

Co-designing Resources to Increase Access to Information and Services: Syrian and Iraqi people with disability from refugee backgrounds and service providers

Workshop to talk about barriers to accessing services

People with disability and their families from refugee backgrounds can find it hard to get information and services in Australia. We want to create some resources to make getting information and services easier for people with disability from Syrian and Iraqi refugee backgrounds. Before we do this, it is important we understand what makes it hard for people to get the information and services they need. Information and services may be related to housing, transport, hospital and healthcare, disability support services, allied health, education, employment, English-language classes, support in the home, and assistive technology such as wheelchairs.

We know a little about this already. We have learnt what we know by talking to people with disability and family members from refugee backgrounds, and information from services that support people and other researchers.

We hope that this summary will help you to think about your own experiences before the workshop.

It can be hard to know about services and how to contact them. For example,

- Sometimes there is not enough information about services and what they can do to help
- Information isn't in my language and dialect or easily available to me
- It can be hard to find someone to help me get the right service
- There can be long waiting times to see services and get help
- Sometimes I am embarrassed to ask for help
- I don't know how to ask for other help if the service isn't right for me or my family member

My culture is not always understood. For example,

- Some cultural differences are not understood, such as the importance of family, shared language and dialect, food, religion, the roles of men and women, and attitudes to disability or minority groups
- Communities and services don't always understand what I have experienced including the challenges of fleeing war and conflict and how these impact on my life now
- It can be hard to find and use translating and interpreting services

Services don't always take my, or my family member's, disability into account. For example,

- Housing and transport aren't available or physically accessible
- Services aren't in the area where I live
- I don't get the equipment, technology and help I, or my family member, need
- I find it hard to get an education, learn English, and find a job because of my disability or, as a family member, because I am busy caring for a person with disability

Services cost too much. For example,

- Housing rent is too expensive
- I don't get enough money to pay for the services I, or my family member needs
- Medical and specialist doctors and therapists are expensive

Services don't meet my needs. For example,

- Some staff lack experience working with people with disability
- Some staff don't stay in their jobs for long
- I find some services don't share information with each other, so I often have to repeat what I tell them
- There isn't enough long-term support for me, or my family member with disability