

SAFE SPACES

Toolkit 3

Co-Design



Understanding and enhancing safety
and inclusion for diverse women

The **Victorian Government** acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on a disciplined social and cultural order that has sustained 60,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the significant disruptions to social and cultural order and the ongoing hurt caused by colonisation.

The Safe Spaces team acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our universities are located and where we conduct our research. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. We acknowledge the ongoing effects of colonisation on Indigenous and First Nations people in Australia and elsewhere and the harmful ways research has further marginalised people who had their lands, their families and their lives stolen. We commit to being better researchers and allies to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This toolkit is one of three designed by the Safe Spaces team to assist local councils and related organisations in understanding safety and inclusion for women in public places.

What is included in each toolkit?

- A **blueprint** with general principles to bear in mind when engaging with diverse groups of women.
- A **set of practices** to support local councils and stakeholders in collecting useful data about women's experiences in public places.

These three toolkits represent the outputs from the *Safe Spaces: Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women* report developed for the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Welcoming Cities, local councils, community members and related organisations.



'Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion for diverse women' is a collaboration between Monash University, Griffith University, University of Sydney, Wyndham City Council, Melton City Council, Monash City Council and Welcoming Cities.

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DEDICATION

The Safe Spaces team dedicates this research and the resultant toolkits to the women from Wyndham, Melton and Monash communities who participated in this project. Over the course of this project, the Safe Spaces team engaged and collaborated with nearly 200 women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with a range of abilities. This project has only been possible thanks to their generosity, intelligence, curiosity and time.

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Key definitions

CO-DESIGN

Co-design brings together diverse participants using design principles and practices to solve real-world problems. It is a mode for shared decision-making and actively involves various stakeholders. The objective is not solely to achieve an outcome, but also to build meaningful collaboration into the design process and between participants. Co-design ideally engages a range of people – including those with 'lived experience' of the issues – to explore and test possible solutions. As a participatory process it is a form of community engagement that can be used for a range of disciplines, including policy development, planning practice and design more broadly.

INCLUSION

In the context of this toolkit, inclusion refers to the feeling of belonging to a community and/or place and the ability to participate fully in social life free from discrimination or disadvantage.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to how different aspects of a person's identity can result in overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Social identities that might contribute to intersectionality can include Indigeneity, ethnicity, race, sex, sexuality, gender identity, parent or carer status, disability, mental health, religion, migrant and/or refugee status and experience, age, socioeconomic status and background, cultural background, educational background and community background. It is important to note that some intersectional criteria change over time, meaning that a woman's identity, needs and priorities may change across her life course.

PUBLIC PLACES

Public places are those that community members can access without payment or membership. Examples of public places include green spaces, walking/cycling trails, local parks, libraries, community centres and the areas adjacent to public transport hubs.

SAFETY

We refer to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of safety as 'the state of being protected from or guarded against hurt or injury; freedom from danger'.¹ However, safety means different things to different people, and it will likely vary across places and time. Women's safety is place-based and subjective. The social and behavioural elements of places and spaces cannot be separated from the built environment.

WOMEN

This project has undertaken research with women in all their diversity. Women are not a homogenous group and differ in terms of their cultural background, socioeconomic status, sexuality, disability and age and where they live. Work in communities is about gender-diverse people too. The Research Team encourages communities to work with a wide range of women and across the breadth of gender in their communities.

¹ OED Online, 2023.



Introduction

Communal public places, such as parks, nature reserves and community hubs, are important spaces for developing social networks. They can support social inclusion and create a sense of belonging for local residents. Equally, they can generate feelings of social exclusion and concerns about safety.

Background

Public places differ in their capacity to offer and support safety and inclusion. For example, a park in one neighbourhood may not evoke the same feelings of safety as a park located elsewhere. Moreover, different users of the same park might experience it as 'safe' or 'unsafe'. Adding to this dynamic, impressions of safety may change as day turns to night. Parks can function as a crime generator, a crime attractor or a crime detractor at different times of the day.²

We know that some groups do not feel safe in their community and actively avoid some public places out of concern for their safety or the safety of their families. This is particularly true for women, especially women from non-English-speaking backgrounds.³

Understanding the specific physical and social elements of public places that lead to feelings of concern and exclusion (including self-exclusion) is foundational to developing strategies that support inclusion and safety for women.

