



This report summarises the end of project feedback from Justlife's two peer research teams, spotlighting the learning, growth, challenges, & value of this work

The data was gathered through exit questionnaires & interviews with our peer researchers

Throughout this report, direct quotes from the peer researchers appear in bubbles. We have been given permission to use these throughout!



"I feel the work we have done is valuable; that we have contributed to real social change in a way that couldn't be done in other spaces. Being a part of the project has been an privilege."

"My Justlife Peer Research Project work was a big part of me embracing my past homeless self!"

"The space was a very good experience for me, it was something new & exciting. I felt a bit nervous at the beginning as I didn't know what to expect, but afterwards I felt proud of what we've done as a group."

What aspects of the project were most enjoyable & useful?

Learning practical, high level research skills

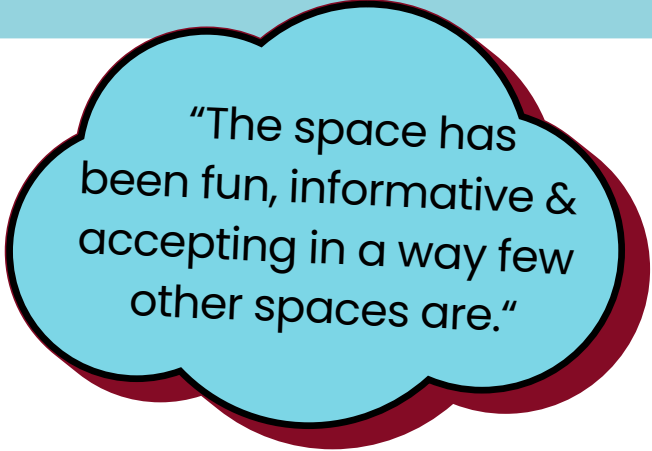
Theoretical learning about research design & methodologies, applying new skills in practice (designing questions, collecting data); & interpersonal skills

People feeling validated & valued, with their lived experience being taken seriously

Recognition of lived experience as a legitimate contribution to research was described as validating, & led to people feeling empowered by seeing the value of their perspectives in a formal setting - especially when combined with the opportunity to influence policy & decision making.

Group connection, team experience & personal growth

Collaboration & camaraderie was cited throughout the feedback - as well as the meaning & fun of being part of a team. The feeling of engaging in meaningful discussions with others who share perspectives was deeply valued & useful for peers; as was navigating collaboration during disagreements or points of difference.



"The space has been fun, informative & accepting in a way few other spaces are."

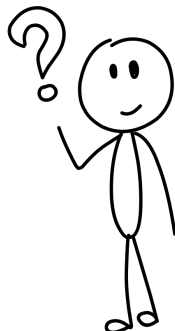
What aspects of the project were most enjoyable and useful?

Creating & delivering impact

Peer researchers described the impact of their research on policy making & council processes as key to their enjoyment of the project; particularly presenting their findings in person to power holders & homelessness system stakeholders.

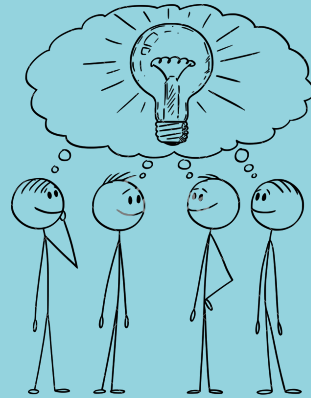
People's connection to Justlife and our purpose

Peer researchers had positive feelings towards Justlife as a whole. One person expressed that their trust in Justlife is what motivated them to join the project. People expressed pride in the project's achievements & that the way Justlife facilitators held the space promoted diversity, inclusion, fun & a sense of belonging.



"At the start I didn't know what to expect or if I had anything to contribute to the project, but I took the leap of faith because I trust justlife. I'm so glad I did because its been a great project to be a part of. Its confirmed to us that the conditions in TA do have an impact on a persons health, & now we have a blog that gives a voice to those that have been affected, and it's being heard."

What skills did you develop?



"I have found being involved with Justlife's peer research project very rewarding. I've learned new skills, met wonderful people & had a space where I felt able to learn & share learnings with others as equals."

