

National Community Consultation Program

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BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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“Lived experience, alongside clinical, professional, industry and academic experience is fundamental for co-producing service improvement.”

Guiding principle agreed at the inaugural Lived Experience Advisory Board, meeting October 2017

Introduction

The Australian Government Department of Health provided funding to InnoWell Pty Ltd for the conduct of Project Synergy to ensure the further development and refinement of the InnoWell Platform and support the conduct of a series of trials validating its effectiveness. The InnoWell Platform aims to support the delivery of right care, at the right time. InnoWell recognizes that the voice of lived experience must be heard and included as we explore how digital products and engagement might change the way people experience their mental health care and well-being and what people really want in mental health reform.

21st Century mental health service reform requires 21st Century community participation. Through Project Synergy, InnoWell is committed to redefining how people with a lived experience of mental health are involved in the co-design of research, digital products and services. While research regarding the benefits and importance of community engagement varies, several key opportunities are commonly identified for organisations that demonstrate meaningful community consultation and engagement. Among these are:

- **Increase in the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted.** People who participate in these community consultation and engagement processes show significant commitment to help make the projects happen.
- **Creating more effective solutions.** Drawing on local knowledge from a diverse group creates solutions that are practical and effective.
- **Empowering and integrating people from different backgrounds.** When people from different areas of the community work together, they often find that they have much in common.
- **Creating local networks of community members.** The more people who know what is going on and who are willing to work toward a goal, the more likely a community is to be successful in reaching its goals.
- **Creating several opportunities for discussing concerns.** Regular, on-going discussions allow people to express concerns before problems become too big or out of control.
- **Increasing trust in organisations and governance.** Working together improves communication and understanding. Knowing what government, community citizens and leaders, and organizations can and cannot do may reduce future conflict.

(Adapted from Bassler, A. et al., "[Developing Effective Citizen Engagement: A How-to Guide for Community Leaders.](#)" Center for Rural America, 2008)

There has been great focus on projects that facilitate approaches for effectively translating community-based interventions in public health and prevention into widespread practice at the community level. The common characteristics of successful community-institutional partnerships for prevention research listed below can be applied to all community consultation and engagement activities but apply particularly for co-design approaches.

1. Trusting relationships
2. Equitable processes and procedures
3. Diverse membership
4. Tangible benefits to all partners
5. Balance between partnership process, activities and outcomes
6. Significant community involvement in scientifically sound research
7. Supportive organizational policies and reward structures
8. Leadership at multiple levels
9. Culturally competent and appropriately skilled staff and researchers
10. Collaborative dissemination
11. Ongoing partnership assessment, improvement and celebration
12. Sustainable impact

(Adapted from From Sarena D. Seifer. 2006 Building and Sustaining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research: Findings from a National Collaborative. Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine doi:10.1007/s11524-006-9113-y)

Importantly, InnoWell is committed to redefining how people with a lived experience are involved in the development and design of digital mental health products, services and research. This commitment is shown in the Project Synergy National Community Consultation Program led by lived experience to explore and gain insight into the overarching question.

How might digital products and engagement change the way people experience their mental health care and wellbeing?

This document sets out the approach to realising the benefits of meaningful community consultation by ensuring the characteristics for success are embedded in the InnoWell Lived Experience Advisory Function (LEAF) model and National Community Consultation Co-design Framework and translating these into a meaningful National Community Consultation Program (NCCP). Importantly the NCCP will be evaluated under the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Project Synergy, conducted by the Social Policy Research Centre from the University of New South Wales.

Objectives

The immediate goals of delivering on the needs of Project Synergy include engaging and supporting a community network of lived experience to inform the building and implementation of the Platform. In the longer term, this program can inform mental health service reform using technology as a vehicle. It is only by understanding as many views of the Australian community that we can support the delivery of better long-term outcomes for people, families and services – ‘right care, at the right time’.

