SOCIAL INNOVATION

STARTER KIT

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Cover Design Inspiration

To achieve social impact, various stakeholders need to work together to co-create, ideate and collaborate. Like a Rubik's Cube, there are diverse needs that can be addressed in different combinations but eventually everyone is working together collectively to achieve the same goal of improving and enhancing the lives of those in need.

FOREWORD

The social issues that we face are evolving and becoming increasingly complex. How might we tackle these issues amid growing pressure to serve more people in need and deliver stronger results with limited resources?

One key strategy is to harness the innovation potential in our sector and social service agencies (SSAs). By being open to change, to new ideas and ways of working, and even to failing, innovation can unlock possibilities of improving the affordability, accessibility and effectiveness of our services and operations.

In the FY18 Social Service Sector Survey conducted with nearly 300 SSAs, innovation was found to be both one of the lowest performing areas, as well as one of the top areas that SSAs wanted to make improvements in. In response, NCSS launched the Sector Design Challenge (SDC) in 2019 to help build capability in this area. This innovation platform forged stronger partnerships across the People, Private and Public sectors, and strengthened human-centred design skillsets among our social service professionals. Today, several of the innovative solutions that were developed out of that process have been accelerated into impactful solutions to address the needs of our service users.

Capitalising on this success, this Starter Kit aims to share insights and areas of learning from SDC 2019, as well as innovation and design thinking tips, tools and frameworks, all contextualised to our social service sector. I am inspired by how the participating teams readily took on the challenge of applying the design thinking approach to empower service users by giving them a voice and to dive deeper into understanding their needs as shared in the case examples. As the SDC 2019 participants have done, I encourage those among you with experience to also step forward and share your innovation journey with others. By learning from and inspiring each other, we can achieve greater impact together.

I hope that you find this Starter Kit useful and I look forward to us harnessing our collective strengths and wisdom to build a more caring, collaborative and impactful social service ecosystem for our Singapore!

By **NCSS CEO, Ms Tan Li San**

INTRODUCTION

We are facing increasingly complex issues and multi-faceted social problems in our world today and it is critical for the social service sector to respond more nimbly and with more immediacy when it comes to emerging needs and gaps. The COVID-19 pandemic has also amplified some long-standing issues in our community such as the ability to rapidly mobilise and match resources to individuals with unmet needs as well as supporting hard-to-reach vulnerable groups who may not have access to digital solutions. To tackle such social challenges effectively, a human-centred and collaborative approach to developing solutions that is grounded in service users' needs is required.

The human-centred design thinking approach is a unique problem-solving method which starts with empathy – putting ourselves in the shoes of the people we are designing for and getting a better understanding of their perspectives, experiences, values, hopes and dreams. Through this process of engaging with users and empathising with them, more effective and sustainable solutions can be developed[1,2].

It's time to think differently. As we work towards the common goal of building a caring and inclusive society where every person is empowered to live with dignity, the social service sector needs to innovate and reinvent itself constantly. Only then can we provide effective and customised solutions to meet the diverse and unique needs of service users in our ever changing environment. We need to adopt an open mindset, be willing to change and experiment with new ways of working.

Excited to kickstart your innovation journey? This starter kit is intended as a toolkit to support your design thinking practice. In the following pages, we will share with you some of the guiding principles and mindsets of the human-centred design process, along with dozens of specific methods and tools that you can pick and choose to try out and use. A PDF copy of this toolkit and accompanying templates can be downloaded from our NCSS Website under Publications. We hope that it will be helpful in guiding you as you embark on your innovation journey!

We would love to hear from you. This starter kit is a working document and free for you to use and share. Do share your feedback to help us improve – what you found useful, how you think this starter kit can be improved or even stories and examples of how you have used it in your work. Drop us a message anytime at PumpkinLab@ncss.gov.sg – we look forward to hearing from you!

[1] *Forrester (2018). The Total Economic Impact™ Of IBM's Design Thinking Practice: How IBM Drives Client Value And Measurable Outcomes With Its Design Thinking Framework*

[2] *Liedtka, J (2018). Exploring the Impact of Design Thinking in Action. University of Virginia, Darden School of Business*

VOICES OF THE SOCIAL SECTOR

"The Sector Design Challenge was a platform where we came together not just to share our problems but to also bring forth the kinds of resources each of us can provide and also highlight our strengths. With greater collaboration and ideation we can tackle the problems in our society together."

Aaron Soon, BevEat

"A key highlight of the Sector Design Challenge was meeting like-minded people who wanted to solve social issues. It was a great platform to share and develop ideas together to help address the needs of our service users."

Lawrence Luan, Octopus8

"Our biggest takeaway was getting a better understanding of the design thinking process which is something we can adopt for future projects or when we want to start a new service."

Tristan Gwee, Presbyterian Community Services

"We enjoyed having the opportunity to work with agencies from various sectors - everyone came from different fields and had a range of new perspectives. It was also useful working together and finding a solution that was mutually beneficial both to the community and for different organisations involved."

Kristine Schaan, Cycling Without Age

A JOURNEY TO CREATE INNOVATIVE AND IMPACTFUL SOCIAL SERVICES

The following journey serves as a guide, tailored for all who wish to embark on a transformation journey, to innovate and redesign social services. Design thinking and industry advice have been woven into this journey, accompanied by practical examples, tools and templates.

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1 STARTING AN INNOVATION JOURNEY

1a. What is Innovation and Design Thinking?

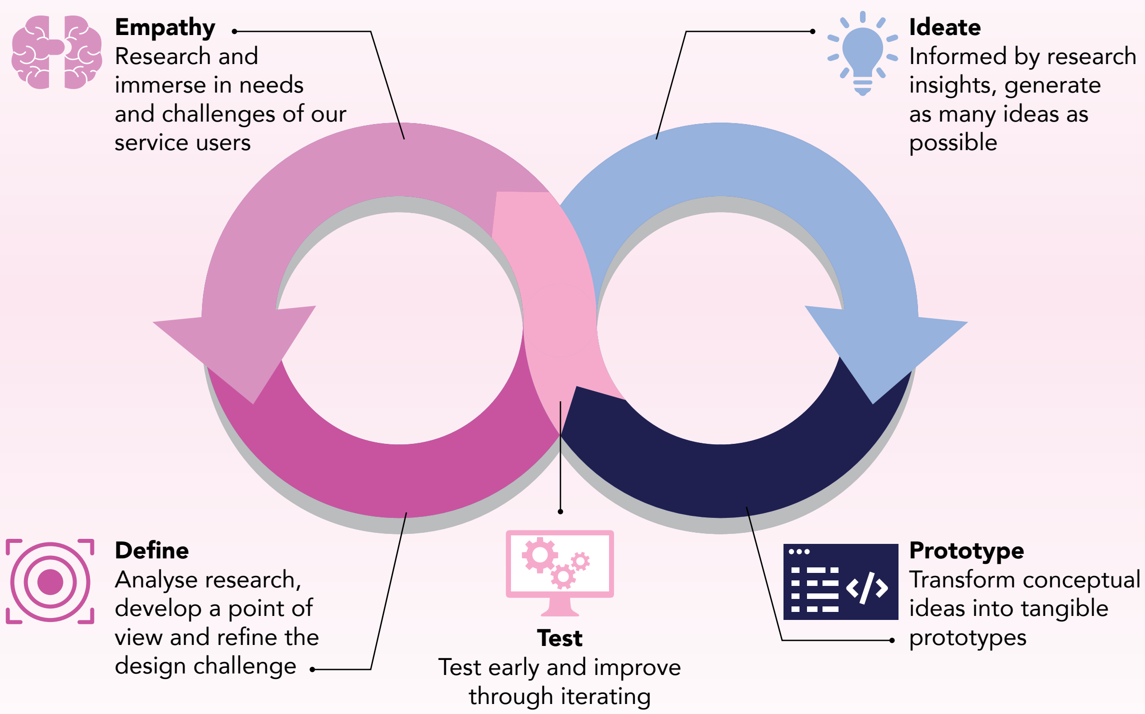
If 'creativity' is the ability to come up with ideas, and 'innovations' are ideas that have been made tangible and resulted in substantial impact, then 'design' is the process of creation; making informed decisions in order to allow good ideas to become great innovations.

Design thinking is a **mindset** and an **approach** to find innovative solutions for complex human-centred challenges.

1b. How do we apply Design Thinking?

Design Thinking Approach

Design Thinking constitutes 5 phases. An innovation team would journey through these phases in iterative cycles, starting from Empathy towards Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test.



We will explore each of these stages more in depth over the subsequent chapters of this book.

Design Thinking Principles

Design thinking as a mindset is a collection of attitudes that guide our actions and decisions as we journey to create better experiences or solutions for our service users.

Human-centredness

We put our service users at the centre of our design process. We need to look through their lens and empathise with the reasons behind their motivations and beliefs, in order to design solutions that resonate with their values, and meet their needs.

Iterative

Failures help us understand what works and how to improve. Through multiple iterations, our understanding of the challenge will get clearer and our design becomes more effective at delivering the impact we seek to deliver.

Collaboration

By bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to collaborate, we can leverage on each other's strengths and take into account our stakeholders' needs to achieve success.

Experimental

Sometimes there is no telling what would work until we try. Prototyping and testing potential ideas as well as avoiding assumptions and biases are an integral part of the innovation process.

Holistic

Other than designing for our service users, we also need to remember the stakeholders that are required to make our solutions work, and be mindful of the impact we cause within the ecosystem. It is important to zoom out to understand the big picture.

Visual

At times it is quicker and more effective to communicate visually rather than in words and this is especially true when describing experiences. Expressing ourselves visually also allows us to be more creative.

Biased-for-action

The best way to know if a solution works is to test and get feedback from our service users. Focus on doing - the earlier we get feedback, the quicker we can iterate and improve.

Driven by impact

Throughout the design process, we remain driven and focused on the impact we hope to make in our service users' lives. Ultimately, improving the lives of our service users is our success.