RESEARCH DESIGN & SKILLS

- Understanding methods & methodology
- How to design research
- Learning about qualitative & quantitative approaches
- Using creative methodologies like "river of life"
- Understanding policies
- Data gathering
- Data analysis

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

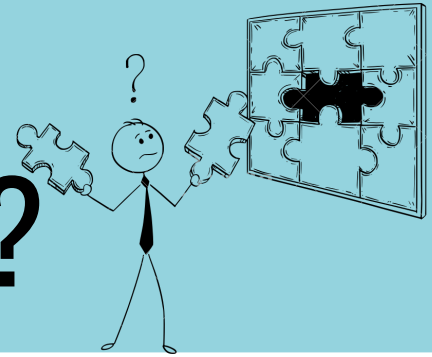
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Active listening & respectful dialogue
- Group process
- Public speaking
- Writing styles for different audiences: blogs, presentations, report writing

CRITICAL & ETHICAL THINKING

- Understanding intersectionality in research
- Ethics
- Personal bias & power
- None-extractive research
- Insider/outsider perspectives

Do you think will these skills be transferable?
6 yes, 1 maybe

What challenges did you experience in this role (1)?



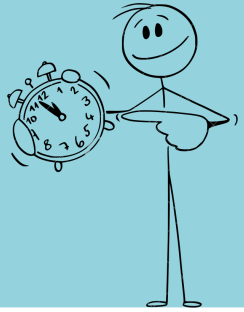
Emotional labour, impact of the content & lived experience work

Sensitive or triggering content was challenging at times. Peer researchers spoke of the emotional labour of preparing for their own emotional responses or potentially being triggered by content. Feedback indicated that peers saw this as something that's "inevitable" in the role, but that it could be a struggle to remain neutral or detached. The feedback given on this did not indicate that there was anything more the facilitators could or should be doing to help with this, with one peer saying it was handled well by the team, but that project participants & facilitators being prepared for this is key.

One peer researcher discussed the challenge of how people reacted to the notion of a "peer" or person with lived experience of homelessness. In terms of power dynamics, sometimes it felt like peer research was seen as "less than" than other forms of research by some professionals or academics, particularly those not engaged in community sector led peer research.

Data analysis

Described as difficult, time consuming, & inefficient - some felt the data analysis program used was potentially more challenging for neurodivergent individuals.



What challenges did you experience in this role (2)?

Time structuring & workload sharing

Time presented a challenge throughout the project. Due to the ad-hoc nature of the project, hours couldn't be banked for later use. A desire for more adaptable scheduling to suit the needs of the workload was expressed. One peer suggested that checking in with the group about issues with timing and scheduling throughout the project, rather than just at the start, would ensure the time & day of the regular meetings would continue to suit everyone as the project progressed.

Lack of representation from diverse ethnic & racialised backgrounds

Peer researchers highlighted a lack of diversity in the group in terms of ethnic representation, & suggested Justlife as a whole might consider developing more inclusive recruitment processes going forward.

"At some point of the research, we were in doubt of what results we would get at the end, but as a group we agreed we'd done what we aimed for."

A CULTURE OF RESPONSIVENESS & CARE WAS NOTED

Peers spoke very positively about Justlife's openness to learning & adapting, suggesting that the organisation is already on the right track in how it approaches accessibility. There were initial difficulties finding an accessible venue for everyone, though this was eventually resolved when the Justlife Hub was opened!

Several peers said they experienced no accessibility issues, or highlighted how issues they had raised had been resolved quickly, suggesting that most individual needs were met.

Accessibility

What worked well?



Hybrid meetings

In group 2, peers were able to participate through hybrid meetings where they might not otherwise due to accessibility needs.

Collaborative approach

Peers noted that facilitators worked through the issues collaboratively in the sessions & in consultation with peers.

Culture of psychological safety & listening

It was described as a "safe" environment to talk about access needs, & peers trusted that issues would be addressed when they arose; stating this responsiveness was key, given that accessibility needs can change day to day.

Would you consider being involved in future projects with Justlife & why?

