



Engaging CALD Carers & Communities

CALD community input in program planning (a co-design approach)

This resource is part of a series of resources in the online Diversity in Disability Toolkit.

For further information, see:
diversityindisability.org

What will this resource cover?

This resource will take a step beyond considerations of preliminary CALD community engagement, and instead delve into ways in which you and your organisation can work with CALD communities in program planning and design. You will gain an introductory understanding of cultural factors to consider when bringing communities into the planning process, and also be aware of the risks and benefits that a co-design approach can produce. A case study will help illustrate this.

Essential information

You may wonder, what is exactly is co-design? For the purposes of this guide, co-design is defined as ‘engaging consumers and users of products and services in the design process, with the idea that this will ultimately lead to improvements and innovation’¹. Co-design allows staff who are developing programs and refining services to test their assumptions with the people who will ultimately be the ‘end-users’ of these programs or services. This design process happens early in the development of program development, and allows the ‘end-user’ to contribute to the direction that the program or service will eventually take. If you are thinking of developing a program for Arabic speaking people with disability for example, it would be important to devise a program that would resonate with that particular group of people.

Co-design is one approach that could be able to achieve that level of resonance with the community you wish to target.

There are numerous benefits to this approach. Some include;

- Giving a community agency and ownership over the programs that they will be involved in. This in turn could help increase the participant rate of those partaking in the program or service if they feel that they had a hand at developing it themselves;
- Changing the deficit mindset of client management. This means that instead of a service provider thinking of a community or client as simply the recipient of that service, they are viewed as partners and co-creators;
- As the community would be asked to make decisions about what they need, and how they can achieve

solutions for their needs, this also helps build strategic and decision making skills;

- If designed well, initial co-design activities can help to build a closer more cohesive working relationship with communities that may be beneficial for continuous collaboration and engagement on other projects.

Essential good practice tips

Before thinking about devising a co-design opportunity that brings communities into the program planning process, it is important to think about the following issues;

- How do you get people to be interested in participating? Speaking with community leaders and people working with communities may help you to gain some insight into how to recruit the right people for the exercise;
- It may be easier to organise the venue at a place where communities visit, as it is a place that is familiar to them, they know how to get to the destination and thus feel more inclined to make the effort to attend the session;
- Think about if the topics that you will be covering will be culturally sensitive to those who will be attending;
- Think about if the use of a bilingual facilitator perhaps a more effective approach;
- Consider issues in relation to child care if applicable;
- Incentives may be appropriate for participants.

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The actual co-design session can come in a range of formats dependant on which community you are targeting, and for what purpose. It could be a focus group, informal workshop and could be held in language, in English or employing the use of interpreters. If there are people attending who speak a range of languages, the use of interpreters may become cumbersome and confusing, and may limit the effectiveness of the activity. It may be more beneficial to conduct session in English (if the participants have high English proficiency), or if in language, limit the group to the one particular language.

During the session itself, it is important to ensure that participants have an informed understanding of the process, types of contributions they can make and an understanding of the meaning of any acronyms that may be used throughout the session.

In terms of framing the session, communication is key to a positive outcome. For an effective design process to occur, you must either change your language or develop the language of the participants to ensure effective contributions.

- Be extremely clear about the purpose of the activity, and obtain informed consent from participants
- If making promises regarding feedback of the session and follow up to participants, make sure that the promise is kept;
- Allow for time during the session;
- Think about innovative ways to communicate with the community. This could involve using case studies, storytelling and using pictorial messages to convey meaning;

- It would be important for the person conducting a session to have a good grasp of cross cultural communication skills, and cultural competency;
- Try to avoid jargon without explanation of meaning, and do not assume knowledge.

If the same group is to be consulted for program planning on a continuous basis, it is also important to be mindful of the capacity of a person's commitment, and also be aware of potential barriers to participation. Also be mindful of over consultation, and consultation fatigue.

Case Studies

Cassandra, a Program Manager is currently devising a 3-year program that will entail developing a young person's activity group targeted at the Chinese community. In the past, some programs of a similar vein have not attracted the amount of people needed to make it feasible. Feedback was given that the program did not meet the needs of the people utilising it. Cassandra thinks that a new approach should be taken to make the program more inclusive and meet the needs of those participating

Key Questions

What first steps do you think Cassandra should take in developing this new program?

Who should Cassandra target in order to get the right people involved?

What factors should Cassandra consider to make the session culturally appropriate?



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