² Corcoran et al., 2021.

³ Fanghanel, 2015; Neal et al., 2015; Rishbeth et al., 2019; Nagaraj Naik, 2020.

Aims

The Safe Spaces project was developed to build local council capability to better understand why some public places are viewed as 'unsafe' and to provide local councils and other community-focused organisations with engagement strategies to connect with women and ultimately improve women's perceptions of safety in public places. The project involved collaborations with women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with a range of abilities living in the Melton, Monash and Wyndham Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The project worked with known problems faced by each of the councils. **This baseline knowledge of crime and safety in the three council areas underpinned the Project Team's approach to:**

- identifying women's awareness of both the problems in public places and approaches needed to address them
- understanding women's experiences in and around these places and the specific physical and social cues that are present, or absent, in public places that lead women to feel unsafe
- examining different strategies to improve safety in public places that emerge through a co-design process.

Methodology

The Project Team developed a multi-pronged research design that involved a series of engagements with women from the community, local council staff, Welcoming Cities staff and crime prevention experts from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. All those involved in the project participated in the co-design workshop, which developed a shared understanding of safety and inclusion issues and their possible solutions.

The evidence accumulated from the research activities reveals why some public places are seen as 'unsafe' or not inclusive. It provides critical insights that can be harnessed by local councils to engage women to improve safety and inclusion in public places. These insights also allow for strengthened partnerships within and across local councils and the development of socially and culturally relevant strategies that target safety and inclusion for diverse groups of women.



Engaging safety and inclusion in public places for women: A blueprint for local councils

In this section, we provide a blueprint for local councils and other organisations to enhance engagement with women regarding their safety and inclusion in public places. It draws from the Safe Spaces project and the wider literature. The blueprint provides core principles to keep in mind when engaging women and assists in identifying the core goals that underpin the project/engagement.

This blueprint is the precursor to all three engagement toolkits developed through the Safe Spaces project. Understanding and enhancing safety and inclusion in public places for women requires a gender-sensitive approach that includes partnerships within and across local councils, state governments and other relevant organisations. Most importantly, it requires partnerships with women from a range of cultural backgrounds and age groups and with diverse abilities and sexual and gender identities because women are not a homogenous group. Enhancing safety and inclusion in public places is therefore dependent on approaches that acknowledge the differences between women and other users of public places. It requires an ongoing process of engagement, monitoring and development.

Respectful engagement

The people in our cities are diverse, but those who control the public spaces and places of the city have typically been men. Consequently, women predominantly live and work in environments built and made by men that cater to men's needs, wants and interests. When public space planning does not account for gender, as Caroline Criado Perez states, public spaces 'become male spaces by default'.⁴ Unsurprisingly, women from all walks of life share similar experiences of harassment in public places. Yet women are not always at the table to design the strategies needed to enhance their safety and inclusion.

Women have diverse histories, resulting in different experiences and needs relating to engagement on issues of safety and inclusion.

RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT REQUIRES:

1. An approach that is sensitive to women's:

AGE

SEXUALITY

GENDER IDENTITY

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE ABILITIES

LITERACY

CHILD/FAMILY CARE NEEDS

CULTURAL NEEDS

2. An awareness of access requirements including

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY

SAFE CAR PARKING OPTIONS

ACCESS FOR MOBILITY AIDS

AMENITIES FOR WOMEN
EG TOILETS, PARENTS' ROOMS AND PRAYER SPACES

3. Facilitators who

ARE TRAINED TO ENGAGE WITH WOMEN FROM A RANGE OF BACKGROUNDS

UNDERSTAND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC PLACES

ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE MATERIALS/CONDUCT RESEARCH IN A MANNER THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES AND LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

⁴ Criado Perez, 2019.

