

## **Communication for Safe Care: Enhancing inclusive communication for people with communication support needs**

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### **Aims/Objectives: What was the purpose what you did? Why is your topic important? What did you want to change? What difference did you want to make?**

The Communication for Safe Care (C4SC) project is a Department of Social Services funded NSW Health project, aiming to enhance healthcare access for people with communication support needs. The project is also partnered with the University of Sydney. 1.2 million Australians have a communication disability, and the inability to communicate in a healthcare setting can mean poor transfer of healthcare information, misdiagnosis, poor healthcare outcomes and preventable death. The C4SC project is working with four services across South Western Sydney and Western NSW to identify the main issues to communication, as well as co-design solutions with people with lived experience.

### **Methods/Process: Who was involved? What did you do? (100 words)**

The C4SC project team collected data over 1.5 years from each site, involving interviews, surveys and observations with healthcare workers and consumers of the service. Our data collection phase gave us a final list of approximately 10-15 issues per site relating to communication, for example, healthcare workers use too much medical jargon, healthcare worker attitudes towards disability is poor, not enough time is given for a consumer to communicate, accessible resources are not provided, the physical environment is not accessible, etc.

Once this list of issues was established, we ran workshops with consumers to design solutions to the issues.

### **Results: What did you find? What changed? What difference did you make? What did you learn?**

Each site produced its own solution. We are now in the implementation phase of the project, where we are working with the health facility to implement the changes. One example of a solution we are implementing is changing the triage and intake process of an emergency department to ensure all patients are being asked if they need any reasonable adjustments for their communication, including introducing the use of communication visuals at the front desk of ED.

**Conclusion: How could other people use what you found out? What would you recommend other people do based on what you did and what you found out?**

Using co-design principles meant that health care workers and people with lived experience of communication support needs were at the front of identifying the issues at each site, as well as designing the solution. The project intends to produce a quality improvement tool that other health services can use to go through the same co-design process within their own site, starting from the data collection phase, to identify the top issues.

**Alignment with the Conference Theme: How does your proposal address the conference theme of ‘New Frontiers’? How does your proposal showcase something new we can do to make the world a better place for people with disability? (50 words)**

At the core of our project is the message of accessibility and inclusive communication. We believe through educating people on accessible communication, we will help ALL people with communication support needs. We learned that nothing can be done without the person experiencing the problem guiding the solution.