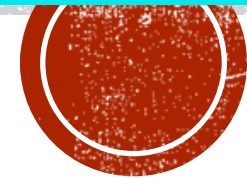


# INCLUSION OF PWLE IN THE RESEARCH SECTOR

COMMUNITY UPDATE ON HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH

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# PURPOSE & GOALS



- **Put community voices at the centre** – make sure the questions we ask, the ways we gather information, and the results we share reflect what community members actually live through
- **Make research matter to the people it's about** – create findings that community organizations and PWLE can actually use to make real changes in neighborhoods and programs
- **Share decision-making power** – move away from “research on” communities toward “research with” communities, where people’s stories carry the same weight as data
- **Connect what we learn to what we do** – turn research into practical tools, resources, and actions that address the real needs people with lived experience face every day
- **Advance fairness and belonging** – push back against who traditionally gets heard in research and make room for the perspectives of those most impacted



# CHALLENGES & BARRIERS



- **Being invited but not truly heard** – community members may be asked to attend meetings or share stories, but have no real influence on what happens next
- **Unequal footing** – institutional structures can treat community knowledge as less valid than academic expertise, making it hard for community folks to feel their contributions matter
- **Emotional safety when sharing personal stories** – asking people to revisit difficult experiences without proper supports in place can cause real harm
- **Practical barriers to showing up** – without fair pay, childcare, transportation help, and flexible scheduling, many community members simply cannot participate
- **Systems that weren't built for this** – ethics review processes, grant timelines, and publishing expectations often don't leave room for the slower, relationship-based work community partnerships require



# BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS



**Build trust before building projects** – take time to get to know each other, be transparent about goals, and set the agenda together with community organizations and PWLE



**Pay people fairly for their time and expertise** – offer honoraria, cover costs, and treat community contributions as skilled work, not free labour



**Be thoughtful about how people share their stories** – provide emotional supports, flexible ways to participate, and clear boundaries so community members feel safe



**Keep checking in along the way** – regularly ask community partners if the process feels fair, inclusive, and meaningful – and be willing to change course



**Share the credit and the benefits** – co-present findings, name community partners as collaborators, and make sure the communities who shaped the work benefit from it



# MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



*When community members and PWLE are part of the research from the start, the knowledge we create is stronger, fairer, and more likely to lead to real change.*

## ***Key Takeaways***

- *Lived experience is not a nice-to-have – it is essential to research that serves communities well*
- *Meaningful inclusion requires shared power, fair compensation, and emotional safety*
- *The strongest research happens when community organizations and researchers walk side by side*
- *Every community member who contributes their story deserves to see it honored in the outcomes*

