



Involving people to have a say in their own way at meetings



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This booklet is about making sure everyone has a chance to have their voice heard in meetings.

This booklet will give you ways to:

- Make sure people are involved and have a say in their own way at meetings
- Give people the control and choices about the decisions that affect their lives
- Give people a chance to get across their message by giving them a bigger voice
- Change the way we do things in meetings
- Make sure we work together with others.



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This stuff really matters!

Everyone:

- Can take part
- Can have their say
- Gets the support they need
- Can get the meeting easily.



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Planning for a meeting

Here are some questions to help you get ready for your meeting:

- Why are we meeting?
- Why am I going to the meeting?
- Do I want to attend?
- What are the reasons for going (good and bad)?
- What will my role be?
- Who will be there? What are their roles?
- What support do I want and who will support me (paid or unpaid support)?
- When and where is the meeting?
- How long will it last?
- How can I get there?
Is there transport or parking?
- Will my expenses be paid?
- Can I get someone to look after the person I am caring for?
- Can I get around and use the building?
- What are the best ways for me to take part?
- What do I want to say and how do I want to say it?
- Have I got the information I need in the right format?
- Will I need to do any work before or after the meeting?



Things to do to be ready to go to a meeting:

- Think about how everyone will get to the meeting, where and when you will meet, the room and the building
- Send information for everyone coming to the meeting at least 2 weeks before. Make sure information is available in different formats (large print and easy read)
- Set a clear plan of what will be talked about in the meeting where everyone can add things on to it. This is sometimes called the Agenda
- Make sure that in the room people can see and hear easily and that the temperature is right
- Think about what is the best way to set up the room
- Use lots of different methods and resources
- Make sure there are drinks (like water or tea and coffee) and make time for breaks.



The right support

Everyone needs support at different times and for different things.

Some people need support with:

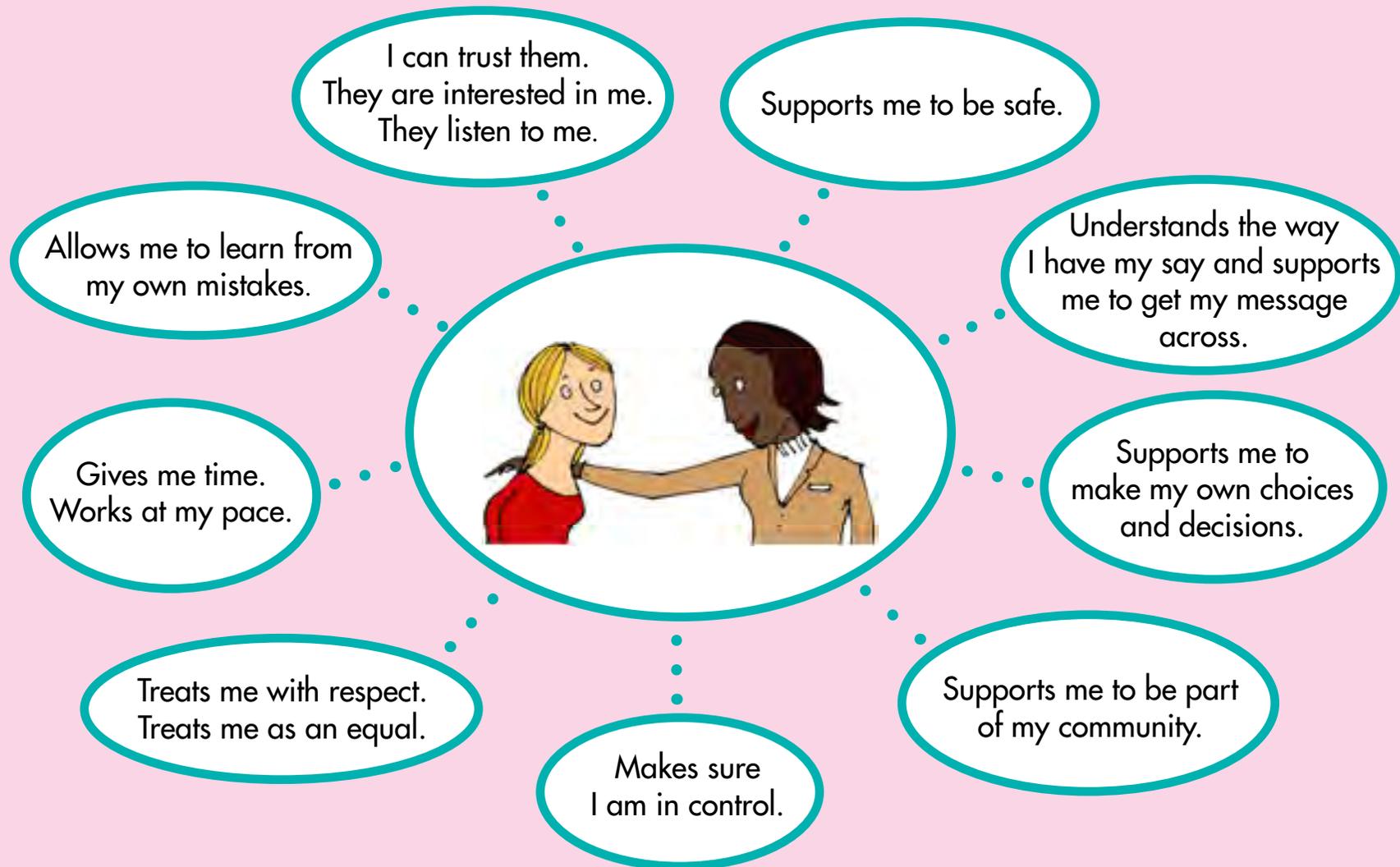
- Planning
- Travelling
- Getting around buildings
- Understanding information
- Having their say
- Taking part in everyday life activities
- Everyday personal needs.