> *Design thinking is an approach best learnt through doing.*
> — **Feng Ling, Quantedge Foundation**

Tip:

An example of a collaborative whole-of-sector approach to resolving complex social issues is the **Collective Impact model**. For more details, check out the Collective Impact Webinar Series organised by NCSS in partnership with the Tamarack Institute.

1c. How is Design Thinking unique in solving challenges?

Design Thinking is an approach with human-centredness at its core and is most well suited for solving complex social issues that revolve around people. These issues tend to have multiple inter-related factors that make it difficult to tackle and are made more complex due to human perceptions and emotions, or deeply rooted habits, beliefs, or cultures.

The Design Thinking approach helps to break down these layers of complexity to uncover the underlying core needs of our service users. This allows us to design and innovate new solutions and services to meet emerging needs or transform existing services.

Case Study Example

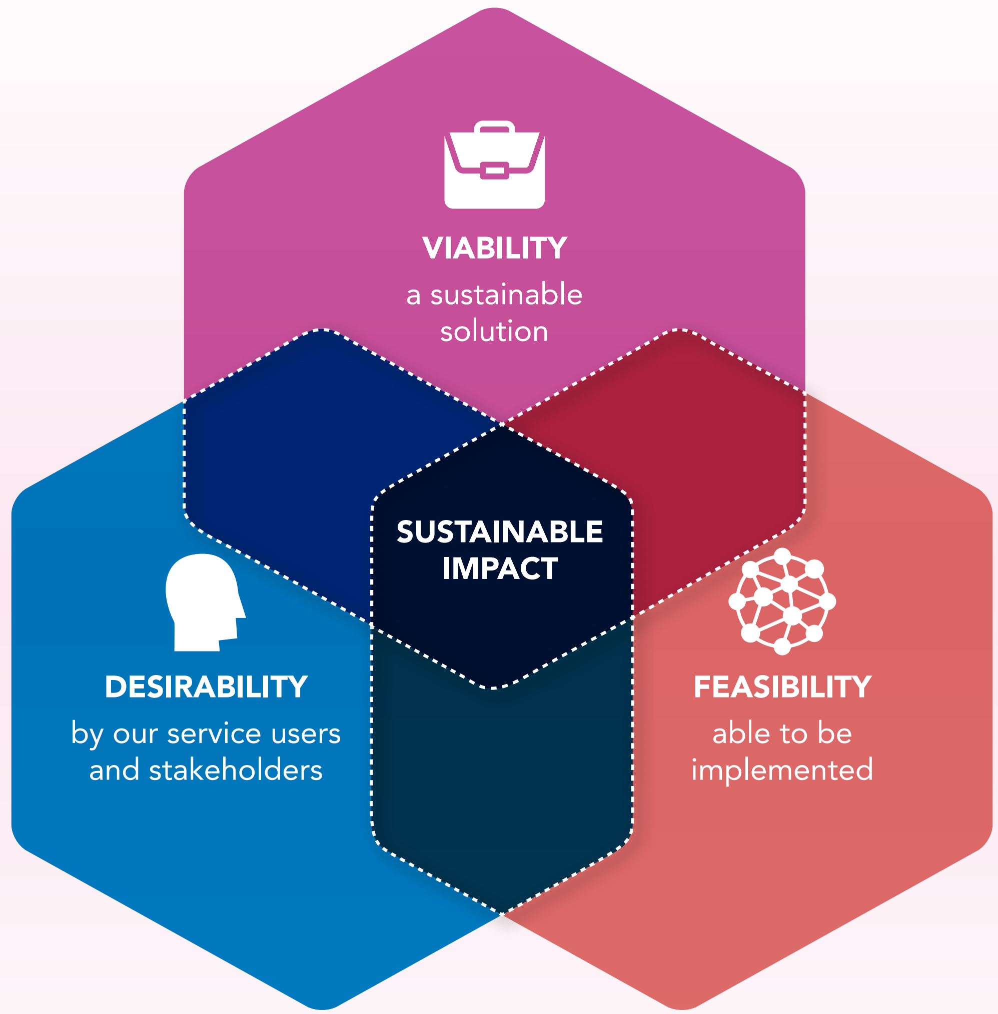
How one of the teams from the Sector Design Challenge 2019 utilised the Design Thinking approach:

Team MOHA wanted to help seniors at risk of isolation but had difficulties understanding the complex issues they faced.

Through the Design Thinking journey, the team discovered that most seniors wanted to be socially connected and saw value in contributing to society. However, many were unaware of where and how to start contributing. Furthermore, they had concerns and fears about overcommitment and excessive efforts needed to partake in community or voluntary activities.

This discovery led to the conceptualisation of **Senior Active Force SG**, a progressive engagement model for seniors. Firstly, seniors are encouraged to improve their fitness and health through active aging activities. Opportunities are then provided for seniors to connect with others through social interactions, thereby reducing the risk of social isolation. The model also empowers seniors to make meaningful contributions to society through curated activities, thus enabling them to rediscover the dignity in their lives.

To design impactful solutions, we need to ensure that our solution is **desirable, feasible, and viable**. To achieve this, we need to shift our perspectives between these 3 qualities throughout our innovation journey.



1d. How do we begin our innovation journey?

Recognising challenges faced by our service users

Why is the problem worth solving? Why do we need to innovate? It is important to be clear about our purpose and desired outcomes, as they help define our project direction, form a motivated and resilient team and rally stakeholders behind a common cause.

Here are 3 questions that could help us frame the purpose and the initial scope of our project.

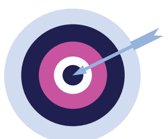
What CHALLENGE(S) are we trying to overcome?

- Why is it important to address the problem?
- How is this challenge relevant to our service users, organisation, and to the society?

WHO are we designing for?

- Are there distinct groups within these potential service users?
- Who are the stakeholders that need to be on board for us to see success?

What IMPACT do we want to make?



- What do we hope to achieve by solving this challenge?
- What does success look like?

If you share an office or a space, place the answers to these questions somewhere accessible to everyone. This will remind the team of the project objectives and priorities. Refer to the topic on *Research Wall*[3].

> *We realize that people tend to focus a lot on what to do, however before we know what to do we must first know the why, it is very important to know the purpose of why you are embarking on this innovation journey.*
> **— Tristan Gwee, Presbyterian Community Services**

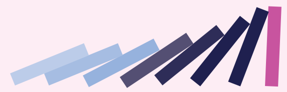
[3] *Page 28*

Defining the scope of our project

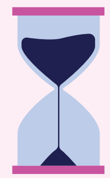
As you understand your challenge better, the following points will help you define your project scope.

Impact

How might we scope the project to yield maximum impact for our service users?



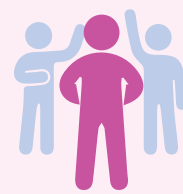
Time



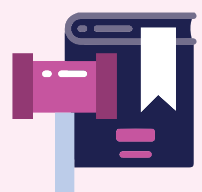
How urgent is this challenge? Could the problem be broken down into smaller parts?

Resources

What and how much resources do we have access to? Do they come with any obligations and how will they affect our project?



Project-specific factors



Are there any constraints that are unique to this project? (e.g. certain regulations or challenges accessing service users)

Tips:

- Do not start thinking about solutions yet as we may be basing them on our assumptions and may not be addressing the right needs. Hold off any solutions until the Ideation Phase.
- Check that our initial scope is free of assumptions and biases, and broad enough to encourage exploration of the challenge topic.

> *My advice for future innovation teams is not to be worried by the amount of work required in the beginning. It definitely seems like a lot, but the effort put into the scoping and planning can reduce the amount of work in the subsequent phases of the design process.*
> **— HealthServe**

1e. What makes a good innovation team?

Other than finding people who resonate with our cause, what else should we look out for when forming a team?

Having a diverse and collaborative team can bring about stronger partnerships across the People, Public and Private (3-P) sectors and generate new and holistic solutions to address social issues.

It is also critical to create a 'safe space' for members to contribute. A great team is one where every member is respected and valued for their contributions.

Of course, a diverse team would have its challenges, as it requires time for alignment. It is therefore important to respect each other's perspectives, skills and strengths during the process.

Let's take a look at some examples of teams from the Sector Design Challenge 2019

Case Study 1: Team Social Integration Hub, made up of representatives from social enterprises and various social service agencies, shared that their first few meetings were challenging as they were trying to decide what they could do together, to provide better opportunities to their organisations or to benefit each other. However, as time went by, the team was able to understand one another's needs, strengths and weaknesses, and were able to reach alignment on how they would move forward together. The team successfully went on to develop their solution - a platform to increase opportunities for vulnerable people to participate in society and contribute to the economy.

Case Study 2: Team iLearn has greatly benefited from their collaboration and partnership between two Social Service Agencies - Cycling Without Age and Care Corner Singapore. Team iLearn's collaborative solution is to offer adolescents who are less academically inclined a learning and employment pathway through a multi-disciplinary training and a hands-on bicycle shop apprenticeship programme.

The participants are offered case management by Care Corner Youth Services, learning entrepreneurial and life skills by various industry professionals and forming of new intergenerational relationships with senior supporters from Cycling Without Age. Cycling Without Age has been able to offer their domain knowledge on cycling, and link the team up with relevant senior volunteers and cycling shops, while Care Corner Singapore has been able to offer their expertise in engaging and understanding the youths-at-risk's needs. As a result, they have been able to develop a programme that interests the youths and meets their needs, as well as create a community of senior volunteers, bike shop owners, mentors and trainers to support the youths in their journeys.

> *In our diverse team we learned to be open and to work with different perspectives, suspend our own biases and judgement and try to understand the problem through the lens of others.*
> **— Peng Ho, Singapore University of Technology and Design**

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Team diversity

It is important to have diversity within a team as it provides holistic perspectives and viewpoints when viewing our challenge. In addition, we can leverage on each other's valuable network connections that help to increase resources and expand opportunities.

Different team members may have complementary expertise in areas such as:

- Gathering data and research skills
- Designing and building of prototypes
- Stakeholder management and networking
- Experience working with service users

Tip:
Before the start of a project, team members can take turns to share their areas of expertise and skill-sets with each other.

