

Activities Designed to Deepen Engagement

Individual
Joining one or more activist or advocacy listservs or discussion groups that are open to the public
Reading diverse blogs, anthologies and ‘gray literature’ work, including from groups and individuals with explicitly contrasting views—for example the work of groups such as Recovery in the Bin (https://recoveryinthebin.org/) as well as groups that have embraced contemporary ‘recovery’ language
Attending diverse activist/advocacy events, such as the annual Alternatives conference – not primarily to present but rather to join in sessions and form relationships
Building friendships with diverse service users and activists, e.g., by ‘hanging out’ at conferences or events, sharing meals, opening up in ways that move the relationship beyond the strictly professional
Asking questions about experience, including feelings: for example, having conversations with service user consultants or advisory board members in informal contexts to understand how they actually feel about their involvement, or what their experience of sitting in on meetings is actually like and how this impacts them
Organizational
Inviting speakers (for psychiatry colloquia, Grand Rounds, departmental series, etc.) that truly represented diverse views and perspectives, not just “the usual suspects”
Organizing events such as potlucks, lab outings, holiday celebrations that support informal relationship building and bonding between researchers/administrators and services users, advocates and activists
Teach-ins, workshops or trainings led by service users, activists etc with diverse and critical perspectives on mental health; or encouraging and supporting staff/trainees to attend these in the community, even if there are not associated CEUs