

Designing with

KA McKercher (them/they/theirs)
@kellyanagram



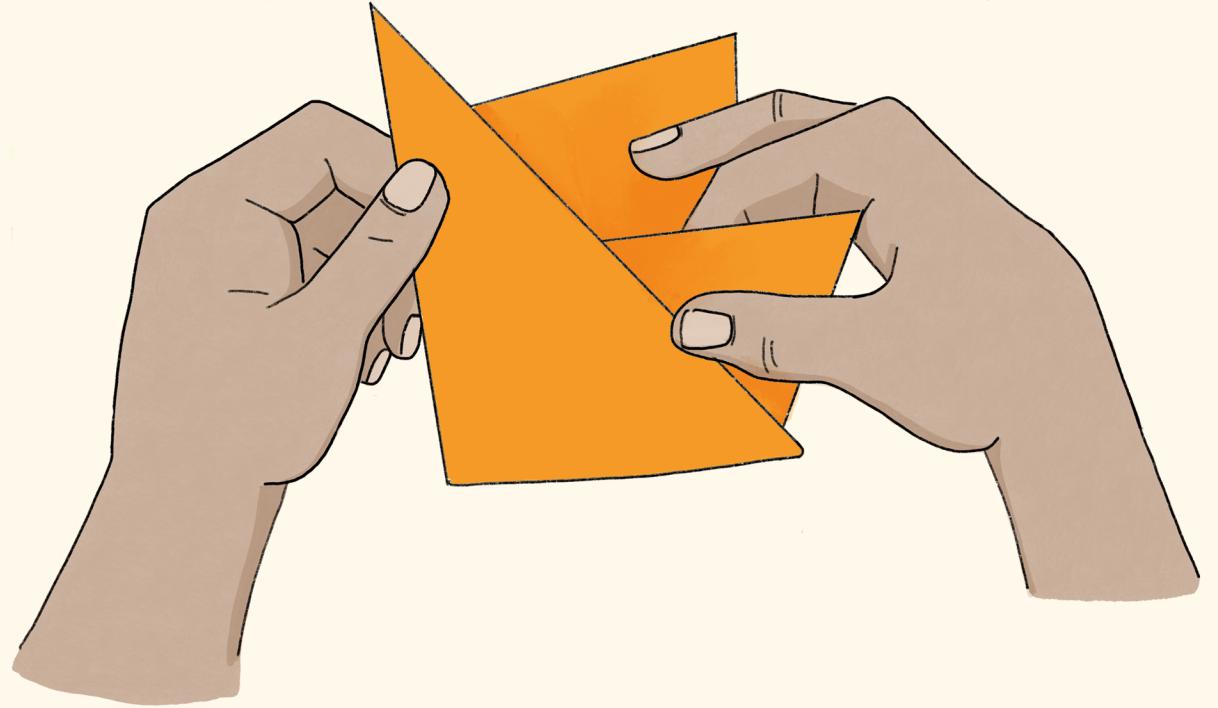


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been designing and innovating for more than 50,000 years.

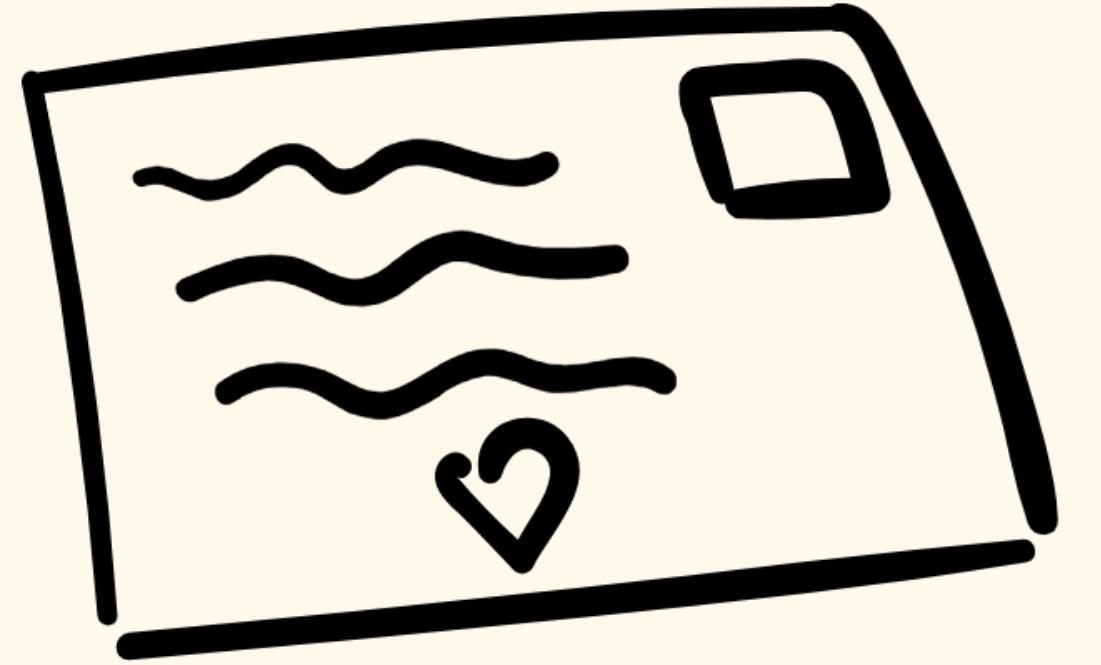
My work builds upon the contributions of Ingrid Burkett, Penny Hagen, Elizabeth Sanders, Simon Harger-Forde, Kataraina Davis, Lesley-Ann Noel, Equity-Centred Community Design ([Creative Reaction Lab](#)), the Design Justice Movement and many others.

Today, in four acts:

- 1 Who am I?
- 2 What does co-design mean to me?
- 3 What is shifting and where are the bright spots?
- 4 What helps and hinders designing with?