Understanding the purpose of the engagement

Knowing when and how to engage women in the community is the first step to improving their perceptions of safety and inclusion. Local councils must first understand where and why women feel unsafe and excluded to enhance safety and inclusion in public places. This requires gathering information from various sources. Depending on the availability of time and resources and the type of information needed, there are different approaches that can be used.

APPROACH	WHAT IT REVEALS	WHAT IT DOES NOT REVEAL
<p>Environmental Scan</p> <p>What it involves: An analysis of publicly available information such as police crime reports, media reports, community Facebook posts and local council surveys</p>	<p>Where the known problems are occurring</p> <p>How problems are reported through formal (news media) and informal (social media) channels</p> <p>The potential targets and perpetrators of the problem</p>	<p>How problems are understood by women</p> <p>If the problems are heightening women's fear and feelings of unsafety</p> <p>If women have changed their behaviours/mobility as a consequence of the problems</p>
<p>Surveys, focus groups or one-on-one interviews</p> <p>What it involves: Asking questions about local problems and feelings of safety and inclusion across a diverse range of women in the local council area</p>	<p>What the known problems are and where they are occurring</p> <p>How women from different backgrounds perceive the problems</p> <p>If the problems are heightening women's fear and feelings of unsafety</p> <p>If women have changed their behaviours/mobility as a consequence of the problems</p>	<p>How problems present on different days or at different times of the day and night</p> <p>Information on different users of the public places of interest</p> <p>Information on the potential guardianship/place management of the area</p> <p>Safety strategies that might influence the use of public places for different user groups</p>
<p>Walking interviews</p> <p>What it involves: Walking with women in those public places where they feel unsafe or excluded</p>	<p>The attributes of the public places that create feelings of unsafety or exclusion</p> <p>Insights from women about how places change at different times of the day or night</p> <p>Information on the potential guardianship/place management of the area</p> <p>Insights on strategies that women feel may improve the safety and inclusion of the area</p>	<p>How other users may experience the place</p> <p>Safety strategies that might influence the use of the public place for different user groups</p>

If the goal is to **change the social and/or physical infrastructure of public places where women feel unsafe or excluded**, active engagement with a diverse range of women is needed and co-design strategies are particularly useful. To ensure that the ambitions of the co-design engagement are appropriate, one or more of the types of engagement shown in the table above should be deployed.

APPROACH	WHAT IT ACHIEVES	WHAT IT DOES NOT REVEAL
Co-design What it involves: Active collaboration between designers and stakeholders throughout the design process that utilises bespoke probes and tools	Challenges the imbalance of power between users and those who determine public spaces and places Supports strong empathy Encourages capacity of participants	Immediate steps forward

Time and resource limitations

Engagement approaches will vary in both the time they take and the resources needed.

SCOPE

The effort required to fulfil the approach, which includes staffing requirements, inclusion of external stakeholders, project complexity and level of detail required

TIME/ SCHEDULE

The time required for each approach in the project's overarching schedule, which includes planning and strategy, internal calendars, number of occurrences in project phases and hours required

BUDGET/ COST

The financial constraints of the project, which include financial budget, number of team members, external stakeholders, and materials and facilities

APPROACH	SCOPE	TIME / SCHEDULE	BUDGET / COST
Surveys	●	●	● ● ●
Focus groups	● ●	● ●	●
Interviews	● ●	● ● ●	● ●
Walking interviews	● ●	● ● ●	● ●
Participatory engagement	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●
Co-design	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●

LOW EFFORT

MEDIUM EFFORT

SIGNIFICANT EFFORT

RELATIVELY QUICK

SOMEWHAT TIME CONSUMING

TIME CONSUMING

RESOURCE LIGHT

RESOURCE MODERATE

RESOURCE INTENSIVE

Who to engage

Regardless of method, the goal is to understand what makes women feel safe/unsafe and included/excluded. This requires engaging with women across different age groups, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual and gender identities as well as cognitive, physical and psychological abilities. It is also important to understand women's relationship to the public places you wish to improve. Do they frequently or infrequently engage with the place in question? Do they actively avoid the place? Are there physical and/or cultural barriers that hinder their engagement with the place?

