

# TOOL: Co-designing a plan for cultural diversity

This tool will help you to successfully co-design plans. It includes:

- how to work in partnership with culturally diverse consumers
- how to design appropriate services and programs that are culturally respectful and competent.

Two key considerations when including culturally diverse consumers in the program design process are:

- **consult** with culturally diverse users and community groups/organisations to identify and understand the needs of the target audience and how the service can meet those needs. The consultation will help you develop or modify plans.
- **co-design** with users to ensure the service resonates with the target audience. Complete consultations and analyse the results. Develop your approach with selected users and staff so they design the program or service together.

## Benefits of the co-design approach

- improved user/consumer experience and outcomes, and appropriately designed services/programs
- building long-term relationships with the user/consumer base
- accessing the skills and knowledge of the user/consumer to contribute to the success of a service/program.

## Identify the needs of your target audience

Consulting service users, consumers and communities should be the first step to identifying the needs of your target audience. Consider why and whom you should consult.

Users/consumers are the key people who can provide the most useful information about their needs for your service/program.

The user's voice may be misinterpreted by advocates or pushed to the side during the design process. But users know best what is needed from a service/program and how it can reach them.



The ways you can identify user needs or collect feedback on existing services/programs include:

- surveys
- user/consumer individual consultations
- consumer focus groups.

**Key community stakeholders** can also tell you about gaps in service delivery and help you understand the issues in your industry/sector.

Stakeholders can include religious or community leaders, community organisations, ethno-specific organisations, larger multicultural organisations, or multicultural peak bodies.

Identify which organisations have the most contact with the consumers you are trying to reach. Additionally, consider the trust and rapport the organisation has within the target communities. One-on-one interviews, roundtables or forums are ways to engage with these groups.

### Methods for consultation

Method	Benefits	Considerations
<b>Surveys</b>	<p>Surveys can be sent out to users/consumers of a program/service to assess if it meets their needs and identify areas for improvement</p> <p>Results can be easily quantified</p> <p>Measures can be somewhat controlled through the consistency of the question set.</p>	<p>Consider who will complete the survey and where</p> <p>Surveys may be completed incorrectly or not at all due to poor English literacy skills. If someone else completes the survey for the user/consumer you may not collect their actual views</p> <p>Budget may be needed to translate the survey</p> <p>Interpreters may be needed to verbally translate</p>

		There may not be any incentive for the user/consumer to complete a survey.
<b>Community consultations</b>	<p>Qualitative data about the needs of the target audience can be obtained</p> <p>A deeper understanding of cultural considerations within your sector can develop</p> <p>Can be smaller focus groups or larger forum style consultations.</p>	<p>The facilitator needs to have culturally competent communication skills</p> <p>An interpreter may be needed if the community has language challenges</p> <p>Different stakeholders require different approaches</p> <p>Consider if it is appropriate to use acronyms and jargon as not everyone may be familiar with the terms.</p>
<b>Individual user/consumer consultations</b>	<p>Feedback can be obtained formally or informally depending on the service/program and can also be used to re-design services/programs on a smaller scale</p> <p>It is flexible and fits in with both the participant's and your schedules</p> <p>When there is trust or rapport between the person conducting the consultation and the participant, more useful information can be collected.</p>	<p>The participant must not feel forced into providing feedback. Consent must be obtained to participate in a feedback session</p> <p>Must be understood how feedback will be used through clear and succinct explanations with an interpreter if necessary</p> <p>Cultural issues will need to be considered. For example, a user/consumer may not be comfortable providing negative feedback</p> <p>Ensure that the user/consumer feels comfortable and clear about the consultation purpose.</p>



## What you need to know about co-design

Consider the co-design approach as a more nuanced method of engagement that incorporates the user/consumer voice within the service/program structure.

Before starting a co-design activity, it is important to:

- have a data and demographic analysis of your current and potential user/consumer base
- be clear on why users/consumers are involved in the co-design process
- ensure that the facilitator of co-design sessions has the necessary skills to conduct the session. You can look in-house for staff members who have the experience, knowledge and community connections needed, or employ someone externally who has the relevant skills.

## What you need to do

### Plan the session

At the beginning of the co-design approach, it is important to consider:

- developing the information needed to engage your users/consumers
- preparing them for the co-design process and ensuring they have the appropriate information to make meaningful contributions. This would include explaining acronyms/jargon or understanding their commitment to ongoing participation.

### Examples of key questions

- what issues do you see for CALD individuals in the area of this service/program?
- what are their barriers to access?
- are there any initiatives you have seen related to these issues that we should be aware of?
- what would you recommend as a best practice model to address these issues?

### Recruit the right people

Consider the different stakeholders to recruit the right people for the co-design activity:

- speak with community leaders/organisations
- recruit from your user/consumer base where possible



- plan incentives for participation
- use interpreters or bilingual staff
- choose easily accessible venues and times where people tend to meet.

### **Develop culturally competent approaches**

Build trust with participants from the beginning of the co-design process. Pre-planning sessions are an important first step. They will also identify who may need more assistance during the process.

Questions can help you understand what an appropriate service would look like, 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?

Ensure participants understand the co-design process and have the capacity to participate:

- allow enough time for the sessions
- avoid using jargon or acronyms
- consider whether the content will be culturally sensitive
- think about creating exercises with visual cues, or more interactive forms. This is particularly useful when participants have low English language proficiency
- ask participants how they prefer to express themselves to inform what approach to take.

### **Follow up**

The follow-up and evaluation processes should be in line with existing program and business cycles. Staff feedback can be embedded during program delivery to address issues impacting the service/program.

- provide any feedback and follow-up that was promised to participants to build trust with stakeholders and close the feedback loop
- assess the effectiveness of the program through appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

- follow-up with participants who have expressed interest in continued consultation but be aware of consultation fatigue
- consider creating a panel of people who are interested in being called on for ongoing involvement
- on completing the co-design process, collect consumer feedback.

### **Tips for best practice**

- good communication is essential to achieving positive outcomes
- during the consultation, use language that participants can understand, or explain specific language and jargon
- be clear about the purpose of the activity
- allow extra time during the session
- consider creative ways to communicate with participants such as case studies, storytelling, videos and picture/photo messages to convey meaning
- be aware of stakeholders' capacity if they are required to take part in the co-design process on a continual basis and consider potential barriers to participation.