We'll do some making, together



Send your questions via:

Conference Slack

Twitter (@kellyanagram)

LinkedIn (KA McKercher)

My positionality:

Transgender, queer person

White, non-citizen, on stolen Aboriginal land

Designer and design educator

Public servant, practitioner, keen observer

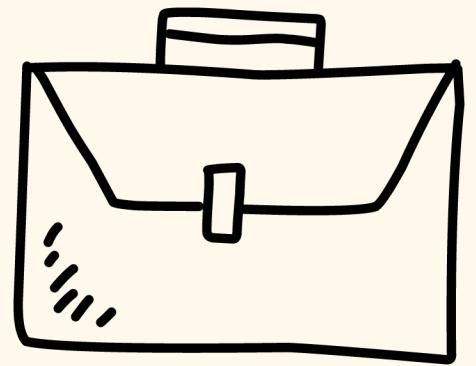




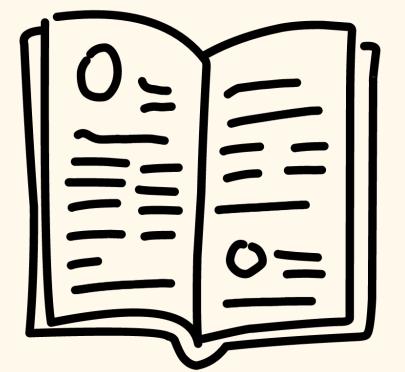
Photo by Jakob Cotton on [Unsplash](#)



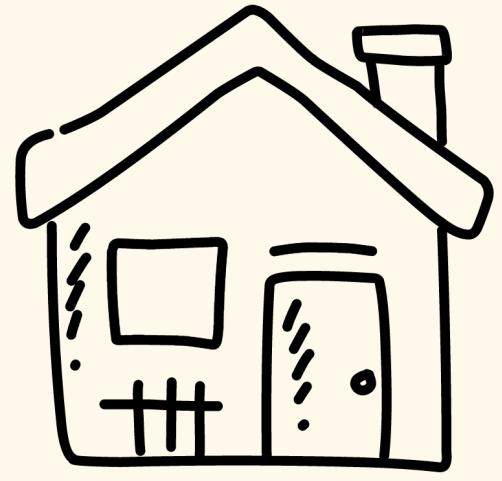
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Euro-American tools and toolkits claiming to be universal



**Colonising of language, re-writing
out one world-view and into another**



**Doing for, helping other people
(usually ‘the other’)**

**“Why do people I don’t know,
know so much about me?”**

**“Why is this report about all the
things I can’t do? I don’t see
my life like that.”**

**“We’re left with a report and no resources.
Does ‘community-led’ mean free?”**

“No one invited you.”

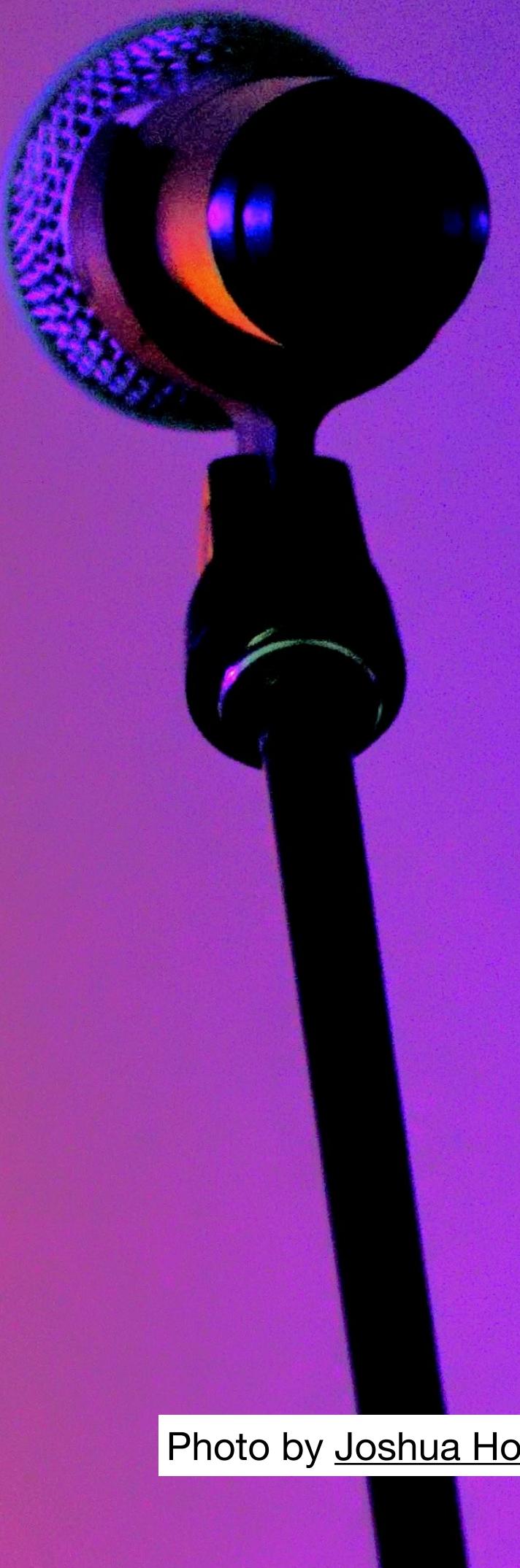


Photo by [Joshua Hoehne](#) on [Unsplash](#)

**“How might we encounter each
other in new ways, that fix each
other less, demean each other less
and allow for new potential to
emerge?”**

Christian Penny

Peer-to-peer and community story gathering



Researcher as expert and author



Researcher as coach





Photo by [Masaaki Komori](#) on [Unsplash](#)



