



Centre for Decent
Work and Industry

Co-creating meaningful work for people with disability

A toolkit for social enterprise employers, managers, and teams





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- Sporting Wheelies
- Vanguard Laundry

QUT acknowledges the *Turrbal* and *Yugara*, as the First Nations owners of the lands where QUT now stands, and pay respect to their Elders, lores, customs, and creation spirits. We recognise that these lands have always been places of teaching, research, and learning. We acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people play within the QUT and wider community.

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Introduction

Using the Toolkit

This toolkit was created to help social enterprises provide meaningful work and inclusive workplaces for people with disability. The toolkit will help social enterprises at any stage of their journey towards this goal by providing strategies and tools for developing safe and secure employment. This includes social enterprises beginning on the journey, and social enterprises that want to facilitate more opportunities for people with disability to progress their careers, including into leadership. We believe working together with people with disability and other stakeholders to foster meaningful work will enable social enterprises to improve their social impact.

The toolkit was created using a co-design approach. Through interviews, surveys, and a series of workshops we gathered insights and perspectives of people with disability, social enterprise managers, and other stakeholders to co-design solutions and strategies. These activities led to the framework and approaches included in this toolkit.

We learned that creating opportunities for meaningful work requires individuals and organisations to have courageous conversations and learn about the lived experiences of people with disability in order to take the strategic action that creates change. We invite you to use this toolkit in a way that serves the goals and needs of your organisation. Engaging people with disability in an authentic and equal partnership to co-design opportunities for meaningful work and inclusive workplaces is a rich and valuable process. The toolkit provides notable insights from our research with people with disability and other stakeholders. In addition, many social enterprises are well equipped to provide further advice and expertise. There is also a wealth of published information from government and academic sources available. We have provided details about some of these sources under ‘Support and Resources’ in this toolkit.

Suggested Next Steps



STEP 1

Read the toolkit and plan a time and process that will engage your team in the activities.



STEP 2

Take the self-assessment.



STEP 3

Conduct the planning activities.



STEP 4

Review and evaluate your plan and actions.

Inclusive Workplaces for People with Disability

People with disability are more likely to be underemployed or unemployed than those without disability.¹ In fact, more than one million Australians with disability are looking for an opportunity to work.^{2,3} They want to experience the personal, social, and financial benefits that come with being employed and being part of a team. At the same time, many social enterprises, which are businesses led by a social purpose, believe it is important for their workplace to reflect the diversity in the community, including by employing people with disability. Many social enterprises aspire to create jobs for disadvantaged jobseekers. Those who do reap the benefits of having people with disability in their workforce. These benefits include valuable new perspectives and skills that positively influence team morale, innovation, collaboration, and overall productivity.⁴⁻⁶

Social enterprises deliver significant value to local communities and economies when they are supported to employ people with disability.⁷

One exemplar social enterprise is Nundah Community Enterprises Cooperative (NCEC), an organisation that recognises that many people with disability experience profound pain due to lack of meaningful work. A uniquely supportive work environment, NCEC has changed workers' lives in transformative ways by enabling and supporting their employment aspirations.⁸

Another exemplar is Australian Spatial Analytics (ASA), a social enterprise that provides careers for young neurodivergent adults who may otherwise be unemployed. ASA believes that social enterprise is the vehicle to unlock neurodiverse talent pools for all organisations as neurodivergent people bring a wealth of benefits to the workplace. ASA states that embracing neurodiversity can lead to a more inclusive and dynamic workplace, ultimately benefiting a business's overall success.⁹

“Jobs-focused social enterprises excel at balancing the commercial sale of goods and services with the workforce development needs of their employees. This unique approach enables them to offer meaningful personal and professional experiences for people with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and diverse economy.” (Adele Laughton, Queensland Social Enterprise Council)

“We believe that an inclusive workplace considers diversity as a strength, acknowledges an individual's unique contributions and is adaptive in role design so this contribution can be harnessed.” (Richard Warner, NCEC)

Giving people with disability access to meaningful and full-wage employment is a goal for many social enterprises. However, to achieve this goal a workplace must be inclusive. Bernardo Ferdman, a researcher of workplace inclusion, provides a definition of inclusion:

“*In inclusive organisations and societies, people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members.*” ^{10(p235)}

Inclusive workplaces are important for people with disability as everyone’s differences are valued, and people feel recognised for their individual strengths and skills.¹¹ Leaders actively work to build a strategic focus on inclusive employment practices, and ensure managers and supervisors understand how to put inclusion into practice. They ensure people with disability have access to opportunities and resources that enable them to contribute their best. While the concept of inclusion is positive and achievable, many people with disability say they still experience discrimination.¹² These are barriers that must be addressed if we want to ensure that people with disability are valued and respected members of workplaces and society.^{13,14}

Managers can create inclusive workplaces by proactively making the workplace accessible through dismantling the barriers that can be physical (such as inaccessible buildings or workspaces), attitudinal (such as prejudice and discrimination), communicational (lack of accessible information), and systemic (policies and practices that disadvantage people with disability).^{15,16} Leaders and managers also play an important role in ensuring the workplace is a safe space for people with disability who may have experienced trauma from the barriers they have encountered in society and in workplaces. Becoming aware of trauma-informed ways of working can contribute to building safe workplaces for all employees.

