

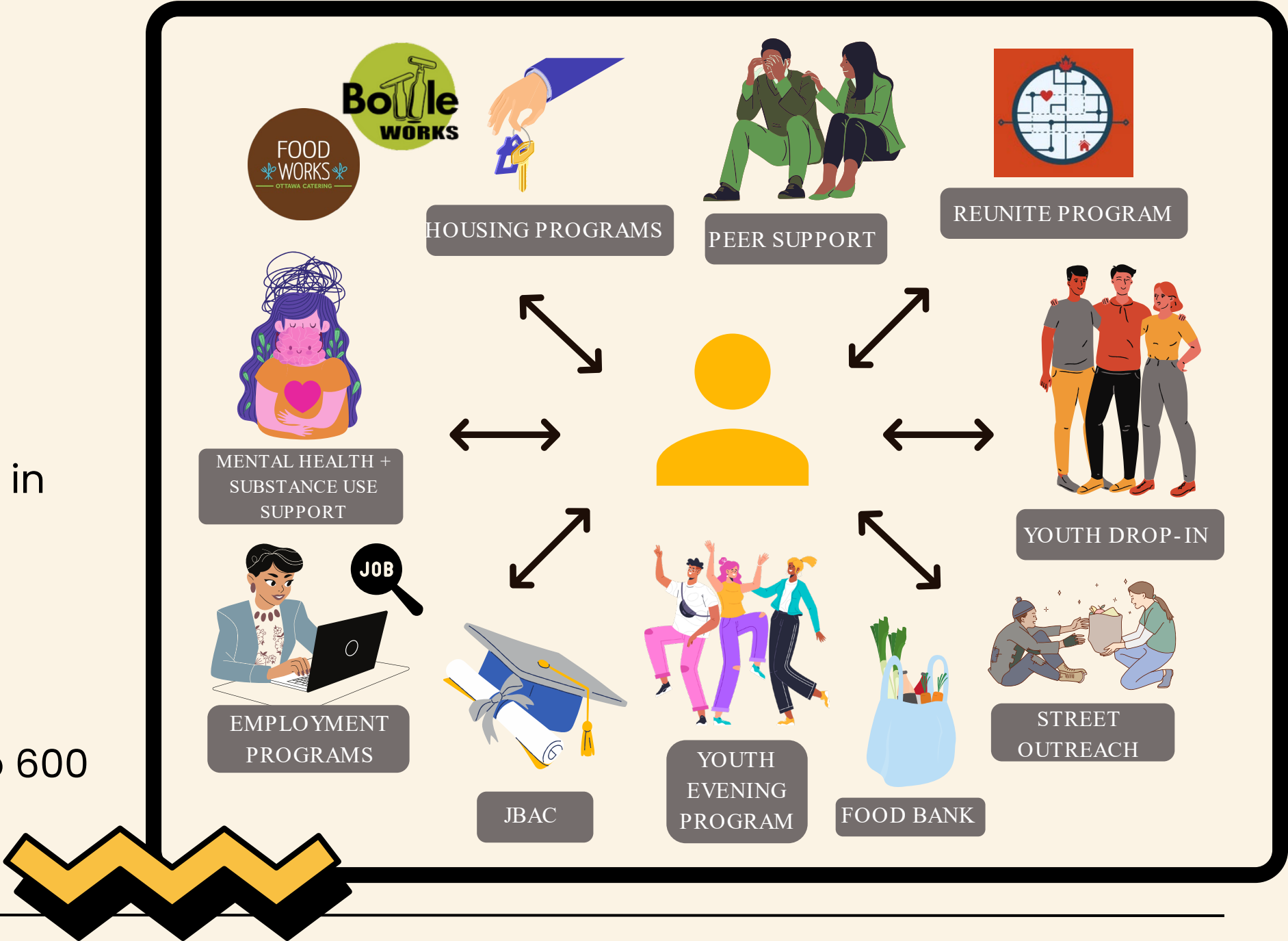


**3 CHALLENGES & 10 RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTEGRATE  
PEOPLE WITH LIVED/ LIVING EXPERIENCE IN PROGRAM  
DEVELOPMENT**



# Our Organization

- Operation Come Home has been around since 1971
- Operation Come Home serves youth at risk of homelessness and those experiencing homelessness in Ottawa
- We provide housing, employment, education, mental health, harm reduction and wrap-around supports to 600 youth/year