Co-designing with service users and stakeholders

How might we improve the likelihood that our solution meets the needs of our service users? A good approach is to engage our service users and the people closest to them to co-design the solution together, incorporating their perspectives into our design. Stakeholders' involvement in the design process also helps to create mutual understanding and buy-in as well as potentially revealing opportunities for collaboration and to leverage on community resources.

> *When working on an innovation project, it is especially helpful to come with an open mind and to work with a diverse group of people all of whom have different viewpoints on the same conflict. We all have our own ways of seeing and understanding things and if we collaborate with people with different backgrounds, we really get ideas flowing.*
>
> — **Cycling Without Age**

ARE WE READY TO EMBARK ON OUR DESIGN AND INNOVATION JOURNEY?

We have broadly defined:

- [ ] Our design challenge
- [ ] Who we are designing for
- [ ] What impact we would like to make

We have considered the following when scoping our challenge:

- [ ] Impact on our service users
- [ ] Time needed to solve the challenge
- [ ] Resources we might or might not have access to
- [ ] Other factors that might affect the project

We have tried to form a diverse team to include:

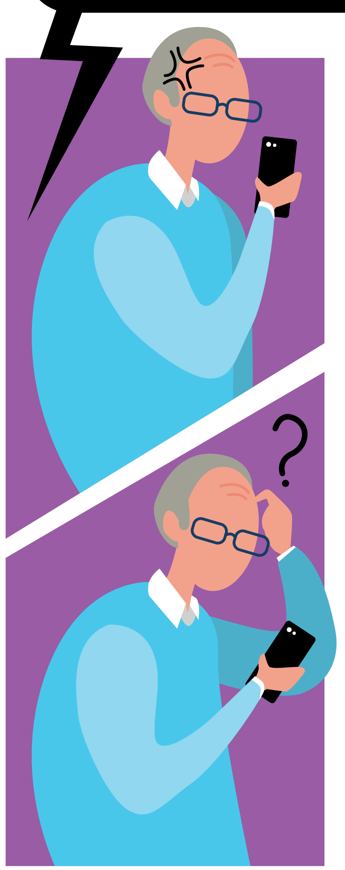
- [ ] Service users and/or stakeholders
- [ ] Members from different departments of the organisation
- [ ] Members with diverse skill sets and perspectives on the challenge

2 UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF OUR SERVICE USERS

2a. How can we dive deeper to uncover the needs of our service users?

When we look at a problem, we are naturally biased towards our own lens. There is often a gap between what we think and what is really happening on the ground.

A senior appears to be angry while using his mobile phone and we might assume that he does not like technology. However, if we probe further, we find out that he is actually confused because he does not read English and is trying to figure out how to navigate the settings on his phone.



This is why we must learn to empathise with our service users and understand their motivations and challenges. We use this understanding to then generate the right ideas for them. This way, our design challenge not only takes inspiration from our service users' lives, it puts them at the very heart of the design process.

We would be introducing 2 research approaches to help understand our service users better — **Desk Research** and **Field Ethnographic Research**. Before we start, creating a **research plan** will help us scope and decide on the methods which are best suited to understand our service users.

How to create a Research Plan:

- As a team, discuss the challenge identified, what the team knows and gaps to explore in understanding the needs of our service users.
- Brainstorm a few broad research questions that the team would like to work on as this helps us to stay focused on the challenge and our service users (e.g. what challenges do persons with disabilities face when seeking employment?)
- Create a research wall[4] to document all our research and facilitate discussions.

> *To understand our clients and the difficulties they face, we have to throw away what we thought we knew and mental structures that we previously had in place, to step out of our current frame of mind and to explore.*
> **— Peng Ho, Singapore University of Technology and Design**

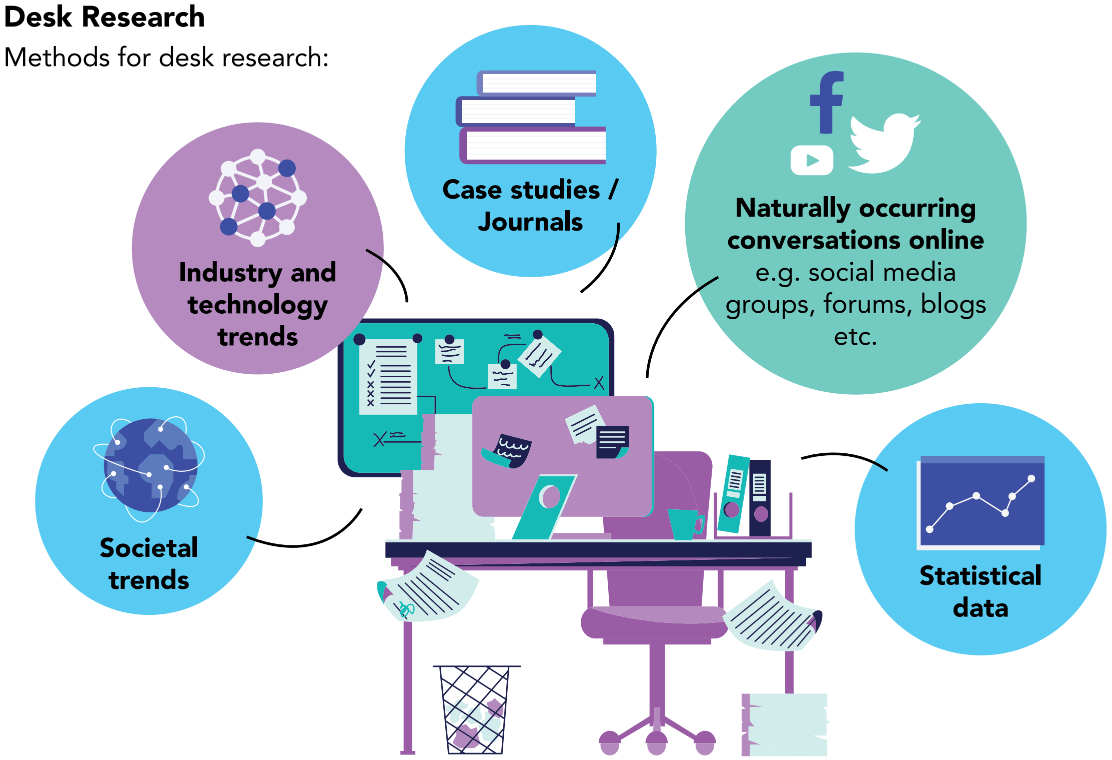
[4] *Page 28*

2b. What are some design research approaches?

Research can be loosely classified into two categories. Desk Research that is done in the comfort of your office, and Field Research that involves going out into the "field" to observe and engage users and stakeholders. While both research approaches are important, Field Research is especially critical for solving human-centred problems.

Desk Research

Methods for desk research:



Tips: Before we start our research, be aware of 2 common pitfalls!

Confirmation Bias:
- We tend to only listen to the information that we want to hear. This limits our ability to take in new findings that do not align with our point of view. So keep an open mind during this phase of the process!

Availability Bias:
- People have the tendency to assume that the examples they have in mind are more representative. Try to check our information against more sources to see if it is a representative phenomenon.

Field Research

To design human-centred solutions, we need to empathise with our users' motivations, fears and needs. This will help us develop a solution that will work and appeal to our service users.

Field research takes time and requires a lot of patience, but it will help us uncover important and contextualised insights. Sometimes, the success (or failure) of a service could boil down to the provision of very basic human qualities that we could uncover from our research such as providing a sense of reassurance or empowerment.

There are several field research methods we can use that will be covered in this chapter. Before doing so, we should consider the following elements in field research that would help us to plan and structure our research better.

1. **Who are our users and stakeholders?** Demographics, characteristics, experiences and behaviours.
2. **What is the process that our users are going though?** Stages of a service or activities that lead to an outcome.
3. **How are our users being engaged?** Touch points and interactions with the services.
4. **What do they see, hear, think and feel?** Interaction with the space, signages, sound, and atmosphere.

Stakeholder Map

Our service users exist within a system and a network of relationships that influence their decisions and behaviours. Good field research seeks not only to understand our users, but also the stakeholders that influences the outcomes we hope to improve.

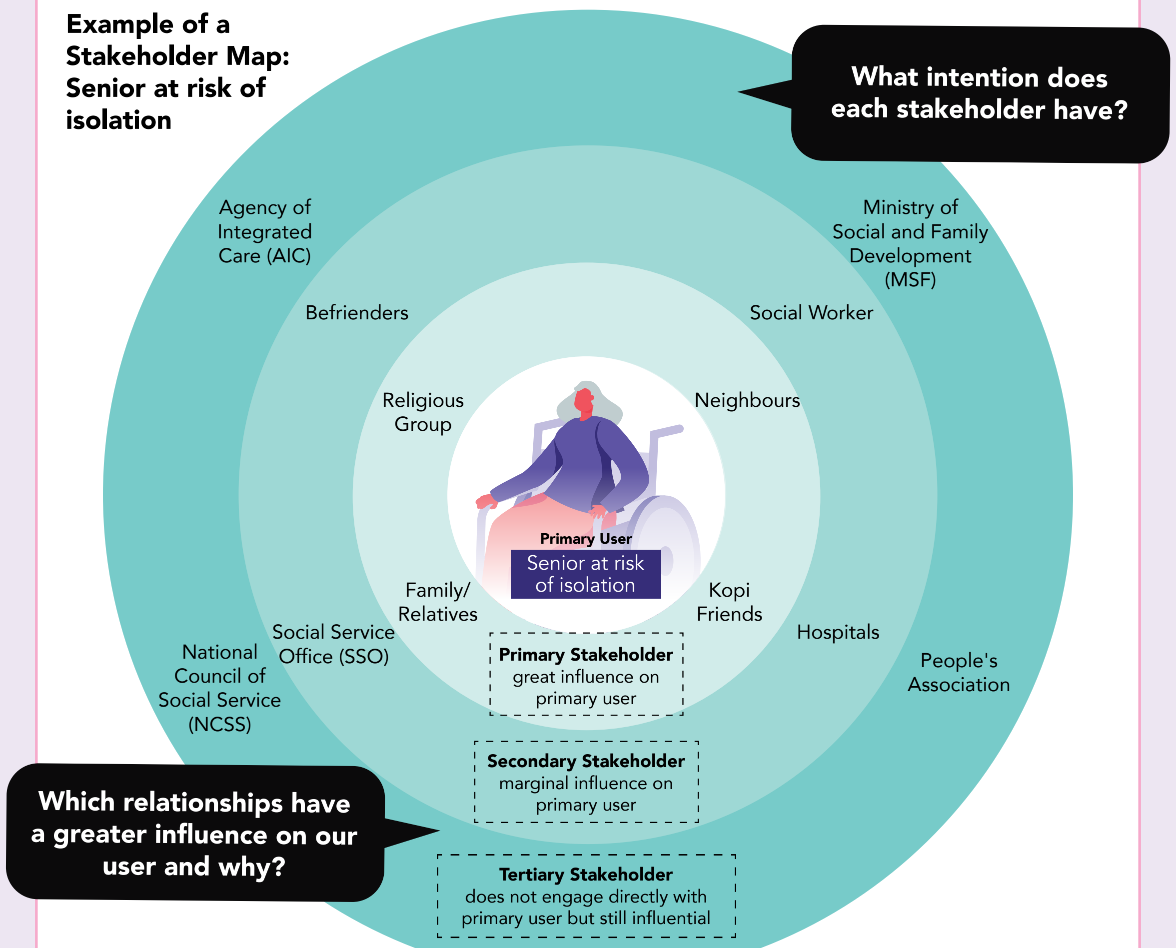
Creating a stakeholder map accompanies our field research to:

