

Lived Experience Voices in Criminal Justice: Examples in the UK, USA, Norway and Australia

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We believe in the importance of lived experience perspectives in criminal justice organizations, research, and advocacy. Lived experience refers to the personal experiences and knowledge that individuals have gained through their own lives, particularly those who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system, including those incarcerated. Incorporating lived experience perspectives into criminal justice organizations allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the system. This can lead to more effective policies and practices that address the root causes of crime and promote rehabilitation and restorative justice as is the work of RoverRadion in Norway. Lived experience perspectives play a crucial role in criminal justice research. Including the perspectives of people impacted by the criminal justice system can provide insights and perspectives often overlooked in traditional research methods. This can lead to more nuanced and accurate understandings of the causes and consequences of crime, as well as the effectiveness of different interventions, exemplified by the establishment of the 'Beyond the Stone Walls Advisory Collective' at RMIT University in Australia. Finally, advocacy efforts in criminal justice benefit greatly from incorporating lived experience perspectives. These perspectives help to humanize the issue and give a voice to those marginalised in the criminal justice system. By centering the experiences of those impacted by the system, advocacy efforts can lead to meaningful and impactful change, evidenced by the efforts of both Humans of San Quentin in the USA and the Howard League for Penal Reform in the UK. There is growing evidence-based research supporting the effectiveness of incorporating lived experience in the criminal justice space, and these organisations mentioned above are pioneers in this domain.