

LISTENING TO **CLIENTS** TO
ADVANCE OUR MISSION



Presented by Leanne Lewis & Chris Middendorp

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVE

- To stimulate discussion about the value of listening to client voices and to consider some of the challenges involved.
- To question whether this is an effective mechanism for advancing our mission – organisation or more broadly.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



- Presentation
 - SHM experience
 - Client participation
- 3 x 15 min discussion groups
 - 10 minute small group
 - 5 minutes – feedback to whole group
- Close – client voices

References:

www.feantsa.org

www.homeground.org.au/assets/cpkit_full.pdf

SHM CLIENT REPRESENTATIVE GROUP



- Sacred Heart Mission grew out of the community work of Father Ernie Smith in 1982.
- The church in action.
- Practical support and a welcoming community for those who are marginalized by poverty and homelessness.
- Listening to client stories and feedback was important from the start.

INVOLVING CLIENTS



- Diverse groups don't always speak with the same voice.
- Client contributions can be varied – media, public speaking, job interviews, surveying others, research, reviewing policy, providing feedback, listening to other clients.

LISTENING TO CLIENTS



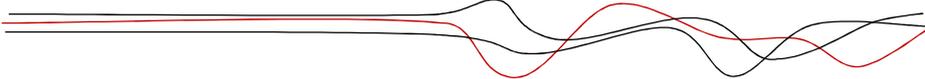
- How can we better involve clients in our work?
- How do we best listen? It's not always obvious.
- Some communities are complex and may not share experiences.

CLIENT VOICES & THE EXPERIENCES OF SHM



- It can be expensive to do well
- Training and support are vital
- There may be tensions and contradictions
- Not all feedback is welcome
- Whose voices are not heard?

CLIENT PARTICIPATION



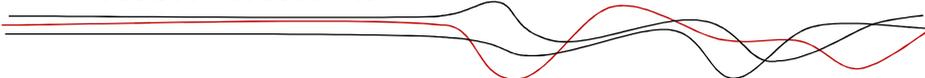
- Underpinned by the belief that consulting with service users results in better service provision
- Degrees of participation
 - Client feedback processes
 - Consultation
 - Responsibility for decision making – e.g. recruitment
 - Board membership
 - Involvement in research
 - Having a role in services provision – e.g. peer support

MAKING THE **MOST** OF CLIENT PARTICIPATION



- **Consider aims and motives**
 - Rights based approach
 - Benefits for the clients
 - Client (customer) feedback
 - Compliance, funding requirement
- **Develop a participation strategy or action plan**
- **Execute the plan**
- **Evaluate**

THE **IMPORTANCE** OF PARTICIPATION



The Principle of Respect for Human Dignity

- Promotes the dignity, diversity and value of the individual

The Principle of Solidarity

- Assisting others who have a shared experience

The Principle of Association

- Fulfills the need for connection with others

RAISING COMMUNITY AWARENESS



The Principle of Subsidiarity

- The opportunity for clients to participate in decisions that affect them

The Principle of Common Good

- Raises community awareness through the sharing of their experience

The Principle of Participation

- Helps to build stronger communities

GROUP DISCUSSION ONE



- What motivates your organisation to listen to client voices?
- Whose voices are missed or are hardest to capture?
- How can you ensure that the voices of diverse groups are captured?

**GROUP
DISCUSSION TWO**



- What are some of the barriers and challenges involved in capturing client voices?
- What does true participation look like?
- Is token participation worse than no participation at all?

**GROUP DISCUSSION
THREE**



- How can we be sure that listening to our clients really does advance our Mission?
- How can we demonstrate this?
- Client participation takes time and resources – is it worth all the effort?

CLIENT VOICES

