Creative activities conversation starter cards

You can use the creative activities cards to plan or start conversations. If you can think of others, please add your own cards to **The Guide**.

When you are planning activities, note the following:

- The activity examples are given to help get you started.
- Try and find other activities that work for your project and participants.
- Look for activities and ideas that help your participants think in different ways.
- Find ways to change activities to build on the strengths of your participants.

Getting to know each other

Community

An activity to build relationships and find common connections.

Steps:

- Break the group up into pairs
- Invite participants to discuss a question. Some examples could be:
  - What does community mean to you? What does community feel like?
  - Why is this co-design project important to you? What do you want to give to the project?
- Invite people to share (if they are comfortable) what they learned from each other.
- Make sure you leave plenty of time. Don't rush conversations.

Getting to know each other

Morning Tea

An activity to build relationships and find common connections.

Steps:

- Consider bringing together the co-design group for a morning tea.
- Break the group up into pairs.
- Invite participants to share why they want to be a part of the co-design project.
- Encourage storytelling, but do not try a force it.

Warming up at the start of a workshop

What are you proud of?

An activity to focus on participants' strengths and build confidence.

Steps:

- As the group, the below question:
- What is something that you are proud of about advocating for yourself, someone you care for, or the disability community?
- Ask the group who is comfortable sharing their answers.

Sharing research

Research Gallery

An activity to share research or background information with participants in an accessible and creative way.

Steps:

- Review the research you have that supports your project.
- Make sure the written content is in plain language.
- Design parts of your research content in different formats, such as:
  - pictures, diagrams, or drawings
  - large posters with important statements about what the research shows
  - audio recordings of important information, quotes, or stories
  - video team members and other people sharing what the information means to them
  - brainstorm with your team other creative ways to communicate your research
- Create a display or exhibition of your designed research content.
- Invite participants to move around the room in their own time and discuss what they think with each other (make sure the room is clear of tables for easy access)

Coming up with ideas

Journey map

An activity to explore all the steps of using your service and find areas to improve.

Steps:

- Decide together on what the journey is about. For example, going to the hospital.
- Decide together who we are focusing on. For example, an autistic person going to the hospital or a carer supporting someone who is going to the hospital.
- Add the main steps of the journey. For example, coming to the hospital, staying in the hospital, and going home.
- Describe what happens at each step. Discuss the staff we meet, the things we need, and the steps in each stage.
- Add how the person is feeling at each stage and what is making it hard or easy to use the service.

Coming up with ideas

Setting the scene

An activity to focus on a situation in your service or using a thing (e.g., product or website). Discuss how to make the situation better for people.

Steps:

- Decide together what you are trying to make better. For example, giving feedback on a service.
- Describe the scene, including the following:
  - Who is the main person that is in our scene, and what are they trying to do?
  - Where is this scene happening? For example, is it in person or online?
  - Describe what is happening step by step.
- Describe who else is there interacting with our main person. For example, staff or support workers.
- Add drawings and pictures of the scene to help make the scene feel real. The below image shows images found on the internet to make the scene of giving feedback feel real.

Testing ideas

Storyboard

An activity to help you visualise your idea from start to finish. A creative way to share your idea with other people to get feedback.

Steps:

- Decide together what part of your idea you want to storyboard and test.
- Drawing how your idea works. Use a series of comic book-style frames for your drawing.
- Think about including someone who is good at drawing and have participants tell them what to draw.
- A storyboard can be simple or full of detail.
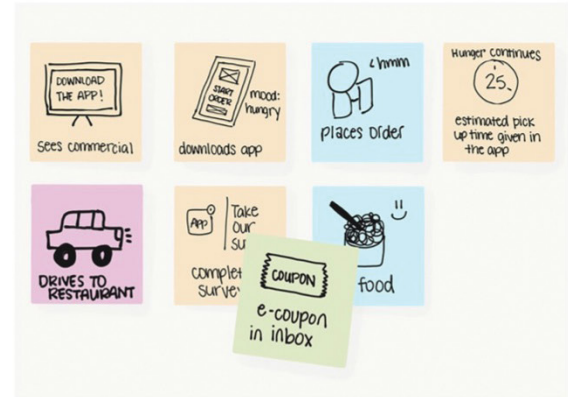
Access Conversation Starter Cards

South West
Healthcare

You can use the access quick tip cards to start conversations about accessibility. If you can think of others, please add your own cards to **The Guide**.

