

Fundamentals of Co-design - 1

Frequently asked questions

“Co-design is more than a process. It is a Social Movement focussed on challenging and changing inequitable power structures. Designing with not for people.”

Beyond Sticky notes. By Kelly Ann McKercher.

The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System (RCVMHS) has highlighted the importance of building mental health and AOD capacity in co-production and co-delivery processes with consumers and carers.

Are Co-Production and Co-design the same thing?

Co-design is one part of the Co-production process. Co-production involves four phases: Co-planning, Co-design, Co-delivery, Co-Evaluation. An excellent resource to learn more about co-production is ‘Co-Production putting principles into practice in the mental health context’ by Cath Roper, Flick Grey and Emma Cadogan. It is an easy read we have provided the link below.

https://healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/3392215/Coproductio_n_putting-principles-into-practice.pdf

We have good relationships with our Lived Experience workforce and they come to all our meetings. Isn’t that co-design?

Co-design and co-production are much more than having collaborative relationships. In authentic co-design that will lead to genuine system change it is about placing those most impacted by the issue, project or service that is being developed at the centre, preferencing their voices and being guided by them.

“Collaborative relationships between individual consumers and professionals (such as health professionals) in a service delivery context should not be described as co-production.” (Roper et al, p. 2)

What is the biggest barrier to authentic co-design?

In all co-production or co-design work the biggest barrier for moving forward is not addressing power. It is particularly vital to address power when attempting co-design or co-production in mental health services.

If we are to implement the genuine reforms the RCVMHS has laid out then we need to acknowledge the power that people employed by mental health services or agencies have over consumers and survivors who access their services along with their carers, families and supporters.

We can do this by:

- Ensuring those most impacted have agency and are supported to actively participate,
- Having greater numbers of people with a lived experience in the co-design teams,
- Paying lived experience members for their time, providing them with training and with the resources to participate

These are just a few ways. I am sure you can come up with many more ways.

EQUALISING POWER - Reflective ideas & questions an article by Indigo Daya and TACSI will hopefully help you dive a little deeper into power. This is in your 'Intro into co-design' pack. If you don't have a copy please email codesign@cmhl.org.au and request one.

How can we do authentic co-design on such short timelines?

Short timelines can often make co-design tokenistic, and no one wants that.

What we have found helpful is to organise think tanks or brainstorming sessions with those most directly impacted by issue. An example would be if you are having to develop a carer service, we would advise that you organise two separate groups of carers and you ask them what have been the issues for them in the past, what are the issues currently, and what might they be into the future?

Then ask what their vision is for a carers service. What are the values that they see underpinning the service? What would they like to see offered from the service? These are just a few examples.

At minimum use that information to guide your service development and out of respect for their participation inform them how the information they provided was incorporated into the development of a carers service. We need to be accountable to those most impacted.

This is just a beginning. A work plan as to how and when you are going to roll out co-design and the steps you are going to do this is also helpful.

Resources

CMHL Co-design intro pack, which includes

https://healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/3392215/Coproductio_n_putting-principles-into-practice.pdf

[2020-Leading-the-Change-Report \(Full Report\).pdf](#)

[Authentic Engagement, Indigo Daya, Bridget Hamilton, Cath Roper.pdf](#)

[Equalising Power: reflective questions.pdf](#)

Recommended book reading

Kelly Ann McKercher: Beyond Sticky Notes, Co-design for Real: mindsets, methods and movements 2020 ISBN 978-0-6487875-0-1

YouTube talk

Keynote talk by Indigo Daya at the 10th World Hearing Voices congress.

<https://youtu.be/6qU6wuc6ql0>

Thank you from

Deb Carlon and the CMHL co-design team May 2022

If you require further information, please email

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