

# Co-design methodology

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June 2023

# Introduction

As articulated in *“Our Commitment to Engagement with People with Lived and Living Experience of Child Sexual Abuse”*, the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (the National Centre) recognises the critical role that victims and survivors play in creating change. It confirms that we will give voice to the experiences of victims and survivors of all ages, life stages and communities. The National Centre will collaborate with individuals, groups, organisations and agencies to increase the understanding of child sexual abuse, promote effective ways for protecting children and guide best practice responses and pathways to healing for survivors.

Our Commitment to Engagement articulates how the National Centre will elevate the collective voices and perspectives of victims and survivors and privilege their stories and experience as a rich and vital source of evidence to inform and drive changes in attitudes and responses at a systemic level. *Our Commitment to Engagement* is informed by best practice approaches to working with victims and survivors and will drive a culture and practice of ethical engagement. It sits alongside the National Centre’s Stakeholder Engagement Framework which outlines the approach and model to stakeholder engagement.

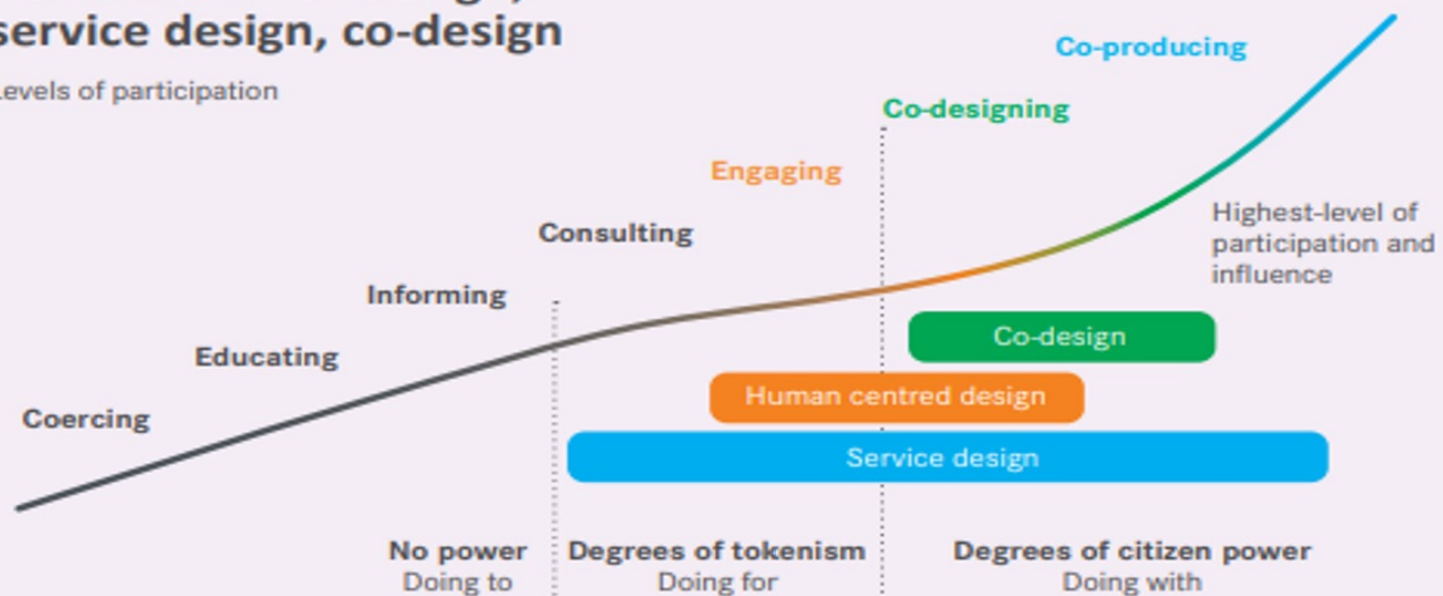
## Why “Co-design”?

This “Co-design Methodology” is yet to be confirmed. It is currently in co-design with our advisory Colleges and includes the Engage Project; a funded design project; a partnership with Southern Cross University and the Australian Childhood Foundation to raise the voices of children and young people. Our view is that our broad commitment to engagement comes to life in several ways including, but not limited to, co-design. Co-design is one way to enact a genuine commitment to engagement and to embedding lived and living experience into all the work of the National Centre (see the chart below). We want to clarify where our commitment has already been built into structures, governance and processes and where we have yet to consolidate this properly by reliably building co-design into our work.

