AVANTI ACADEMY IN PRACTICE

Doing It With, Not To

Engagement, co-production and lived experience in practice

Workbook

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How to use this workbook

Each part of Doing It With, Not To includes a short Try it activity. When the narration invites you to pause, turn to the matching sheet here and take ten minutes or so to work through it for your own role. There are no right answers. The point is to leave with something you will actually do. Keep your completed sheets: they make a useful record for supervision, appraisal or your personal development plan.

Part 1 · Who Are We Engaging, and Why

My one-page purpose sheet

Choose one piece of engagement you have coming up. Before planning any method, answer each prompt in plain words, then show the sheet to a colleague and ask whether it matches what you are really offering.

The decision, in one sentence a resident would recognise:
What is already fixed, and the reasons you can give for it:
What people could genuinely change:
Who this touches, including those who rarely respond:
The level of engagement you are offering, and the word you will use:

To reflect on: *Think of a recent piece of engagement in your area. Could you have written down, at the start, exactly what people were able to influence?*

My consultation fairness check

Choose a consultation you are planning or have run recently. Work through each prompt, noting one practical fix for each. Then choose the fix you will make first and who you need to involve.

Is the mind still open? What could still change the result?
Can people follow it? Which options, alternatives and impacts need explaining?
Is there enough time? Which groups need longer, or a visit?
How will responses reach the decision makers, and when will people hear back?

To reflect on: *Think of a consultation you have run or responded to. Could anything people said have changed the outcome, and did they find out what happened?*

My plan for a group we rarely hear

Choose one group your service rarely hears from. Work through the prompts, checking your answers with someone who knows the group. Finish by naming one partner to contact and a date to report back.

The group I will focus on, and why they matter to this decision:
The barriers they are likely to face, practical, trust, digital or language:
Who already has their trust, and how I will involve and pay them:
Formats and adjustments I will build in from the start:
How and when I will go back to report what changed:

To reflect on: *Which group affected by your work do you hear from least, and what about how you engage might be keeping them away?*

Testing my co-design

Choose a project or service you would describe as co-designed or co-produced. Answer each prompt honestly, then choose one change to make before the next session and note who you need to persuade.

To, for or with: which word does this work deserve today, and why?
What is fixed and why, and what is genuinely open:
Who is in the room, who facilitates and who decides:
What power, money or decisions could change hands:
One change I will make before the next session:

To reflect on: *Think of something your organisation calls co-designed or co-produced. What, if anything, changed hands as a result?*

Checking an invitation to share experience

Choose an invitation you have sent or are about to send to someone with lived experience. Answer each prompt, then rewrite one sentence of the invitation and note one change to make to your process.

Why we are asking, and what we hope to learn:
How the person's words will be used, kept and withdrawn:
How we will pay or recognise them, and cover expenses up front:
Who will support them on the day, and how we will follow up:
The sentence I will rewrite, and how it now reads:

To reflect on: *When did your organisation last ask someone to share their experience? Would they say they were treated as an expert or as an illustration?*

My engagement plan on a page

Choose one real decision coming up in your work. Complete each part of the plan in plain words, then share it with one colleague and one person it affects and ask what is missing.

The decision: what is open, what is fixed and who holds the final say:
The people: who it touches, who is usually missing and who has their trust:
The promise: the level, how views will be weighed and when people will hear back:
The support: access, formats, costs, payment and care for anyone sharing:
The measure: one measure at each level, and how I will report what changed:

To reflect on: *Think of your organisation's last engagement report. Could a participant read it and see what changed because they took part?*

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