

Building civic infrastructure through centering lived expertise

Amber; Kim Bender; Becca Berry, Chuck; Ducky; Robbie Goldman; Helen; Danielle Littman; Tom Lucas; Tara Milligan; Meredith Mollica; Xen.
Community Partner: Dry Bones

This participatory action research study is a collaboration with University of Denver and Dry Bones, a community-based organization who focus on **relationship and community for young adults with experiences of homelessness**.

- **AIM:** to develop a PAR team to guide plans for **integrating lived expertise of unhoused young people**.
- **PROCESS:** The team members train one **another** to build skills of inquiry and action, engage in collaborative participatory research, and **design and formalize processes for integrating lived expertise at the organization**.
- **DESIRED OUTCOMES:** Team members study their process to inform **how PAR can build civic infrastructure with in an organization**.

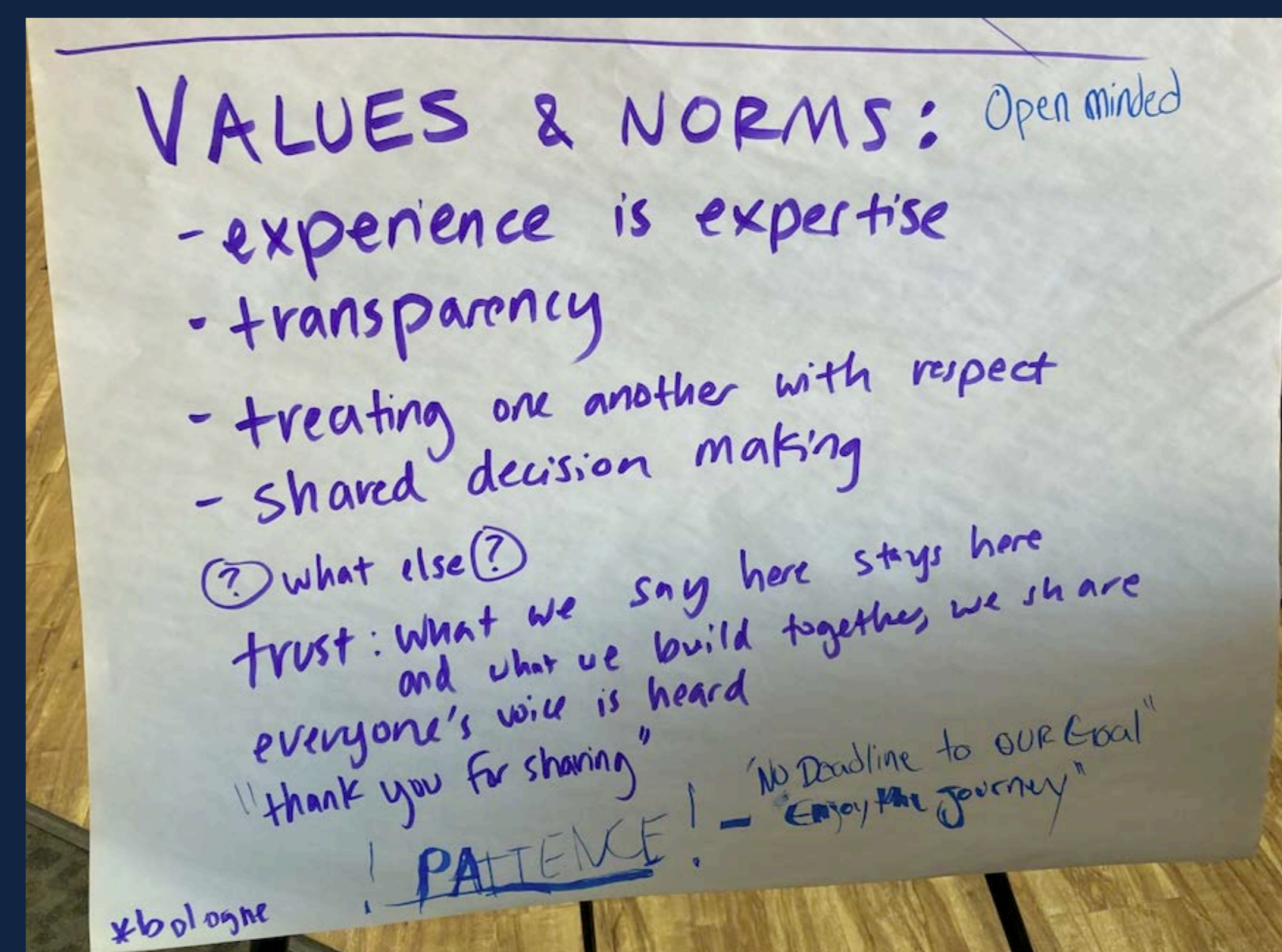
Guiding Research Questions

- 1) What strategies are supportive in **creating an anti-oppressive PAR team** to serve as the backbone of a civic infrastructure in a community-based organization serving unhoused young people?
- 2) What **impact does building a PAR team have on its members and on the organization** in which it is embedded?
- 3) What is a **process for integrating lived expertise** considering Dry Bones' unique contextual realities?



What is important in building a lived experience advisory group?

- communication
- mutual understanding of goal
- conflict resolution
- patience, taking your time to be intentional
- space, time, availability to commune
- collective values and norms



For more information, contact
Kimberly.Bender@du.edu



Scan to download the
suite of research materials

Research design and data

Community Partners:

Affirming Ground Project: connected to the Graduate school of Social Work at the University of Denver
Dry Bones: non profit that supports unhoused young people in Denver, CO

Partner Involvement:

- co-create community norms
- co-researchers in: research design, data collection and interpretation, action planning.
- cross training of expertise (i.e. insights related to the experience of the challenge and research tools and methods)

Case study design:

Individual and group interviews with interested parties; participatory thematic data analysis; detailed field notes of weekly meetings documenting decision making process and how PAR members are supported to be included in the process

What are the potential opportunities to apply the study fundings?

This study contributes to research on **models and best practices for using participatory research to build and sustain civic infrastructure** and centering lived experiences within that infrastructure.

- The research team intends to build on this study by examining the impact of integrating lived expertise within the Dry Bones community.