



The Voices of Lived Experience

5 ways to engage people who live in
poverty in your work

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5 ways to engage

Definition of Poverty

In our own words...

“Lack of availability and access to resources to meet the basic needs “

“When you would not be able to do the things in life that you want to do because of your limited financial resources leaves you stressed out, and poor health. You lose your focus what you’re going to do for your future planning. When you’re in poverty, you have to deal with it day to day.”

“the financial inability to provide one’s self with the basic necessities of life, affordable decent housing where one wishes to live, decent healthy food for the month long, seasonal affordable decent clothing and footwear, transportation for the month, the ability to go out at least once a month to a movie and dinner.”

“Poverty is the difference between ‘existence’ and ‘life’!”

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1. Provide Training

Examples of training that were made available in Hamilton to our members:

- Speakers bureau (included a media boot camp on how to write letters to the editor and handle interviews)
(<http://hamiltonpoverty.ca/hamilton-has-a-history-of-pulling-together/>)
- Neighbourhood Leadership Institute
(<https://tinyurl.com/k7tqq15>)
- Mohawk City School
(<https://tinyurl.com/nx5qekn>)
- McMaster Discovery Program
(<https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/mcmaster-discovery-program/>)
- Jack Layton Leadership Course
(<http://www.ryerson.ca/sociology/program/JACKLAYTONLEAD/>)

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2. Develop Social Inclusion Policy

- What would need to be included:
 - Honorariums
 - Daycare
 - Transit (bus tickets/taxi)
 - Other ideas
- Opportunities – to lead or co-lead projects/work groups
- HRPR's Social Inclusion Policy: www.hamiltonpoverty.ca

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3. Establish a Speakers Bureau

- Membership - How we became members (applications)
- Training – bringing in the experts
- Social Inclusion – honorariums, daycare, transit, hot lunches
- What you like most about being a member
- What is the most challenging

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What the members said

About our Speakers Bureau Experience...

“Gave me courage to raise my voice on issues that our community is facing”

“Being able to go out and speak to various groups about the truth around poverty to dispel the myths that surround us.”

“as the members bond with each other they morph into a mutual support network ”

Reminders...

“in its early days work with your group to set mutually agreed upon boundaries around conduct and confidentiality”

“personal development of the members on topics like anger management, cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution, networking”

“discuss what you expect from the members and ask participants about their expectations”



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4. Provide Alternative methods of expression

- Video production (Speakers bureau)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjXcOeoyx0Q&feature=youtu.be>

- Theatre (McMaster project)
- Art Evaluation (McMaster students)

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5. Focus on the Importance of Shifting Attitudes

- help to bust the myths, educate, and shift attitudes about who lives in poverty
- Empower the person with lived experience – use their own voice to let people know they are the experts
- find ways to showcase their talents (board positions, committee chair, project coordinator, network with other groups working on poverty-related issues such as housing, food insecurity, social assistance reform, etc)



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