Language is a powerful way to foster an inclusive workplace. It is important to think about the language we use and learn how our language can provide the support people need to feel included and valued. In this toolkit we use people-first language as this is most common in Australia, for example ‘people with disability’.¹⁷ Some people with disability prefer identity-first language, such as ‘disabled people’, which acknowledges disability as a positive identity. We all have preferences about the language that is used to describe us. Both approaches align with a human rights perspective, viewing access and inclusion as fundamental rights rather than special needs.¹⁸ If you are unsure about a person with disability’s preference, it is best to ask what words they prefer you use.¹⁹

“*An inclusive workplace means we have to embrace as many diversity initiatives as we can. Neurodivergent people are more likely to belong to other marginalised groups. For instance, 20% of our team are part of the LGBTQIA+ community. If you’re singling out neurodiversity for inclusion without embracing everyone, the intent of the welcome won’t land. Diversity begets diversity.*”
(Geoffrey Smith, ASA)



Principles for using inclusive language include:²⁰⁻²³

- Focus on people rather than labels
- Use person-first language (people with disability) when you don't understand or know an individual's or community's preferences
- Foster curiosity and responsiveness when you get feedback on the language you have used
- Be aware that language about disability changes over time.

Factors that Foster Meaningful Work

Researchers and employers have been exploring how to attract and retain loyal, high-performing employees for many years. Research shows that while financial stability is important to employees, they also seek meaningful work.²⁴ The concepts 'meaningful work', 'meaningfulness', or 'meaning in work' refer to the significance or value that individuals place on their work.^{25,26} This significance can stem from a person's life circumstances, characteristics, values, goals, the nature of the work itself, or the outcomes it achieves. Research has found that meaningful work positively influences an employee to be more engaged, committed, and satisfied with their work.^{27,28} People engaged in meaningful work are also less likely to leave the organisation that employs them, and are more likely to have better health outcomes. These are compelling reasons for employers to ensure that employees experience meaningful work.

Our research found that people with disability can find it difficult to experience meaningful work due to discrimination, negative attitudes from employers and colleagues, and exclusion from workplace activities. These factors can all impact how a person with disability feels about their work and workplace. Not considering the strengths, goals, and accessibility requirements of people with disability can hinder their full participation in the workforce and lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion.

Our research also identified barriers to creating meaningful work for people with disability. They include:

- Assumptions and misconceptions about what a person with disability can do
- Seeing all people with disability as the same
- Invisible disability can be overlooked
- Stigma
- Managers' and leaders' fear of the unknown
- Fixed mindsets regarding disability
- Disingenuous or tokenistic commitment to inclusion of people with disability
- Poor building design
- Lack of time, resources, and funding to make changes.

We identified that throughout all stages of the employment lifecycle, from pre-employment to employment and post-employment, meaningful work emerges from the interplay between organisational culture, employee attitudes, and workplace practices. While we recognise that one person's experience of meaningful work can differ from that of others, our research shows there are some core factors that matter to people with disability, and practices that colleagues, teams and organisations can follow to create opportunities for people with disability to experience meaningful work.

On an individual level, to access meaningful work, research has identified that employees want control of their work (autonomy), respectful relationships (dignity), equal and adequate pay and opportunities, and participation in planning and decision-making (recognition).²⁹ In addition, our research found that people with disability value:

- Having their individual strengths and abilities recognised
- Work that resonates with their personal identity as a person with disability
- A sense that they are contributing to the mission of the organisation and bigger purpose
- Positive shared experiences with colleagues
- Opportunities to connect and work alongside colleagues.

Our research also identified actions and attitudes that employers and managers can adopt at the job, team, and organisational levels to foster opportunities for meaningful work for people with disability (Table 1). We then conducted co-design workshops with people with disability and other stakeholders based on these factors. The co-design workshops informed the development of a framework (Figure 1) outlined in the next section of the toolkit.

“People with disabilities are vulnerable to not being seen as real employees, to being seen as not having skills or not capable. Hence it is important to bend over backwards to ensure that the perception the employee gets of themselves, and most importantly the perception that the general public gets, is the exact opposite.”
(Social enterprise manager, research participant)



Table 1. Fostering Meaningful Work for People with Disability

Job Level

Develop role descriptions that can be customised to the strengths of people with disability.

Design roles in a way that reduces the need to share disability information.

Offer opportunities for flexible work.

Design roles that include opportunities for people with disability to work in teams or with colleagues.

Proactively design work and workplaces to be accessible for all people.

Support people with disability to make decisions about how their work is completed.

Provide opportunities for people with disability for promotion at work.

Develop skills and knowledge by providing opportunities to work in different parts of the organisation.

Manager and Team Level

Create opportunities for relationship building between all team members.

Support the career aspirations of people with disability, in both supported employment and open employment.

Remove barriers for people with disability by meeting their individual needs.

Create opportunities for collaboration with people with disability to make decisions about how work is organised.

Create a safe environment where people with disability can be themselves.

Organisational Level

Understand how gender and other social identities affect the employment of people with disability.

Have a strategy for the open employment and recruitment of people with disability.

Take accessibility and inclusion into account in decision-making.

Create opportunities for people with disability to share their access needs and disability information (if they want to).

Create a culture that makes everyone feel like they belong.

Develop a disability-inclusive leadership style.

Have a strategy for transitioning people with disability from supported employment to open employment.

Meaningful Work for People with Disability

Meaningful Work for People with Disability Framework

The Meaningful Work for People with Disability Framework identifies six key attributes that support teams, managers and organisations to create opportunities for meaningful work and an inclusive workplace in which people with disability can thrive and make their best contribution.

Figure 1. Meaningful Work for People with Disability Framework





Inclusive Leadership

Leaders and managers value the lived experiences of people with disability, and model respectful and inclusive practices that enable opportunities for meaningful work.



