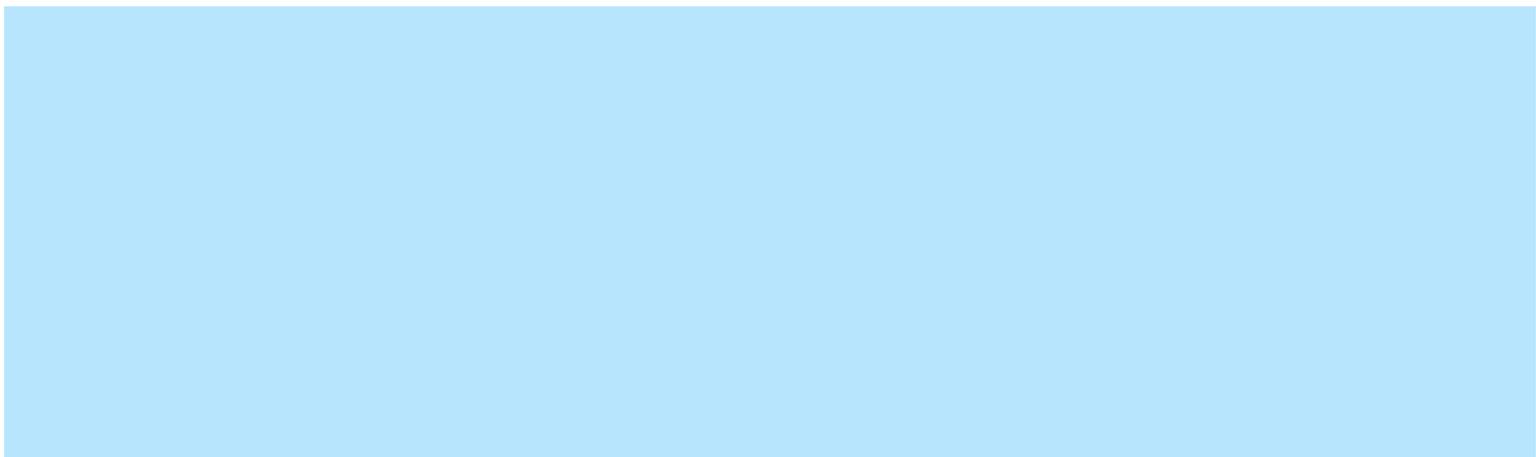# 2

Co-design: How to increase CALD consumer participation & input

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What is Co-design

Co-design is engaging consumers and users of products and services in the design process, with the idea that this will lead to improvements and innovation. Co-design allows staff who are developing programs and/or refining services to test their assumptions with the people who will be the users of these programs or services. This design process happens early in the development of programs, and allows the users to contribute to the direction that the program or service will take.

Consumer participation is at the heart of co-design for the community sector. Broadly, consumer participation allows for the incorporation of consumers in varying degrees of involvement in service planning and delivery.

Benefits

The benefits of co-design are many:

- Giving a community ownership over the programs that they will be involved in, which helps increase the participation rates;

- The client is viewed as a partner, not just a receiver of the program/service;

- Places community members as decision makers, allowing them to shape outcomes of what they need, and how solutions can be achieved;

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

This tool highlights the benefits of a consumer participation approach with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) consumers and communities to program design, and the steps you would take to make this approach a success. It provides guidance around how to work alongside CALD consumers to design appropriate services and programs in a culturally respectful and competent way.

There are two key elements to including CALD consumer voices in the program design process:

1. **Consulting** CALD consumers, and or carers and community groups/ organisations to find out what the unique needs of the community are, and exploring what consumers need out of a service. The appropriate staff team

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would then take the output of this information, and develop/modify a program or service based on the findings from the **consulting** process.

AND

2. **Co-designing** with consumers to design a program or service that directly resonates with the 'end users' of the program. This involves completing step one (the consulting phase), taking this information away and analysing it, then instead of the team developing a program 'back at their desks' from the output of the consultations, they will develop a **co-design model** with selected consumers, where both the staff and consumers design what the program/service should look like together.

Stakeholders

The initial step of consulting the community is important to identify what the needs are. You also need to consider, who you need to consult with, and for what purpose. The roles that a consumer, community leader, or peak body representative will adopt will depend on the context of what service/program you are designing to address a service gap.

Consumer

Consumers are the key people who will be able to provide the best information around what they need out of a service or program. Often the voice of the 'end user' gets pushed to one side in the process of developing a program, or the voice of a consumer gets re-interpreted by consumer advocates or staff working within the particular sector. The person receiving the service, their families and carers are best placed to know what does, and doesn't work for them.

The mediums you can use to identify consumer needs, as well as feedback on existing services that could feed into the re-design of an amended service, could be:

- Surveys;

- Client individual consultations; and

- Consumer focus groups.