6/6
said
yes

Positive relationships & trust in facilitators

Peer researchers really valued the Justlife team, particularly the facilitators of the project, praising their professionalism, empathy, & ability to create a safe, respectful environment.

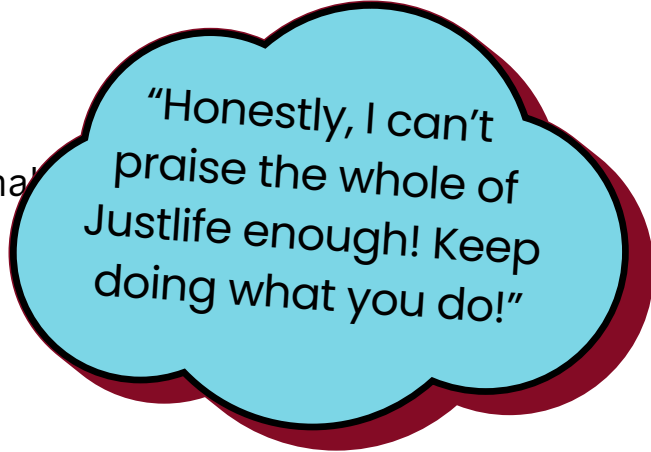
Belief in the purpose & values of the work

Peer researchers expressed feeling aligned with Justlife's values & mission to make change, & were motivated by meaningful, purpose driven work.

Personal growth & confidence building

Peer researchers gained confidence, learned new skills, & talked about feeling improvements in their mental health and anxiety.

A number of peer researchers (including 2 who left before the end of this project, who fed back separately) are actively moving away from lived experience participation, some saying this is in part due to personal development during this project. They feedback that this was positive for them, & that while they wouldn't work with us again in a participatory way, they would engage with Justlife for any support appropriate to their situation or to volunteer with other projects.



"Honestly, I can't praise the whole of Justlife enough! Keep doing what you do!"

WE'RE COMMITTED TO BEING
LED BY LIVED EXPERIENCE IN
IMPROVING OUR
APPROACHES, POLICIES, &
WAYS OF WORKING.

THE FEEDBACK & LEARNING
IN THIS REPORT HAS
ALREADY HAD AN IMPACT
ON HOW WE WORK AS A
TEAM & ORGANISATION.

HERE'S AN OVERVIEW OF
HOW WE'VE STARTED TO
EMBED THE LEARNING FROM
THIS FEEDBACK INTO
JUSTLIFE - ACROSS THE
ORGANISATION, &
SPECIFICALLY IN THE
**PARTICIPATION & LIVED
EXPERIENCE TEAM &
CAMPAIGNS & SOCIAL
CHANGE TEAM** (THE TEAMS
WHO HOSTED THE PEER
RESEARCH PROJECT)

Justlife's Response: Across the Organisation

Accessibility & inclusion

Peer research output about the 5 forms of accessibility has shaped the Justlife wide DEI policy, ethical framework, & is informing the design of our upcoming trauma-informed working group. It now underpins all of our participatory practice.

Anti-racism in co-production

We're forming a cross-team anti-racism working group bringing together the teams who conduct & lead on the participatory & co-production projects in Justlife: Participation & Lived Experience, Common Ambition, & the Network Teams. This working group will explore how co-produced & participatory work at Justlife can be actively anti-racist. This includes reviewing recruitment practices to ensure they are more culturally aware & inclusive, & embedding anti-racist principles into the foundations of how we design & deliver collaborative projects.

Justlife's Response: Participation & Lived Experience, & Campaigns & Social Change Teams

Facilitation & relational practice

We're deepening our commitment to relational, liberatory facilitation. This learning will be explored in more detail following upcoming facilitator research report; where Justlife facilitators were interviewed & shared their insights about why a reflective, facilitatory approach is important.

Adapting data analysis

We've moved away from inaccessible data analysis software, choosing more flexible, manual analysis methods in current community research projects to ensure greater inclusion and shared ownership.

Reducing emotional labour

In our current community research, we're balancing challenging content with solution-focused sessions. Emotional workload is shared between peers and staff, creating space for care and reflection.