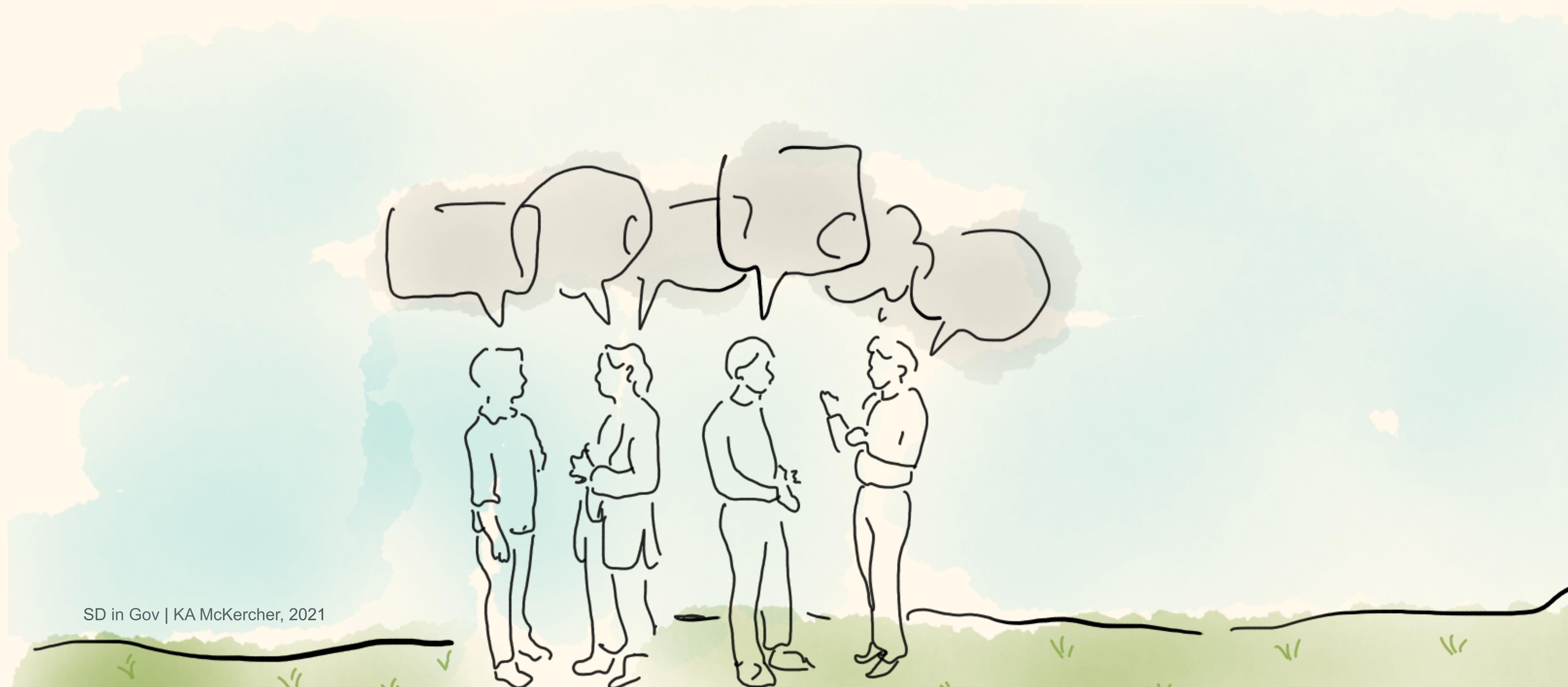




Photo by [Artem Maltsev](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Act two: What co-design means to me

“But we’re already doing co-design...”



SD in Gov | KA McKercher, 2021

PARENTING,
PATERNALISM
"I KNOW BEST..."

QUICK FIXES
& MAGIC
BULLETS

HOMOGENIETY &
BLANKET SOLUTIONS

SAVIOURISM.

BINARIES.

COMPETITION

RUSH TO SCALE,
AWKARDS

SERVICES AS THE ANSWER
TO EVERY QUESTION.

THE
'TASKMASTER'

EXPECTING LINEARITY
& ORDER.

PROBLEM FRAMING

ONE WORLDVIEW -
NO PLURALITY.

PROJECT 'MANAGEMENT'
OUTLOOK - HYPERFOCUS
ON OUTPUTS NOT OUTCOMES

WANTING PEOPLE TO
BEHAVE! - BE MORE
ACCEPTABLE TO YOU.

(A few) practices of co-design

- Starting with questions, holding solutions lightly
- Trying things out, using prototypes to learn
- Engaging in community-led and peer-to-peer action
- Caring deeply for everyone involved in co-design
- Professionals sharing power and their postionality



Human-centred design

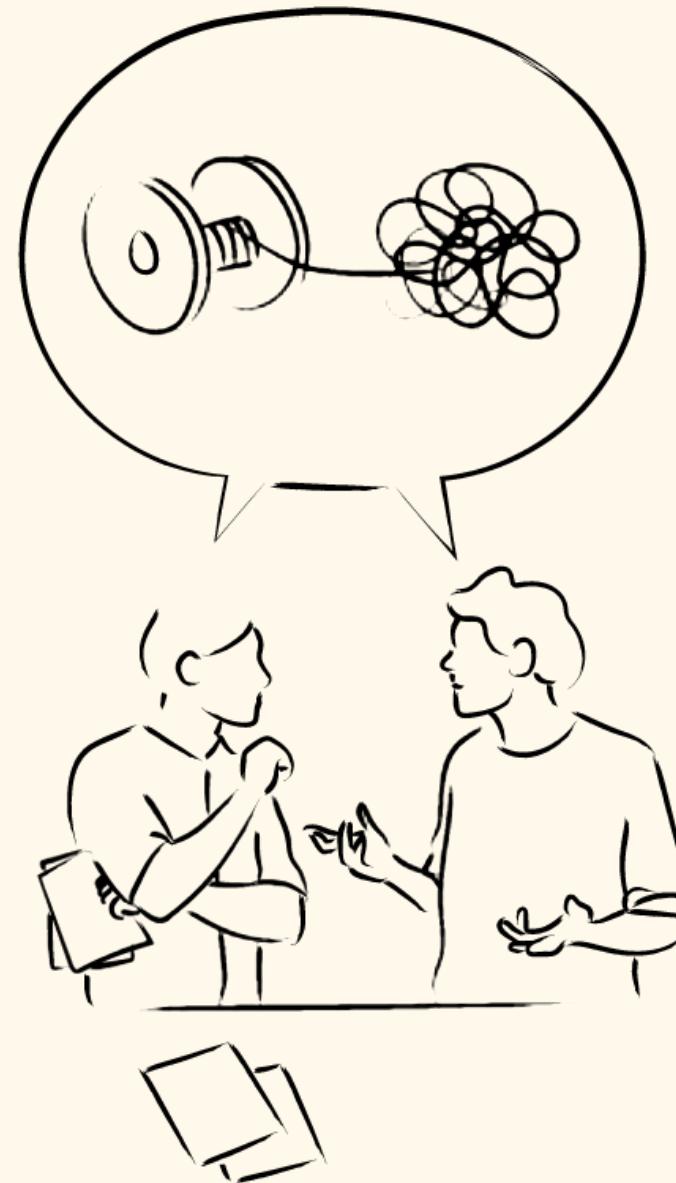
Participants

We lead

We service pre-determined agendas and worldviews

We decide

We tell stories on behalf of



Co-design

Partners

We support

Co-deciding, plural, social movement to share power

Co-deciding

Own stories, own voices

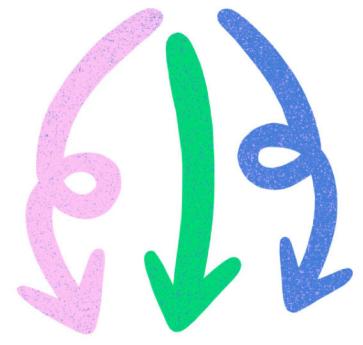
The Model of Care for Co-design describes how to support people during co-design – in two parts:

Part One: Before togetherness

Part Two: Together and beyond

Creating safety requires more care and hospitality from people who design and run co-design initiatives. People with lived experience do not have to change to suit us professionals.