Depending on the place of concern, there may be other groups whose voices and experiences should be incorporated into any change to the social and physical structure.

Consider engagement opportunities with groups such as:

- local businesses or community groups and organisations that are situated near to the place of concern
- state government agencies, with whom partnerships may be needed to make changes to certain places (for example, public transport stations)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, because placemaking takes place on their unceded lands
- young people, who also benefit from having access to public spaces but may not feel included in these places.

Supporting women to engage

Women are busy people! They often have primary caring responsibilities for children and extended family members. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, the vast majority of women in Australia are in paid employment.⁵ Women are also more likely to engage in volunteering than men. Women's time is valuable, and their ideas are critically important. To encourage women's participation, local councils need to:

- consider times and timelines for engagement. The 9–5, Monday to Friday working schedule may not suit all women and weekends or weeknights might be more amenable.
- offer women compensation for their time, depending on what is asked of them. Stipends or honorariums are appropriate when asking women to go beyond participating in a short survey.
- provide childcare or child-friendly engagements, because women are very often the primary caregivers of children.
- provide the right support for women with disabilities to encourage their engagement – accessibility is key.

⁵ Volunteering Australia, 2023.

One size does not fit all. Multiple engagement strategies may be needed to connect with a diverse range of women. This may include targeting approaches to community leaders, developing recruitment flyers in different languages, attending relevant events or activities where women are likely to be present, and being clear about expectations.

Communicating outcomes to women

Communicating the actionable outcomes of your engagement with women in your local council area is crucial. It signals respect for those who have given up their time to engage with the project. Moreover, it allows women to validate or challenge the conclusions or decisions that flow from the engagement. The [Centre for Global Development](#) provides useful tips to help you decide how to share the results of your engagement. Remember, women are not a homogenous group so, again, accessibility is key. You will likely need to communicate the outcomes of your engagement using different audio and visual materials, and you may need to consider translating the outcomes into the main languages spoken by your women participants. Straightforward language is essential.

How do you know you are doing it right?

Engagement with the women in your local community should not be a one-off experience. As discussed in the report that accompanies these toolkits, improving safety and inclusion is an ongoing process that involves maintaining relationships with women in your community. Monitoring and evaluating a new strategy is the only way to ensure you have the design fit for purpose.





Engaging women using co-design workshops

This toolkit provides a set of practices developed by the Safe Spaces team to assist local councils and related organisations with designing interventions for women's safety and inclusion in public places. A co-design workshop is an approach that aims to engage stakeholders and the people that will benefit from the design outcomes and most often involves high-level decision-makers, planners, designers and the various user groups. Co-design is a tool that is ideally deployed at multiple stages in the design process to ensure deep engagement with the lived experiences of community members and with the issues faced by communities. As a method, co-design represents an equalising force in supporting engagement within an inclusive, collaborative environment. It aims to facilitate the co-production of solutions and requires those who see themselves as 'experts' (usually planners, engineers or designers) to share power via co-learning.⁶

In the context of gender-sensitive design, co-design can disrupt the top-down, gendered power dynamics that often create⁷ barriers to women's participation in cities and communities. As a design method, co-design requires participants to engage in a process of 'mutual learning'.⁷ In this way, women from communities can actively inform the design

6 Caretta et al., 2016.

7 Fuad-Luke, 2009.

process – by describing what they require from public spaces and co-producing solutions with designers and decision-makers.