- Sharing information
- Communication
- Diverse teams of participants
- Agendas and instructions
- Workshop venues
- Online workshops
- Making things
- Visual designs

Sharing information

Sharing information is a big part of any co-design project. Ensure everyone has access to your project, problem, or challenge. As the saying goes, "knowledge is power". Sharing information in an accessible way is a start to sharing power with participants.

Information can include the following:

- About your project
- Recruiting project teams and co-design participants
- Background information, such as research findings
- Activity instructions
- Project findings, recommendations, and reports
- Presentations (PowerPoint, video, live presentations, emailed presentations)

Conversation starters

How can we share information in different ways?

Who do we need to involve in making information accessible (hint: lived experience)?

Why is it important to make research findings and background information accessible?

Thinking about your project, write a list of all the different types of information you could share. List from most important to least

Communication

Communication is a human right. We need to be open to communicating to meet the needs of the individual. Good communication starts with respect.

- Use a normal tone of voice. Do not raise your voice unless asked to.
- Be polite and patient. Do not rush the conversation.
- Speak directly to the person rather than the person with them.
- Ask the person what will help with communication.
- Do not pretend to understand. Try asking yes or no questions.
- Be flexible. Try a different way of wording something. Rather than repeat anything that is not understood.
- Only refer to the person's disability if necessary or relevant.
- Relax; everyone makes mistakes. Apologise if you think you have embarrassed someone.

Conversation starters

What are the different ways people can communicate with each other?

How can we ensure we communicate in a way that meets the needs of individual participants?

What type of communication supports are available?

What do we need to know about different communication supports? For example:

- Verbal supports like Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and technology
- Interpreters and communication guides
- Non-verbal communication, like pointing at pictures, gestures, signs, objects, symbols
- Tactile supports like braille

Diverse teams

We need to make co-design inclusive. It doesn't just happen. Diverse ideas help us develop solutions that meet our community's diverse needs.

We often think of people as having one identity. For example, inviting an autistic person to join a co-design. But people are more than just one thing. Someone can be autistic, an artist, a teacher, a sibling, non-binary, and culturally diverse. Be open to inviting people as they are, not just a label.

Spend time planning things like:

- How to remove barriers for different people to be able to take?
- Using affirmative language. For example, people don't identify as non-binary; they are non-binary.
- Using plain language.

Conversation starters

How can we reach a diverse range of participants?

How can we make things more inclusive?

What are the barriers different people might face in joining our co-design groups?

How do we overcome these barriers?

Agendas and activity instructions

We all learn and understand in different ways. By making agendas and activity instructions accessible, everyone can benefit.

Create clear agendas with short descriptions. Add images to go with the text. Images can add meaning for people who learn visually.

Break down your activities into clear steps. Test your activity instructions with your team. If possible, check your activity instructions are clear with people who have different learning styles. For example, people with lived experience of disability.

Send out your agendas and activity instructions a week before the workshop. This will give people a chance to get ready for the workshop.

Conversation starters

What are the different ways we can make agendas and activities accessible for our participants?

How can we make sure our agendas are clear?

How can we make our activities straightforward and clear?

Who can we test the accessibility of our documents with? If they are not a part of our team, how can we ensure they are reimbursed for their time?

Workshop venues

Finding an accessible venue can be hard. Knowing your participants' support needs is not always possible before booking a venue.

Consider visiting locations in person. Think about signage, physical access and moving around the venue. Look for sensory things, such as lighting, sound, and smell.

Find a venue that has things that can be changed to support participants. For example, a small room could be used as a low-sensory environment by providing a lamp, blanket, noise-cancelling headphones, colouring books or tactile tools. This can be helpful in managing overload and give people a place to go if they need to retreat from an overstimulating situation.

Conversation starters

What do your participants need in an accessible workshop venue?

How can you make sure an accessible venue meets diverse needs?

What can you bring and make small changes to make the venue more accessible?

What are all the things you can consider avoiding in a venue?