- Explore the relationships between our users and their stakeholders
- Identify who to interview or observe
- Understand relationships that we may leverage on or to take into account while designing our solution

Tips:

- Expand the map and detail the relationships as we discover more about our stakeholders.
- Prioritise stakeholders with a strong influence over our outcome as primary stakeholders, while secondary and tertiary stakeholders have decreasing influence but may be critical to the design of a sustainable solution.

Example of a Stakeholder Map: Senior at risk of isolation



Credit: Design4Impact 2020, Team PillowPals.

Field Research Methods

Field observation

We often rely on surveys and interviews to collect data and feedback from our users. However, this self-reported information is limited as we often only recall the most memorable moments of our experiences while other details fade over time. People may also choose to withhold details or not be truthful about their opinions.

Instead, we should immerse ourselves in our service users' environment and observe how they act and behave as they go about their activities. This would give us more details and first hand information about our users.

Tip:

Take note of the tendency for people to respond in a way that is viewed favourably by others. For example, a respondent who claimed to have made changes in their diet to lose weight during an interview is later found to consume unhealthy fast food during a field observation.

Shadowing

Shadowing is a good way to understand how our service users live their lives and experience certain events or services. It involves spending a period of time with our user and observing their actions and behaviours. Shadowing not only helps us develop empathy for our users, but it can also identify important moments that matter to them as well as potential barriers and opportunities.

Be aware of the **Hawthorne effect** where people alter their behaviour due to the awareness of being observed. To mitigate this, we may need to spend enough time with our users for them to "forget" our presence or blend into their surroundings. Alternatively, we can employ a 'fly on the wall' approach by using video recording to capture the experience of users, if permission is given.

Day in the life of/Service Safari

To understand the perspectives of our service users, we could put ourselves in their shoes, immerse in their lives for a day or experience how it is like to navigate their circumstances. This is usually done after having a prior understanding of our users' behaviours, needs and constraints so that we can appreciate their thought processes and actions better.

Case Study Example

"Who Cares? Transforming the Caregiving Experience in Singapore" was NCSS' first project utilising the design ethnography process to understand the lives of caregivers.

Over the course of several months, the team journeyed with ten diverse caregivers between the ages of 21 to 78 and utilised several field research methods to understand their needs, values, hopes, dreams and fears. The team spent numerous hours together with the caregivers observing how they lived, conducting hours of interviews in their homes and just overall to get to know them better. Video recording was also used during shadowing sessions to capture the caregivers going about their daily lives and caring for their loved ones. Through this process, the team began to unearth deeper insights and a richer understanding of the needs, wants and challenges faced by these caregivers.

The insights gained were then used to guide the ideation process of envisioning and designing a better ecosystem of support for caregivers and their loved ones.

Journals

There may be specific episodes or experiences in our service users' lives that we are interested to understand further but may be too long or difficult for us to observe, such as time spent in a senior activity centre or in longitudinal studies such as living in poverty. In such scenarios, we could recruit our service users as research participants and get them to journal their lives and experiences. Other than describing what they did to cope with challenges, we could also encourage them to reflect upon their experience and reasons behind certain actions and decisions.

To structure such participatory research, we can create a research diary with prompts, calendar and stickers to help guide our research participants in their reflections.

Interviews

When preparing and structuring our interview questions, we should be inspired by the understanding and curiosity we have gained from our desk research and field research observations.

Try to dive deeper. Beyond asking for a simple reporting of our service users' experience and challenges, explore how they articulate the reasons for certain actions or behaviours. We can consider using the **"5 Whys" technique**:

Action/Behaviour: Mrs A decides to take a part-time rather than a full-time job.

- **Why?** A part-time job gives me greater control over how I spend my time.
- **Why?** I want to have more flexibility in my life.
- **Why?** I want to be able to spend more time with my young children.
- **Why?** I want to be a good mother to guide and instil good values to them.
- **Why?** I value my role as a mother. Being a good mother is important to me.

An insightful interview does not usually follow a script. Instead, allow the interviewee to openly share the following:

Impression & perspectives
Remember that we are not here to confirm our perspectives but rather to understand that of our users. Do not be quick to correct or defend. Listen with an open heart.

Aspirations & desires
Sometimes we could get some hints of what our interviewees believe a solution might be by asking them to imagine an alternate future without constraints.

Stories & opinions
We can make use of prompts such as photos to trigger memories and responses.

Surveys

Conducting a survey is a quick way to gather a large volume of responses. Here are some tips to help us conduct better surveys and constraints we should be aware of.

Tips:

Think of how surveys can capture important data such as demographics, behavioural habits, attitudes and characteristics that yield insights to our research.

Ask good questions:

The quality of a survey depends on the quality of questions asked. It is recommended to conduct other forms of research first and have a good understanding of our challenge before drafting survey questions.

Keep questions neutral to avoid influencing opinions:

Neutral question: "Please rate your experience at our centre."

Leading question: "Please rate how good the service was at our centre."

Have a balanced set of options:

Balanced: "Very Bad, Bad, Neutral, Good, Very Good"

Not balanced: "Neutral, Good, Very Good"

Keep questions simple:

Avoid assessing multiple things in a single question. (e.g. "Were you able to understand our instructions and were they helpful?")

Always test our survey with others.

A good survey should encourage respondents to answer truthfully and have a quick and easy participation experience.

Constraints of surveys:

- People do not have a lot of time to spare in completing surveys, hence multiple choice questions work best. However, these responses lack contextual information, such as emotions or explanations on perceptions, which is required for good human-centred design.
- Do not rely on surveys alone. Consider employing other forms of research to complement the shortcomings of surveys.

3 ANALYSING OUR RESEARCH AND REDEFINING OUR CHALLENGE

> *If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions.*
> **— Albert Einstein**

'Define' is the phase that is dedicated to making sense of the data we have gathered and to better define the challenge we would like to solve.

Complex challenges are often filled with uncertainty and ambiguity. Rather than jumping to conclusions and perceiving the problem through our own lens, it is important to digest the information gathered and to reframe the problem until we get to the root issue to be solved.

Key steps in define phase:

- Ensure everyone in the team has access to and understands the data collected
- Unpack and analyse data from desk and field research
- Define the segment of service users we would like to design for
- Identify significant needs, painpoints or motivations shared by our service users
- Synthesise hypotheses from observations and test them to uncover insights
- Refine our challenge based on the new information discovered
- Construct a "How Might We…?" question, a key point for subsequent design thinking phases

3a. How do we consolidate our research data as a team?

Put it all together and create a research wall! A research wall is where we can put up all our research materials in one place. We want to have a bird's eye view of all the information that has been gathered so that we can analyse them and connect the dots easily.

A good old fashioned physical wall is great but for online versions, consider Miro.com, Canva.com, Mural.co or Padlet.com. These boards also allow materials such as photos, videos or website links to be added.

3b. How do we make sense of research and uncover new insights?

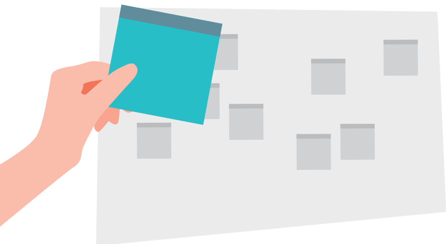
Sharing, sense-making of data, and uncovering insights

For effective collaboration to take place, a culture of trust, openness and sharing is key. We need to be open and have respect for different perspectives.

Organise regular huddles for the team to come together to synthesise and analyse the research findings. It will be a messy process as we might have different interpretations and perspectives. Be patient when there are disagreements; it often reveals new insights or might uncover more areas to be explored and understood.

Affinity Diagram

An Affinity Diagram is a way to make sense of the information collected.



