Creating a Theory of Change

Towards a future of inclusion

INCLUSION

Acknowledgements

Creating the Future of Inclusion

Introduction

This booklet is written for people with intellectual disability who want to speak up to make positive changes in their communities.

This booklet can also be used by organisations, supporters or people who want to support people with intellectual and learning disability to work together on a Theory of Change. This could be to respond to an idea, a challenge or to design a project. It is a practical guide and uses the examples from working through the process with a group of self-advocates, to ensure that it is led by people with intellectual disability and built on the foundations of co-design.

This approach aims for genuine engagement with people with disability by building in their active participation early in the project. We recommend that this engagement continues, is resourced and built into the project where possible.

People who speak up for themselves are called self advocates.

You may want to speak up so people in your community learn how to make it easier for people with intellectual disability to participate in community activities, volunteer or paid work.

It is a good idea to work with other self advocates to make positive changes.

Often we do this together in a group workshop.

In a workshop it is important to decide together

- what you want to change;
- what you need to do to make changes.

This is called a plan.

A plan can be used to keep track of your progress and to seek funding.

What we will cover in this booklet

This booklet shows you how you can work together to make a plan for what you want to do differently.

We use an approach called the **Theory of Change**. We will

- Explain what Theory of Change is;

- Give you ideas about how to run a Theory of Change workshop with others;

- Provide an example of a workshop you could use.

Who we are

This booklet has been developed by

- Queensland Disability Network;

- Community Services Industry Alliance;

- The Australian Centre for Social Innovation.

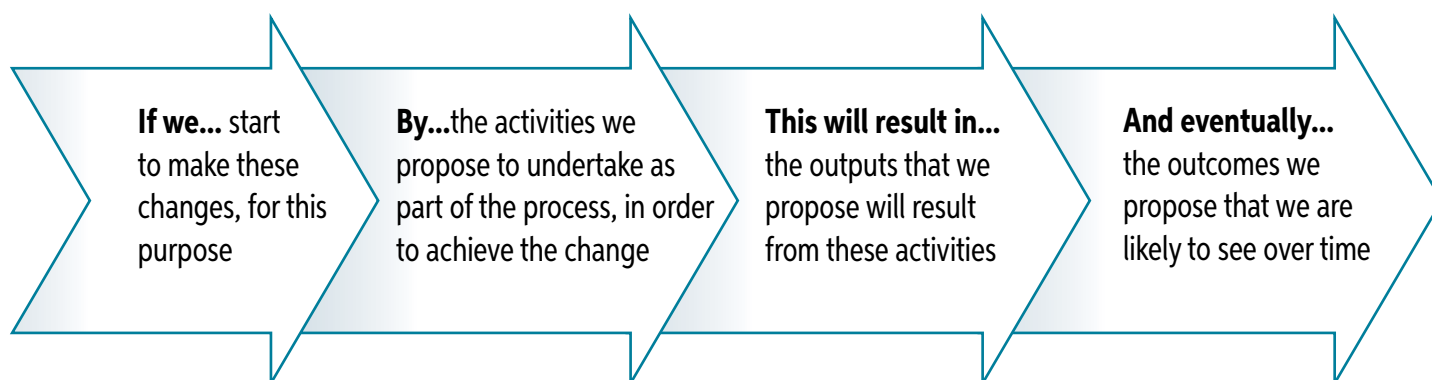We held a workshop alongside self advocates with intellectual disability.

Together we all shared our ideas.

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change helps people and groups plan to make changes.

It is a step by step story about

- What the change is you wish to create;

- Why this change is needed and;

- How you intend to create the change.

If we... start to make these changes, for this purpose	**By...**the activities we propose to undertake as part of the process, in order to achieve the change	**This will result in...** the outputs that we propose will result from these activities	**And eventually...** the outcomes we propose that we are likely to see over time

The Theory of Change helps people and groups

- Think about how to create change.

- See how each activity is linked to what we want to achieve in the short term and in relation to broader goals.

- Build a shared view so we are all working together.

- Strengthen our determination to make change happen.

- Make decisions.

- Feel inspired to contribute to the achievement of a broad goal.
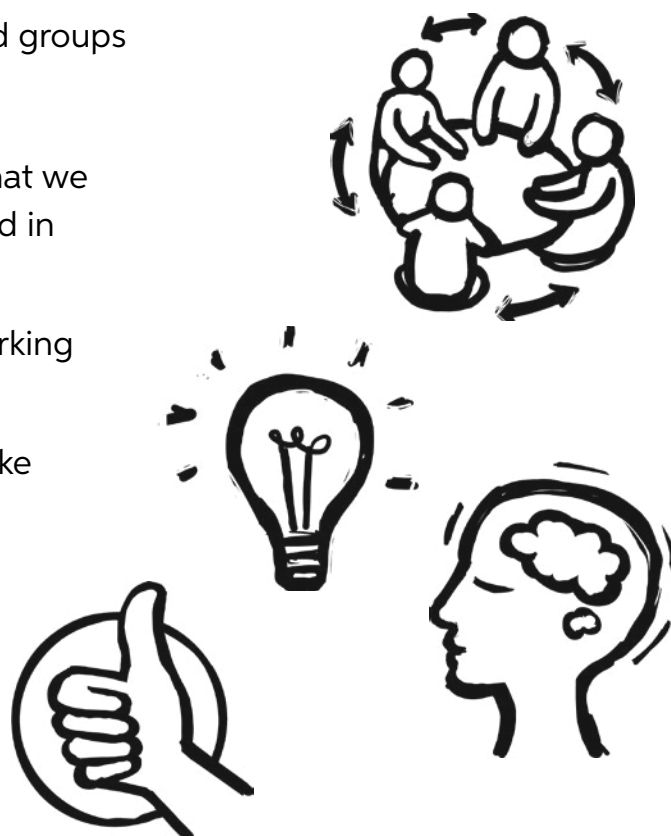
Tips