# Our Project

- During 2022, we launched a street outreach project funded by Health Canada
- Our primary objective is to reduce harms from substance use while incorporating people with lived/living experience
- Two peer street outreach workers provide youth with information and opportunities to participate in harm-reduction programs
- This project was implemented under the guidance of people with living or lived experience of homelessness at every phase (including the the funding application)





# 3 THINGS WE HAVE LEARNED

## One

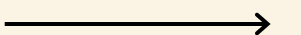
Be thoughtful in how you support belonging and inclusion on the job

## Two

Take a close look at your practices and assumptions

## Three

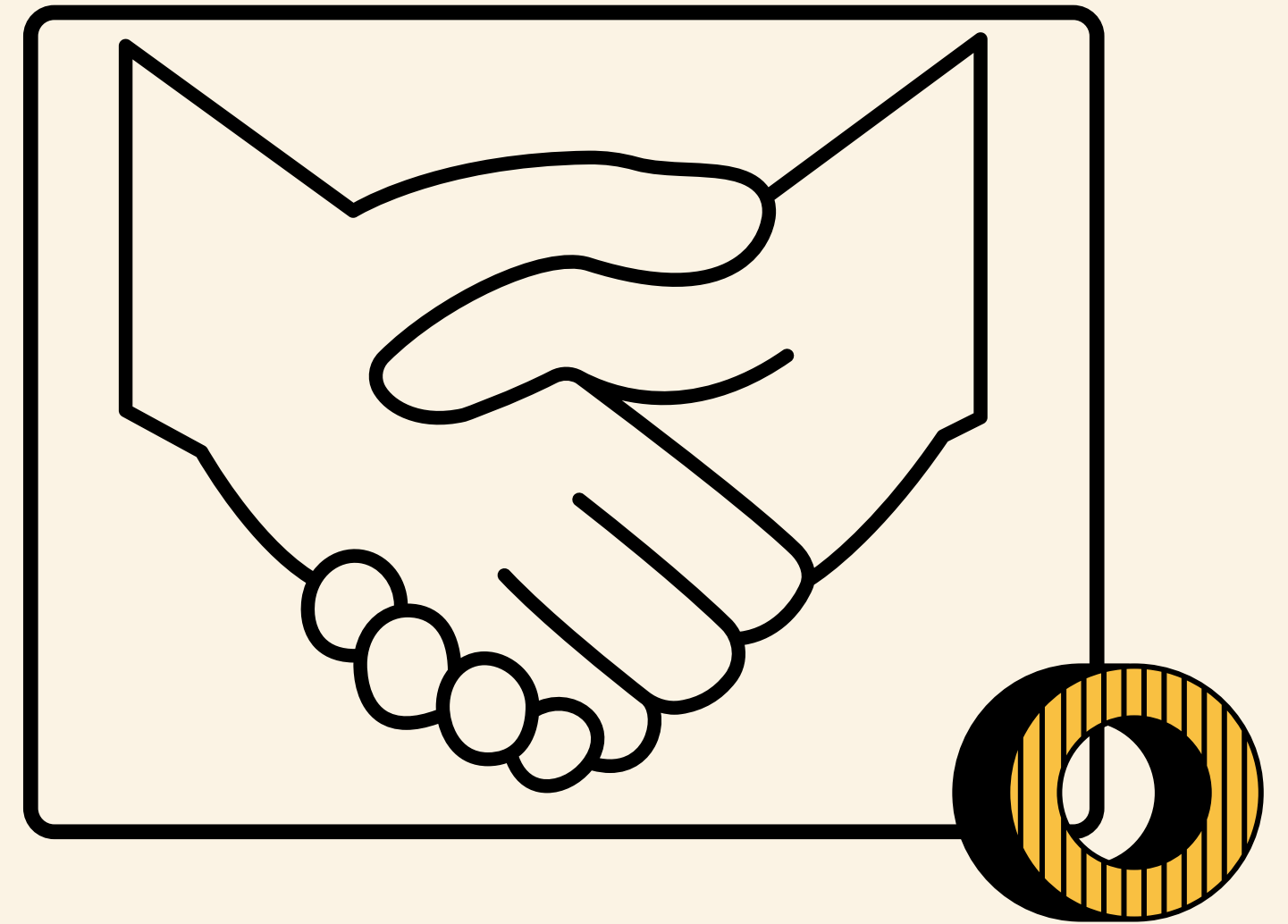
Incorporate a variety of viewpoints in your planning



# 1. BE THOUGHFUL IN HOW YOU SUPPORT BELONGING AND INCLUSION ON THE JOB

- PWLE often come from outside the social work profession
- Peer support roles have a history of being incorporated as a different "level"