***Forging partnerships with victims, survivors and other stakeholders to grow the knowledge base and drive generational change.***

## Human centred design, service design, co-design

Levels of participation



Credit: Jo Szczepanska, Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria, 2021

# How we work with victims and survivors

There are a range of ways that the National Centre will partner, engage, consult, connect and communicate with victims and survivors through its work program and activities:

1. Formal National Centre governance engagement mechanisms → Survivor-led Adult College | Child and Young Persons College | First Nations College and through a range of activities and projects in development and design within the National Centre's workplan.
2. Informal communication and engagement through regular updates, media, social media, website, newsletters, pamphlets and videos.
3. Research and workforce change initiatives.
4. Community wide education and awareness campaigns – change to community education and messaging.
5. Advocacy and media activities.

Regardless of the way we work with victims and survivors, the following practices will drive and activate our principles (unpacked overleaf).



*The National Centre will partner with survivors in all its work, valuing their knowledge and experience.*

# Our Commitment to Engagement

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## Purpose

Provide safe, supported and diverse opportunities for victims and survivors to influence the National Centre's activities.

## Principles

Engagement principles guide the way the National Centre works with victims and survivors in all its activities.

## Practices

Practices outline what the National Centre's intended and practical steps will be to live our principles.

## Tools

Tools and support processes are being co-designed to support the practices outlined.

# Co-design principles currently in discussion

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## 1. Outcomes-focused

Co-design is about achieving change and improving results or having a positive impact. While the outputs matter, the outcomes are more important.

## 2. Inclusive

Different types of participants with different kinds of knowledge (lived experience, professional and specialist expertise) are involved in the process.

## 3. Participative

People are involved as active participants with meaningful input throughout the process. Co-design is not about tokenistic consultation and ticking a box.

## 4. Respectful

All participants are seen as experts and their input (time, knowledge and other contributions) is valued and has equal standing.

## 5. Adaptive

Co-design is an experimental process aiming at innovation. It should be full of feedback loops, learning, iteration and trial and error.

# Our Definition of Co-design (reproduced in “Here for Change”)

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Co-design is an iterative and participatory process that brings people together to address health and social care issues, design solutions and improve outcomes for those who need them most.

People with lived and living experience of child sexual abuse are central to the co-design process. Their knowledge and expertise are essential for understanding the impacts the trauma of child sexual abuse on individuals' health, daily life, on society and innovating potential solutions.

The National Centre views co-design as a broad endeavour that also engages with practitioners, policymakers, specialists and other key stakeholders depending on the scope and nature of the project.

Co-design is not a consultation or one-off event – it is an iterative process of genuinely bringing people together to share ideas, generate solutions, test and refine innovations and collectively work toward achieving positive outcomes.

*With acknowledgements to*

*<https://clinicalresearch.mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/about-us/co-design-and-implementation-effectiveness>*

# Our co-design efforts to date

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*Our Commitment to Engagement* and embedding the commitment in formalities such as the Terms of Reference to all our committees and in our public documents.

## In practice:

- Colleges and their engagement with the architecture and establishment of the National Centre
- Engage Project with children and young people
- Leadership at Board level
- Peer Reviews on the Research Panels determining competitive research grants
- Input on newly developed resources
- Extensive feedback on the Draft Five-Year Strategy
- Extra once-off panel to complement the College input on the brand/logo
- Growing contact from individuals seeking to connect and participate.



# Next Steps

The process of ensuring we are agreed on the co-design principles we have drafted and are discussing will be finalised over the coming months. Unpacking the principles to agree how we will work to ensure we honour them in practice will be finalised at the same time.

*“Co-design is being equal and starting together because the minute you don’t, the power is gone. The diagram of the lived experience and professional – it creates separation – everything is treated separately. Lived and living experience needs to be elevated – it needs to be seen as professional as we are the car mechanic looking under the hood.”*

*Member of the Adult Survivor-Led College June 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

