



Partnership Continuum

Planning





This document describes the five approaches to working together and explains how each can be defined in terms of power and decision making, time and commitment, as well as what is needed to execute each approach properly.

Each approach describes the primary way of working together. However, a project may require a range of approaches to be applied. For example, there may be a need to inform at some stages, then progress through to involving and collaborating, then return to informing or involving.

Working with people with lived experience is required in every approach across the continuum.

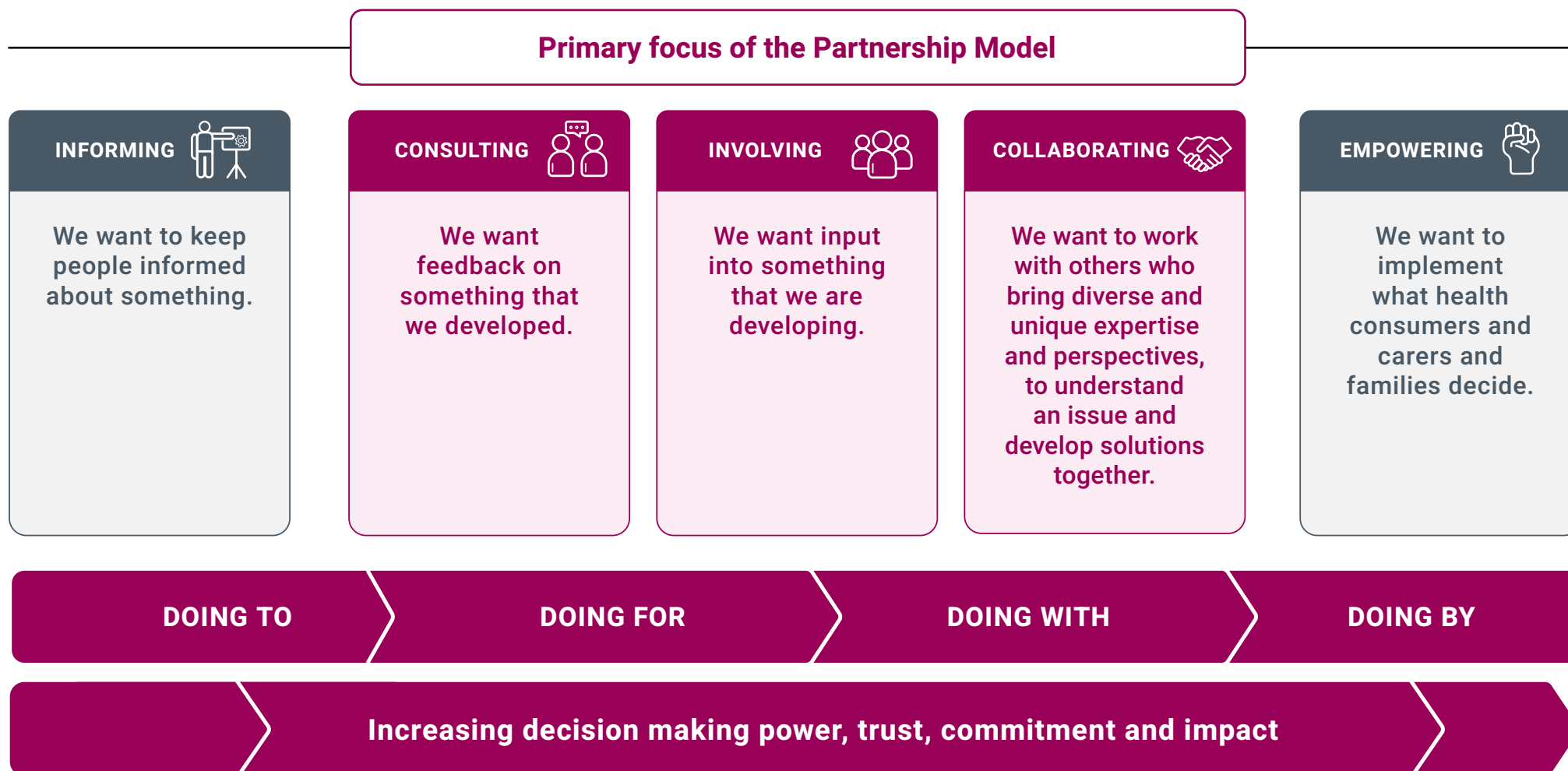
The primary focus of the Partnership Model is on **Consulting, Involving and Collaborating**.



Partnership Continuum



This continuum describes different ways of working together depending on the purpose of the work, so that the most appropriate approach can be used to achieve the best outcome.



Informing

Informing is providing people with complete, balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

This could include the opening of a new service, a change to the way a service operates, or structural changes in an organisation.

In Informing:

- ✓ **Power and decision making** is held by those doing the informing.
- ✓ You don't need **trust** or a relationship to keep people informed.
- ✓ It does not need a great deal of **time**.
- ✓ **Commitment** is not required for people to receive information but there does need to be commitment to provide useful, relevant, accessible and quality information.

What is needed to do this well?

- ✓ Information is clear and easy to understand by the intended audience.
- ✓ Information is engaging to the intended audience so people want to read it.
- ✓ Information is in plain language and jargon free.
- ✓ People know what is happening, why, where and how it affects them.



Consulting



Consulting is seeking and obtaining feedback on something that has been developed.