Inclusively Designed Work

Job roles are designed to be inclusive. People with disability are provided with inclusive work arrangements that enable them to thrive and contribute to their organisation effectively.



Accessible and Safe Workplace

The workplace is designed so that people with disability can navigate and work safely, productively, and autonomously.



Dignity and Respect

People with disability are valued for their unique experiences and expertise. They are actively involved in the process of designing their work and decision-making processes.



Training and Development

Training and development activities enable leaders, managers, and employees to understand how they contribute to creating inclusive workplaces and opportunities for meaningful work for people with disability. People with disability have an equal opportunity to access employment opportunities, skill development, and career advancement.



Recognition

The organisation recognises the achievements and contributions of people with disability. Managers monitor, acknowledge, and share achievements and progress made towards becoming an inclusive workplace that enables opportunities for meaningful work.



“Ask... [people with disability] their interests and needs...then give them support to do it. We all love to do things we do well, so people with disability should have that opportunity too.” (Social enterprise manager, research participant)

Meaningful Work Assessment Tool

If you are now excited about meaningful work and inclusive workplaces for people with disability, this assessment tool can help you evaluate your organisation’s practices and identify areas for action or improvement. Ideally the assessment should be completed collaboratively as a team and involve employees with disability or people with lived experience of disability in this process. You may have existing data and documentation that you can draw on such as profiles of your workforce, staff feedback surveys, diversity and inclusion metrics, organisational policies, and peak body reports. We encourage you to draw on the principles of co-design outlined in the next section of the toolkit to complete the assessment. You and your team should ensure you develop a shared understanding of each statement and consider the evidence you have for each practice before selecting a response. You may want to complete this assessment as part of your organisation’s strategic planning process.

“Give them [people with disability] some autonomy and just trust that they [people with disability] know how to get the best out of themselves.” (Person with disability, research participant)

Choose the response that best represents your organisation’s current practices. The responses are on a scale:

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always



Inclusive Leadership

1.1	There is a policy or strategy for employing people with disability that includes transitioning employees from supported to open employment.	1	2	3	4	5
1.2	Managers value the diverse perspectives and lived experience of people with disability.	1	2	3	4	5
1.3	Managers initiate courageous and regular conversations that listen to and learn from people with disability.	1	2	3	4	5
1.4	Managers model language and practices that create safe spaces, and give people with disability dignity and recognition.	1	2	3	4	5



Inclusively Designed Work

2.1	Managers co-design inclusive job roles.	1	2	3	4	5
2.2	Throughout the employee life cycle, managers identify and address the need for inclusive and flexible work arrangements.	1	2	3	4	5
2.3	Managers enable people with disability to focus on tasks that align with their strengths and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
2.4	People with disability have someone to talk to when their needs change (e.g. a manager, disability advocate or support worker).	1	2	3	4	5



Accessible and Safe Workplace

3.1	The workplace is designed using inclusive universal design principles to ensure safety, accessibility, and usability for all employees, including people with disability.	1	2	3	4	5
3.2	Work activities, including meetings, events, conferences, and training are accessible and inclusive.	1	2	3	4	5
3.3	People with disability have access to assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice recognition software, and mobility devices.	1	2	3	4	5
3.4	People with disability receive information in different formats (e.g. verbal, written, visual or tactile) so they can navigate the workplace safely and autonomously.	1	2	3	4	5



Dignity and Respect

4.1	Managers understand and utilise the strengths and skills of people with disability, and support them to set and achieve their career goals.	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Managers apply policies and procedures in a way that upholds the dignity, respect, and self-confidence of people with disability.	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	Managers build teams and workplace cultures that ensure formal and informal activities foster a sense of belonging.	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	People with disability know when and how to share their strengths, needs, and preferences with their manager and are enabled to share tools and solutions that support them to do their work.	1	2	3	4	5



Training and Development

5.1	Staff training and development include awareness about the benefits of employing people with disability and their capabilities.	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	Training and development on disability, inclusion, and belonging are led by people with disability.	1	2	3	4	5
5.3	Training and development programs are designed to be accessible (e.g. offering different formats including online, self-paced or blended learning) to enable and support people with disability to reach their full potential.	1	2	3	4	5
5.4	Training for managers and supervisors includes information about best practice in inclusive leadership and inclusively designed work, disability employment legislation, and the availability of employment support and other government incentive schemes.	1	2	3	4	5



Recognition







6.1	Managers and supervisors recognise and celebrate the strengths and achievements of people with disability as a part of workplace recognition schemes.	1	2	3	4	5
6.2	Employee feedback mechanisms are used that enable people with disability to share their experiences, diverse ideas and perspectives, and the feedback is acted upon.	1	2	3	4	5
6.3	People with disability feel valued and empowered to contribute to decision-making processes.	1	2	3	4	5
6.4	Diversity and inclusion indicators or metrics, including disability, are part of the organisation's reporting practices.	1	2	3	4	5