Training and on-boarding can help address this and focus on the requirements of the role can help



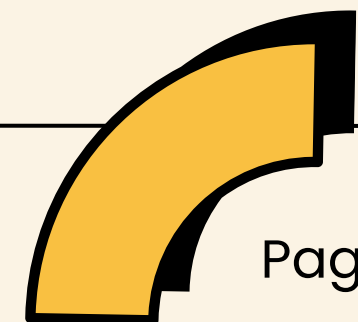
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## 2. TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT YOUR PRACTICES AND ASSUMPTIONS

- Involving PWLE make programs stronger and more effective – but this only happens when staff have space and ability to question assumptions and challenge practices
- Incorporating the views of PWLE, and bringing them into your organization, often requires a shift in attitudes and working styles

You will want to take a close look at why your rules and practices are the way they are

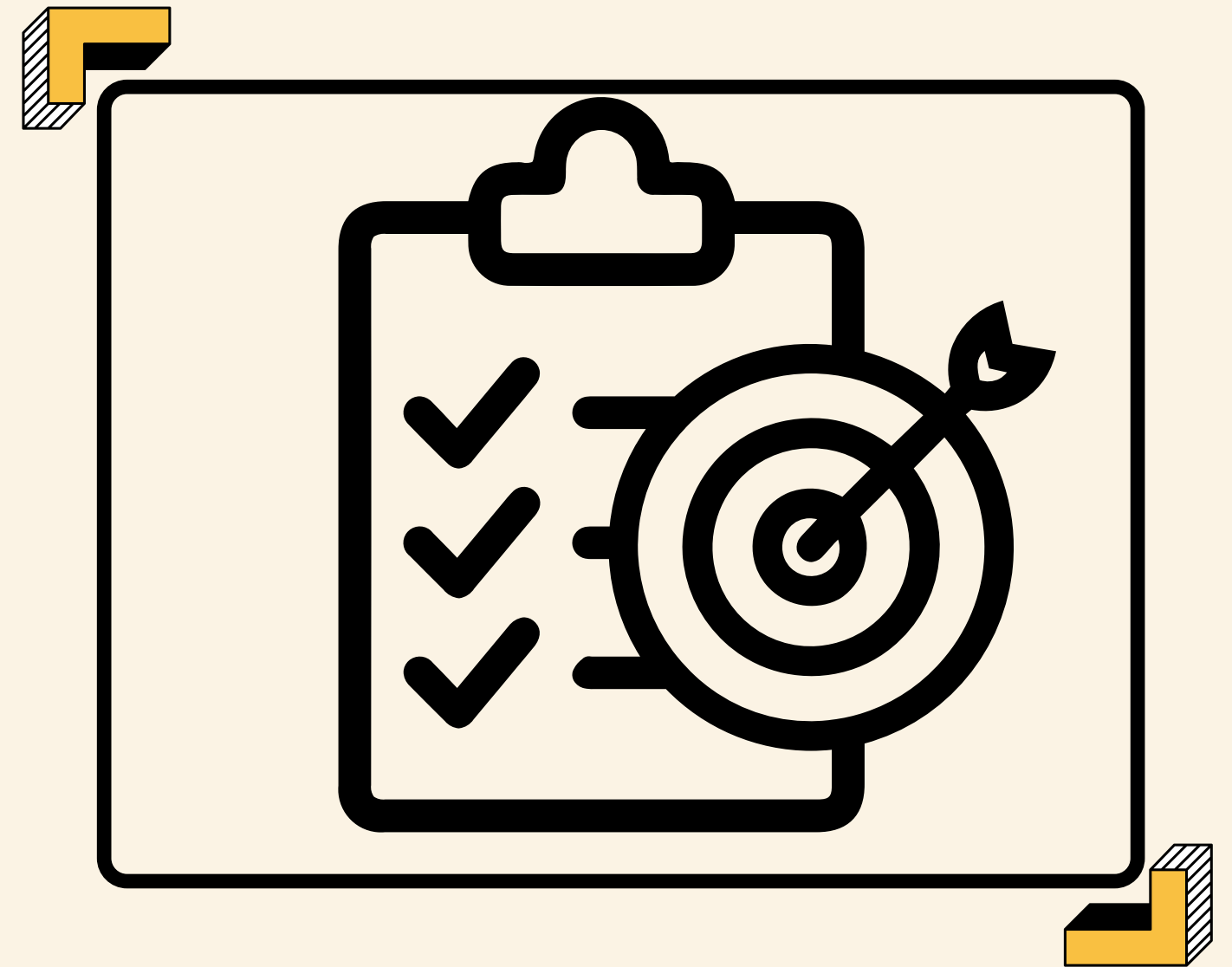
- In many cases, you may not decide to change things – be prepared to speak transparently about why rules are in place