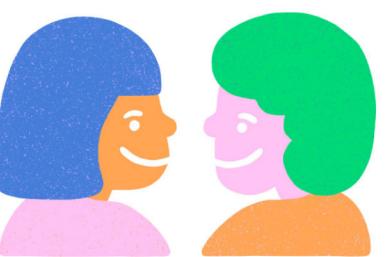
Slow down to create safety



ASSESS THE FIT

Determine if the work you want to do is needed, if it will add value to the lives of people with lived experience, and if you should lead it.

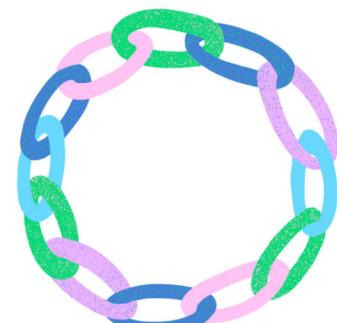
Before togetherness



Together and beyond

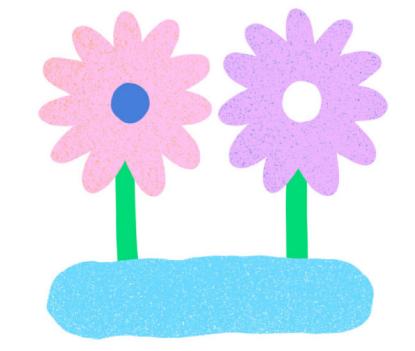
SEEK ON-GOING FEEDBACK

Inexperienced facilitators often take silence as agreement and move ahead when there is unfinished business, confusion or contempt.



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

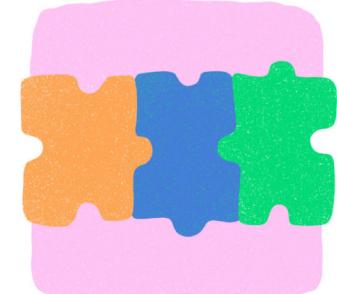
If you don't have time to build relationships, you don't have time for co-design.



Before togetherness

RECRUIT WISELY

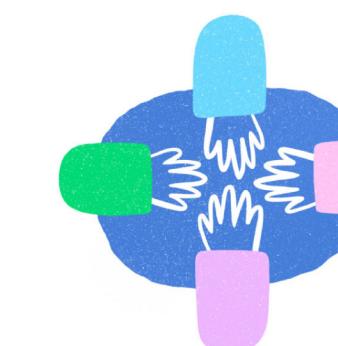
Carefully select professionals to work alongside people with lived experience.



Together and beyond

CONNECT CO-DESIGNERS

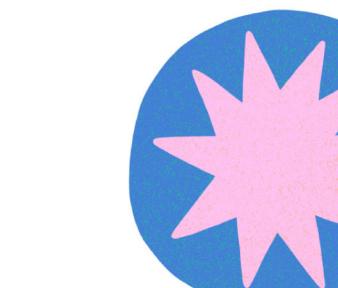
The relationships are the work – do not rush to ‘doing’.



Before togetherness

WIDEN INCLUSION

Design and co-design are not inherently inclusive; we have to make them so.



Before togetherness

OFFER GENUINE INVITATIONS

Focus on what people can contribute. Look beyond the usual suspects and in unusual places. Invite people to share their strengths first.



Before togetherness

ESTABLISH A SUPPORT TEAM

After assessing the fit, form a support team to guide and care for co-designers. Include these roles: convener, design coach, coordinator, healer and community connector.



Together and beyond

HAVE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

If conveners don't speak up when someone is harmed, they are complicit in that harm.



Together and beyond

CARE FOR EACH OTHER

Make sure that members of the support team are well looked after and care for each other.



DEVELOP FRAMEWORKS FOR SAFETY

Frameworks help create an environment that is ‘safe enough’ for co-designers to work together.



Before togetherness

PRE-EMPT BARRIERS

Pre-empt possible barriers to increase accessibility and reduce shame. Consider people's identities, emotional safety, culture, triggers and neurotype.



Together and beyond

SEEK ON-GOING RELATIONSHIPS

After co-design, consider how you'll support co-designers to minimise the distress of an ending.

**Let's test our
assumptions...**

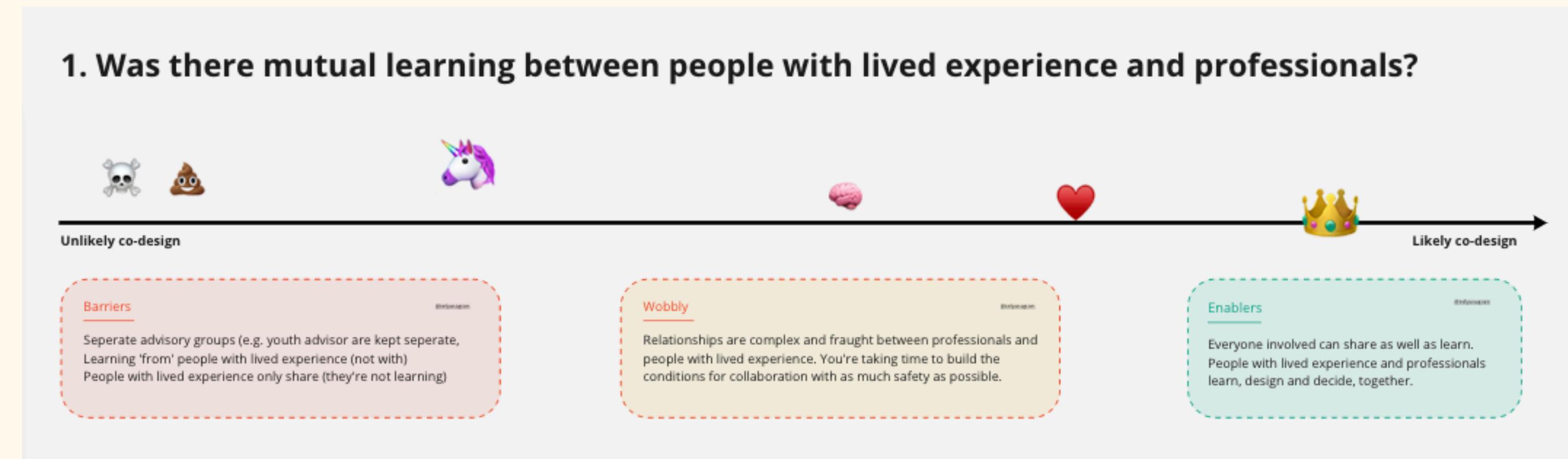
Co-design quick test

	Yes	No	Don't know
Is there mutual learning? The 'co' bit			
Is there something being made? The 'design' bit			
Is there a degree of co-deciding?			
Are people with lived experience recognised for their time?			