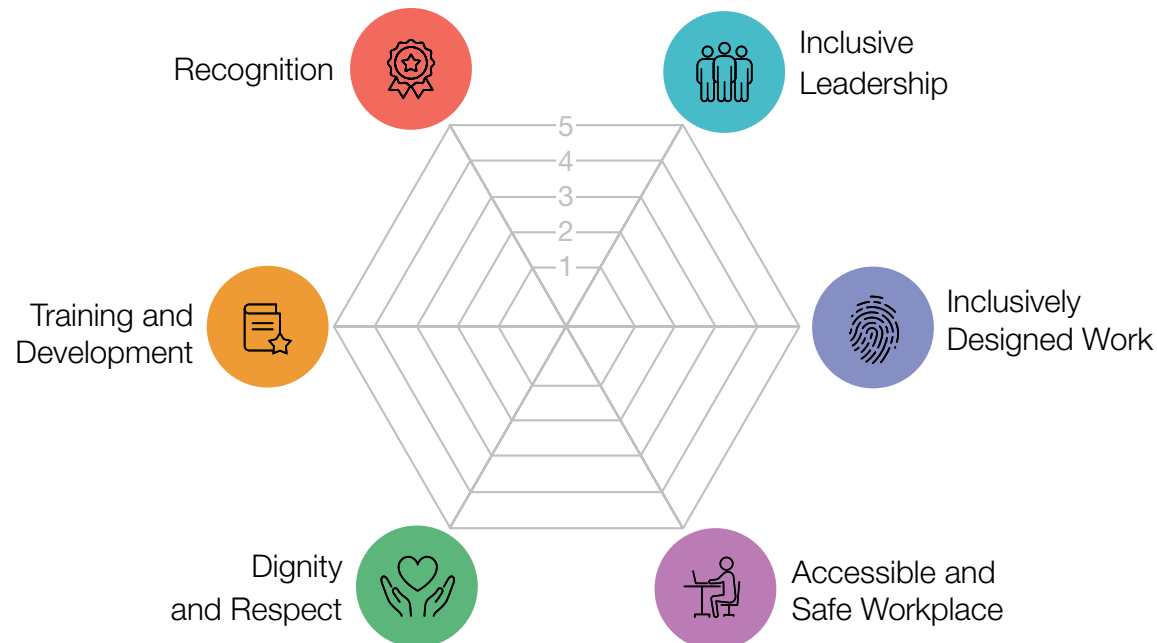
“People need to feel like they're able to ask for help... for some disabilities, you might need like a screen reader or something like that, and people would need to feel like they could ask for that, rather than trying to muddle through without something they really needed.” (Person with disability, research participant)

“Give them [people with disability] some autonomy and just trust that they know how to get the best out of themselves.” (Person with disability, research participant)

Review Your Assessment

- 1 Add up the scores for each attribute to get the total score for your organisation.
- 2 Calculate the average for each attribute by dividing the total score by 4. (For example, 14 divided by 4 = 3.5)
- 3 Use the 'radar chart' below to plot the scores for each attribute. Connect the points to create a unique radar shape that visually represents the strengths and areas in need of review.

Attribute	Total score	Average score
 Inclusive Leadership	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
 Inclusively Designed Work	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
 Accessible and Safe Workplace	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
 Dignity and Respect	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
 Training and Development	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
 Recognition	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



- 4 Reflect and discuss with your team to see which attributes are your organisation's strengths and which are areas for review and improvement or development. Note your reflections using the Meaningful Work Assessment Review Template on page 39 in Appendix 1.
- 5 Use the next section of this toolkit to develop an action plan for change.

Co-Designing Meaningful Work

Using Co-Design

Co-design is an approach that supports employers, managers, and teams to ask curious questions and find solutions to challenges by working collaboratively with others. In co-design the process of listening and learning from others, rather than just noting the actions and views that people agree upon, is valued and prioritised. Co-design can take many forms, and there are many tools to choose from. It is the key principles of co-design that are important, particularly seeing every person as the expert on their own lives and respecting every person's perspective and ideas.

Queenslanders with Disability Network have published a guide to their co-design principles.³⁰ This guide can assist organisations and individuals to apply co-design in their work with people with disability. The guide highlights a range of benefits of a co-design process, including that it:

- Facilitates the sharing of wisdom and lived experience
- Provides a better and broader understanding of barriers faced by people with disability
- Engages, motivates and empowers people
- Generates a diverse range of perspectives and ideas
- Creates engagement and accountability.

Also, to support your co-design process, we suggest you use Kelly Ann McKercher's book, "Beyond sticky notes: Doing co-design for real: mindsets, methods and movements".³¹ It describes six mindsets that support working collaboratively with individuals or teams:

- “ ■ Elevating lived experience
 - Being in the grey
 - Valuing many perspectives
 - Curiosity
 - Hospitality
 - and Learning through doing." ^{31(p5)}

By integrating these mindsets and drawing on the principles of co-design described in Table 2 (below) in your plans and activities, you will be able to bring together a collaborative team that values professional and lived experience equally, so that all employees feel recognised and empowered to share their ideas.

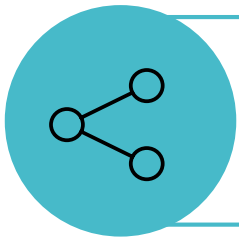
Table 2: Co-Design Principles

Working with Individuals	Working with Teams	Working with Organisations
Engage with individuals on a personal level to be curious about their unique perspectives, skills, and lived experiences. Celebrate individuality and differences.	Use questions and tools to start conversations and build positive connections within a team.	Create safe, accessible teams and environments where people can share ideas and fully participate.
Practice active listening, and open and honest communication.	Empower each person to contribute to the discussions and planning activities.	Create co-design teams with diverse members, ensuring a mix of roles, lived experience of disability, and expertise.
Collaborate by solving problems together and make decisions that support each person’s needs and aspirations.	Identify shared goals and be clear about what the process is aiming to achieve and when.	Treat co-design as an ongoing process. Regularly revisit and refine strategies to ensure they remain inclusive and effective.