Specifically, the rich tapestry of lived experience inputs gathered via the conduct of the consultation activities will be fed back through the co-design framework and into one of four streams of outcomes:

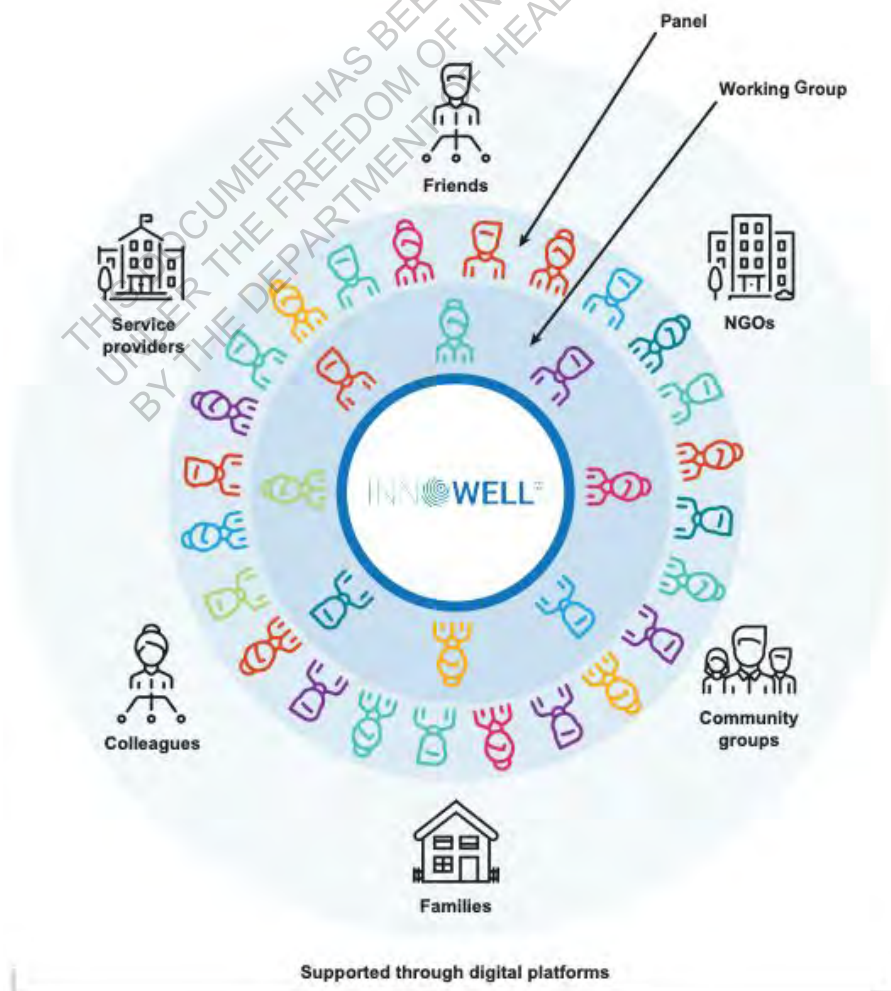
- Digital product development (improvements, enhancements and/or new features)
- Implementation related service level improvements
- InnoWell governance, process and procedures improvements
- Presentations, reports or publications that contribute to the broader mental health policy reform agenda

The National Community Consultation Model

The InnoWell LEAF model and National Community Consultation Co-design Framework underpin the NCCP activities.

The LEAF model is a collaboratively refined model of engagement to better support co-design. The LEAF is made up of a diverse group of lived experience champions. They work together to identify current and emerging issues while sharing advice, guidance and recommendations to InnoWell and Project Synergy from a lived experience (LE) perspective (see below LEAF Model).

Figure 1: LEAF Model



This model of engagement and framework was co-developed during Phase I of Project Synergy in order to produce genuinely LE designed and led engagement activities that operate alongside the trials, thus maximizing potential to provide input into Project Synergy activities, while ensuring meaningful engagement with people within the mental health space.

Importantly, Project Synergy will provide opportunity for an evaluation of this model assessing its financial viability, as well as its ability to operationalise meaningful lived experience engagement that covers a broad range of diversity (See below National Community Consultation Co-Design Framework).

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Key features and approach

Our NCCP is led by lived experience and utilizes a co-design framework, including both digital and face-to-face strategies with individuals with a lived experience of mental ill health and the support network of people with a lived experience of mental ill health, to allow us to optimise diversity, reach and inclusion and ensure a rich tapestry of experience and input. The program aims to advance knowledge, challenge assumptions and test hypotheses.

