

Lived Experience Advisory Network

*Amplifying lived expertise to improve how we prevent and respond to domestic,
family and sexual violence in South Australia.*

Member Handbook

Acknowledgement of Country

Embolden acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands across South Australia.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and we are committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the shared effort to end domestic, family and sexual violence.



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Acknowledgement of DFSV Lived Experience

Embolden acknowledges the strength, courage and resilience of people with a lived and/or living experience of domestic, family and/or sexual violence.

We honour those who have not survived and pay our respects to the families, communities and loved ones who continue to carry that loss.

We recognise the importance of lived experience voices and are committed to ensuring that lived expertise meaningfully informs our collective efforts to end domestic, family and sexual violence.

Welcome to the South Australia Lived Experience Advisory Network (LEAN)

The LEAN brings together South Australian residents aged 18 and over who have a lived experience of domestic/intimate partner violence, family violence and/or sexual violence.

The LEAN is a key driver for embedding domestic, family and sexual violence lived expertise into the work of the SA Government and the domestic, family and sexual violence services sector more broadly.

We recognise that for many people, sharing their lived experience in advocating for system change is an important part of their healing and recovery from violence.

You and your fellow members bring a broad range of experiences, identities, backgrounds, cultures and perspectives. Through this diversity of representation, the LEAN has the ability to shape services and policies that better meet the needs of all South Australians at risk of, experiencing, or recovering from violence.

The LEAN is supported by Embolden, the peak body for specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services in South Australia. Embolden provides the coordination and support needed to ensure the engagements you participate in are ethical, trauma-informed and inclusive.

Your participation in the LEAN is entirely voluntary, and you are able to pause or discontinue your participation at any time. Just let us know.

Our commitment is to create “safe enough” spaces for you to feel respected, supported and empowered to contribute to the change you want to see. We also recognise that engaging in this work can bring up strong emotions at times, and we encourage you to prioritise your wellbeing and engage in ways that feel safe and manageable for you.

This handbook outlines how the LEAN will function and provides information on what to expect as a member.

We feel privileged to do this work with you and we applaud your courage and desire to drive positive social change that will make a difference for your fellow South Australians.

With care,

The Embolden Team

What you can expect as a member of the LEAN

What does the LEAN do?

The LEAN is where you can:	The LEAN is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contribute your knowledge, insights and expertise by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ responding to surveys ○ providing feedback on policies ○ participating in facilitated engagement sessions, either in person or online – focus groups, workshops or interviews ✓ Influence the change you think is needed in the areas you choose to participate in ✓ Be kept up to date on issues relating to domestic, family and sexual violence and other lived experience opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ a counselling and/or crisis support service ✗ an avenue for individual advocacy outside of specific LEAN engagement opportunities ✗ a decision-making body ✗ an advocacy mentoring service ✗ a networking group with regular in-person meetings <p>A list of support services is provided at the end of this document.</p>

How will I be involved?

The main function of the LEAN is for people with lived experience to directly inform the reform of systems and services, in line with the accepted recommendations from SA's Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.

You will be invited to contribute lived experience insights, perspectives and feedback through structured engagement activities, such as surveys, emails or focus groups.

Participation is voluntary and you always have autonomy, agency and choice regarding your involvement.

How will Embolden communicate with me?

We will communicate with you in three key ways;

1. Sharing an engagement opportunity and inviting expressions of interest via email;
2. Sending you an e-newsletter every two months giving updates on work the LEAN has contributed to and any upcoming opportunities; and
3. Hosting online information sessions that aim to support you in your role as a LEAN member. These sessions will usually involve a guest speaker and are interactive, with speakers responding to questions from members.

How will I be engaged?

Engagement opportunities most often come through State Government agencies but may also come through Embolden or other organisations that are preventing or responding to domestic, family and/or sexual violence.

When these agencies and organisations contact Embolden, we will work with them to develop a clear scope for the potential engagement and understand whether they wish to engage the entire LEAN or a specific group of members (for example, Aboriginal people or people living with disability). We will then send the relevant groups an email clearly outlining information including;

- detailed engagement opportunity information
- if the opportunity is paid and the details
- logistics (date/time, location, preparation etc)
- how to opt in and express your interest in participating

Will I be paid for my lived experience contribution?

Membership and participation in the LEAN is unpaid unless specified otherwise. Every engagement opportunity sent to the LEAN will convey whether you will be paid and the rate of pay.