This toolkit will kickstart your journey and may give you some confidence to use more co-design activities throughout your organisation. If you have never used co-design before, we encourage you to research the resources available (there are some suggestions in this toolkit), which provide tips and tools for doing co-design well. If you are looking for someone to lead the process, you might want to consider supporting an employee with disability to be trained to lead the process, or involving another social enterprise with expertise in co-design. You can also contact a specialist recruitment agency or disability employment service for advice about disability-inclusive recruitment, selection, and employment practices.

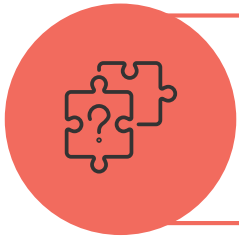
“ *The fact that I would be classed as having a disability makes me better able to understand what life might be like... you know, it’s not an abstract thing for me.*” (Person with disability, research participant)

Co-designing Meaningful Work Steps



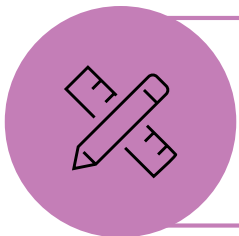
STEP 1 **Connection and Collaboration**

Create the right team, mindset, and time for co-design activities that value professional and lived experience equally.



STEP 2 **How Might We?**

Create a “How Might We?” question to turn challenges into opportunities.



STEP 3 **Planning and Taking Action**

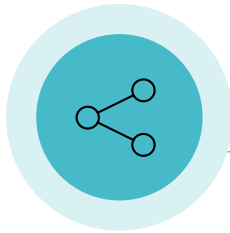
Create an action plan and evaluation period (e.g. 6-12 months).



STEP 4 **Reflect and Evaluate**

Reflect on the progress you make towards your goals. Celebrate achievements and recognise everyone’s contribution.

“Without consulting the users and understanding their individual disability-specific requirements, ‘inclusive’ design is a pointless endeavour!”
(Josh Marshall, Inclusion Access)



Step 1: Connection and Collaboration

Step 1 is to bring together a team, including people with disability, and agree on the goals and principles of working collaboratively to develop your approach to creating opportunities for meaningful work and inclusive workplaces for people with disability. Co-design does not necessarily require extensive time and resources if implemented on a small scale, with individuals, or as part of your regular work practices. If you want to use the co-design tools and process to engage teams on organisation-wide projects, it may take more time and planning.

Connection and Collaboration Ideas

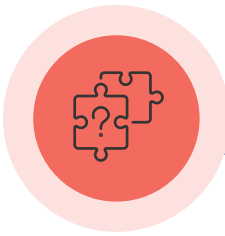
The ideas suggested in Table 3 can be used to encourage connection between people as they reflect on the topics being discussed. They can be adapted for one-to-one conversations, team meetings, or workshops to help build a sense of community, communication and collaboration. You can note your connection and collaboration ideas in the Co-design Step 1: Connection and Collaboration Template on page 40 in Appendix 1.

Table 3: Connection and Collaboration Ideas

<p>Connecting to People, Purpose and Place</p>	<p>Begin meetings and workshops by building positive and respectful relationships. Remind everyone on the team that they have something to offer and something to learn. Questions that can help build trust and connections include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Where are we from? ■ Who are we outside of work? ■ Why are we here? ■ What are we each bringing to the team? <p>For further tips and tools, see the guide from New South Wales (NSW) Regional Health Partners.³²</p>
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Meaningful Work Ingredients	<p>By discussing personal stories and experiences, you can gain insights into what makes work meaningful for people. Use the following questions to create some shared understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ How can we create an environment where recognition is authentic, fair, and respectful?■ How can we ensure that a person's worth is assessed based on what they contribute beyond their job title or achievements?■ How can we promote autonomy that enables everyone to play to their strengths?■ How can we ensure our workplace facilitates a sense of dignity, and what is the significance of dignity when working in a team?
Conceptualising Meaningful Work	<p>Adapted from Nina Mapson Bone's book "Meaningful work: unlock your unique path to career fulfilment",³³ ask the team to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What does it mean to you and others in the organisation to have meaningful work?■ What about your job makes it meaningful for you?■ Which factors most strongly affect team members' sense of meaningful work?■ How might you redesign or modify your job to enable more meaning?■ How important is the vision of the organisation where you work? How does that collective vision contribute to making your job meaningful?■ What are the factors that give your work meaning, and how do they change over time? <p>If you want to extend this discussion and get creative, invite people to create a collage, share photos or drawings of people, places, and items that reflect who they are and what their work and career means to them. Then invite everyone to share their creative work with the team. It is a great way to help people articulate and reflect upon their own and others' experiences of meaningful work.</p>



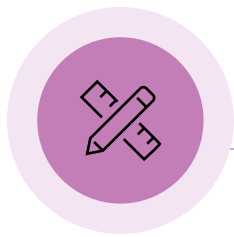
Step 2: How Might We?

Once you have completed Step 1 and established a collaborative and creative team environment, then introduce the ‘How Might We?’ (HMW) activity. This is a problem-solving exercise to help individuals and teams reframe challenges into opportunities.

Use the activity in Table 4 to create a ‘How Might We?’ question about meaningful work for people with disability that you would like to start or improve. This might be one of the areas identified when you reviewed your assessment (page 17). Read the advice in the IDEO.org Design Kit³⁴ on how to create good HMW questions. HMW questions should not be too broad or too narrow in order to allow for many perspectives and a range of possible solutions. You can develop as many HMW questions as you like; ideally have a few so your team can then choose which one they will work on as a goal in Step 3. You can note your HMW ideas in the Co-design Step 2: How Might We? Template on page 41 in Appendix 1.