The approach to community consultation and engagement are listed below.

1. Recruitment of participants via channels appropriate to the engagement method, including where suitable, news and social media, communities and networks of LEAF members, sector and stakeholder engagement.
2. Providing a digital platform to support communications, consultation and engagement with the community and stakeholders for the digital strategy #drivingchange.
3. National face-to-face workshop-based consultations and community engagement activities strategically located across Australia.

How the voice of lived experience supports and drives the NCCP activities

The voice of lived experience is embedded in each stage of the co-design framework that guides the NCCP and utilises a six-step process:

Step 1 - Gather questions: Contribute to and collate the questions that will form the focus of community consultations.

Step 2 - Develop discovery intent: Participate in areas specific to their areas of expertise and experience.

Step 3 - Community engagement and online discovery: Support community engagement activities at appropriate forums/conferences/events.

Step 4 - Making Sense: Support interpretation of community engagement activity findings.

Step 5 - Generating ideas and concepts: Development of appropriate ideas and concepts.

Step 6 - Developing, prototyping and testing: Provide feedback, in resulting prototype development, user testing, or reports.

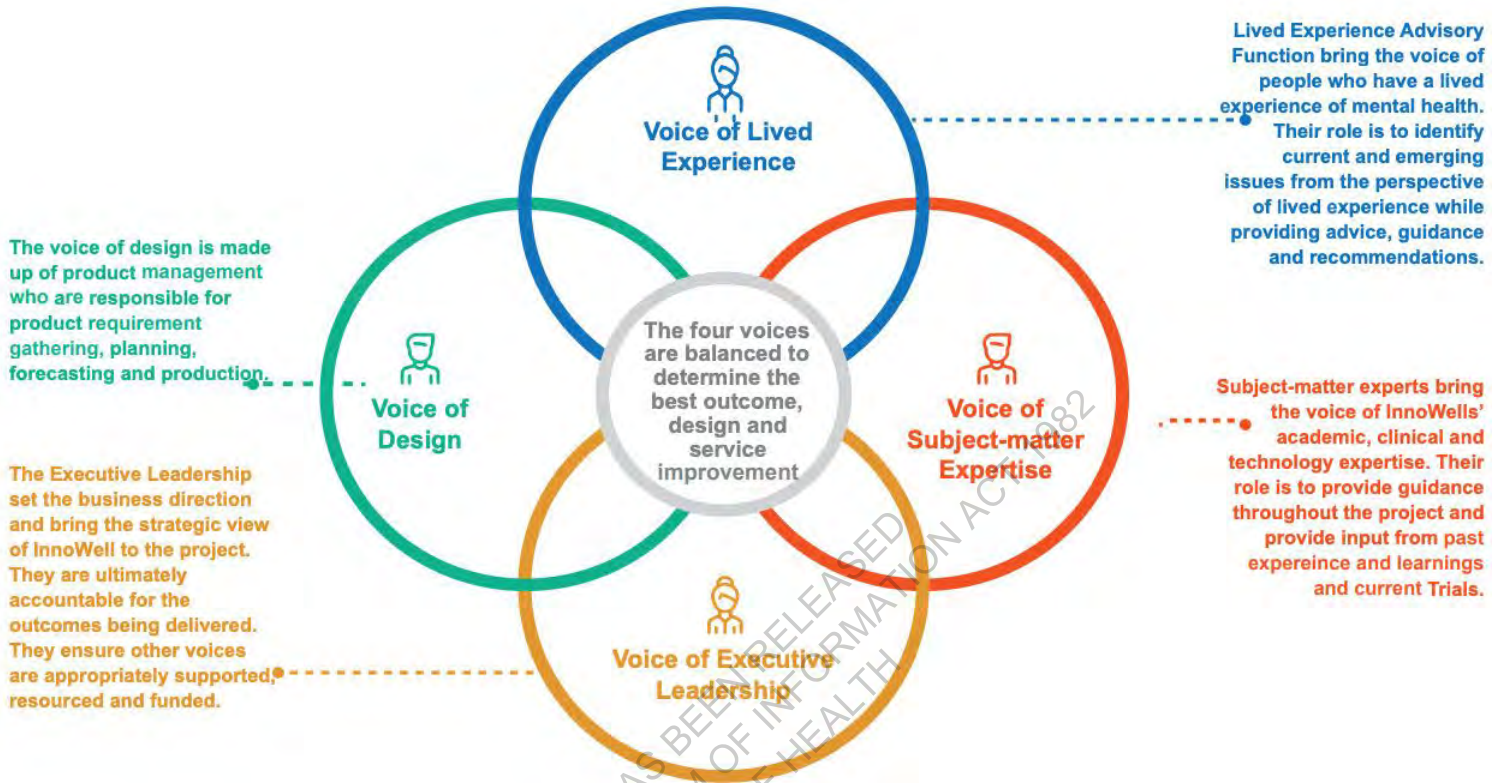
These activities are ongoing throughout the NCCP to develop the engagement intent and approach and provide an opportunity for LEAF members to contribute to the intended objectives and outcomes.

