**­­SPEAK Project**

Co-design Report Summary

November 2022

When we say **we,** we mean the SPEAK Project Team. We work at Alfred Health and South West Healthcare.

We have written this report in plain language.

People with disability do not get the same healthcare in hospitals as the rest of the community. We aim to improve hospital healthcare for:

* Autistic people
* People with intellectual disability
* People with communication support needs.

## Method

This report shares information from co-design workshops. Co-design means people with disability are a part of improving hospitals. When we say **participants**, we mean people in the workshops. Participants included:

* 41 people with disability
* 12 support people (7 parents and 5 support workers).

## Findings

Participants shared what it was like going to hospital. Many participants had negative experiences because of the following:

* A lack of respect and compassion from hospital staff
* Hospital staff do not know enough about disability to support patients
* The hospital is an overwhelming sensory environment
* Support people are often ignored
* Changes to healthcare are not made to meet the needs of people with disability
* People with disability did not get equitable healthcare
* A lack of disability awareness can lead to misdiagnosis and mistreatment
* A poor journey of coming to, staying in, and leaving the hospital.

## Recommendations

Participants also talked about how to improve hospitals. The recommendations are the following:

* Provide a specialist service for people with disability when they come to hospital
* Give disability training to all staff who work in the hospital
* Include people with disability in making and delivering training
* Add disability support information to patient records
* Make easy-to-read information about important procedures and tests
* Include people with disability in making and testing easy-to-read information
* Make it easier for people with disability to give feedback
* Include people with disability to improve ways to give feedback.

Hospital staff were not a part of the co-design workshops. We did this for two reasons.

1. To have a safe space for people with disability to talk about their experiences.
2. Staff were not available when the hospital was dealing with COVID.

Future work of the SPEAK Project must include the following people to continue co-designing improvements in the hospital:

* People with disability
* Support people
* Healthcare staff.

Staff often see disability as 'this is a problem, and this is how you treat it. We must teach staff to be 'this is a person, and this is how you help them'.

– Speak Project Participant