

Recommended Graduate Programs for Students with Lived Experience of Mental Health Services/Challenges/Psychiatric Disabilities

A project of the Transform Research: Building User/Survivor Research Capacity and Leadership Collaborative.

Portland State University, Department of Psychology, Portland OR USA

Type of program: [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [As a faculty member](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[I am referring specifically to faculty in the Community Psychology track/ area being supportive, although I trust and have experienced the general climate in our Applied Psychology program to be supportive of students and faculty with lived experience](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

[Yes— as an applied psychology department, we value being close to our phenomena of interest and encourage/ welcome students to describe how their lived experience informs their scholarly and applied](#)

Portland State University, School of Social Work, Portland OR USA

Type of program: [masters](#), [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [As a faculty member who has colleagues in the department but has not worked there](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[My knowledge is based on what I've heard and observed through collaborations with faculty and students in the department](#)

Memorial University of Newfoundland, School of Social Work, Newfoundland, CANADA

Type of program: [masters](#), [doctoral](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[There are three openly mad faculty members in this department. There are also several mad-positive faculty. This makes for great choices for supervision. However, there are also a number of faculty and professional staff who are not mad positive who may make things difficult for mad](#)

students. So, the experiences may be excellent at times and mixed at other times. It nonetheless remains a good choice, as long as potential students understand what spaces in the school are safe and where problems may need to be navigated.

Portland State University, Department of Psychology, Portland OR USA

Type of program:: [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [As a faculty member](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

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[Yes— as an applied psychology department, we value being close to our phenomena of interest and encourage/ welcome students to describe how their lived experience informs their scholarly and applied](#)

**Wilfrid Laurier University, Community Psychology Program, Waterloo, Ontario
CANADA**

Type of program:: [masters, doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a former graduate student, as a current graduate student, as a faculty member](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[The programs themselves are rigorous but the faculty are quite understanding/supportive of those who have lived experience](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

[Yes, I did and I believe it strengthened my application](#)

Do you have any other information or advice?

You have to be your own advocate. I have never found disability services to be particularly helpful in the context of a graduate program but, as I said, faculty have always been responsive to my needs/accommodations

University of Windsor, Social Work, Ontario CANADA

Type of program:: masters, doctoral

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: as a faculty member

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

I'm eager to supervise in particular PhD students who are interested and invested in Disability and Mad studies approaches to social work.

There are a handful of faculty who are trying to mobilize lived experience (in a variety of forms) as knowledge proper in the university. These Faculty are supportive of lived experience. I'd say that the PhD program in particular would be a flexible environment to learn, and I am always looking for good PhD students to work with on research projects, and have them teach undergraduate Disability Studies courses.

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

Yes, I think that would be fine. I review MSW applicants and a number of students put this into their application.

Do you have any other information or advice?

You have to be your own advocate. I have never found disability services to be particularly helpful in the context of a graduate program but, as I said, faculty have always been responsive to my needs/accommodations

University of the District of Columbia, Law, Washington DC USA

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: as a former graduate student

University of Nottingham, ESRC Midlands Doctoral Training Programme - Mental Health & Well-being Pathway, Nottingham, England UK

Type of program:: [masters](#), [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[Keen to support service-users develop skills from being involved in research \(e.g. as part of a Lived Experience Advisory Panel or Patient & Public Involvement volunteer\) to gaining skills to lead their own research](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

[Yes absolutely as long as you can articulate the importance of including this perspective](#)

Do you have any other information or advice?

[Competition is high but the lead researchers are often involved in creating/ aware of other fully-funded PhD opportunities](#)

University of Sheffield, Human Communication Sciences, Sheffield, Yorkshire UK

Type of program:: [masters](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[Flexibility and communication and care. I began in 2007 and completed 2 years without issues, then had serious OCD. The faculty worked very hard to accommodate me with extra time and extend my registration with no fee implications. I had to exit for a few years but they accepted me back with no prejudice. Very professional and understanding.](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

Without question. Excellent disability advisory service also.

Do you have any other information or advice?

It simply hasn't been an issue to experience severe mental health on this programme with any staff member. They have been understanding and caring and made me believe I can get through.

**Adelphi University, Clinical Psychology
New York, USA**

Type of program:: [masters](#), [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[Took a course on trauma and know professor in the program. Recommend Michael O' Loughlin as a faculty advisor for people interested in becoming clinical psychologists: O'Loughlin is a strong supporter of hearing Voices movement; collaborative research; and readily accepts people that self-disclose into his lab](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

[Yes and know people that have](#)

Do you have any other information or advice?

[Reach out to Michael O'Loughlin if interested in applying to the PhD program.](#)

Cardiff University, School of Psychology, Cardiff, Wales, UK

Type of program:: [masters](#), [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

University of Toledo, Toledo OH USA

Type of program:: [masters, doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

The combination of lived experience with cognitive/psychological/emotional/physical disabilities and my exposure to Disability Studies concepts/paradigms catalyzed development of a disabled identity. The DST program at the University of Toledo under direction of Dr. James V. Ferris, PhD. provide opportunities for intellectual and academic development. The skills I have as an unaffiliated researcher specializing in autoethnography, support my production of scholarly articles and presentation from Hawai'i to Malta and points between.