The LEAF Working Group meet monthly over the course of the project and use the co-design model to prioritise and co-develop engagement activities at each phase of the timeline. LEAF Working Group members act as champions and bridges to their communities to maximise reach of the project and in order to bring back the most current information of the views of their communities.

NCCP engagements and questions are prioritised, designed and executed by the LEAF Working Group with the support of the broader Panel. Internal and external facilitators will be utilised in accordance to the needs of the population and the method of engagement.

The figure below shows the different voices and the role of each of these in all codesign activities.

Figure 3: Balancing all voices



Target Audience

The identified community and stakeholders for the NCCP activities includes all Australians. In particular individuals with a lived experience of mental ill health and the support network of people with a lived experience of mental ill health. However, the following priority populations groups will guide recruitment and the digital/ face-to-face strategies:

1. Veteran community (ex-serving and serving personnel as well as their families)
2. Young people
3. Adults through to healthy ageing
4. Young children
5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Priority areas of diversity include:

- Rural, regional, remote locality
- Culturally and linguistically diverse cultures
- Refugees
- Disability
- LGBTIQA+

Guiding Questions

Throughout the NCCP we will be talking to a large and diverse population and generating insights to help guide and inform Project Synergy. This will include exploration of how technology-based solutions could improve mental health and individual experiences of mental health care.

The broad topics that will be explored throughout the engagement activities include:

- What motivates people to use a digital solution?
- What barriers do they face in accessing one?
- What keeps them engaging once they are there?

These will be grouped under these general themes:

- Needs
- Cultural appropriateness
- Accessibility
- Trust
- Stigma
- Accessing service
- Knowledge about services

At every engagement activity, a baseline set of co-developed questions will be asked:

- Have you searched for information on mental health online?
- Have you accessed mental health services?
- Have you experienced barriers to accessing mental health services?
- Would you feel comfortable providing information on your mental health using online tools that only you and a nominated health care provider would have access to?

These answers along with all the other information collected during the engagement will feedback through a co-design framework into four streams of outcome (listed above).

Engagement Methods

The below table describes the foundation principles of the LEAF at InnoWell and they extend to everything that we do as part of the NCCP (Table 1).

Principles of Engagement		
Empathy & Compassion	Patience	Honest
Respect	Active Listening	Understand the best ways to work together
Constructive communication	Equality	Transparency & accountability
Recognition of diversity	Reciprocity	Equity

Table 1. Principles of Engagement

One or more of the following methods of engagement will be utilised for each activity, dependent on stage or phase of the consultation (see Table 2 for summary).

The recruitment strategies for the activities include a mix of the following:

- Social media dissemination
- LEAF member networks and communities
- Sector and stakeholder networks
- other channels tailored to suit the community and target audiences

Digital strategies

- Digital community engagement activities
- Digital engagement surveys, polls or submissions
- Private Online Forums
- Project Synergy Website
- Digital Engagement Platform

National face-to-face consultations

- These in-person workshops will be conducted in a range of locations including urban, rural and remote, trial site populations and other targeted diverse communities

National in-person community engagement events

- These will be conducted in a range of locations including urban, rural and remote, trial site populations and other targeted diverse communities.
- May take the form of workshops, focus groups, 1:1 research interviews, or site visits.