Key community stakeholder

Engagement of community stakeholders can provide a more systemic overview of the gaps in service delivery and provide an understanding of issues relating to your area.

Within CALD communities, they can be religious or community leaders, community organisations, larger multicultural organisations, or multicultural peak bodies for example. To get the most out of consulting with key community stakeholders, it is important to investigate who the main 'go to' organisations are for CALD people within your area, and investigate who has built the trust and rapport needed to gather an informed opinion about the needs of the community. You can use individual interviews, roundtables or forums to engage with this group.

Examples of key questions

- What issues are you seeing for CALD individuals with disability who wish to enter the workforce?

- What are their barriers to access?

- Are there any initiatives occurring at a grassroots level regarding these issues that we should be aware of?

- What would you recommend as a best practice model to address these issues?

The consultation phase helps to develop an understanding of the issues and gaps present. It also identifies any grassroots initiatives that you may not have known about.

Communication mediums for consultation

There are various mediums to facilitate consultation with CALD communities through a co-design process, outlined in the following boxes.

Surveys

Benefits

- Surveys can be sent out to clients of a program to assess if current programs are meeting their needs and if there are suggestions for improvement

- The results can be easily quantified as it will be filled out in a written format (or electronic)

- The measures can be somewhat controlled through the consistency of the question set

Considerations

- Thought needs to be given to who and where the person would be filling out the survey. If their written English skills are poor, then they may not fill out the survey or fill it in incorrectly. If someone else if filling out the survey for them, then you are not collecting the views of the actual client

- You may need to translate the survey, and this needs to be budgeted for

- A bilingual caseworker or interpreter may need to verbally translate, and consideration needs to be made around resources for this

- There may not be any incentive for the client (or carer) to complete a survey. A caseworker will be needed to explain the purpose and aims of the survey in a clear manner, without the client feeling pressured into completing it

Community Consultations

Benefits

Community consultations may be a good way to obtain qualitative information regarding the needs of a particular community

Consulting a community around what the needs are can deliver a detailed insight into cultural considerations to be taken into account within your sector

Considerations

The person facilitating the community consultations will need to be skilled in culturally responsive communication skills

Language needs must be taken into account. Is there a need for an interpreter or bilingual worker?

The approach will differ dependent on who is in the room. If you are consulting with service providers, then it is reasonable that you would use acronyms and jargon that everyone in the room is familiar with

Focus Groups

Benefits

Focus groups can be an efficient way to elicit input from a group of people regarding a service or program. They may include a range of stakeholders

Can be a more efficient way to garner views of a few voices, and is usually limited to about 8 participants, as it is a more intimate collection of people as opposed to larger community consultation forums.

Considerations

Consideration needs to be made around privacy concerns. In some cultures, there may a prevalence of stigma around certain issues which may make participants unlikely to share their stories

Think about the appropriateness of the focus group, and the likelihood of participants becoming distressed through the process – e.g. if discussing topics relating to disability, ageing or loss

Individual Client Consultations

Benefits

- Client feedback can be gathered either formal or informally (i.e. gathered through regular appointments in an unstructured way, or for a targeted aim), and can also be used to re-design programs on a smaller scale (as opposed to the co-design process which is a more nuanced way to work with the client to re-design programs)

- Individual consultations can be flexible, and fit in with a client and caseworker's appointment schedule

- If the individual consultation is organised and delivered by a caseworker or other staff member that the client has established good rapport and trust with, then there is a higher chance that the information gathered would be fruitful

- The individual consultation could also be delivered in language if there are bilingual staff available

Considerations

- Consent to participate in a feedback session needs to be obtained

- Individual feedback must be collected at an appropriate time, i.e. when all other urgent client matters or health issues have been addressed for example

- Client and/or carers need to understand how their feedback will be used, and this needs to be explained in a clear and succinct way, using an interpreter or a bilingual worker if the client does not speak English

- As in the survey section, it is important that the client / client does not feel forced into providing feedback, and instead need to give informed consent for this activity to occur

- Cultural issues will need to be considered, for example a client may not feel as though they can be open about their feedback if their feedback is negative. Ensure that the client feels comfortable, and is again reminded of the purpose of the consultation

- There may not be any incentive for the client (or carer) to complete a survey. A caseworker will be needed to explain the purpose and aims of the survey in a clear manner, without the client feeling pressured into completing it