For example, people may be invited to provide analysis, alternatives or critique a process, program, resource or policy.

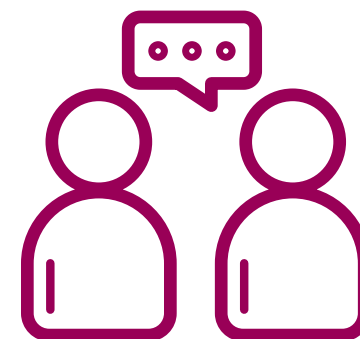
In consulting:

- ✓ **Power and decision making** is held by those seeking the feedback.
- ✓ You don't need a great deal of **trust** (or a strong relationship) but trust is helpful in getting genuine feedback. The process of consulting needs to be trustworthy.
- ✓ It does not need a great deal of **time**.
- ✓ **Commitment** is episodic – for example, feedback is provided as and when required.

We want feedback on something that we developed.

What is needed to do this well?

- ✓ People invited to provide feedback have an understanding or expertise about the content or area in which you are requesting their input.
- ✓ The way feedback is asked for works for those you are asking (eg: diverse communication needs are catered for).
- ✓ Be clear on what happens with the feedback, including who makes the decision about incorporating it, how, when, why, etc.
- ✓ Watch your language! Use terms and language that everyone understands.
- ✓ Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations.
- ✓ Let the people who you consulted with know how their input was used.
- ✓ Share the final versions of the work with people who provided feedback.



Involving

Involving is working directly with others throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

This could include harnessing people's input in the design, development or delivery of a process, program, resource or policy.

In involving:

- ✓ **Power and decision making** are held by those doing the involving (but they need to be transparent and explicit).
- ✓ You need to actively build **trust** to work together so people genuinely participate.
- ✓ It takes **time** to engage the right people in the right way to work well together.
- ✓ Processes of involvement often take more than one step.
- ✓ **Commitment** is short term (eg: to a process such as one or more workshops).



What is needed to do this well?

- ✓ Be clear about the purpose and process of people's involvement.
- ✓ Be clear and transparent about the whole process, including how people's contributions will be used, decisions and next steps about what was created.
- ✓ Keep people informed as you go. Share progress, not just the outcome.
- ✓ Involve people using a range of different approaches so that they can be involved in ways that work for them.
- ✓ Ask for support and advice from people with experience working with those you want to involve, as well as the people themselves.
- ✓ Build connections to get to know the people you are involving, including their culture and ways of working, their history and any past involvement.
- ✓ Ensure that what is being asked through the involvement is genuine.
- ✓ Manage expectations about the process, including how long it could take and what happens next.



**We want input
into something
that we are
developing.**

Collaborating

Collaborating is working directly with others (who bring their knowledge and experience) to understand an issue, create and evaluate solutions together to the best extent possible.

In Collaborating:

- ✓ **Power and decision making** are shared. Decisions are made together. How this is done needs to be explicit, transparent and agreed.
- ✓ **Trust** is critical to the process.
- ✓ It takes **time** to build shared understanding and develop solutions. This is always a multi-step process.
- ✓ **Commitment** is longer term (eg: to a process that may take a series of steps that may be known or unknown and that may change over time).



What is needed to do this well?

- ✓ Provide people with the information they need to make decisions, in ways that work for them.
- ✓ Make time to connect on a personal level in workshops and meetings and build a welcoming and engaging environment for participants.
- ✓ Be clear on what was being designed and the scope of your work together.
- ✓ Build authority and legitimacy for the work with people involved in the collaboration.
- ✓ Ensure the work is connected to decision-making processes.
- ✓ Be transparent about any external approval needed for what is created.
- ✓ Meet people where they are and build their confidence to participate – this includes NMHS staff and consumers, carers and families.
- ✓ Be flexible and adapt processes as you go based on what you are learning.
- ✓ Embrace diversity of views, experience, context, etc to build rich and meaningful discussion.
- ✓ The final outcome is shared with all those involved in the process.
- ✓ It is only “collaborating” if consumers, families and carers agree it is.



We want to work with others who bring diverse and unique expertise and perspectives, to understand an issue and develop solutions together.



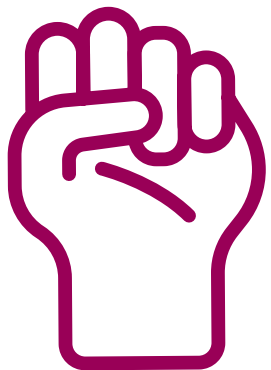
Empowering

Empowering is placing the final decision in the hands of the public and implementing what they decide.

This could include consumers and carers making decisions about consumer priorities to be addressed by the health system, and the health system acting on these.

In Empowering:

- ✓ **Power** and decision making are held by those being empowered. As above, how this is done needs to be explicit, transparent and agreed.
- ✓ **Trust** is critical to the process as power is genuinely handed to others.
- ✓ It takes **time** to build mutual trust and relationships that reflect shared power. This is always a multi-step process.
- ✓ **Commitment** is longer term.



What is needed to do this well?

Empowering incorporates everything from all the previous approaches and the following additions:

- ✓ Be prepared to release control of decisions and actions and be flexible enough to meet changing needs or goals.
- ✓ Use democratic processes to ensure decisions are transparent and democratic (eg: citizen juries).
- ✓ Build capacity to implement what others decide.

We want to implement what health consumers, carers and families decide.





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