

Life Without Barriers (LWB) is committed to partnering with people to change lives for the better. To truly achieve a partnering relationship, active and purposeful engagement is fundamental. We recognise our clients are our most important stakeholders and the reason for everything we do. Clients have a right to participate in determining their service needs, rather than simply receiving services.

Engaging on a daily basis with children, families, carers and other individuals with whom we work is critical because they are the experts in how our service is experienced and can advise us on how we might improve our effectiveness. Our approach to engaging and empowering clients focuses on the people we support, not just on the services we provide. This means that the goals and aspirations of clients should be uppermost in all our minds when we plan, design and deliver services and supports.

Our client engagement approach is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum, which is designed to help organisations select appropriate engagement methods based on the client's needs and characteristics and the goals of the engagement. The IAP2 spectrum recognises that engagement occurs in a variety of ways that gradually increase the level of client and community participation and influence, comprising:

- **Information:** providing balanced, accurate and objective information to understand problems, opportunities, alternatives and solutions
- **Consultation:** obtaining feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or outcomes
- **Involvement:** working directly with stakeholders to ensure their concerns and needs are consistently understood and considered
- **Collaboration:** partnering in developing alternatives, making decisions and the identification of preferred solutions
- **Empowerment:** enabling/equipping stakeholders to actively contribute to the achievement of outcomes and placing final decision-making in their hands.

Our engagement activities are targeted at three different levels: Individual, Program, and Organisational. While these areas are related, the different levels support the development and implementation of client engagement strategies that enable client voices to be heard at each operational level and across the whole organisation. Specifying these levels also allows us to tailor our engagement activities to the unique aspects of the different programs that we deliver.

Our engagement activities focus on the benefits to our clients, and the outcomes of these activities are used to inform our continuous improvement as an organisation. They are also used to inform our advocacy activities, amplifying the voice of our clients and their communities in our discussions with Government, the sector and other stakeholders.

Related Policy Guidelines or Documents

- Engaging and Empowering – the LWB Approach to Partnering
- Pillars of Practice
- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People – The LWB Practice Approach.