The Challenge

- is what is happening now and is a problem or issue that we want to change

Activities Do, Do, Do

- these are the actions/ things we can do to help get to the big goal

Results

- the changes we see because we have done/ implemented the Do, Do, Do

The Broad Goal

- is the solution to the challenge – it's saying this is where we want to get to into the future

The Theory of Change begins with a challenge, issue or problem we are seeking to change.

Then we decide what the broad goal is we want to achieve.

Then we look at each of the steps we need to complete to move toward our big goal.

A Theory of Change is a series of steps about how we might address a significant challenge and what our goal is in doing so.

Planning for Theory of Change workshop(s)

We designed a Theory of Change workshop to help self advocates with intellectual disability come together to

- learn to speak up more on important issues

- ensure they are being listened to

- make a plan for change.

Self advocates with intellectual disability helped us design the workshop.

They told us the following things are important to help them participate well in a Theory of Change workshop:

- Create a Safe Environment

- Be respectful of all ideas

- Make it fun

- Have small-group activities so people feel more confident to talk and share back to the larger group

- Include activities that involve play and games or physical activities

- Include options to draw answers

- Include drama and role-playing

- Make sure we have breaks, refreshment and food!

We tested our workshop and activities to get feedback so people are able to participate well in the workshop.

The suggestions we received are provided here.

Making it real:

The theory of change can be difficult to explain.

A simple way we used to describe the theory of change is to use a metaphor.

The metaphor we use is dominoes.

Each action will affect the next action that can help you achieve your goals.

This is like dominos falling, one after another.

For your workshop you may wish to build a set of giant dominoes out of cardboard.

Each domino is labelled with clear headings to indicate the different parts of a Theory of Change:

- Activities: DO, DO, DO

- Quick Changes

- Results

- Big Goal

The dominoes can be made to any size you like.

You may want to vary your sizes so that the big goal is larger.

You may also like to use an object to highlight the challenge or issue you are trying to 'solve' at the front of the dominoes. A safety cone is something we used.

Here are plans and materials needed to create dominoes.

Techniques + Tools for Engagement

Using the Theory of Change approach can be difficult to explain in a group.

We use other tools to help make the process fun, engaging, participatory and accessible to all.

Below are some ideas for engaging people in a workshop to build their own theory of change.

Visual Tools + Murals

Using pictures and drawings rather than just talking about ideas

Encouraging people to share their ideas by drawing themselves

Using a picture as a metaphor can help to structure the Theory of Change.

For example the members of our group chose the metaphor of crossing a sea or river to get to a new island,

- Upgrading from a canoe in the early days, to a cruise-liner in the later stages,

- As the strength of their activities grew, they could include more people.

Other visuals can be used for activity sheets throughout the Theory of Change workshop that can be included in the final mural.

Some examples of worksheets and a blank mural are included here.
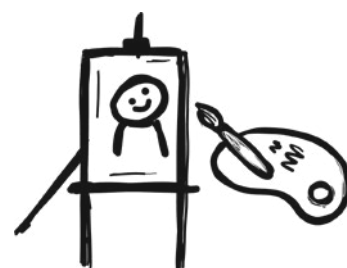
Blank example of a Theory of Change mural

Role-plays + Drama

Role-plays can show what is happening now or help try out possible activities that could lead to outcomes when building a Theory of Change.

In our workshop we asked participants to develop a role play about a time that showed why we need self-advocates

This helped us to complete the 'challenge / problem' part of the Theory of Change.

After each performance the audience was asked to reflect on the key message in the story.

This was recorded to form part of the story for the Theory of Change.

Stories + Story Tools

Like drama, story-telling can help to bring both issues and outcomes to life.

We used some storytelling cards as an example to show how a Theory of Change can link challenges, activities and outcomes.

The example we used relates to the growing number of people who are getting heavier and more unfit.

Each story telling card shows a part of a Theory of Change.

The first card is the challenge or problem.

We then asked people in the group to match the different cards to the dominoes that names different parts of a Theory of Change.

We also asked people to draw ideas they had about other activities to deal with the problem of people putting on weight.