1. **Place each piece of data** - facts, quotes, drawings and observations - **onto single post-it notes and on the research wall**

2. **Collectively as a team, discuss** and **cluster** these individual elements with similar ideas into groups

3. **Identify themes** and **patterns** which can be further developed into deeper insights

For each theme, discuss and look for key conclusions that either:

- Explain the issue (e.g. fear of being judged)
- Point us towards requirements of solutions (e.g. seniors like to maintain social connections)

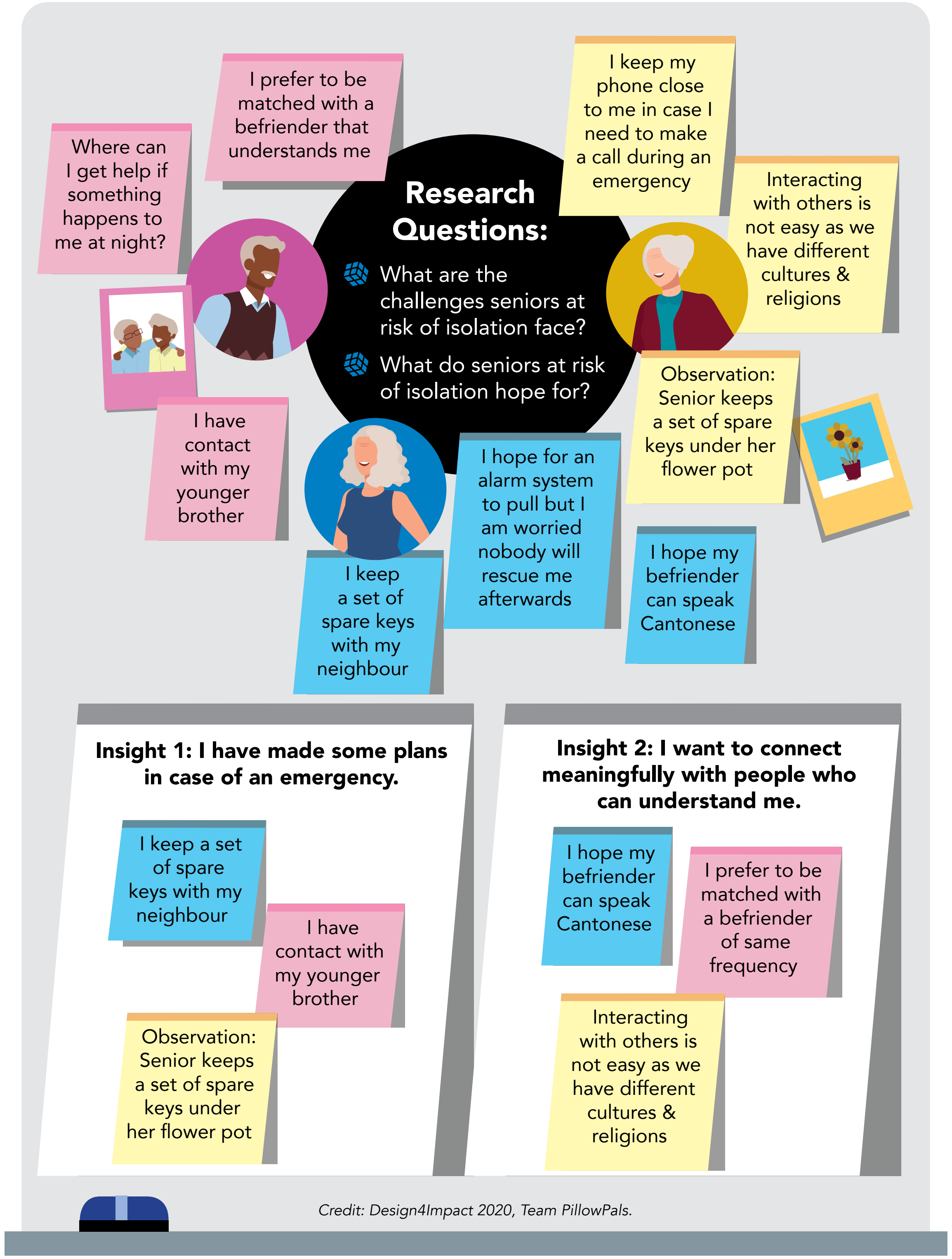
As the information gathered gets clustered and organised, the research wall will become a shared mind-space - clusters that refine the design challenge, describe the users, portray hypothesised insights, and conditions for possible solutions. Content generated from the research wall will flow into other tools that help us better define the challenge, such as stakeholder maps[5], personas[6], and journey maps[7].

Tip:

At this point, we might have data and ideas that are not utilised. Keep them on the research wall and revisit them from time to time if needed. Remember, the design thinking approach is an iterative process.

[5] *Page 23* [6] *Page 33* [7] *Page 34-35*

Research Wall with Affinity Diagram: Senior at risk of isolation



Credit: Design4Impact 2020, Team PillowPals.

3c. What could help us focus on our users and their needs?

Personas

Personas describe different user types we would like to design for. A persona is a 'point of view' that captures the different attributes of our service users, such as demographics, behaviours, values and perspectives. These are important characteristics for us to consider when designing our solution.

Without one, each member of the team may have very different perspectives of who our service users are and what their needs might be.

How to create personas

Research interviews and observations form the foundation for us to create personas. Personas are not individuals but an aggregation of multiple persons that the team has interviewed and observed.

To create a persona, uncover any clusters of users that share common needs, challenges, experiences, or behaviours.

Tips:

- Be aware of personal biases. Personas should be derived based on what we have uncovered during our field and desk research and not reflections of who we think our users are.
- Look for "extreme" or frequent users of our service, as they would be able to give more insights as compared to a one-time user that had a very average and expected experience journey.
- It is more important to find representative and good quality insights from the persons in your field research, rather than achieving numerical validity.
- Validate personas by presenting them to multiple stakeholders.

Persona

Example of a Persona: Senior at risk of isolation

1 **Hi, my name is Mdm Rosmah**

70 years old

Lives alone in 1-room HDB flat

Single

Retired

Level of isolation

Healthcare needs

2 **My needs**

- To seek help at anytime when needed
- To interact more with others
- To stay healthy both physically and mentally

My pains & challenges

- Limited social interaction due to mobility issues
- Not very tech-savvy
- Fears not being able to seek help in emergency situations, especially at night

3 Diagnosed 5 years ago with hypertension, diabetes and coronary heart disease, Mdm Rosmah had to retire early due to her health problems and mobility issues and this has greatly diminished her sense of independence.

Without any friends or regular social activities, Mdm Rosmah has turned to watching Youtube videos and doing housework to pass the time.

Mdm Rosmah often suffers from spells of dizziness and is at risk of falling at home. As a result, she has to rely heavily on home nursing and other social service agencies to assist her with her health and social needs.

4 **My attributes**

Tech Savviness

Activation/Initiative

Resourcefulness

Social Connectedness

5 **"I am worried that no one is around to help me if I need help at night."**

1. Describe the profile, including the demographics of the persona*
2. Include important attributes such as needs, pains and challenges
3. A short story that paints a vivid image of this persona
4. Attributes that differentiate this persona from others
5. A quote that encapsulates the key characteristic of this persona

Credit: Design4Impact 2020, Team PillowPals.

** Name of the persona should be fictitious as it is not describing an individual but a user type.*

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3d. How do we identify opportunities from our user's experience?

Journey Map

A Journey Map is a graphical visualisation of our service users' experience, or in some cases an episode or particular time frame in their lives. It helps us understand and analyse the experience of our service users and to identify key moments, gaps or opportunities in the current service.

The map is created by first identifying the phases of our service user's journey, the actions taken in each phase and interactions the service user had with the service or stakeholders.

At each of these junctures, the map shows their experience in terms of emotions, behaviours and thought processes.

It is important to incorporate several research methods such as interviews and observations to gain an accurate snapshot of our service user's journey.

> **Tip:**
> Journey Maps are typically used in conjunction with Personas as it describes a common experience from the point of view of a segment of users.

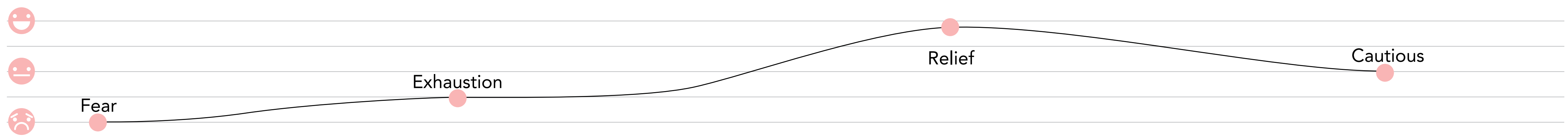
Example of a Journey Map

Scenario: Mdm Rosmah, aged 70, lives alone and experienced a bad headache while in the toilet on a Friday night.

Needs and Goals:
- Able to seek help at any time when needed
- Stay healthy both physically and mentally

Stages	Major medical episode at night	Seeking Help	Diagnosis & treatment	Discharge & back in community
Actions	• Could not locate my phone • Wanted to use the alarm system but it was too far away	• Got up from the toilet floor after 1.5 hours • Crawled slowly to phone to call 995	• Discussed with medical team about condition and plans for discharge • Recuperated with medication and physiotherapy	• Learned to identify when unwell and seek medical attention if needed • Attempted to ask neighbour if they are able to help in emergencies
Thoughts/ Feelings	• Worried I might die alone since nobody is able to help me • Needed to gain strength to call 995 for help	• It would have been helpful if someone detected my fall and assisted me immediately • It was so exhausting and I am worried the delay affected my health	• I know I am well-taken care of by hospital team • I look forward to going home	• Who can help me if something happens to me again at night? • I feel like I am imposing on my neighbour when I ask them for help

Emotions



Pain-points/ Opportunities

- Help Mdm Rosmah get help and access to medical attention immediately
- Help Mdm Rosmah calm down when trying to seek help

An alert to indicate Mdm Rosmah is in an emergency

- Help Mdm Rosmah identify that she needs medical attention early before it escalates
- Enable greater awareness of medication needs and control over her health

24-hour access to medical help

Credit: Design4Impact 2020, Team PillowPals.

3e. How do we turn our observations into insights?

Insights

An insight is a clear and deep understanding of a situation or an explanation of why people behave the way they do. We focus on discovering insights because they bring clarity to the issue we are addressing and hint at the possibilities of how we can solve them.

Observations to insights

Most of what we have captured from our research tends to be observations or facts we have discovered. For us to turn observations into insights, we need to understand the "why", or the reasons that drive the behaviours we have observed.

For example, knowing the number of homeless people in Singapore and seeing their living conditions are just facts and observations. Knowing **why** people fall through the cracks or choose to sleep on the streets are insights.

Case Study Example

How one of the teams from the Sector Design Challenge 2019 turned their observations into insights:

1. **Developed hypothesis from observations and trends:**

   Desk research showed that only 20% of persons with disabilities were employed and most do not pass the interview stage.