The design thinking methods, material tools and facilitated discussion allow the lived experiences of women to be made tangible through the process of visualisation, building and making.⁸

Summary

Purpose

- Place a diverse range of local women in the same designing space as ‘experts’, so that everyone in the room is considered an expert
- Equalise traditional power imbalances and shift away from preconceived ideas of solutions to complex issues
- Understand the gender-based issues present in the community and how the process of co-design can shape solutions
- Examine policy, planning and existing design assumptions
- Consider how centring women’s experiences will support a reimagining of public places in the community

Planning

- Identify and define the issues and ensure co-design processes will be meaningful to women and girls in the community
- Engagement planning is critical:
 - » Consider how women’s involvement may benefit them and what support women may need to participate (such as support related to childcare, transport and accessibility)
 - » Consider the sensitivities and ethics of engaging women in your community and remunerate them for their time and contribution
 - » Identify empathetic representatives from stakeholder organisations to participate
 - » Consider the possible obstacles to participation and special needs of women, such as the need for interpreter or translation services

Engaging

- Be guided by the topics identified by women in the community and encourage or adapt co-design activities to engage them
- Support the agency of women in all engagements
- Consider the power dynamics and ensure that facilitators are skilled in conducting participatory co-design respectfully
- Be clear about how any outcomes may (or may not) be used by council

Visualising

- Ensure community interventions identified or developed through the co-design process are informed by and address women’s concerns
 - Test through two- and three-dimensional material prompts that encourage novel insights and collaboration
 - Ensure workshops are generative and gender-sensitive
-

Synthesising

- Undertake a review of workshop insights and look for similarities, divergent attitudes, patterns and themes identified
- Translate the outcomes developed by participants' perspectives and make recommendations for community interventions
- Present the findings to participants for comment to ensure that participants feel represented

Communicating

- Share information from the co-design process to demonstrate how communities are prioritising women's concerns
- Communicate the outcomes from the workshops publicly and note the actions
- Communicate how participatory co-design processes contribute to community placemaking and council processes

Enacting

- Leverage the activities of the co-design process to enact change
- Advocate for government funding of placemaking initiatives that prioritise women's concerns
- Monitor and measure the impact of interventions to develop case studies for best practice

Co-design processes

Planning a co-design workshop with women is a design exercise in itself. The organisation and facilitators will need to consider a range of preliminary questions, which may include:

- What are the problems we're trying to address through this co-design workshop?
- Who are the primary users or stakeholders who need to be involved in the co-design process?
- What are the goals and objectives we want to achieve with the co-design process?
- Are there any constraints or limitations we need to be aware of (e.g., budget, time, technology)?
- How can we ensure that the co-design process is accessible and inclusive for all participants?
- What are the potential risks or challenges we might face during the co-design process, and how can we mitigate them?
- How can we measure the success or impact of the co-design process?
- What expertise do we need to engage in the co-design process successfully?

Understanding who should be involved and how many people need to participate, clarifying the available resources and sourcing facilitators with the expert skills required for successful engagement are paramount. As a guide, the number of women participating in a co-design workshop should be sufficient to represent the women in the communities – across ethnicity, race, dis/ability, age, gender, sexuality, religion and socio-economic class. In smaller

communities, this may be 10 to 20 women, whereas in larger communities, you may need 60 or more women. With larger groups, consider conducting multiple sessions or using multiple facilitators to capture the range of perspectives.

The activities need to be collaborative and to involve groups made up of designers, stakeholders and women from the local community. These groups will work together to create and shape a design solution or public experience (for example, an event or activity). There are a range of ways to develop and move towards the prototyping of solutions including two- and three-dimensional material activities. While the specific activities may vary – and should always be dependent on the context – all activities will need to be generative and gender-sensitive. The activities outlined below will likely follow foundational information gathering with women such as interviews, surveys, observations and other approaches to understand women's needs, preferences and behaviours. Examples of such methods are provided in Toolkit 1 (Walking Interviews) and Toolkit 2 (Community Safety Surveys).

BRAINSTORMING AND IDEATION

Brainstorming and ideation can assist designers, stakeholders and women users to collectively generate ideas and solutions. Intended to elicit responses to a question, prompt or series of prompts, brainstorming should be undertaken rapidly to encourage free thinking and generate a diverse, even excessive, range of ideas. This is often most effective when participants first work individually and then discuss and develop their ideas together. Participants need to be encouraged to share their thoughts without judgement from others and to discuss even the most unconventional and radical ideas. This process can overcome preconceptions about solutions and – if done early in the co-design workshop – will help develop teamwork and ensure participants are comfortable with divergent perspectives.