Target Group Engagement Strategies

- An approach to engaging with priority communities has been developed to ensure that appropriate consideration has been given to diverse populations across Australia, as research and experiences highlight the need for a strategy that doesn't undertake an approach of one size fits all.

The key issues to be explored prior to each activity:

- If we engage with this community what's important to know?
- What would successful engagement with this community look like? How would we know it was successful?
- Who do we know/ how could we engage with them?
- What methods are appropriate if we are trying to understand more about this community?

The information will inform, shape and lead the engagement to ensure not only mental health safety but also cultural safety and protocols.

	Method	Rationale	Total Number	Locations	Examples questions and opportunities
Digital engagement	Digital engagement poll questions	Regular engagement with target audiences on LE reform and needs.	Monthly	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does meaningful engagement look like to lived experience? How should LE be involved in the governance and delivery of services? What are the barriers?
	Digital community engagement activities	Answering specific questions from the four voices	8	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running activities concurrently to face to face workshops or events. Specific activities which are promoted via networks and stakeholders. Opportunities for people to see what happened with their initial input and give further input into iterations.
Face to face Consultations	In-person - workshops -site visits -1:1 interviews - focus groups	Facilitated	6	1 x rural remote 1 x Sydney 4 x elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might digital solutions improve the way that people experience their mental health care? Target hard to reach and diverse populations.
Attending existing events/ opportunities	In-person community engagement events	Networking promote community awareness Gather community thoughts, feedback, perspective	6	Depending on timeline and needs of the project	Attending specific community events e.g. STOMP 2018 Veterans Family Day

Table 2. Methods and examples of engagement

Intended Outcomes

Each consultation activity is designed to collect information which feeds back into four key outcome streams

- Product (improvements, enhancements and/or new features) development
- Implementation related service level improvements
- InnoWell governance, process and procedures improvements
- Presentations, reports or publications that contribute to the broader mental health policy reform agenda

A report will be generated for each consultation activity, providing a description of the activity, engagement methods and success and key findings. A final NCCP Program report will be prepared covering all learnings from key activities.

Secondarily, it is anticipated that some of the key learnings that the activities will provide for is:

- An understanding of the Australian community’s perspective on mental health, technology and service reform.
- Increased understanding of the requirements for culturally appropriate and accessible technology.
- An engaged, online lived experience community that are willing to participate in research and add value.
- Identification of potential features/functionality to include as part of the InnoWell Platform and or other eHealth products. eg early 2019 meeting with Department of Health planned to explore potential of Head to Health alignment opportunities.

NCC Activities, Expected Timeframes and Status

Activities	Expected Timeframe and status
Phase 1	
Activity: Build framework, engagement platforms, prep, foundational work. Develop a co-design model for lived experience led national CC framework and commence consultation activities:	March - November 2018 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design sessions LEAF March and June Meetings 	March 2018, June 2018 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of the LEAF and NCC co-design framework 	June - July 2018 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Synergy Steering Committee presentation and input 	August 2018 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting LEAF Working Group to test framework 	September 2018 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft DOH deliverable - foundational work and timeline 	October 2018 Completed
In-Person Community Engagement event (STOMP2018 - VETS)	November 2018 Completed
Social Media Strategy updated to align with NCCP	October - November 2018 Completed
Digital Platforms content developed	September - November 2018 Completed
Submit National Community Consultation Program to DoH	November 2018 Completed

Activities	Expected Timeframe and status
Phase 2	
Run engagement activities alongside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS Trial - Sydney Veteran Community • NCPHN Trial • Butterfly Foundation trial • Product Development Roadmap 	Commenced November 2018
Digital Engagement Poll Questions	Monthly from Dec 2018 Commenced
Social Media strategy	Commenced January 2018
LEAF Working Group meeting diversity workshop activity	February 2018 completed
Digital Community Engagement activities 3X	Commenced March 2018
In-Person Consultations 3X	April - June 2018
In-Person Community Engagement Event 2X	April - May 2018
Phase 2 Summary Report	June 2019
Activities	Expected Timeframe and status
Phase 3	

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