2. **Investigated hypothesis by conducting additional research, asking "why?" and going beyond the symptoms of the problem:**

   Persons with disabilities often felt self-conscious and had concerns performing well in an interview. After an unsuccessful interview, they lacked the confidence to pursue other job opportunities, thus limiting their employability.

3. **Refined and tested hypothesis with users to affirm if they were true:**

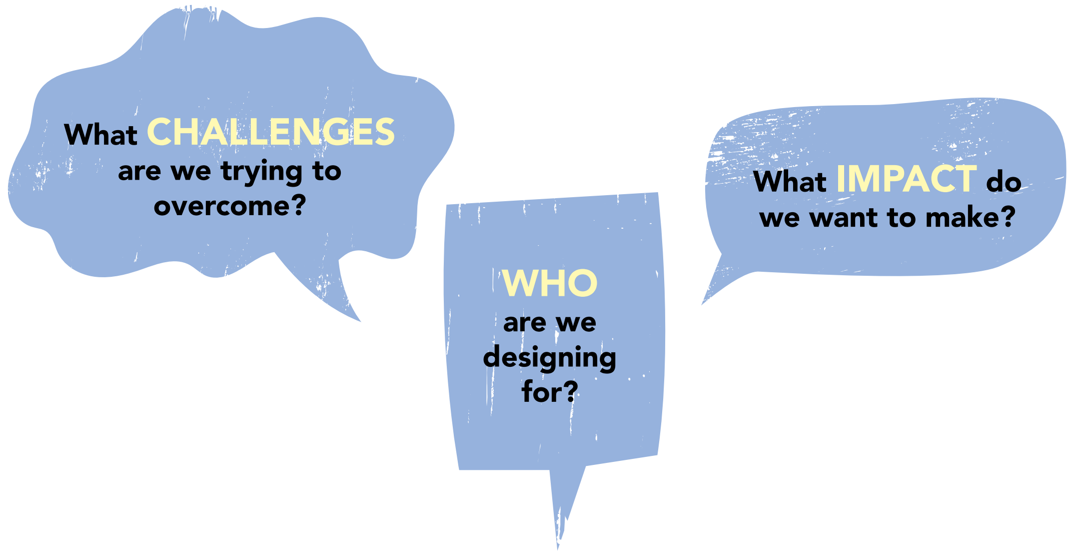
   If persons with disabilities were better prepared for an interview, they became more confident and independent. As a result, their employment opportunities would also improve.

Credit: Sector Design Challenge 2019, Team Can Do

3f. How to refine and frame our challenge to deliver greater impact?

Refining your design challenge

Having conducted substantial research, we now have a more intimate understanding and appreciation of our challenge. From there, we can answer the following questions again and revisit the scope of our project. We might notice that our answers to these questions have changed. This process helps us to focus our attention on what matters, guiding us towards delivering greater impact for our service users.



> *We discovered that there was so much we wanted to do, but it's hard to change the world with one solution. One way we stayed focused was to always go back to ask ourselves how our "how might we" question has changed? Why has it changed? Is this relevant to what our users need and does it belong to the core of what we set out to do? We do this so that we are clear about our direction.*
> **— Cycling Without Age**

> *Usually I find a solution and hope it will solve the problem. Design Thinking helped me realize that not all solutions solve the problem. It helped me define the problem before finding a solution.*
> **— Irene Loi, Catholic Welfare Services**

Framing a "How might we…?" question

As we move towards ideating and developing solutions, it is important to keep in mind the important aspects of our challenge and research insights. By framing our answers for the questions above into a "How might we…?" question, it gives our team a focal point to start off on the right foot. At the same time, it expands our mindset into exploring possibilities so as not to land on an idea or a solution prematurely.

A good "How might we…?" question needs to be:

- **Human-centred:** Focused on delivering impact to our users
- **Relevant:** Appropriate to the situation and context of our challenge
- **Broad:** Allows room for creativity
- **Framed positively:** Leverages on strengths and possibilities

Tips:

- Continue to refine our "How might we …?" question as we discover more about the challenge. This ensures relevance and improves the impact of our solution.
- Frame our "How might we…?" question from the perspective of our users and stakeholders. Could the question be phrased to take into account their motivations?

Case Study Example

How one of the teams from the Sector Design Challenge 2019 developed their "How might we…?" question

Desk and Field Research	Personas/ Archetypes	Journey Maps

Insights and Opportunities on Youth-at-risk

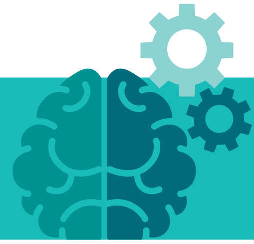
- Lack essential skillsets and qualifications.
- Lack sense of purpose and meaningful engagement.
- Need for recognition and affirmation on their skills and strengths.

Insights	Users	Impact
Youth-at-risk are unable to experience a sense of purpose and be recognised for their skills and strengths due to a lack of essential skillsets and qualifications because of early school dropout.	Youth-at-risk or school dropouts	Improve youths' employability and their life trajectory so that they can be meaningfully engaged and contribute to society.

How might we **expand educational opportunities** for **disadvantaged youth-at-risk** so that they **can achieve a level of formal education, while also receiving hands-on work experience**, thereby **improving their employability and life trajectory to be meaningfully engaged and contribute to society**?

Credit: Sector Design Challenge 2019, Team Project iLearn – The Cycle Social Workshop

4 GENERATING IDEAS AND CONCEPTS



4a. How do we start generating ideas?

Congratulations! You have finally arrived at the fun part of your project, to ideate and come up with possible solutions.

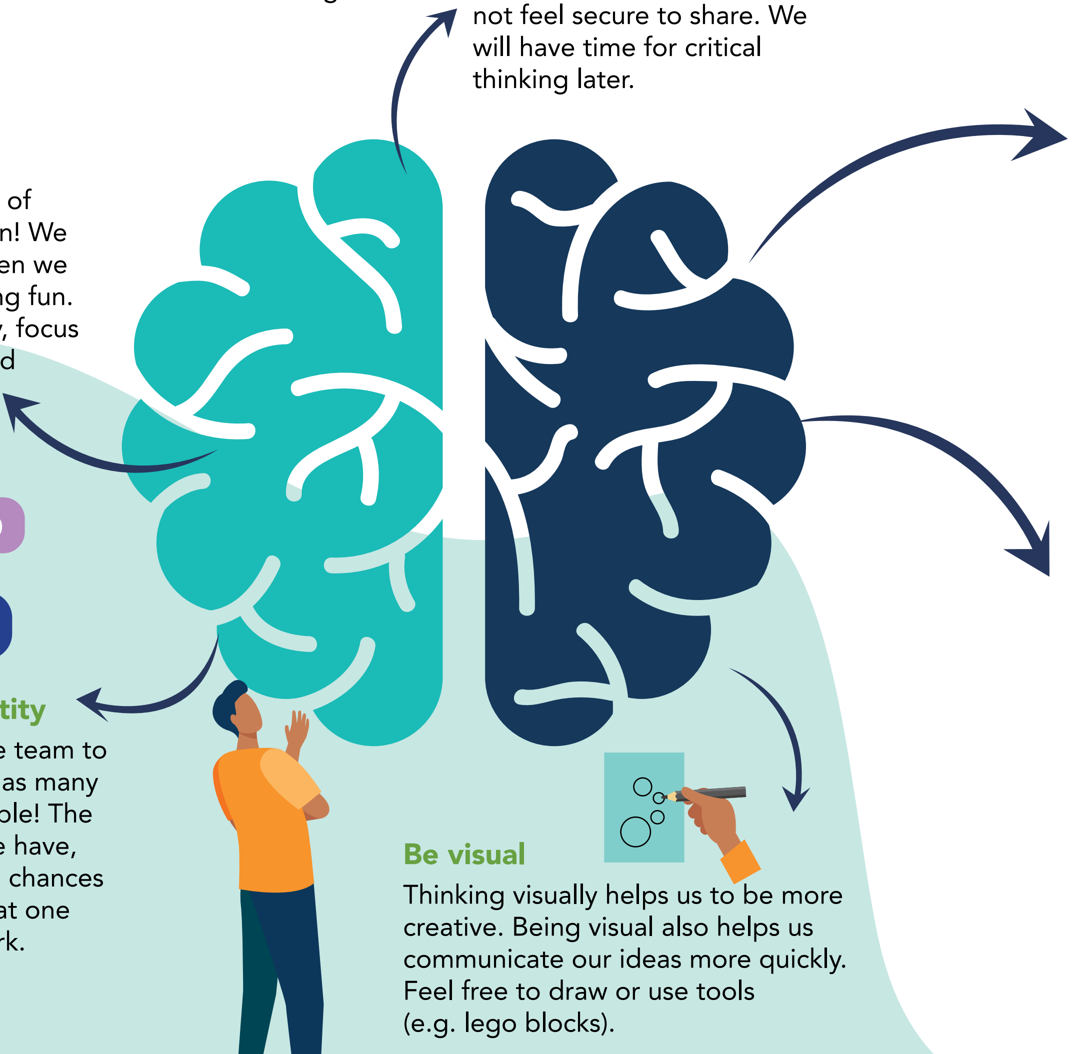
Before we jump into some ideation activites we could do, here are some mindsets to remember throughout the ideation phase.

Postpone judgement and criticisms

Remind everyone that this is not the time to judge. Being critical impedes idea generation, and people may not feel secure to share. We will have time for critical thinking later.

Have fun

The number one rule of ideation is to have fun! We are most creative when we are relaxed and having fun. Treat ideation as play, focus on being positive, and enjoy the process.



Build on each other's ideas

Share and listen with an open heart. Try to synergise and build on one another's ideas.

Go for quantity

Encourage the team to come up with as many ideas as possible! The more ideas we have, the higher the chances we will arrive at one that could work.

Be visual

Thinking visually helps us to be more creative. Being visual also helps us communicate our ideas more quickly. Feel free to draw or use tools (e.g. lego blocks).