Table 4: How Might We Exercise

Define a Goal or Challenge	Create a HMW Question
<i>Example: Provide people with disability opportunities for flexible work.</i>	<i>Example: How might we incorporate candidates’ and employees’ need for flexible work into our recruitment/selection and people management processes?</i>



Step 3: Planning and Taking Action

This step involves developing a plan for your team to action, monitor, and evaluate. This begins by writing one of your How Might We? questions developed in Step 2. *Example: HMW ensure our work activities including meetings, events, conferences, and social activities are accessible and inclusive for people with disability?*

Write your HMW in the box:

With your team, collaboratively develop your big ideas and smaller steps to solve your HMW question as outlined in Table 5. Use the co-design principles to guide the discussions and agreements. Think creatively and inclusively by considering different ways people can contribute and participate. Some suggested strategies and actions from our research are included on page 27-30. You can note your planning ideas in the Co-design Step 3: Planning and Taking Action Template on page 42 in Appendix 1. As you plan, consider things such as:

- What are the aims, objectives, values, inclusion metrics, short-term and long-term goals you will consider?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of people involved (including people with lived experience of disability)?
- What are the needs of stakeholders and participants?
- What inclusive tools and methods could be used to engage people and build trust?
- How can you build in flexibility, accountability, and recognition to your activities?
- When and where will actions take place?



Table 5: Planning and Taking Action

What Big Ideas (Strategic Actions) Will Help Us Achieve Our HMW?	
What Smaller Steps and Actions Need to Happen?	
Who Will be Involved?	




When Does This Need to Happen?	
What Resources are Required?	
What Might Get in the Way?	

Suggested Strategic Actions

The strategies in Table 6 below were developed and recommended by people with disability, employers, and employment services organisations as part of our co-design workshops when developing this toolkit. They are important for organisations and workplaces to consider when planning how to create meaningful work and inclusive workplaces for people with disability throughout the employee life cycle. You can draw on them and adapt them for your context when you are planning in Step 3 (Planning and Taking Action).

Table 6: Suggested Strategic Actions

Attribute	Example Strategies
 <p data-bbox="203 836 405 919">Inclusive Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Create a disability inclusion policy/strategy that includes planning for supported and open employment.■ Implement training for managers and employees to understand and address unconscious biases, prejudices, and micro aggressions.■ Encourage leaders and managers to develop a trauma-informed approach.■ Develop opportunities that set people with disability up for success in building career momentum, confidence, and relationships in the workplace.■ Obtain informed consent before sharing disability-related information that a person with disability has shared.■ Develop a template with prompting questions for raising courageous conversations about disability respectfully and clearly.■ Provide training and development opportunities to keep up to date with accessibility and inclusion best practices.■ Share the organisation's values with all employees and integrate these values into everyday work practices and decision-making processes.■ Allocate specific times for conversations in teams about diversity and inclusion.■ Provide safe spaces for conversations between managers and people with disability.■ Hold managers accountable for fostering an inclusive workplace.



Attribute

Example Strategies



Inclusively Designed Work

- Embed questions about accessibility and work arrangements into the recruitment and induction process to address inclusive work needs from the start.
- Where appropriate use the WHO questionnaire (WHODAS 2.0) on the six domains of function to design roles that accommodate a wide range of abilities.³⁵
- Offer flexible working arrangements to people with disability.
- Develop autonomous and/or asynchronous collaborative practices.
- Ensure there is always someone available for people with disability to talk to when work adjustments are needed.
- Allow people with disability to nominate a support person, such as a disability advocate or a friend, to join discussions about their requirements, for example regarding flexible work and accessibility.
- Tailor roles to match the unique strengths and needs of people with disability.
- Be adaptable with workload assignments and deadlines for people with disability.
- Allow extra time for people with disability to learn new tasks or to adapt to changes in the workplace.



Accessible and Safe Workplace

- Conduct an accessibility assessment of the workplace, including stairs, lifts, toilets, doors, desks, and meeting areas. Implement changes based on the assessment to enhance physical access.
- Budget for and provide resources that support accessibility and inclusion.
- Ensure that screens and IT equipment are adjustable and compatible with assistive technologies.
- Provide photos and layouts of the workplace online for pre-visits and orientation of new employees.
- Offer virtual tours or detailed descriptions to make it easy for people with disability to familiarise themselves with the workplace layout.
- Ensure the workplace is navigable and safe, with clear markings and accessible facilities.
- Clearly communicate options to work from home and ensure that remote work setups are accessible.
- Designate quiet areas or private offices for employees with disability who need to focus or rest.
- Refer to and use accessibility guidelines to design websites, documents, and other digital resources.
- Partner with local transport services to provide accessible transport options for people with disability.



Attribute

Example Strategies



Dignity and Respect

- Create forums for people with disability to share the tools and solutions that work best for them.
- Co-design activities that highlight individual team members' strengths and contributions.
- Ensure all team activities are accessible and inclusive.
- Create a safe team environment where staff can share personal stories to build empathy and understanding.
- Employ people with disability for their lived experience, as experts by experience.
- Ensure meetings, events, and conferences are accessible and considerate of all employees' needs and preferences.
- Enforce zero tolerance for discrimination and exclusion.
- Have designated disability advocates within the organisation so employees know who to contact if they need advice or support.
- Foster a culture of partnership, where employees are paired with colleagues or mentors throughout their employment journey.



