

Inclusive groups with staff and consumers:



'I think it's about not setting them up to be separate or different from the rest of the members of the team. They get distributed all the same documents as everyone else.'

Part of the discussion that we have when we invite people to be part of the projects, is that we're very open about what they feel is the expertise they can contribute to it. So, it's part of that expectation at the beginning where we explain that we don't expect them to be scientific experts necessarily on some of the stuff we do, but they're very welcome to comment and contribute on whatever aspects they want. And then it's actually just modelling in meetings with the team that we truly listen and take notes and make sure that it's acknowledged and evident that their input influences what we do. It's explicit stuff, but it's also just simply listening and making sure that you truly act on what is being contributed.'

-- Patsy Yates, Chair, Queensland University of Technology School of Nursing

'I think the really big part that I try to impart onto new people coming along is that it is very much so being part of a team. It's not about trying to right past wrongs and having that little soap box to stand up on. Sometimes when we feel strongly about those things we have to just keep our mouth closed because it's not the right moment and it's not the context of what we're talking about. So I think it's about being a mature professional in what we do and to sort of be mindful about what hat am I wearing today and who am I representing and what am I here for.'

--Leonie Young, consumer, Chair CanSpeak Queensland

'We have consumers at pretty much every table when we're doing anything involved in strategy for cancer in South Australia. There are consumer members of the Cancer Clinical Network Steering Committee that have the same rights and responsibilities as any other member on the committee, but they are there because of their consumer expertise....'

The consumers are equal members of this committee. If they're equal members of this committee, then they must follow the same confidentiality procedures. If they don't, then they undermine their own position...It's a very important principle if you want them to have equal engagement. There can't be one rule for us and one rule for them because it sets up the 'us' and 'them' thing. If we're all experts in cancer in our own way, including being an expert cancer consumer, then we all bring our expertise to the table and we all have to be held to the same accountability....'

In those big meetings full of cancer professionals of all different stripes and colours, the conversation can be very robust and it can be very difficult to have your voice heard. So it's particularly incumbent on the chairman to actually make sure that everybody gets to say what they want. I might say our consumers are fairly vocal so we don't often have a problem with that. But as the chair, if I think they haven't contributed then I will always make sure that they get their point across.'

-- Dorothy Keefe, Clinical Director, Royal Adelaide Hospital Cancer Centre