



Survivor Engagement Strategy: Listening Sessions

Overview: ICADV has worked with member programs to co-facilitate seven listening sessions with survivors so far in 2022. We have conducted groups in person and via online meeting platforms. Our primary purpose in convening the listening sessions was to center survivors' experience and wisdom as we develop new programs, but survivors consistently told us that this involvement helped them to feel valued, empowered and supported by their peers. Survivors helped us to develop the stigma reduction campaign (inagainstda.com), informed changes to our service models, described their accountability needs, and told us about the ways that they would like to be engaged in, and lead supports with other survivors.

Successes: This strategy creates so many benefits! It helps ensure that our programs are responsive to survivors' current needs, and they tell us that participating in solutions supports their ongoing healing. Staff members have also reported that participating in the listening sessions feels deeply mission-centered and energizing for them.

Challenges: We have experienced minimal challenges with this strategy. Because our conversations have focused on developing solutions, the tone has generally been optimistic and hopeful. We do use two facilitators for each session so that we are prepared to provide individuals with additional support, if that is needed. The main challenge to plan for is making space for enough staff time to plan for the session (developing questions, recruiting participants and managing logistics), to facilitate the session, and to report back what was learned there.

How we pay for it: ICADV is working to include assessment as part of program planning in all areas of our work. With that, we write assessment related costs into many of our grants. The costs include staff time, and survivor incentives (we provide participants with a \$40 grocery gift card to compensate them for their time). The sessions described above were supported with funding through FVPSA, DVPT and STOP. Member agencies have also been very successful in getting local food donations to offer light refreshments during these gatherings.

For more information: Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions, or if you would like technical assistance with this strategy! Contact Colleen Yeakle by email or phone:
cyeakle@icadvinc.org
317.917.3685