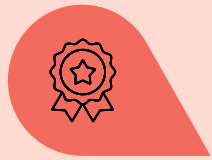
Training and Development

- Invite people with lived experience of disability to deliver training and development on disability, accessibility, and inclusion.
- Ensure training includes the benefits of employing people with disability, and their capabilities.
- Provide Mental Health First Aid training for employees to better understand and support mental health in the workplace.
- Provide training on universal design principles and accessibility requirements.
- Recognise the potential and provide opportunities and training for people with disability who start on supported employment to transition to open employment.
- Ensure training and development activities reflect the importance of diversity and inclusion and how to build trauma-informed workplaces.
- Provide training so employees can ensure that all documents, reports, and websites are produced in accessible formats.
- Use social enterprises, the Job Access Network, and Disability Employment Services to access resources about employment support, financial incentives, and training on disability inclusion.



Attribute

Example Strategies



Recognition

- Seek feedback from people with disability on how they would like to be acknowledged (e.g. privately and/or publicly).
- Ensure that recognition practices are fair and equitable, and always gain consent before any public recognition.
- Integrate disability, diversity and inclusion metrics into key performance indicators (KPIs) of the organisation.
- Ensure that workplace celebrations are accessible and considerate of all employees.
- Track and highlight the benefits of inclusion, such as retention rates, engagement, and productivity.
- Share stories that showcase the positive impact of inclusion practices on the organisation.

“While role modelling comes from the top to facilitate the process, it is their [the person with disability] direct manager and their colleagues who encourage and support them through the process and celebrate small wins.” (Social enterprise manager, research participant)

“We support staff at induction to discuss their needs and approach us when they need help, for example around mental health. This has occurred on multiple occasions. We get positive feedback about the process and that this is the first time they have disclosed to an employer about their condition.” (Social enterprise manager, research participant)




Step 4: Reflect and Evaluate

By now, your team has created a HMW question and turned it into a goal, then co-designed some strategies in an action plan, and taken some action. This last step, Step 4, encourages your team to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies you have planned and implemented, and evaluate the co-design process you have used. This step also encourages your team to continuously improve and innovate as you discuss and learn what has worked, and what challenges may be preventing you from reaching your goals.

There are many models that help teams reflect. One simple model outlined in Table 7 is the ‘What? So what? Now what?’ model popularised by Rolfe et al.³⁶ You can use this approach to reflect on the actions you have taken to achieve your goals to ensure that they lead to increased opportunities for people with disability to experience meaningful work. You can note your reflections in the Co-design Step 4: Reflection Template on page 43 in Appendix 1.

Table 7: Reflection Process

What?	Describe the action and what occurred. Use a variety of data such as statistics, observations, and diverse voices to discuss roles and actions, and the results and changes that have been observed or felt.
So What?	Analyse why this data, observations and voices matter, and any implications (your insights).
Now What?	Consider next steps and strategies based on the insights. Celebrate your milestones and achievements responsibly and transparently so that everyone feels recognised for their contribution. Regularly review and refine your action plan based on the insights, feedback, and outcomes.



In addition to reflection activities, regularly checking in with people can help in learning about people's lived experience. The questions below from Metro North Health can be adapted for one-to-one conversations, creative activities, surveys, polls etc.



- Did those involved feel that the process achieved a positive outcome?
- Did those involved feel that they now have increased skills and confidence to undertake co-design in the future?
- Have relationships been built within the team that will continue beyond the project?
- Did all people feel adequately prepared and supported to participate in the process?
- Did all people involved feel heard, respected, engaged, empowered and equal?
- Did all people feel like they had an impact?
- Did all people feel their unique knowledge and skills were recognised and valued?
- Would people choose to be involved in co-design again in the future?
- What could be done to improve/assist participation in the future?"^{37(p4)}

Reflection can also take place using journals, surveys, or action research projects where team members can document and discuss their reflections. Importantly, whatever tools you use to reflect, people should feel safe and supported to share their ideas and lived experience. Continue to use the co-design mindsets and principles as your team reflects and shares their experiences and perspectives.

It is also valuable to evaluate the co-design process you use. A simple format for gathering feedback is the 'I like, I wish, I wonder' approach commonly used in design thinking. The version in Table 8 is available as a MIRO board, inspired by IDEO.org and designed by Frankie Kok.³⁸ Ask people to complete each sentence "I like...", "I wish....", "I wonder...". Then ask people to share their statements and prioritise the next steps as what will be amplified, addressed, and implemented. This tool can be used in team settings, in person or online.

You can record your feedback using this approach in the Step 4: Co-design Process Evaluation Template on page 44 in Appendix 1.



Table 8: I Like, I Wish, I Wonder

I Like	I Wish	I Wonder
<i>What is going well? What is the evidence of change?</i>	<i>What needs further improvement or change?</i>	<i>What else could we try?</i>
We Will Amplify	We Will Address	We Will Implement
<i>What will we do to amplify the things going well?</i>	<i>What will we do to address the things that need improvement?</i>	<i>What actions will we take to implement new ideas?</i>



Support and Resources

Exploring the information and resources below may help you when developing your action plan. These resources are not an exhaustive list, so it is recommended that you create your own selection of resources that are accessible to managers and teams within your organisation.

Inclusive Workplace Practices

The business case for Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) developed by Diversity Council Australia provides a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of D&I in the workplace. It is a useful resource for organisations looking to improve its D&I practices. Read it [here](#).


Australian Disability Network provides a resource that can help you understand the potential benefits of hiring people with disability along with example case studies to demonstrate what can be done in practice. Read it [here](#).