Be open-minded and don't be afraid of making mistakes

Unleash your inner creative self! Even the craziest or most unusual ideas could be useful. In fact, all innovations at one point would have been an unusual idea no one had heard of.

With this in mind, unleash your creative self, be bold and go wild!

Inspirations for ideation

Where do most new and novel ideas come from? They come from old ideas of course! As well as insights we have gleaned from our research.

Creativity is about connecting the dots. These dots are pieces of information, experiences, viewpoints, people, resources, understanding of the challenge, research insights and more. The more dots or the higher quality of dots we have, the better we can connect them and form new ideas.

Be a dot collector! Before we begin our ideation process, spend some time collecting dots. Read widely and take inspiration from other industries, find benchmarks and learn from exceptional case studies.

Thereafter, creativity or connecting of dots is just a matter of practice. Anyone can be creative!

4b. What activities can help us generate ideas?

Creating an atmosphere for ideation

Ideation is best done when we are having fun. Find a place with a creative environment, remember to let those attending know beforehand what to expect, to dress comfortably and be ready to have some fun!

If there is a hierarchy or a dominant person within a group, it can be challenging to get the team to relax. Have separate sessions with senior management if needed. Inviting service users to co-ideate with the team also helps to design more effective solutions but do remember to be aware of power and group dynamics too.

Ideation Warm-Up

It is a good idea to have a few warm-up exercises to get people relaxed, break down social barriers and get ready for ideation.

Here are 2 sample activities:

i. Paperclip Exercise

Ask everyone to come up with as many ideas as possible around the use of a paperclip in 2 minutes.

Appoint one note taker per team to jot down the ideas.

This activity can be done with groups as large as 20 people or as a competition between teams.

ii. "Yes and..." Exercise

Give a group of 2 to 4 people a candid topic to ideate on (e.g. what to do when on a vacation, how to motivate staff, etc.).

In a clockwise direction, ask the group to build upon one another's idea by saying "yes and..." with the next person answering immediately. This activity can go on for 2 to 5 minutes.

The concept of this activity is to encourage collaboration and break down the fear of saying something foolish.

Brainstorming

Two constraints that can help encourage the ideation process are **silence** and **time**.

Allocate 5 to 10 minutes of silent individual brainstorming to allow less vocal individuals to contribute their ideas, ideate without disruption or criticisms and prevent dominant individuals from unintentionally controlling the discussion.

Group brainstorming brings ideas to life as it allows the team to synergise and leverage upon each other's strengths and perspectives. For group brainstorming sessions, it is good to appoint a scribe and a facilitator. The facilitator's role is to balance the group and allow everyone time to speak and express their ideas, while the scribe will assist by writing down new ideas or help to cluster existing ones.

Set a time limit for your brainstorming sessions depending on the complexity of the issue and the duration of the entire ideation workshop. Time limits help people stay focused and we tend to generate more unexpected and spontaneous ideas under pressure.

Brain writing

Brain writing is a quick way to generate a large number of ideas in a very short time. Here is how it works:

Form a circle with a group of 6 people. Each member is given a piece of paper to write down their top 3 ideas.

After writing, each member will pass their paper to the person on their right. The next member will then have 5 minutes to build upon the ideas listed on the paper.

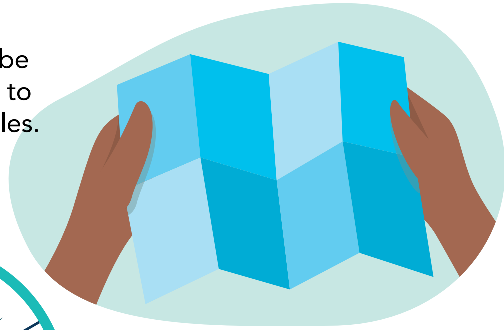
This process continues until everyone gets back their original piece of paper.

Within 30 minutes, the group would have generated 108 different versions of the original 18 ideas.

Crazy Eight

As the name suggests, Crazy Eight aims to generate 8 wild ideas within 8 minutes. You are encouraged to generate a wide variety of solutions that may be wacky, crazy and seemingly impossible. The focus is on quantity of ideas instead of quality ones. Let your creative juices flow in this exercise!

Each member will be given an A4 paper to fold into 8 rectangles.



Set a timer for 8 minutes. (Someone can volunteer to be a timekeeper.)

When the timer starts, team members can start sketching their ideas into one of the rectangles.

After each minute, the timekeeper reminds the members to move on to sketch the next idea.

After 8 minutes, each team member takes turns to present their ideas.

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Business Take-over

To encourage learning from successful business models, teams can consider giving the "Business Take-over" activity a go. Ask ourselves the following questions:

- What if our ideas were implemented by a well-known company like Facebook or McDonald's?
- How would they solve our problem or implement our ideas?
- What are the strengths of these organisations?
- How might we adapt their success to meet our needs?

> *I learnt that we have to dream without boundaries if we want to go beyond our limitations. Our clients already are limited in terms of resources, so if we want to help them we have to go beyond their limitations and explore innovation. When looking for solutions, we must not be limited and we must think outside the box.*
> **— Manju Mohta, Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore**

4c. How do we select and prioritise our ideas?

At this stage we might realize we have a lot of ideas, and honestly not every idea is great. The team must select which ideas to focus on to prototype and test. Here are 2 idea prioritization techniques that could help us.

Dot voting

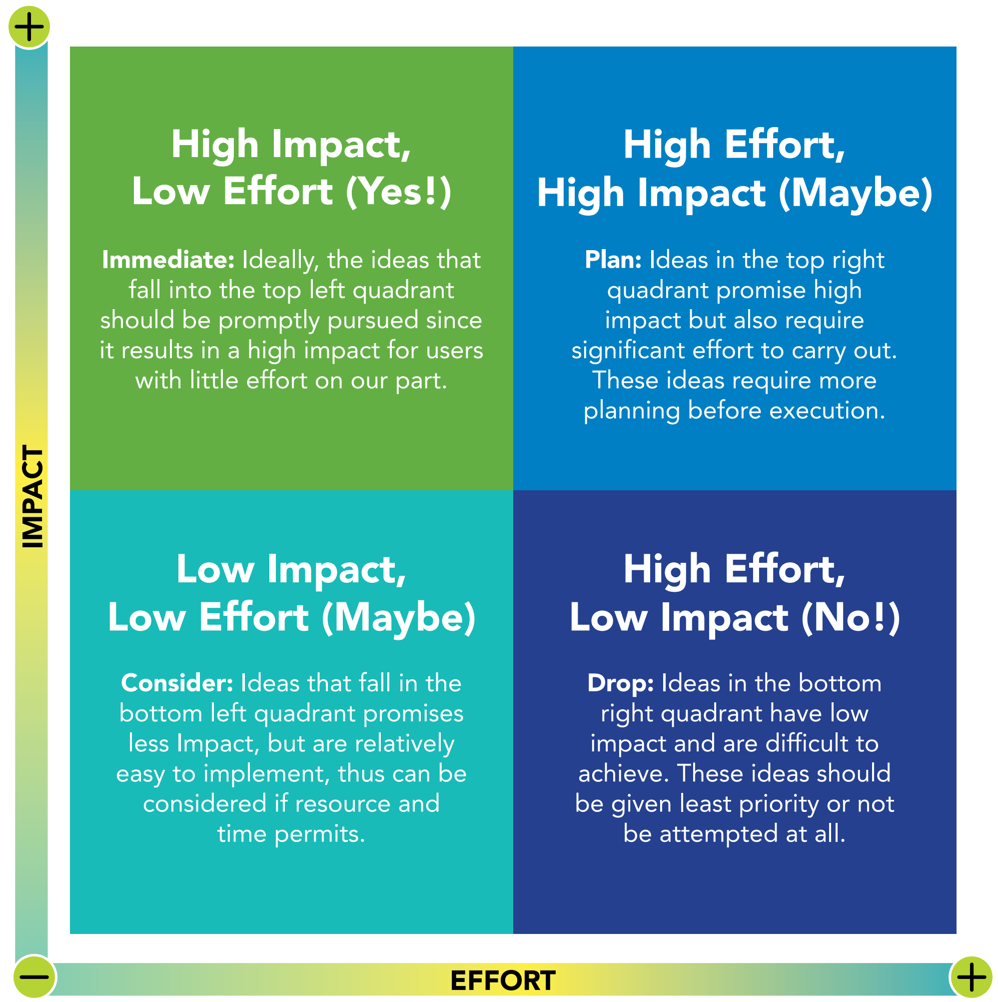
Dot voting is a fast and visual method to shortlist ideas in a democratic fashion. Let's imagine our team would like to shortlist 5 ideas out of 30. This is how it works:

- Each member of the team is given 5 sticky dots which represent 5 votes. (This can be replaced with a coloured marker.)
- Members are given 15 minutes to read through the 30 ideas and place their votes.
- Select the top 5 most voted ideas.

Ease vs Impact Matrix

The Ease vs Impact Matrix is a technique used to categorise ideas into four quadrants. The vertical axis represents the level of impact for users if the idea is implemented while the horizontal axis represents the level of effort required to implement the idea. Consider the following questions when categorising our ideas in the matrix:

- How many people will our idea positively impact?
- Is this something our users need?
- Do people desire it?



Breaking down impossible ideas and developing solution concepts

As we are prioritising our ideas, we might realize that some ideas are too complex and are impossible to achieve. However, we keep gravitating to them because of the potential they have. Don't give up on these ideas. Instead, try to break them down to something more manageable by thinking critically with the help of these questions:

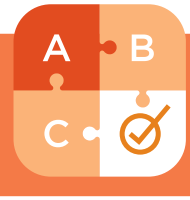
- Why is this idea so valuable?
- Can we achieve the same outcome in a different way?
- Which components of the idea can we address now?
- Are we able to create a road map and implement the idea over time?

Conversely, we may also find that several ideas seem to fit together. Try letting our ideas synergise and interplay with one another which will help form solution concepts.

Once we have a clear picture of the concepts that can be pursued, we can then proceed to build prototypes and test these concepts.

