making may be shared with lived experience participants.
- LEX provides advice on projects designed by site leadership, with input shared but outcomes decided by leadership.
- LEX roles can be defined or superficial; sometimes LEX is informed or given a voice without genuine influence.
- LEX may be used to support causes indirectly, with leadership claiming inspiration or using LEX for their support without true involvement.


Ladder of Lived Experience Engagement
(Adapted from Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation)
Lived Experience Led
Site Leadership – LEX Partnership
Site Leadership Initiated, Shared Decisions with LEX
Consulted and Informed
Assigned but Informed
Tokenism
Decoration
Manipulation
Projects or programs are initiated by LEX and decision-making is shared between LEX and site leadership.
When LEX initiate and direct a project or program. Site leadership is involved in a supportive role.
When projects or programs are initiated by site leadership, but decision-making is shared with lived experience participants.
When LEX gives advice on projects or programs designed and run by site leadership. LEX informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of their decisions made by site leadership.
LEX is assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.
When LEX appears to be given a voice, but in fact have little to no choice in how they participate.
When LEX individuals are used to bolster a cause in a relatively indirect way, although leadership does not pretend the cause is inspired by LEX participants.
When site leadership uses lived experience to support causes, and pretend they are inspired by the LEX community.

Learn more