### 3. INCORPORATE A VARIETY OF VIEWPOINTS IN YOUR PLANNING

- Utilize a wide variety of expertise and viewpoints
  - Consult locally and nationally
  - Meet with PWLE groups, policy makers, alike programs - find the gaps

Incorporating different experiences can help mitigate risk, plan for the unknown and bolster service delivery



# 10 Recommendations

1. Find external advisory committees with a variety of lived experiences
2. Consult early and often - make a plan to seek outside advice at all phases and be ready to make change





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# 10 Recommendations Continued

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- 3 . Support PWLE with their professional development

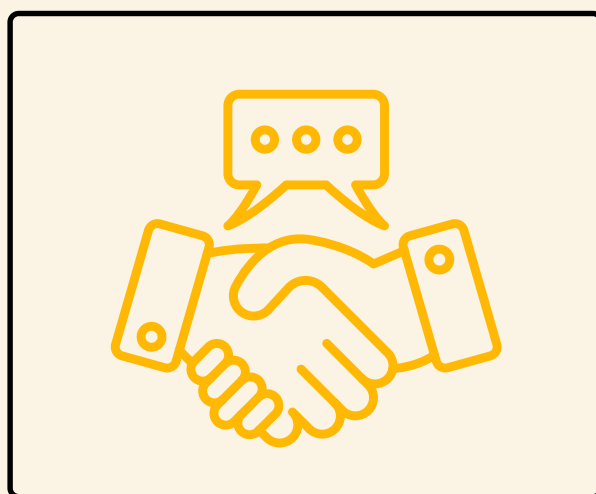


- 4 . Have a plan in place to help individuals navigate potential challenges

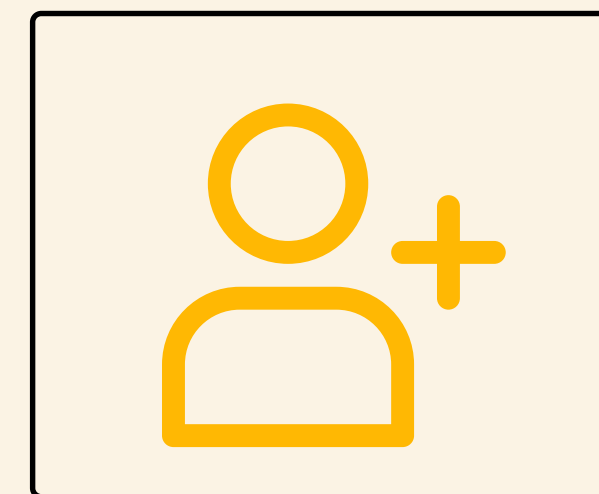


# 10 Recommendations Continued

- 5 . Be upfront about your non-negotiables and boundaries



- 6 . Ensure PWLE know who will offer them direction and be transparent about this on day one

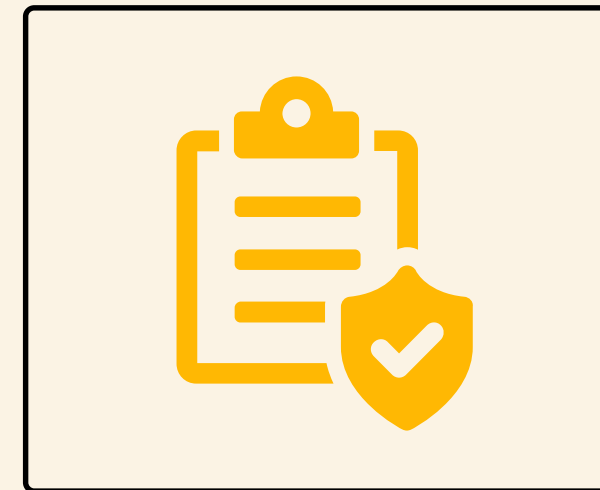


# 10 Recommendations Continued

- 7 . Those coming from outside social work practice can feel as though they are at a disadvantage - make info accessible



- 8 . Clarify your policies on substance use, police checks, permitted client/staff relationships, etc.





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# 10 Recommendations Continued

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- 9 . Schedule opportunities for genuine debrief and protect that time



- 10 . Make time to prepare properly, and recognize that things will take longer when you do this well



# Thank You!

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