List out step by step what it takes to get to the venue – from leaving the house to arriving in the workshop room. Look at the list to find all the steps you could make more accessible.

Online workshops

It is easy to assume everyone knows how to do meetings online. But for many, logging in, joining, and participatimng in an online meeting can be challenging.

We recommend using an online platform that participants know. This is better than using what your organisation wants.

A job for one of your project team members could be to support people getting ready and joining online. Or you could offer a plain language and Easy Read guide. The guide would show people how to join from mobile devices and desktop computers.

Conversation starters

What video conferencing platforms are your participants comfortable using? How can you find out?

What would you need to know if this was your first online meeting?

What accessibility features does your chosen platform have? For example, live captioning.

What tools and supports could you use to make online workshops more accessible? For example, Auslan interpreters or coloured cards to show facilitators they need to slow down or provide an extra explanation.

Make a list of all the things that could go wrong. Then brainstorm as a team on how to overcome these barriers.

Making things

An important part of co-design is the design part. Design is a creative process. Doing creative activities can help people think differently, including experts by profession. It can also be fun and help people connect with each other.

For example, making a map of how people enter a hospital. Using Lego characters to represent different staff people with disability might meet. Participants can share what questions staff should ask people with disability to support their stay in the hospital. But it is important that creative activities are accessible for everyone. In our example, do not make people have to move Lego characters to spots on the map. Instead, have participants share where to place it and discuss why they made that choice.

Give participants a wide variety of making options. Participants will seek familiar tools that they are good at using or like, so offer a range of alternatives.

Conversation starters

Following each activity, ask people to think about what they said or made. Ask them how they felt about the activity and what they learnt.

Ask people to think about why they chose tools and materials.

As a facilitator, reflect on your approach and how you might change current and future workshops.

When selecting activities for your participants, ask your project team the following questions:

- What could be hard to do?
- What tools could be physically difficult to use?
- What activities may be visually challenging?
- How might you need to change an activity to make it more accessible?

Visual designs for low vision

There are many ways that the brain process visual imagery. In design, imagery can include posters, flyers, presentation slides, pictures, or videos.

Designing for low vision:

- use good colour contrasts and readable font size (minimum 14 pixels)
- use a combination of colour, shapes, and text (don't use colour differences to communicate things)
- follow a linear, logical layout (don't spread content all over the page)

Conversation starters

- How can we make our designs **universal**? **Universal design** means making visual designs accessible to everyone in society.
- How can we make our visual design easy to access for our participants?
- How can we test that our visual designs are accessible?

Visual designs for neuro-divergence

There are many ways that the brain process visual imagery. In design, imagery can include posters, flyers, presentation slides, pictures, or videos.

Designing for neuro-divergence:

- use simple colours (don't use bright contrasting colours)
- write in plain language (don't use metaphors or sayings)
- use simple sentences and bullets make
- simple layouts of information (don't make complex and cluttered layouts)

Conversation starters

- How can we make our designs **universal**? **Universal design** means making visual designs accessible to everyone in society.
- How can we make our visual design easy to access for our participants?
- How can we test that our visual designs are accessible?

Visual designs for dyslexia

There are many ways that the brain process visual imagery. In design, imagery can include posters, flyers, presentation slides, pictures, or videos.

Designing for dyslexia:

- use images and diagrams to support text content
- align text to the left and keep a consistent layout (don't centre, underline or write in capitals)
- consider making information in other formats (for example, audio or video)
- keep content short, clear, and simple

Conversation starters

- How can we make our designs **universal**? **Universal design** means making visual designs accessible to everyone in society.
- How can we make our visual design easy to access for our participants?
- How can we test that our visual designs are accessible?

Visual designs for deaf or hard of hearing

There are many ways that the brain process visual imagery. In design, imagery can include posters, flyers, presentation slides, pictures, or videos.

Designing for deaf or hard of hearing:

- write in plain language
- use subtitles or provide transcripts for videos
- use a linear, logical layout
- break up content with sub-headings, images and videos

Conversation starters

- How can we make our designs **universal**? **Universal design** means making visual designs accessible to everyone in society.
- How can we make our visual design easy to access for our participants?
- How can we test that our visual designs are accessible?