



Towards Inclusive Practice

Including Everyone.

A project by:  | Inclusion Australia

Inclusion: take the time, make the time.



In the Towards Inclusive Practice project, we talk a lot about time.

When thinking about things government can do to be more inclusive, Inclusion Advisors frequently mentioned time.

This includes allowing enough time for planning and consultations, taking more time in meetings and conversations, and building in enough time to be able to work together. It is clear that time matters when it comes to inclusion.



We wrote this short guide to help you think about time in your work and how you can take time to be more inclusive.

Time is relative

We live in a busy world. It can often feel like there is never enough time for all the things we have to do. This is true at home and at work where time plays a big part in what we can do each day. For many people, work is about completing milestones and meeting deadlines. Such deadlines are often out of our control, set by others. For people who work in government, deadlines are often aligned to financial years or the cycle of politics. This can feel disempowering and create stress for those who must deliver on government promises and projects.

Time is also very important for people with an intellectual disability. Many people lead busy lives with set routines. People may have set times when they can be available. Routines can be hard to change, especially where people need support. It is not easy to rearrange supports and to be available at short notice. Inclusion Advisors were also clear that people with an intellectual disability often need more time to do things that others might do quickly.

It is therefore important to remember that time is relative and that each of us can feel anxious, or even powerless when we are working to someone else's timeframe.



Good practice when thinking about time

Good consultation and co-design take time to do. You may need to **reframe the way you think about time** and do things differently to what you are used to. Think differently about how you use time and challenge your expectations of how long something should take. This is one of the most important things you can do to increase the inclusivity of your practice and to get better results.

Your experience of time may be different to other people. People need and use time in different ways. For example, having ‘enough’ time to prepare for a meeting will depend on many things including any support needs, clarity of information, previous experience in meetings, familiarity with the topic and the nature of their expected involvement. It can also depend on how well prepared the documents are and how well the meeting has been planned. Consider how much time people might need in your planning, but also check in and ask meeting member regularly.

Think about time as an investment. Not rushing steps or processes will help the work you do to feel more empowering and authentic, and result in better policy and outcomes for both the government and for people with an intellectual disability.

Time tips from our Inclusion Advisors

Time is always important to think about throughout the work you are doing, especially engagement and co-design with people with an intellectual disability. Here are some time tips from our Inclusion Advisors to help your practice.



Build time into your project planning

- Engage experts early including Disability Representative Organisations (DRO)
- Take time to think about your questions. Are they easy to understand? Work with experts to co-design questions in accessible language.
- Invest time in preparing your project information. Is it accessible? Use our guide

“Connect via trusted community organisations at the planning stage and start with the National organisation to get a good cross section of people.” - Advocate, VIC

Allow time for recruitment

- Build in time to work with organisations to recruit people with an intellectual disability for consultations and meeting.

“People need to understand that it takes a bit of time for me to prepare. I need to do this with my support. We should be paid for this time.” - Inclusion Advisor, TAS

Preparation time

- Give plenty of notice for people to work out how to make themselves available at the requested day or time, including organising support people or transport
- Plan time to make and share supporting documents, including like Easy Read
- Give time to ask and respond to questions about the location, access information, refreshments, payments, and any other important information
- Leave enough time to read any supporting materials

- Plan time to organise captioners, interpreters, support workers, and others
- Allow time to address any barriers people may have to participation

*“Talk slowly and give us time to process the information before answering.”
- Inclusion Advisor, ACT*

Take time in meetings

- Give time for people to get settled and comfortable before the meeting begins
- Build in time for everyone to get to know each other before the questions start
- Take time to explain how the meeting will run and the purpose
- Be patient. Allow time for people to consider questions before answering and give everyone chance to fully contribute
- Make time to “check in” with the group and see how they are doing
- Create timeouts – always allow breaks if the meeting is over 1 hour
- Make time at the end to check that everyone had their say, was listened to, and if anyone wants to add any other information before the meeting closes
- Take time to summarise the meeting and tell everyone the next steps

“The consultation brought up some difficult things for me. They called me after the session to check I was okay. They told me about different supports I could access.” - Inclusion Advisor, TAS

Take time afterwards

- Schedule time for people to add any other thoughts after the meeting or event
- Allow time for feedback, compliments, or complaints and follow up any actions
- Take time to follow up and offer support if difficult subjects are talked about
- Prioritise a quick turnaround of meeting minutes and share in a good timeframe
- Allow time to translate meeting minutes into Easy Read
- Make time to review how the meeting went and make any changes required

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO BE MORE

INCLUSIVE?

Thinking about time – reflective practice activities

- Review these tips with a colleague. Which ones are most important for you personally when attending meetings or consultations? Compare your answers and see how they differ and any similarities.
- What things do you always make time for in your meetings?
- Are there any suggestions on this list that challenge you or that you weren't thinking of before?
- What are they, and how can you include them going forward?