10 mins

Think of a project that you, or someone else called ‘co-design’

Consider each spectrum in Miro and place an emoji



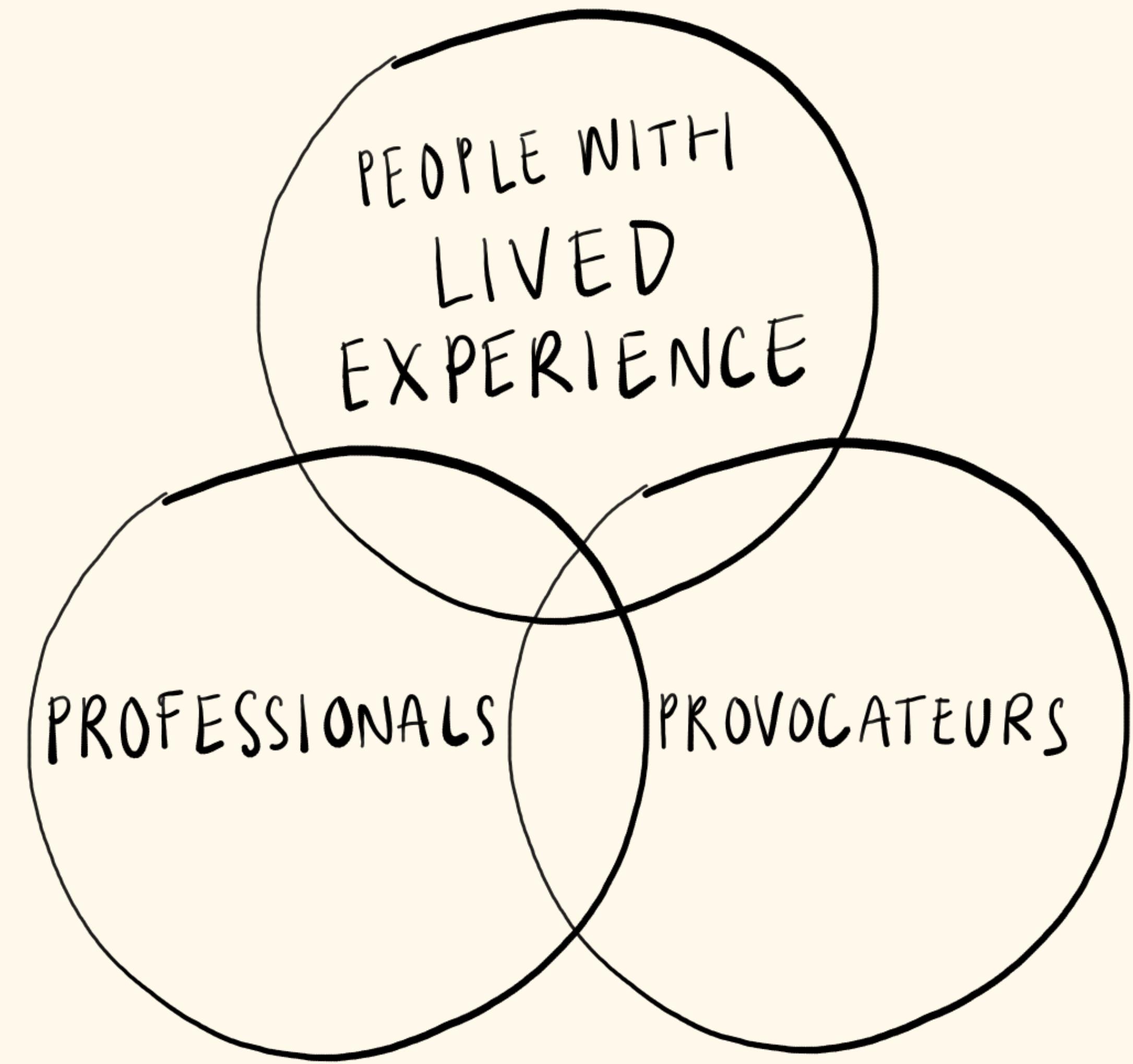
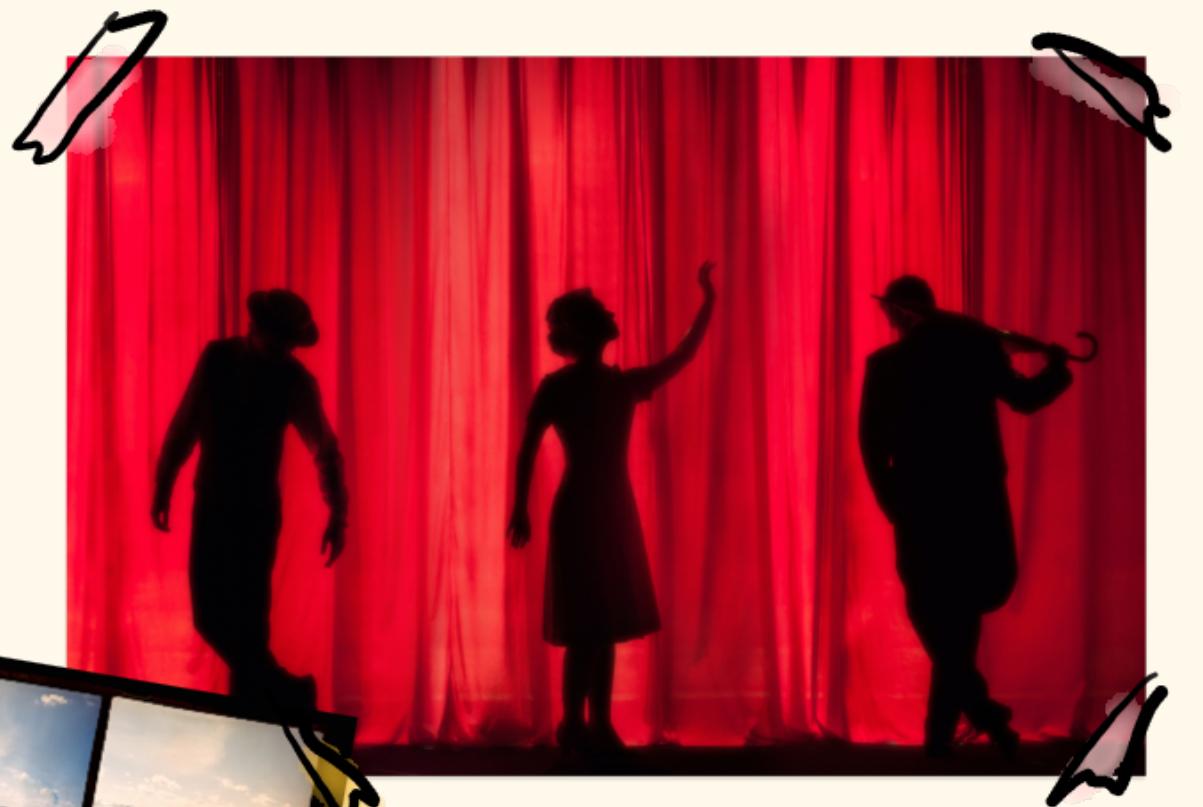
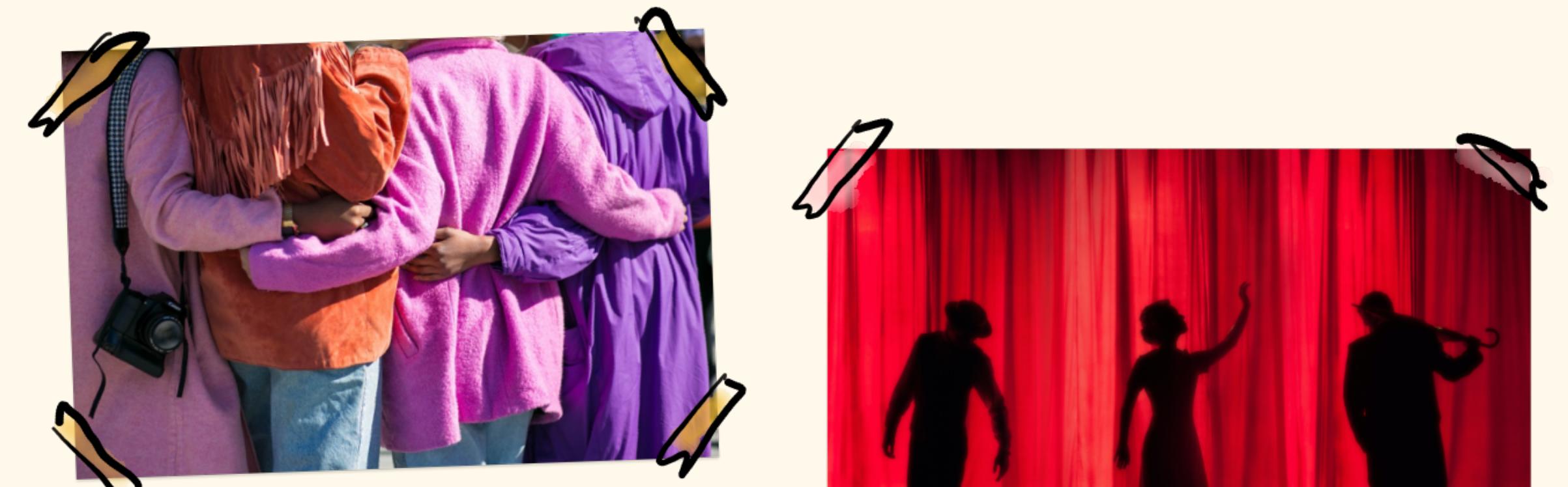