PERSONA ANALYSIS

Persona analysis can be a key component of a gender-sensitive co-design process. It involves creating detailed profiles of various user types (or 'personas') that are likely to interact with various public places and environments. A persona is a detailed profile collated from typical demographic information (such as women's age, disability, migration status and caring responsibilities) and informed by local data obtained from surveys (such as data on women's needs, fears, mobility preferences, attitudes to public space and behaviour).

The aim of using persona analysis is to encourage co-design participants to look beyond their personal lives while still drawing on their lived experiences. Using a persona helps participants to better understand the lived experiences as having a particular group. For women this would include their intersectional needs, preferences and decision-making, ensuring that women are not viewed as a homogenous group but with different and compounding experiences of inequality. Understanding the nuances of women's 'lived experience' can positively influence design decisions and lead to the creation of more women-centred cities and communities. Persona analysis helps designers (as well as women) to develop a sense of empathy for those who benefit from the co-design process by enabling understanding of their needs, fears and struggles.

VISUALISING IDEAS

Visual tools – such as storyboards, journey mapping, diagrams and model making – play an important role in planning and communicating in a co-design process. The specific design of the visual tools requires significant investment from the hosts that must draw on the particular aims of the co-design process.

Visual tools help designers, stakeholders and workshop participants to visualise, prioritise and communicate their ideas. Whether using storyboards, diagrams, journey mapping or models, these artefacts provide a sequence of events, often depicting a narrative from a certain time and place that describes experiences that the workshop team captures and documents for further synthesis and analysis.

The visual ideas generated through a co-design workshop can be used to inform the design decisions for urban interventions, such as public spaces, buildings and infrastructure. By understanding the priorities of women and identifying the patterns and relationships between their movements, urban designers can create solutions that are more responsive to the community's needs and better integrated into the existing urban fabric.

Advantages of co-designing with women

Evidence suggests that inviting policymakers, planners and designers to work alongside women and girls in a feminist co-design framework fosters outcomes that are 'supportive of the spectrum of gender and intersectional identities'.⁹ Within the co-design process, the results can be transformative as participants are empowered, and their insights can be used to inform alternative narratives and design solutions.¹⁰

Gender-sensitive co-designing with communities increases direct engagement with women from diverse backgrounds. When women are involved in an iterative co-design process, they feel invested in their community and in finding solutions to urban design problems. They are more likely to participate positively in the implementation of projects and to develop a sense of ownership of public space. When community members are involved in the design process, they feel heard and valued, which can increase the trust and collaboration between the community and the designers.

Women who live in cities and communities have a unique perspective on their safety needs. Co-designing with women helps to ensure that solutions are more effective, impactful and address women's lived experience. As 'non-expert' designers, women may address problems in ways that are outside standard design practice yet often more creative in being untethered from conventional urban design strategies.

Because co-design encourages diverse perspectives and a deep engagement with intersectional experience, the solutions will be particular to the issues in that community and to the people and processes through which they are produced. By involving women in the community in a co-design process, the implemented solutions are more likely to be appropriate to the social and cultural needs of the community and to align with its values and priorities.

9 Kalms & Bawden, 2021, 107.

10 Blomkamp, 2018, 739; Bawden & Edwards, 2021, 61.

Challenges of co-designing with women

The co-design process requires collaboration with and facilitation by experts who understand how to deploy an inclusive approach to ensure the diverse perspectives and needs of all stakeholders are acknowledged. Time and resource needs should not be underestimated, and this can pose particular challenges for smaller communities or communities with limited resources.

Understanding the power dynamics within the co-design process (that is, the unequal power between stakeholders and the various communities of women and girls) is pivotal. Some voices and experiences have more influence than others and need to be managed. Acknowledging that the process may be challenging in terms of equity also requires deft facilitation skills.

In recent years, co-design has been implemented in less than rigorous ways and has suffered as a result of being too eagerly taken up by sectors with little or no design expertise.¹¹ Practices like 'brainstorming' and 'storyboarding' are now well-understood in community engagement and business circles but, unless set within a gender-sensitive research framework, they will likely lack an evidence base.