As a general guide, your time to complete a survey, reply to an email or attend an information session is unpaid, whereas your time to take part in an interview, focus group or workshop (online or in-person) will be paid – including preparation time. For these engagements your out-of-pocket expenses (like car parking or public transport) will also be reimbursed. Childcare and any other requirements can be discussed in relation to each engagement. Further details of payment arrangements can be found in this [Payment Information](#) document.

How will I be matched to an activity?

As interviews, focus groups and workshops will have limited spaces we will undertake a matching process, with consideration of:

- Whether the engagement is focused on a particular group of LEAN members (e.g. LGBTIQA+ people, migrants and refugees)
- The areas of interest you identified on your expression of interest to join the LEAN
- Diversity of representation
- Equity in participation opportunities across the LEAN over time
- Your individual capacity/readiness to engage in a particular topic in a group setting

You will be advised by email whether or not you have been matched with a particular engagement opportunity.

What happens once I am matched to participate in an activity?

As a participant in a particular activity, we will provide all the information you need. We will check with you about safety, support and dietary requirements. Some activities may require pre-reading and a pre-engagement meeting. You will be paid for this time. This pre-meeting is to connect with/meet other participants and ask any questions about the engagement.

If you don't feel comfortable in a group setting, let us know and where possible we will work out an alternative that suits you.

What if I need support to help me fully participate in an activity?

You may require specific supports to fully participate in an engagement opportunity, including but not limited to;

- access needs relating to disability and/or neurodivergence
- cultural safety needs
- translator - including Auslan
- support worker attendance

If you express interest in participating in an activity, you can advise us at that point of any support needs. If matched to participate we will work with you and your support person as needed.

We recognise that discussing domestic, family and sexual violence, and experiences of harm or safety, may bring up strong feelings. Please take part in a way that feels safe and

right for you and consider the supports you may want around you during or after the session.

What are my rights?

As a LEAN member you have the right to:

- choose whether or not to participate in an activity
- decide how much you share about your experience/s
- decline questions or discussions
- take breaks from participation
- withdraw from the LEAN at any time

You are also welcome to raise feedback, concerns or questions about the LEAN (refer to page 10 for info on feedback, complaints and compliments).

Do I need to consent to participate in engagements?

Yes. Each time you express interest for an engagement you will be asked to complete a brief activity consent form. To provide informed consent you will have received and understood detailed information about the engagement, including who will receive your input and how it will be used.

You may wish to decline an engagement if you do not have a specific lived experience on the subject matter of that engagement (for example, participating in an activity that might be about sexual violence if you have not experienced sexual violence).

What can I expect in an engagement activity?

LEAN engagement sessions may take place online or in person. You will receive information ahead of time, including an agenda and session details, presenter bios, relevant materials and any pre-reading to help you prepare.

Online sessions are usually held via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. You will be sent a meeting link and any supporting information in advance. In-person sessions will include similar preparation, along with details about the location and logistics.

Sessions will be facilitated and a social worker/counsellor will be present at all sessions to provide support and breaks will be scheduled.

All facilitators are provided with a facilitation guide to support safe, respectful and trauma-informed discussions.

Some sessions may be recorded or transcribed with the consent of participants, with clear information provided on safeguards in place to protect privacy.

Written records or transcripts will be de-identified and securely stored by Embolden. Additionally, written records of engagements will be sent to the participants for their review, to ensure that records accurately reflect participants' contributions.

Will I get feedback on the outcome of the activity I participated in?

Yes, we are committed to ensuring that LEAN members are provided with information on how engagement contributions are used. We will keep you up to date on any outcomes and impacts over time from your collaborations with agencies and organisations engaging with the LEAN.

Where possible, we will share in our bi-monthly newsletters;

- outcomes of consultations
- key findings from LEAN engagements
- updates on system reforms influenced by lived experience input

Our trauma-informed approach

The LEAN is guided by these six trauma-informed principles that shape how the Network operates and how we engage with one another.

We ask everyone involved in LEAN to apply these principles in their interactions.

Safety as a priority

Our physical and emotional safety and wellbeing are prioritised in all LEAN activities.

Choice & Control

Our needs and choices are respected, and we decide what and how we share.

Collaboration & Respect

We listen to one another, share perspectives and contribute respectfully.

Trust & Transparency

We communicate openly, respect confidentiality and recognise that power differences exist in systems and decision-making.

Cultural safety & Intersectionality

We respect the diverse identities, cultures and experiences that shape people's lives.

Strengths-based & Judgement free

We recognise the strength and resilience people bring and respect each other's experiences without judgement.