Photo by [Leon](#) on [Unsplash](#)

CO-DESIGN
CAN ALSO
LOOK LIKE...



ACTIVISM, RAGE,
HOPE, GRIEF, PLAY

While we make tangible things, we can't neglect the intangible...

- Relationships
- Movements
- Coalitions
- Networks
- Communities
- Futures



Gender Spectrum Collection

“Over cups of tea and the experience of bringing people together... it becomes possible to talk with each other and be in the same room with the people we talk about.”

Padraig O-Tuama, <https://onbeing.org/programs/padraig-o-tuama-belonging-creates-and-undoes-us/>

If ‘co-design’ is used to describe consultation or placation it:

- **Re-produces the status quo**
- **Damages enthusiasm for genuine co-design**
- **Reinforces power ‘over’**
- **Destroy trust systems (Evans & Terrey)**

Evans, M., & Terrey, N. (2016). Co-design with citizens and stakeholders. *Evidence-based policy making in the social sciences: Methods that matter*, 243-262.



Photo by [Sam Moqadam](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Act three: Bright spots



- Valuing slowness (years, not weeks)
- De-centering the designer in design
- Non-linear, non-dogmatic
- Focus on learning, together





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Our Town

A 10-year, place-based initiative to support community leadership and wellbeing

Supported by the Australian Centre for Social Innovation, the Fay Fuller Foundation and Clear Horizon

Capability building focused on:

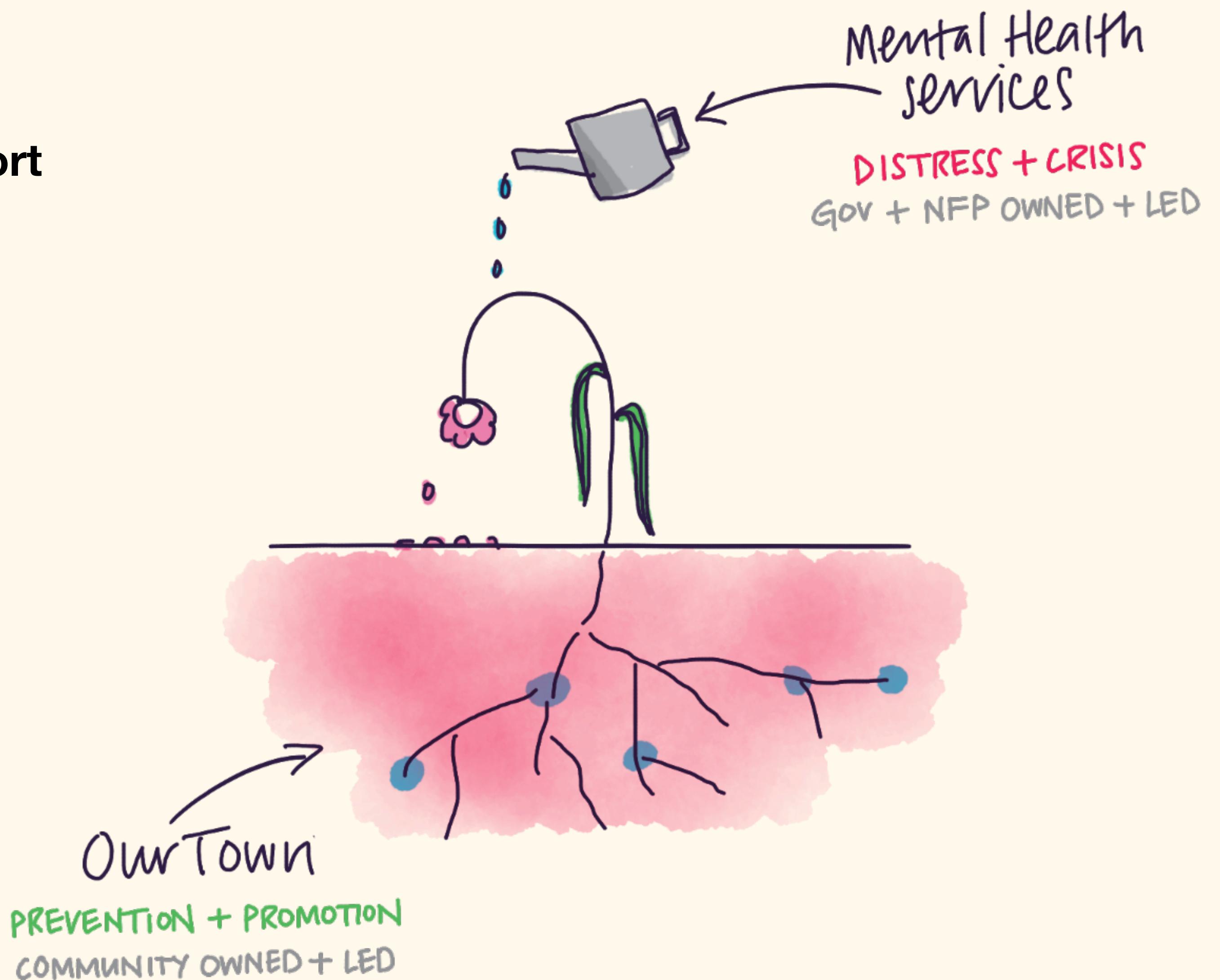
- Community leadership
- Participatory decision-making
- Policy and systems influence