Use the WHODAS2.0 assessment schedule when designing roles and workplaces. Access it [here](#).

Blueknot have prepared a guide for disability support workers who want to learn about trauma. It is particularly helpful for learning about complex trauma people with disability may experience. Read it [here](#).

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides guidance and tips for creating job adverts and ensuring your recruitment practices are accessible and inclusive [here](#). They also provide insights on creating an accessible and inclusive workplace [here](#).

To understand the importance of inclusive leadership, its benefits for workplace diversity, and how to develop these capabilities in Australian organisations read the article on building inclusion by Diversity Council Australia [here](#).



Deloitte Insights present six signature traits of inclusive leaders that go beyond traditional leadership assessment tools and frameworks. Read about them [here](#).

For advice on navigating workplace inclusion and developing inclusive skills to foster equity, authenticity, and belonging in diverse environments read the Harvard Business Review article [here](#).

Done well, meetings can be useful and inclusive. If done poorly, meetings can waste time and isolate or exclude people. NSW Regional Health Partners provide some tips, templates, and examples for how to meet well [here](#).

The JobAccess Employer Toolkit provides information related to disability employment. Through short video lessons and downloadable resources, you can be empowered to hire people with disability and understand the necessary steps you need to take. Read it [here](#).

Meaningful Work

“Meaningful work: unlock your unique path to career fulfillment” by Nina Mapstone Bone is a book based on research that provides clear examples of what meaningful work means. Find resources about this [here](#).

“Map of meaningful work: a practical guide to sustaining our humanity” by Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Lani Morris is based on research and addresses questions such as “What gives my life and work meaning?” and “How can I balance inspiration and reality?”. It offers insights to anyone interested in creating more meaningful and purposeful work environments. Find resources about this [here](#).

The Meaningful Work Profile Tool allows individuals to measure what meaningful work means for them. Developed by Beaumont People, the tool can help individuals gain insights into their workplace values and motivations. For organisations, it can help to improve employee engagement, commitment, and overall performance by aligning work with what employees find meaningful. Read it [here](#).



Language

The Australian Government Style Manual provides guidance on how to use inclusive language that respects diversity. Read it [here](#).

The Disability Language Guide was written in 2019 by Labib Rahman and reviewed by the Stanford Disability Initiative Board. It provides information about considering disability equity in the words we use. Read it [here](#).

The People with Disability Australia language guide was written by people with disability to assist people when talking about and reporting on disability. Read it [here](#).

Co-design

Doing Research, Together, published by NSW Regional Health Partners, provides practical tips and tools for applying co-design principles and co-delivering research projects from start to finish. Read it [here](#).

“The art of co-design” by Jeremy Kerr et al. is a book that outlines the key steps in the co-design process. It includes details about developing a co-design process, understanding how to involve various stakeholder groups, analysing results and producing effective solutions. Read about it [here](#).

Feros Care has developed a Co-design Framework, which shows how they support people with disability to live healthy, fulfilling, and connected lives. Read it [here](#).

Purple Orange has prepared a useful guide for co-designing with people with disability. It explains the difference between consultation and co-design. Read it [here](#).

Siscode has put together some helpful co-design tools in their guidebook. Read it [here](#).



Support and Further Advice

Contact Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC) to be connected with social enterprises that offer support and advice [here](#).

There are peak body organisations that assist Queenslanders with disability, their family members and carers, as well as disability service providers. If you need information about disability, or general support and advice, these are organisations that can help or provide advice. Learn more [here](#).

The Back to Work program provides support payments for eligible employers who hire unemployed Queenslanders. The program also offers support to attract, find and retain employees through locally based teams. Read more [here](#).

The National Standards for Disability Services guide organisations delivering support to people with disability. The guide outlines six standards focusing on rights, participation, and inclusion, individual outcomes, feedback, service access, and service management. Read more at Department of Social Services, Australian Government [here](#).

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides guidelines and resources to help employers understand their responsibilities and foster a culture of inclusion, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities. Read more [here](#).

JobAccess can assist people with disability in finding and keeping jobs, getting promoted, and upgrading or expanding their workplace skills. Learn more [here](#).



Appendix 1: Toolkit Templates

This appendix contains templates for the various planning and reflection activities discussed in the toolkit.



Meaningful Work Assessment Review Template

Attribute	Score	Strengths	Areas for Review/Development



Co-design Step 1: Connection and Collaboration Template

Connecting to People, Purpose and Place	
Meaningful Work Ingredients	
Conceptualising Meaningful Work	



Co-design Step 2: How Might We? Template

Goal or Challenge
How Might We? Ideas
Our How Might We?



Co-design Step 3: Planning and Taking Action Template

What Big Ideas (Strategic Actions) Will Help Us Achieve Our HMW?	
What Smaller Steps and Actions Need to Happen?	
Who Will be Involved?	
When Does This Need to Happen?	
What Resources are Required?	
What Might Get in the Way?	



Co-design Step 4: Reflection Template

What?	
So What?	
Now What?	





Co-design Step 4: Co-design Process Evaluation Template

I Like	I Wish	I Wonder
<i>What is going well? What is the evidence of change?</i>	<i>What needs further improvement or change?</i>	<i>What else could we try?</i>
We Will Amplify	We Will Address	We Will Implement
<i>What will we do to amplify the things going well?</i>	<i>What will we do to address the things that need improvement?</i>	<i>What actions will we take to implement new ideas?</i>

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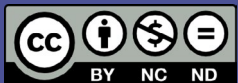
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