Projects about disability institutions
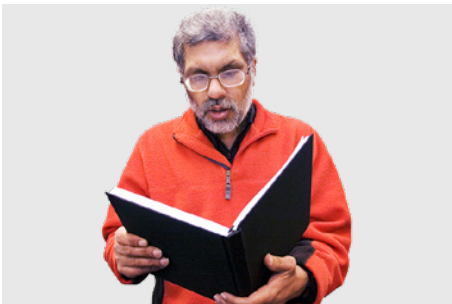
What we learned

Easy Read

About this information

The organisations that made this information are

• NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

• University of Technology Sydney.

We did a project about **self advocates** and **disability institutions**.

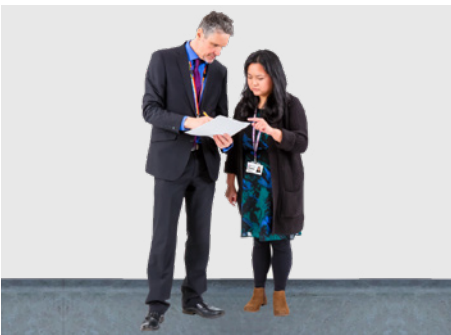**Self advocates** are people with disability who speak up for their rights.

Disability institutions are big places where many people with disability used to live.

We spoke to disability self advocates about disability institutions.

We had focus groups and interviews with the self advocates.

We learned a lot about doing this kind of project.

This information is about what we learned.

Questions we asked self advocates

We asked the self advocates questions like

- How should we remember disability institutions

- How can we tell the stories of the people who lived in disability institutions

- What can we learn so disability institutions do not happen again?

We asked older self advocates how they spoke up to close disability institutions.

We asked how we can remember the self advocates who helped close the institutions.

We also talked to younger self advocates.

We asked them

- What they want to learn from older self advocates

- How can we make sure disability institutions do not happen again?

What we learned

There are some important things we learned from the project.

It can be hard for people to talk about their time in disability institutions.

A lot of these people have had **abuse** happen to them.

Abuse is when someone treats you very bad.

It is important there are **counsellors** when we talk to people about this.

Counsellors are workers who can support you with your feelings.

Counsellors can help keep people safe in focus groups and interviews.

It is important we remember that there are different kinds of disability institutions.

Disability institutions are not just the ones that have closed now.

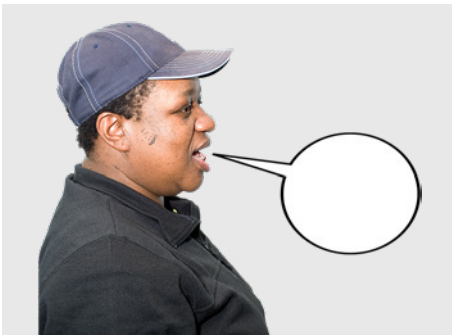Disability institutions can also be places like

- Group homes

- Schools

- Jails.

We should let people with disability say what disability institutions mean to them.

It is hard to find people with disability who have lived in big disability institutions.

Some of these people might not want to talk about being in a disability institution.

A lot of people have moved far away or died since the institutions closed.

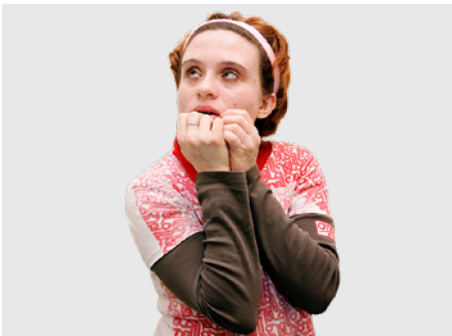We must respect if people do not want to be in a project.

But this means not all the people we speak to have been in big disability institutions.

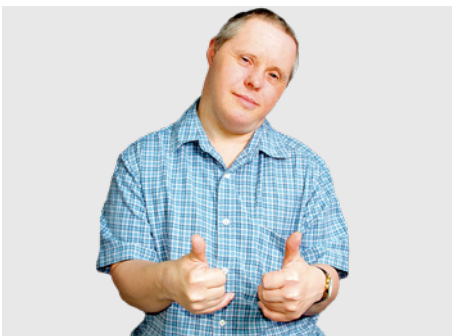We need to remember this when we look at what we learned from the project.

A lot of people who have been in disability institutions have **trauma**.

Trauma is when something from the past makes you feel bad.

People should not have to talk about their trauma in the project.

We will make sure we do things in a safe way so people are not hurt by their trauma.

In our project we let people choose if they wanted to talk to us in a

- Focus group

- Interview.

It is important people with disability can choose what they are comfortable with.
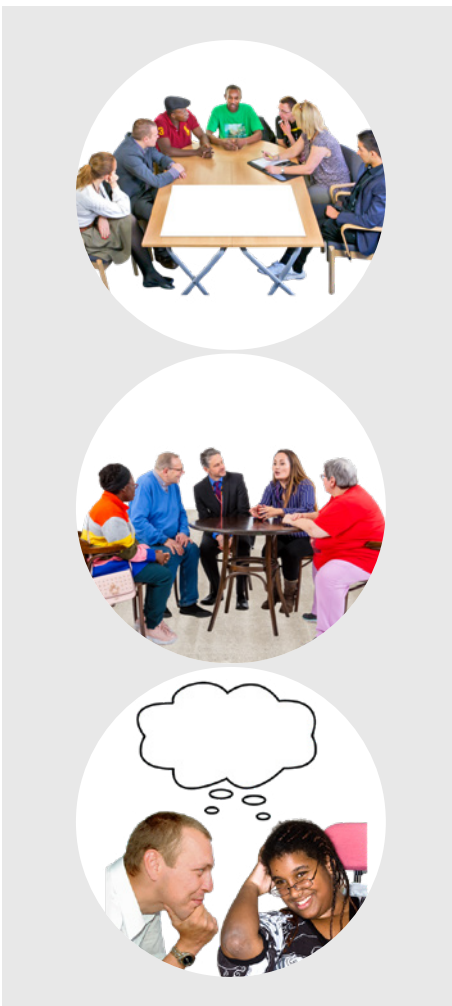
This makes sure people get their right to make their own decisions.

It is important we work together with people with intellectual disability for projects like this.

This makes sure that people with disability can be part of things.

People with intellectual disability should be a part of

• Planning the project

• Doing the focus groups and interviews
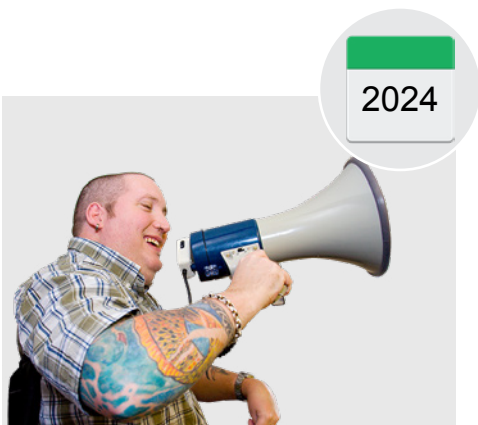
• Deciding what to do next.

The project information should also be Easy Read so everyone can understand it.

A lot of people we spoke to shared stories about speaking up for their rights.

1970

Self advocates with intellectual disability spoke up for their rights in the past.

2024

This has helped the self advocates today be able to speak up.

Self advocates are still speaking up about

• Jobs

• Schools

• Group homes

• Prisons.

Council for Intellectual Disability made this document Easy Read. **CID** for short.

Email CID at **business@cid.org.au** if you want to use any of the pictures.