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

Absolutely! As at least two faculty members with the DST program have visible disabilities, they are very supportive and inclusive. I am currently in my 14 year of recovery. As my journey through the program began just years after I sustained a severe traumatic brain injury involving coma/amenia of more than 10 weeks, I found the best support from faculty and university accessibility offices.

Yale University, Program on Recovery and Community Health (PRCH), New Haven CT USA

Type of program:: [masters, doctoral, certificate](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a faculty member](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

Chyrell Bellamy is a lived experience identified academic. PRCH also has many other lived experience staff in both community engagement/program delivery roles and academic roles. PRCH as a whole is supportive and genuinely inclusive of people with a lived experience but Chyrell is particularly focused on this space and really understands the challenges.

I was there as a visiting scholar and will be staying on in an affiliate role. Chyrell was the first lived experience mentor I've had for a research project and she really knows her stuff. She is personally and deeply connected to the work, a great advocate and an insightful critical voice. As

an LGBT woman of colour she also brings an understanding of additional 'diversity' issues that is rare.

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

Yes I think it would be encouraged, people are very open about their roles/experiences. Around half the staff have lived experience.

Do you have any other information or advice?

This is a very active program running many community programs, for someone with a practical bent this could be provide a useful PhD focus.

University of Massachusetts Boston, Clinical Psychology, Boston MA USA

Type of program:: [doctoral](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as a graduate student](#)

University of the Sunshine Coast, Social Work, Fraser Coast, Hervey Bay, Qld, AUSTRALIA

Type of program:: [undergraduate](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as an undergraduate, as a community member who has worked with the department](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[Inclusiveness and willing to explore dimensions of psycho-social narrative in mental health peer support](#)

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

[These are conversations that can be framed with confidentiality, discernment, discretion and detachment. The unpacking of a life lived and be relective along with others through recovery of Mental health as choice and personal circumstances and well-being. Thanks](#)

**University of the Sunshine Coast, Sunshine Coast Mind & Neuroscience Thompson Institute,
Fraser Coast, Hervey Bay, Qld, AUSTRALIA**

Type of program:: [undergraduate](#)

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: [as an undergraduate, as a community member who has worked with the department](#)

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

[Cherie McGregor: Consumer Services Co-ordinator \(Sunshine Coast Mind & Neuroscience Thompson Institute\) Lived Experience Academics Programme PEER Centre : Participation in Education and Research](#)

[I am currently on Field Placement at The Thompson Institute. I am in my third year of a Bachelor of Social Work Programme \(USC\) and have a Lived Experience. I highly commend the commitment, direction and opportunities that are supporting systems Advocacy for people with a Lived Experience of Mental Health Challenges. The commitment and valuing of Lived Experience Perspectives is most certainly present, along with a commitment to various projects that encourage and work toward fully implemented Co-Production & Co-Design projects. Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.](#)

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[The University of the Sunshine Coast, Social Work Field Educators linked me to the organisation based on my Lived Experience and passion for creating Social Change in this area. My desire for this, participation and engagement has been warmly welcomed and supported.](#)

[Do you have any other information or advice?](#)

[The potential of one's Lived Experience transforming and influencing mental health reform in Australia. This LE being valued. The programmes which are being implemented and run are open to social inclusiveness and valuing of diverse perspectives. My time here has allowed me to reflect on and grow to understand how valuable my Lived Experience is. This has enabled me to reflect on how and why my Lived Experience can so greatly contribute to future practice directions. I feel far more confident in valuing and combining both my emerging professional expertise and my own Lived Experience. I have found the supportive and encouraging environment has further enabled me more healing and transformation. I hold much hope and belief that The Thompson Institute will continue to commit their Advocacy Position on the role of Lived Experience in Education, research and the Mental Health System.](#)

**Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Department of Mental Health, Baltimore
MD, USA**

Type of program:: masters, doctoral

How you have engaged/worked with the program you are recommending: as a former graduate student

Specifically, please describe your experiences with the program and why you would recommend it.

I was admitted based on a letter in which I described my patient advocacy activities. The chairman at that time was William Eaton, who is part time now. I found a few mentors to be very supportive. There are also training grants that require participation by underserved populations. I was on many of these because I identified as a person with a disability.

The mentoring is enh, depending on the advisor you get. It provides a great but stringent/stressful education and is a very high-powered, high-expectation research environment. There is little to no teaching, which is nice. There was one student who did her thesis on peer support organizations, but other than that the only "peer" research they do (as far as I'm aware) is community health workers in developing countries. The emphasis is on epidemiology and biostatistics.

Do you believe it would be fine to disclose a history of lived experience/psychiatric disability when applying to the program? If relevant, please explain your answer.

Absolutely fine. As I said, you have the option of specifically being appealing as a student because you would be eligible to fit those quotas for underserved populations and possibly receive NIH funding because of it.

Do you have any other information or advice?

It's quite stressful. There are legal requirements for accommodations due to disability, however, the office that handled them when I was there was staffed with people who knew nothing. The mentoring has the possibility to be absolute crap, so you have to be a high-powered self-starter.