With the right support people can have a real say and get the things that are important to them.



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Some basics of great support are ...



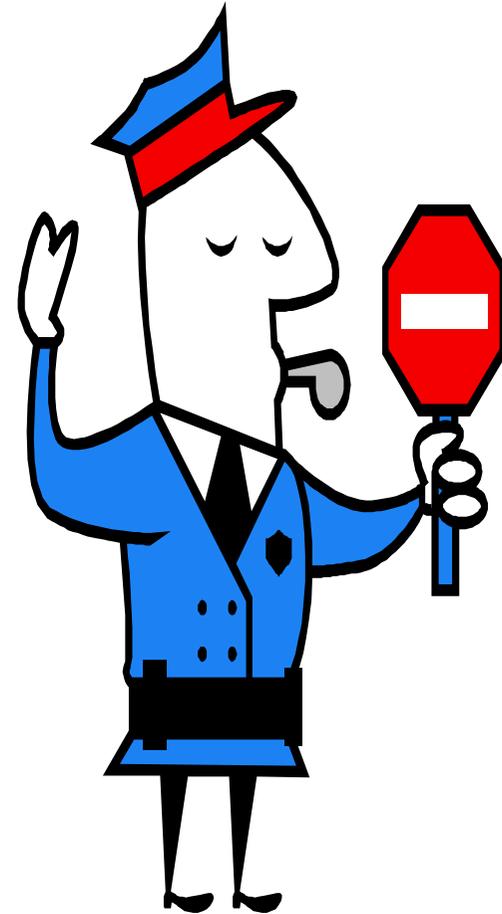
Barriers stop people taking part

There are barriers that stop people are able to take part and have a real say.

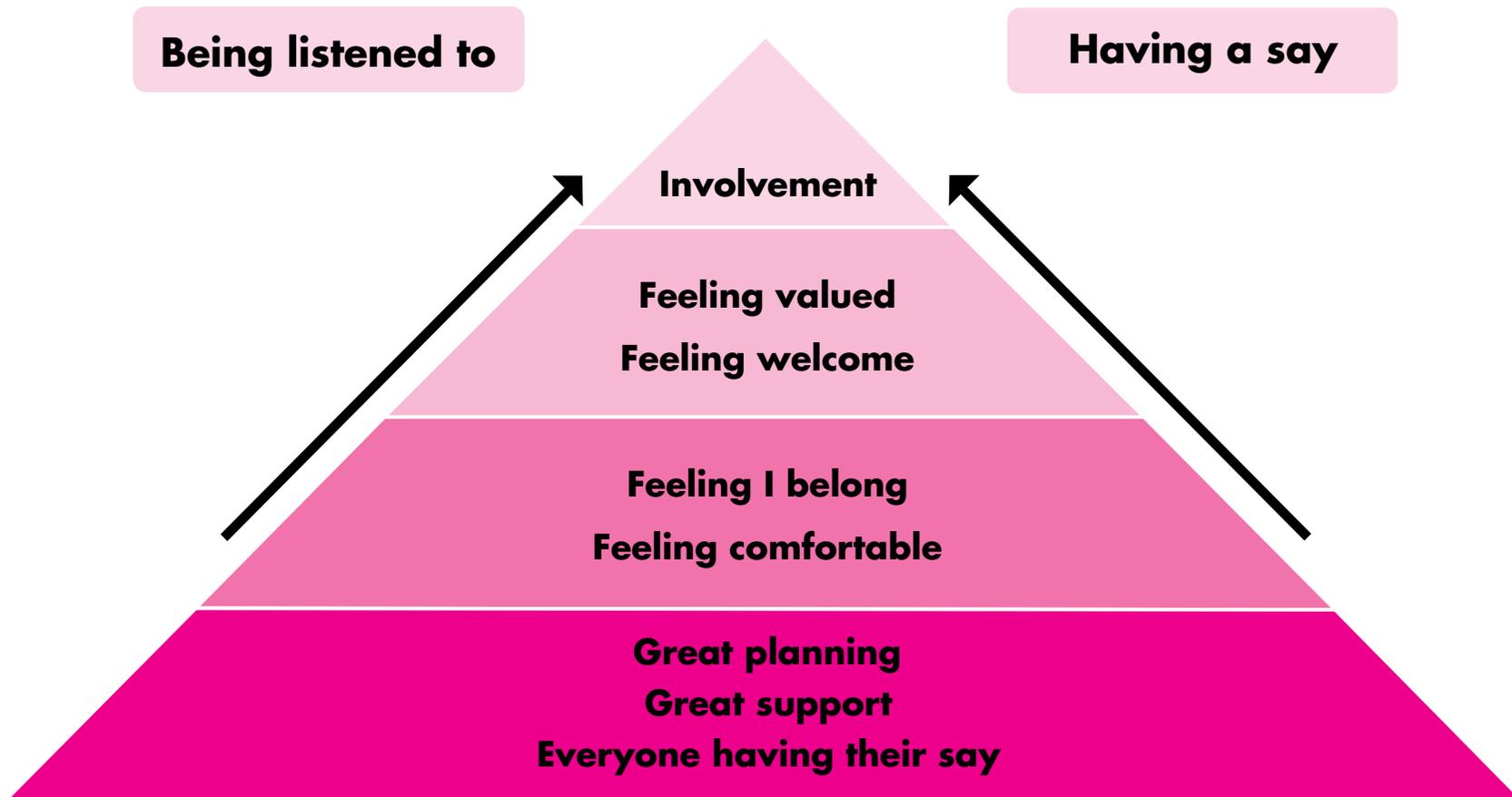
These barriers include:

- People: the way people behave and think about things
- Organisations: the rules organisations have, such as their policies and procedures
- Environment: such as ways to get into and around buildings.

Always remember, it is not your way or the organisations way, but the person's way.



The Involvement Triangle



Making people feel welcome

- Make sure someone is there to welcome people
- Have drinks (like water or tea or coffee) available
- Make sure everyone at the meeting knows how they will take part in the meeting
- Do not have everyone from the same place sitting together
- Have fun!



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Having my say

Remember that everyone would like to have their say:

- People have their say in different ways
- Find out how the person likes to have their say
- Give them support if they want it
- People should be able to have their say in their own way and at their own pace
- Learn about peoples different ways to have their say.

Always use different ways to make it easier for people to have their say.



How to help people take part

If you are having a meeting, here are some questions to help people take part:

- How can I get people to take part?
- How can I change the way I do things to make this happen?
- What can I do it differently?



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Make people feel comfortable and that they belong

- Respect that we are all different - we all have different skills to bring
- Everyone has the same right to take part
- Celebrate achievements and learn from mistakes
- Give people time to have their say and time to be listened to
- Keep to the point, make it clear, short and simple.



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- Use 5 minute listening wall to help people to keep to the meeting plan
- Do not use words that others might not understand
- Only give people the information that they want and need
- Be creative - use different ways of showing information.



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Use different ways of showing information so that everyone can take part



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Making sure everyone is treated the right way

Make sure everyone is treated with respect at your meeting.
Make a rule that anyone who makes fun of another person at the meeting will not be allowed to come to more meetings.

They might make fun of someone because of:

- The colour of their skin
- Their religion
- Their disability
- How old they are
- Or because they are gay or lesbian.



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Ending the meeting

- Make an plan of what needs to be done after the meeting
- Make a note of who will do what and by when
- Have a plan for how everyone will say what they have done at the next meeting

Find out from everyone:

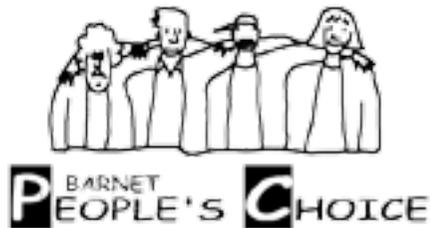
- What worked well and what did not work well?
- What needs changing?
- What needs to be included at the next time?
- If needed - decide the next meeting, place, time and date.



After the meeting

How did it go?

- How did people feel at the meeting?
- Included or excluded?



Feeling included:

Welcome
Supported
Able to have a say
Listened to
Respected
Belonging
Treated equally
Accepted
Safe
Great
Comfortable
Relaxed
Warm
Valued
Happy
Good

Remember

Making sure everyone feels comfortable to have their say is a process of learning, sharing, growing and changing together.



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