What you need to know

You can think about the co-design process as a more nuanced way to engage and incorporate the client voice within the structure of the service or program.
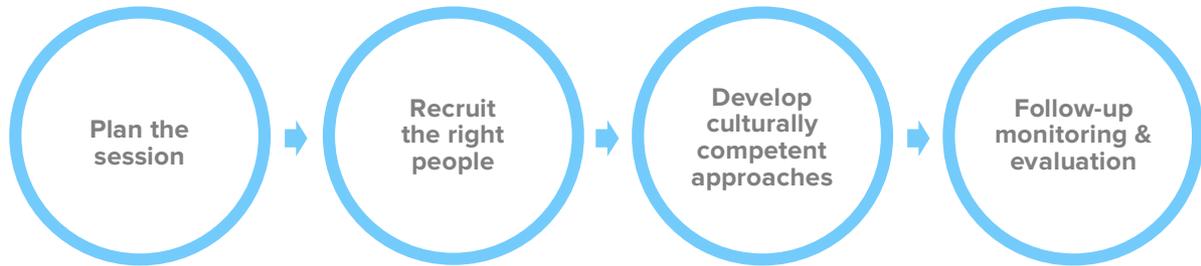
Before starting a co-design activity with recipients and/or carers of your service, it is important that you have:

- Completed a data and demographic analysis of your current and potential client base;

- Be very clear on *why* you are involving clients in the co-design process;

- Ensure that the person facilitating any co-design sessions has the necessary skills to conduct the session. You can look in-house to staff members who have the experience, knowledge and community connections needed for the session, or employ someone externally who has the relevant skills.

Some benefits to this approach include:

- The potential for more meaningful positive client outcomes and appropriately designed programs and services as consumers are engaged with the process right from the beginning;

- The development of long lasting relationships with the communities you wish to engage and connect with;

- Contributing to building the capacity of individuals within communities to harness and grow their analytical and problem-solving skills;

- Taking a truly strengths-based approach to client service delivery through tapping into the array of skills and knowledge that clients and carers possess to innovatively contribute to the viability and responsiveness of the program you are working in.

What you need to do

| Plan the session | → | Recruit the right people | → | Develop culturally competent approaches | → | Follow-up monitoring & evaluation |

1. Plan the session

Before beginning the process, it is important to understand that this approach to co-design relates to working with consumers as partners to design a service or program. It also identifies barriers or needs of the community to establish service requirements.

There are considerations to take into account before the process of co-design with CALD communities. These include:

- Thinking about developing the information required for that level of participation;

- Pre-planning sessions with participants to prepare them for the co-design process, and to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge needed to make a meaningful contribution. This would include explaining acronyms, or understanding their commitment to ongoing participation, for example.

2.Recruitment

To recruit the right people for your co-design activity, it is important to consider the different stakeholders you can work with to build programs and/or services.

- Speak with community leaders

- Recruit from your client base where possible

- Plan for incentives for participation

- Use interpreters or bilingual staff

- Choose easily accessible venues where people visit

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3. Develop culturally competent approaches

During the process of conducting a co-design workshop, it is important that trust and rapport is established from the beginning. Any pre-planning sessions are an important first step in building this. Pre-planning will also help you determine who needs more assistance or guidance throughout the process.

What can work is taking the consumer through the journey of what an appropriate service looks like for them. Questions can be asked along the way, such as – 'what can the service do to be welcoming? What elements of the service/program are critical to you achieving what you want to achieve? What would that look like?

Other essential considerations are:

- Ensure participants have an informed understanding of the process, and capacity to participate;

- Allow enough time for the sessions;

- Avoid jargon or acronyms where possible;

- Consider whether the content will be culturally sensitive to some participants;

- Think about creating exercises with visual cues, or more interactive forms of interaction. Asking participants how they feel most comfortable expressing themselves is a good indicator around what approach to take. Visual cues can be useful if English proficiency is low. Symbols that convey meaning can be used (for example having a picture of a happy face that would symbolise positivity). Be mindful that there is a balance between using visual cues and symbols to convey meaning without being patronising or too simplistic.

4. Follow-up

- If promising to provide feedback and follow-up to participants, ensure this happens to facilitate trust between the organisation and participants and close the feedback loop;

- Ensure that appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of the program;

- Be aware of consultation fatigue, and make sure follow-up with participants who have expressed the desire and skill to continue in the design process takes place;

- Consider the creation of a panel of people who are interested in being called on for ongoing involvement;

- Collect consumer feedback after the process has finished. For example, discovering whether consumers felt comfortable in participating and if not, why not?

The follow up and evaluation processes that you undertake should be in line with existing program and business cycles. You could build into your service planning that an evaluation be undertaken at the end of the program. You could also imbed staff feedback processes during program delivery to iron out any issues affecting the delivery of the program in a timely manner.

Tips for good practice

When 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 extra time during the session;

- Think about innovative ways to communicate with the community. This could involve using case studies, storytelling and using picture/photo messages to convey meaning;

- It would be important for the person conducting a session to have a good understanding 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 important to be mindful of the capacity of a person's commitment, and to be aware of potential barriers to participation.