



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

Creativity and partnership

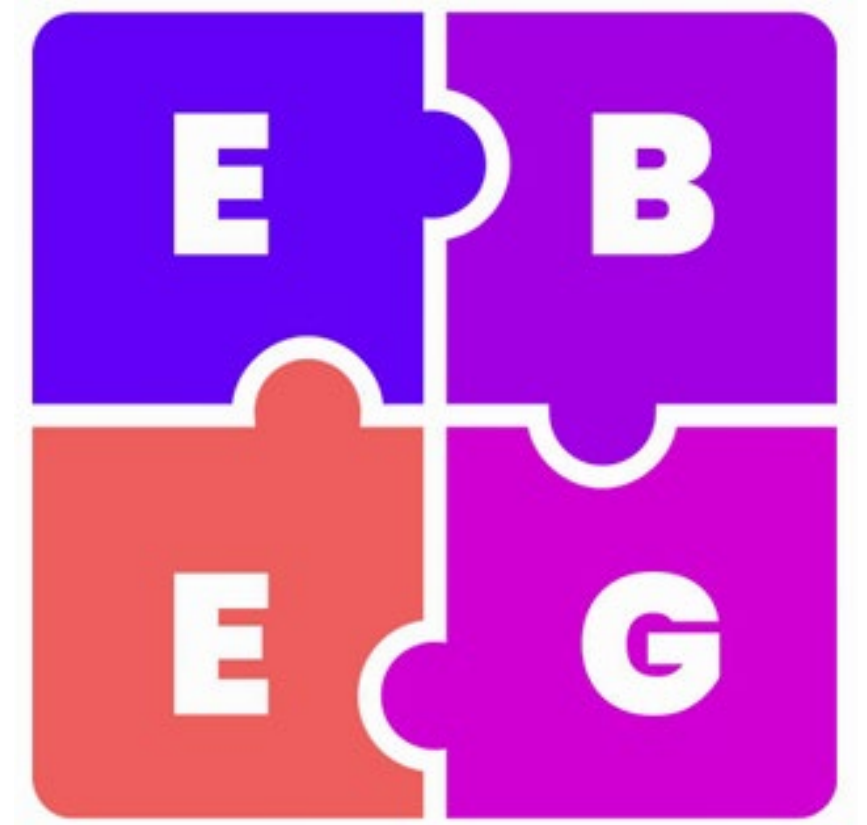
Social Work Education

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YOUR TIME.
YOUR PLACE.

Overview

- People with lived experience of social work are a fundamental part of social work education
- At the University of Portsmouth we use the term 'experts by experience' to recognise and value the unique knowledge and expertise that this group brings
- Social Work England (2021) created professional standards that establish the expectation that social workers will 'work in partnership with people' and recognise 'them as experts in their own lives'



Create Project

As part of Level 4 students assessment, they are required to complete the Create Project.

Students will:

- Meet with an Expert by Experience and listen to an element of their story
- Collaborate with the Expert by Experience to creatively tell their story
- Present this creative piece to the class alongside a reflection on the experience and learning for their future practice.



Value Base

When seeking to learn from Experts by Experience we walk a fine line between empowerment and commodification.

In order to avoid commodifying people's experiences we seek to be value based in our approach.

- Building relationships with the Experts by Experience through team meetings, 1-2-1's and debriefing opportunities
- Drawing on social work values to ensure our focus remains on social justice throughout our work (BASW, 2021)
- Seeking to collaborate with the Experts by Experience, co-producing sessions and assessments wherever possible. Aiming to reduce or remove any power imbalances.

Impact of incorporating listening

- There is the potential to have a significant impact on students, experts by experience and future social work practice
- Thorpe et al's (2026) recent research showed the impact telling stories had on people with lived experience:
 - Initially it felt daunting and unknown
 - The storytelling space provided opportunity for human connection
 - Participants described a sense of belonging
 - The process of storytelling linked with developing a sense of purpose
 - For many participants there was an improved sense of self which led to a freedom from shame
- The Create project provides us with an opportunity to see similar experiences within our Experts by Experience, as well as to witness the impact on student's journeys.

Student Perspective – Telan Oketch

Expert by Experience perspective – Pearl Cox



THANK YOU

FOR LISTENING



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References

BASW (2021) Code of Ethics. [Code of Ethics | BASW](#)

SWE (2021) *Professional Standards*. Social Work England. <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>

Thorpe, C., Bickerton, R., Horn, N., Leonard-Dixon, B., Peters, M., & Piggin, L. (2026). A "turbo form of therapy": A co-produced investigation of lived experience storytelling. *Psychological Reports*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941261442803>