Sharing your lived/living experience/s

You may be asked for input on:

- what is working well in current systems
- where improvements are needed
- what safe and effective responses should look like

Sharing personal experiences is **always your choice. You are not required to disclose personal details about your lived experience/s.** Lived experience engagement can include reflections, insights, observations and ideas for improving systems and services, including what other survivors may have shared with you.

Our [Self-reflection](#) tool is designed to help you decide if you are ready to participate and our [Fostering Safe Group Discussions](#) resource provides information and guidance to support safe engagement for all.

Privacy, confidentiality and the legal stuff

Your privacy is critical to us. Information shared through the LEAN will be treated respectfully and confidentially. Embolden complies with the [Australian Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).

What information we collect

We collect some personal information when you apply to join the LEAN, such as your name (or pseudonym), contact details and information about how you identify. This information helps us communicate with you about engagement opportunities and ensure participation is respectful and inclusive.

If you participate in paid engagement activities, we may also collect your banking details so payments can be processed. If you prefer, you may choose to receive a voucher instead of providing banking details (refer to [Payment Information](#)).

How information is used and shared

Insights shared through the LEAN will inform the development and improvement of systems, policies and services. LEAN responses shared with engaging organisations will be de-identified to protect identities, unless consent is given to share personal information.

Storage, retention and publication

Information is stored on our secure system with limited personnel access. De-identified data will be retained and disposed of in accordance with approved retention schedules under the State Records Act 1997 (SA). Any information used in reports or publications will be de-identified or use pseudonyms, unless you give explicit permission for it to be attributed.

Limits to confidentiality

While confidentiality is prioritised, there may be circumstances where Embolden staff are legally and/or ethically required to share information; for example where:

- there is an immediate risk of harm to you or someone else
- information in an activity suggests a child or young person may be at risk of harm

Should a situation like this occur, the matter will be discussed with relevant participant/s where possible and appropriate.

Conflicts of Interest

We recognise that people with lived experience come from a range of backgrounds and occupations. Considerations of conflict of interest may apply for some engagements but won't necessarily prevent you from participating. If you think you have a conflict of interest relating to a particular engagement please let us know.

Feedback, compliments and complaints

Embolden is committed to respectful and transparent engagement.

You may provide feedback, ask questions and make compliments or complaints by emailing livedexperience@embolden.org.au and we aim to respond to you within 3 business days.

How to contact us

You are welcome to email livedexperience@embolden.org.au any time and we undertake to reply to you within three business days.

For people who need to contact us by phone please use 0447 670 827 between 9am and 5pm – Mondays to Fridays.

Support services information

Embolden and the LEAN is not a support service. If you need support, please refer to the following services. **If you are in immediate danger call 000.**

Support Service Name	Contact Details
SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line	1800 800 098 (24/7)
Full Stop Australia	1800 385 578 (24/7) free, confidential trauma counselling specialist – gender inclusive – for people affected and their families, friends, colleagues etc
1800RESPECT	1800 737 732 (24/7)
SA Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Assault Service	1800 817 421 (24/7) Gender inclusive, for anyone over 16yrs.
13YARN	13 92 76 (24/7) National crisis support service for all First Nations people
Another Closet	1800 65 64 63
QLife	1800 184 527 – 3pm to 9pm daily LGBTIQA+ peer support and referral
Lifeline	13 11 14
Urgent Mental Health Care Centre	13 14 65 - 24/7 215 Grenfell Street, Adelaide
First Nations Healing (SA)	(08) 8367 6474
Shine SA	(08) 8300 5300 Weekday clinical and counselling for sexual and reproductive health services.
Legal Services Commission SA	1300 366 424 – 9am to 5pm weekdays Free legal helpline
Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service	1800 246 642 – 9am to 5pm weekdays
Safe Pets Safe Families SA	0490 818 879 (crisis intake line) Foster pet care during difficult times

LEAN related documents

LEAN Terms of Reference

<https://embolden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Terms-of-Reference-Lived-Experience-Advisory-Network-Adult.pdf>

Self-Reflection Tool

<https://embolden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Self-reflection-tool-Lived-Experience-Advisory-Network-Adult.pdf>

Payment Information

<https://embolden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Payment-information-sheet-Lived-Experience-Advisory-Network-2.pdf>

Information Privacy

<https://embolden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Information-Privacy-Lived-Experience-Advisory-Network-Adult.pdf>

Fostering Safe Group Discussions

<https://embolden.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Fostering-Safe-Group-Discussions.pdf>