If the public sector implements co-design outside a research setting, there is a risk that participants will be exploited and that communities will spend time and resources on under-researched design ideas. It is therefore critical to differentiate a feminist co-design model from a commercialised community engagement process which is most likely a weak form of consultation lacking reciprocity.

Ethical considerations when co-designing with women

The preparation for engaging with communities involves a range of social, legal and policy protocols,¹² including in relation to forming transparent partnerships, reporting, assessment and data privacy protection. Facilitators must ensure participant consent, privacy and safety. To this end, terms of reference should be developed to state the terms of the participatory and co-design work.

Facilitators of the co-design process must respect participants' autonomy and ensure that they have been provided with transparent information and the rationale for the co-design process and have provided their informed consent. In this sense, it is vital that communities engage experienced community consultants if dealing with sensitive issues such as gender-based violence. Some communities may have preferences for facilitators from particular ethnic or racial backgrounds, which will need to be clarified with respect and sensitivity to community needs.

In addition, it is important to pay women for their time. This is not only fair, but also essential from an ethical standpoint. It recognises the value of women's contributions and ensures that they are not exploited or marginalised in any way.

¹¹ Thinyane et al., 2020.

¹² Huybrechts et al., 2017.

Communicate the process for obtaining participant consent for the use of data and the process for ensuring that data is securely stored. Participants should have the right to withdraw from the process at any time, with any consequences clearly communicated to them prior to commencement. Women's data (including their contributions to the co-design process) will need to be protected and anonymised in any public-facing documents. This will require that their informed consent is obtained.

Ensuring the personal safety of participants is paramount. Women may choose to share personal experiences of trauma and violence, and other women may witness the sharing of this information. Facilitators must be sensitive to the potential harms that may arise in the process and provide appropriate referrals to such support. This may include the provision of trauma-informed counselling (during the session and for a period of time following the engagements).

Ideally, the co-design process should form part of longitudinal research into participatory processes undertaken in the public sector to further define the impact and benefit.¹³

These ethical considerations aim to foster a safe and inclusive participatory design process in which the insights and perspectives of all stakeholders are considered, leading to more relevant and user-centred outcomes.

Getting ready for a co-design workshop

Decide on the type of co-design activities best suited to the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the remit of your project? • Who are the participants you want to engage with? • What type of design interventions are you seeking? 	□
Ensure ethical processes are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need ethics approval for your project? • Have you created an explanatory statement? • Have you prepared an outline of the participation requirements and the processes around consent, recording, confidentiality and data storage? • Have you secured appropriate remuneration for each participant? • Have you created a consent form for participants to sign? 	□
Carefully plan and prepare for the activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of the co-design session? • How do the activities promote meaningful engagement with the issues? • Do the materials allow engagement from diverse participants? Do they use a broad range of communication such as talking, writing, drawing and tactile making? • Have you prepared an ethical way to document the information produced during the co-design session (such as photographing materials, recording discussion with video or audio and feedback and collecting all the artefacts)? 	□

Identify an appropriate location, prepare a clear agenda, and plan and rehearse a 'script' for the session well in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you organise the groups across the activities? • Is the chosen space comfortable and set up for the activities you will undertake? • Is there good sound and visibility so that people can hear instructions and be directed to undertake tasks? 	□
During the co-design process, ensure that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people who need extra assistance or support are provided with such • the louder voices and perspectives do not dominate the conversation and activities • the women participants are leading decisions and seen as experts in the session 	□
Manage your materials and artefacts ethically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will manage all the materials, such as the recording, video, observational notes and demographic forms? • Where will you store the materials? • Who will be given access to the materials? • What is the plan to destroy the materials once your project has been published and acquitted? 	□
Share the insights with participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you share the insights with your participants? Consider clear and concise communications. • Can you share participants' stories in innovative ways? Consider which digital media and methods are most appropriate for sharing the findings more broadly. • How will you ensure that participants' contributions are acknowledged and are accurate and reflective of their co-design experience? Is there a case for co-authorship? 	□



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