This led to other potential activities that we could add to the Theory of Change.

This is an example of how you can put the cards together into a Theory of Change to help people understand each part.

| The Challenge	The Do, Do, Do	The Results	The Big Goal
People eat too much fast food	Help people to cook healthy, easy meals	Less health problems from weight + poor fitness	Healthier lifestyles leads to better well-being

Other potential tools and methods

The self-advocates also made some other suggestions for the workshop.

- **Games** that involved people in teamwork;

- **Art and drawing** – so people:

    - could draw their ideas if they wanted.

    - add to the Theory of Change mural.

- **Music** – you could involve everyone in writing a short song to a well known tune or write a poem.
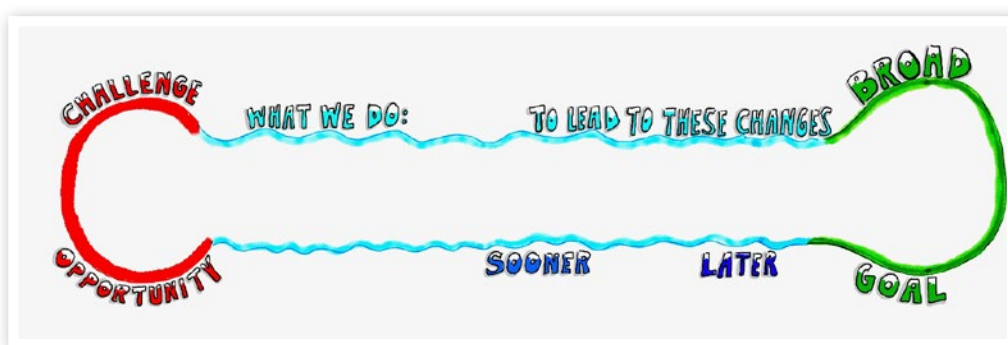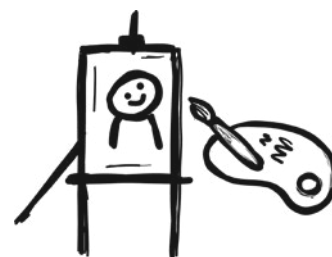
Holding your own workshop

Preparation

Before holding a Theory of Change workshop it is best to meet with some or all of the participants to

- discuss the purpose of the workshop

- ask them what would help them participate well

This helps people feel they are involved from the beginning and their ideas are important.

On the following page we have provided a sample workshop outline.

It is a good idea to find people who have run groups before to help mentor and assist you the first time.

You can make changes to this sample workshop.

Example Workshop Outline

Opening

Acknowledgement of Country + Welcome

Identify someone to do the acknowledgement of country and welcome people to the workshop

10 mins

Check-in

Some warm up introduction questions for each group participant

Your name ....

What has brought you here today? ....

What self-advocacy means to me ....

15 mins

What is a Theory of Change?

Talk about what the Theory of Change is.

Identify someone to provide an introduction to Theory of Change.

- Giant Dominoes – explain how each part of the Theory of Changes links to the other parts, and how they work towards the 'big goal'

- Theory of Change Story Cards (download from https://bit. ly/2KID2h1) -

- In small groups work out which cards align to each of the parts of the Theory of Change

- Theory of Change Song (download from https://bit.ly/2KXgq8G)

30 mins

Starting with the problem / challenge

Someone to introduce the role plays.

Role plays: why do we need self advocates?

Develop a role-play around a time that shows us why we need self-advocates.

Then reflect on the moral of the story to draw out the issues, problems and challenges.

Someone to record this and all the sections below on the large Theory of Change Mural.

30 mins

What is our Big Goal?

Ask the group to imagine the future and their big goal.

In small groups we describe this future world

- What would be different?

- What is this world like?

- What should we aim for boldly?

Someone records this so that it can be added to the mural.

20 mins

Do, Do, Do: What do we need to do to get there?

Everyone draws pictures of what we need to do to get to our broad goal.

One activity per page.

Vote with dots to get those activities everyone thinks are most important.

30 mins

Results: Short Term and Long term

Use the boats to symbolise a progression of results

- the quick changes, and the longer-term changes…
- how we know we are getting closer to the goals.

Stick all these on the dominoes, and then agree if they demonstrate the domino effect.

30 mins

Check-out

Share in the circle -

- One thing you learnt today, and
- one thing you're looking forward to working on from our Theory of Change

Presenting back and seeking feedback about the Theory of Change

Check with the group you have recorded or drawn all the important points from the workshop

If you haven't been able to do this in the session you can do this later.

You could send all the information to participants to check, confirm, challenge or change your recording.

This is an important step to ensure that the group 'owns' the Theory of Change.

There are two ways you can give this feedback:

- In pictures
- Using text.

Using your Theory of Change

A Theory of Change should be a useful, public document or picture that is referred to actively and often.

It can be used for grant applications to seek funding or to help groups with a plan for a big idea and for turning it into action

Therefore it is important for everyone to have a sense of ownership over it, and be able to see and reflect back how their actions over time relate to it.

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