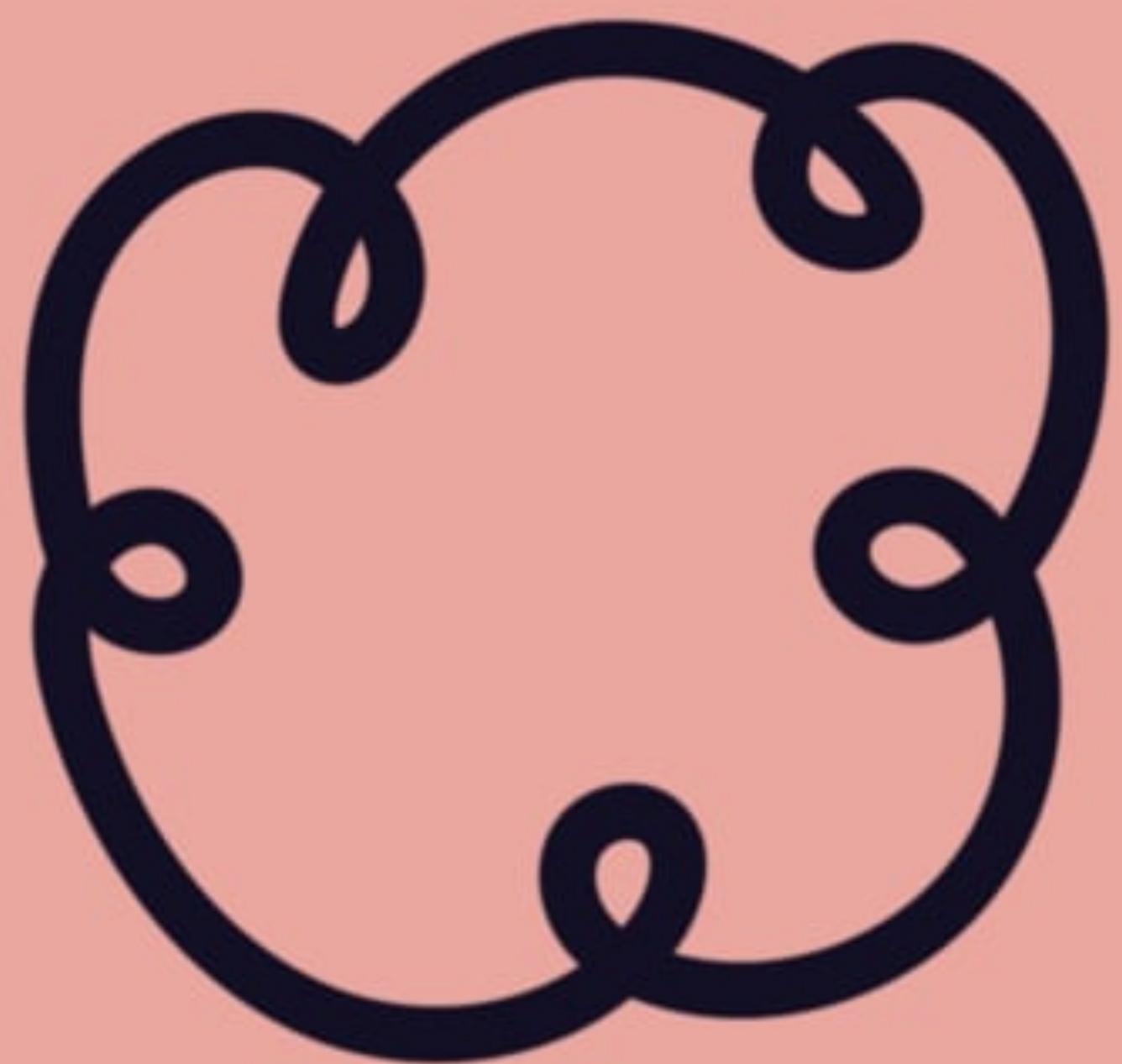
The outcome is not more services

Not about homogeneous responses

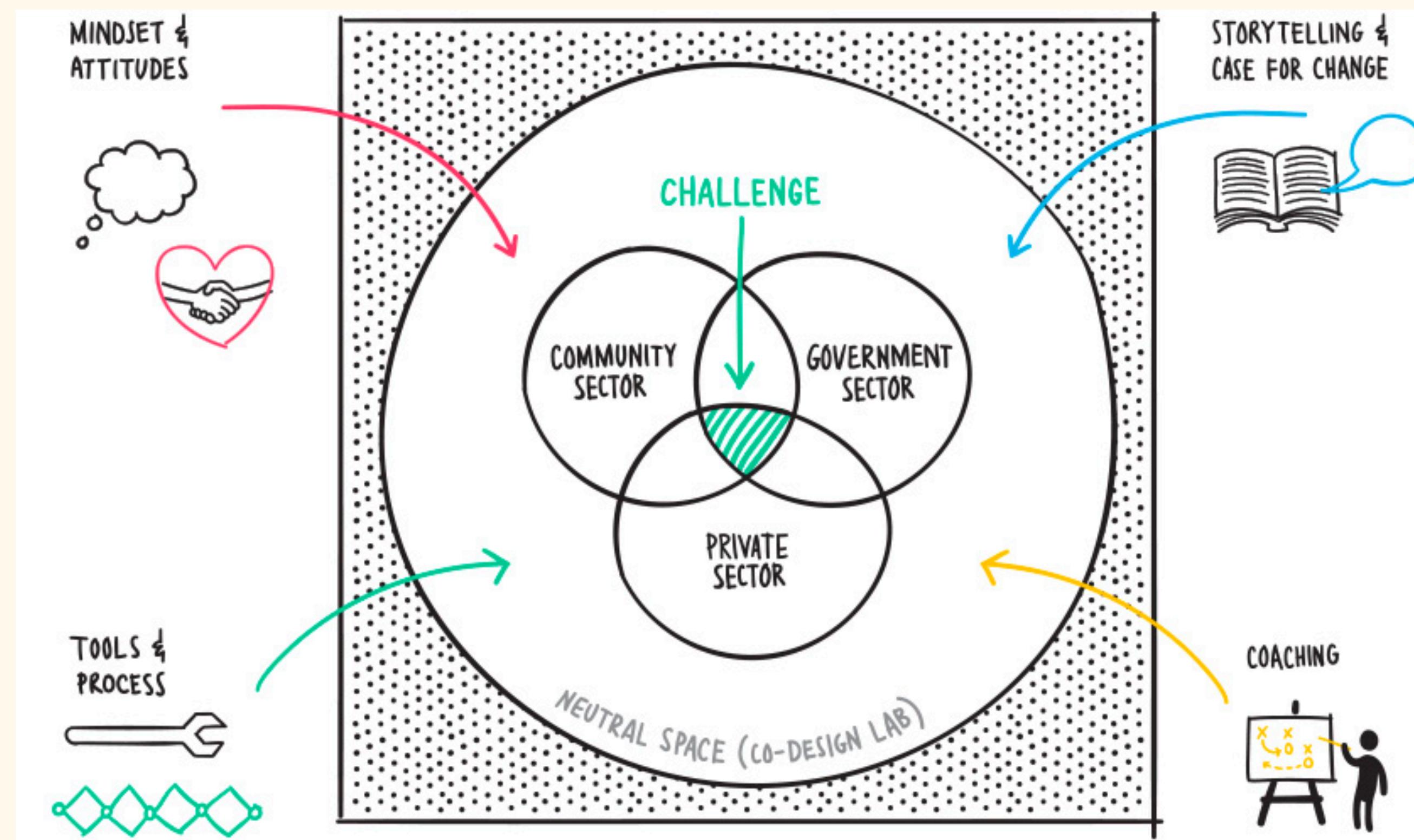
Government as enablers of community action

<https://www.ourtownsa.com.au/timeline>





Auckland Co-design Lab (NZ)



Placed-based, community-authored approaches

Integrating co-design, complexity, ethics and evaluative practices

Relational approaches

Methodological pluralism - many different kinds of data, methods and approaches
(2019)

Whānau-centric design

Māori protocols for doing, together

[Read more](#)

Image: Auckland Co-design Lab. Retrieved from: <https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/about-us/what-we-offer>

Co-design in mental health services (AU)

Enabled by policy and Royal Commission recommendations

- Employing people with lived experience
- Influencing traditionally fixed processes, such as health infrastructure planning
- Making best use of people's time through engaging them in things they know and care about
- Sharing whole selves (yes, professionals too)

[Read more](#)

Tindall, R. M., Ferris, M., Townsend, M., Boschert, G., & Moylan, S. (2021). A first-hand experience of co-design in mental health service design: Opportunities, challenges, and lessons. International journal of mental health nursing.



Photo by RF_.studio from Pexels

Change in deep structures. As June Holley (p.11) notes:

- A shift in how we relate to each other from hierarchy to peers
- A shift from pressures for conformity to a deep appreciation our differences
- A shift from a control mentality to a creation of a web of support

The Network Weavers Handbook (retrieved from: <https://networkweaver.com/product/network-weaver-handbook-pdf/>)

 **Ladder of Participation** (Arnstein, 1969)

From non participation and tokenism, to citizen partnership and control

 **Orders of design** (Buchanan, 2007)

From visuals and products, to services and systems



If we're not solving other people's problems, what are we doing?

Coaching around mindsets and skillsets

Encouraging others to see and challenge the status quo

Enabling people to contribute in different ways

Coaching people to hold their ideas lightly

Nurturing practice and practitioners

EXPERT



← COACH →

Act four

What helps and hinders
designing with?

👋 See you in Miro



Thanks !

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BeyondStickyNotes.com