> *We tried to come up with the "perfect" solution, however we quickly realized that there is no "perfect" solution. We changed our focus to what issues matters most to us, as opposed to trying to resolve all issues.*
> **— Wendy Lim, REACH Community Services Society**

5 BUILDING AND TESTING OUR SOLUTION

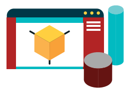


5a. How do we develop our ideas and find out if they work?

Building prototypes will help us further develop the ideas we have selected and assess if they are valid and useful through user testing.

Thinking in motion

As we transform our solution from a concept to something tangible, we start to identify the important aspects of our solution and areas we need to take note of in order for it to work.



Prototype to communicate

Having a tangible prototype will allow our users to interact with and experience our solution, which is more realistic than explaining it with words. This can help us communicate our solution more effectively to our users and stakeholders.

Test and Evaluate

To find out if our solutions appeal to our service users, are feasible and can achieve its desired impact, we need to test and evaluate them. Testing will also help us uncover areas to iterate and improve our solutions.

There are 2 categories of tests:

Test of Concept

- Is it meaningful and of value?
- Do people desire it or does it solve a problem?
- Is the solution feasible and scalable?

Usability Test

- How easy is it? How delightful is the experience?
- Do people understand what they need to do?
- Is the solution achieving its intended goals?

Don't be afraid of failures. It is not easy to get it right on our first try. The key idea in this phase is to test fast, fail fast and iterate fast. The longer it takes us to realise that our idea is not appropriate, the more resources we waste. Conversely, the faster we validate with our users, the faster we can improve our idea to make it a success.

> *Be nice to us but don't be nice to our ideas, we want to know what worked and what didn't so that we can improve!*
> **— Lawrence Luan, Octopus8**

5b. What kind of prototypes can we build?

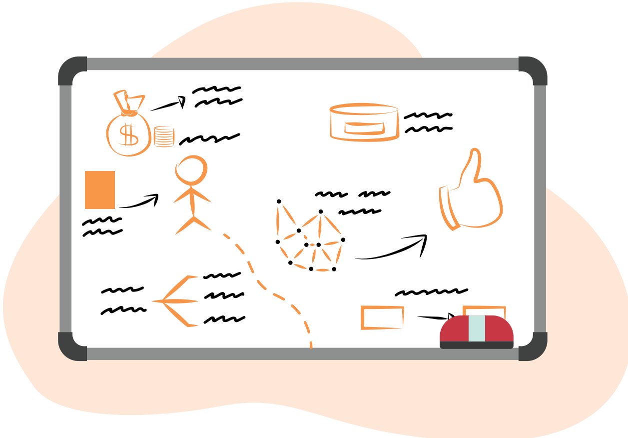
To test our solutions with users, it is always good to use prototypes. People are able to easily understand and provide better feedback when they can see, touch or feel your solution. We can start to create low resolution prototypes that are simple and cheap, making use of available materials like paper, cardboard, plasticine or even Lego bricks.

As we get more validation from our users, we can then enhance our prototypes to be of medium or even high resolution, which is close to being ready for implementation.

Depending on what our idea is about, we can create prototypes based on one or a few of these approaches:

Solution Diagram

Draw it out! Draw our solution and explain how it will work with our users such as the various touch points between stakeholders. This is often used as a prototype for processes and service ecosystems.



Storyboard

Like a comic strip, a storyboard illustrates the key scenes of how our user experiences our solution. It also conveys the relevance of the solution and how it creates value for our service users. Present this to users and stakeholders to test the general concept of the idea.

Paper prototyping

Use paper or cardboard to build mock-ups of our physical or digital interface. This allows our users to interact with and experience our solution, giving us feedback on the feasibility and usability of our solution.

Scenario desktop walkthrough

We can re-imagine our users' journey using scenario desktop walkthroughs. By creating representations of touch points and space using simple props on a small-scale, we can play out how users might engage in different scenarios to create an experience they desire.

Role Playing

The best way to prototype is to experience the solution for ourselves! Role playing is a fun (and often under-rated) prototyping approach that allows us to examine interactions from a first person point of view. Invite users to participate and co-create the experience together.

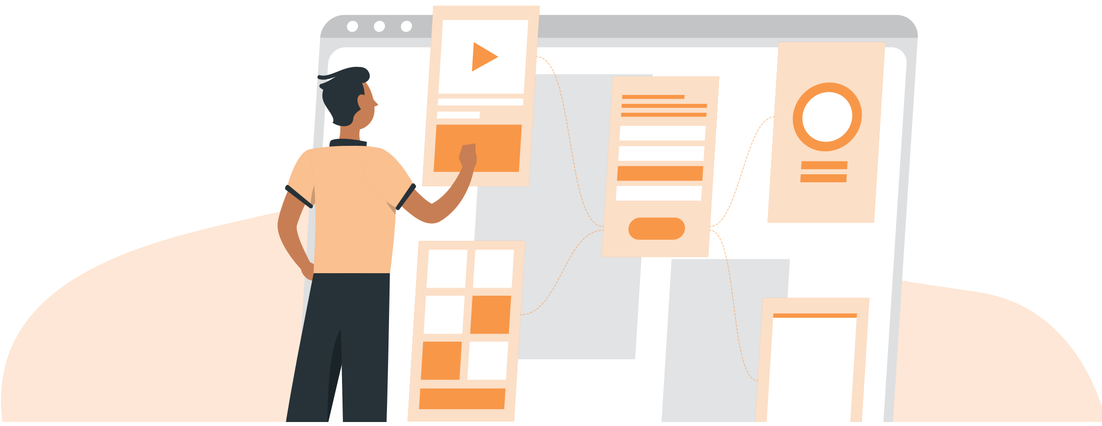
Spatial prototyping

Humans have poor spatial perception. If we are designing a space, create a mockup to allow users to have a good feel of the spatial design. Role play different scenarios and observe how users and stakeholders interact and experience the space to identify opportunities for improvement.

Wireframes

Well-designed digital interfaces (e.g. mobile apps and websites) are intuitive and delightful to use. They seem to read our mind, presenting the right information at the right time, and enables first time users to navigate effortlessly.

When designing a digital interface, we should first construct wireframes to plan and test the layout. Wireframes can be easily done on paper or on one of the many online resources available such as Marvel (marvelapp.com) or InVision (invisionapp.com).



5c. How do we test our prototypes?

Here is some advice on testing with our service users:

Conduct our test in the same context where it will be used.

If the solution is meant for seniors at a Senior Activity Centre, test the prototype there! Re-enact the scenario where the solution would be used and define the role we want our service users to be playing during our test. This helps our testers understand how to evaluate the prototype.

Plan our user testing session.

Spend some time to come up with a set of questions for our users to answer and what to observe as they test the prototype. These could link to the indicators of a successful solution and how we can measure success.

Allow the user to tell us their honest opinions.

Do not rush into explaining what the solution could do. Explain the design challenge and what led to the conceptualisation of the solution first before running through the solution with our users. When possible, stay quiet and observe how they interact with our prototype.

Identify the most critical touchpoints and test them!

We should test the most critical interactions: those that create value for our service users and any handovers between service users or stakeholders.

There is no such thing as a failed prototype, only more design insights.

Remember we are not here to sell our idea but to test it, even if it means trashing our original idea! The more we test our idea, the more insights we will discover. Continue to iterate and improve – nothing is perfect the first time round.

Tips:

- Record the process so we can review and observe certain things that might not have been obvious during the test.
- Encourage participants to "think aloud" by verbalising their thoughts during testing. This may seem unnatural to some at first, but it is a low cost and effective method to provide insights on their thought process and behaviours.

Feedback Capture Grid

At the end of the demonstration, we can get users to fill up each section of this chart with their feedback. These insights will be a source of validation and inputs for the next iteration of our solution!

LIKE	UNSURE
INSPIRATIONS	**QUESTIONS**

We should not be discouraged if we receive any negative feedback! Treat it positively because it provides a critical assessment of our solution and helps us consider if our solution needs to be redesigned.

In addition, while we test our ideas with users, we are also learning how to pitch our idea in a way that resonates with them. We can start paying attention to key words or messages during our pitch that excites our users. These key messages will give us a glimpse of what our users would like to see.

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> *Our idea changed over time as we spoke with more people and got more feedback. If someone said that they didn't like our idea, we would ask "Why? What can we fix?". This was how we improved our idea.*
> **— Lawrence Luan, Octopus8**

> *The real challenge is to understand what the user wants as opposed to what we want to get out of a design. We are designing this for the user rather than for ourselves.*
> **— Christopher Yeh, En Community Services Society**

6 IMPLEMENTING AND SUSTAINING IMPACT

Who will benefit from our solution?

Why would our service users use our solution?

6a. What value does our idea create for our users?

These questions are meant to be a reality check on the value our solution provides, whether it addresses the needs of our service users, and makes them gravitate towards our solution. This is where the importance of a value proposition comes in.

The Value Proposition Canvas allows us to articulate and visualise the value our solution offers to our service users. A value proposition canvas could be done for each user segment or persona, taking into account their unique needs and pain points.

The canvas encourages us to connect the pain points and expected gains of our service users to what our solution offers. This allows us to identify unmet needs or prioritise which aspects of our solution needs to be developed first.

Value Proposition Canvas

Example of a Value Proposition Canvas

Gain Creators

What are the features that seek to create the gains for your service users?

- *Social workers establish a respectful and trusting relationship with service users and seek to address their needs holistically*

Product & Services

What are the products & services you are offering?

- *A 24h emergency shelter that provides a continuum of care for the newly homeless*

Pain Relievers

What are the features that seek to reduce the pains of your service users?

- *Social workers support users in navigating the system to receive help*
- *Shelter provides basic needs such as food and accommodation*

Credit: Strategyzer - Value Proposition Canvas

Value Proposition Statement: An emergency shelter that addresses the immediate needs and issues of the homeless in a dignified manner.

Gains

What are the gains your service users expect or want to achieve?

- *Receive medical, financial and social support*

Objectives

What are your service users objectives of going through your service?

- *Living a dignified life to support self*
- *Gain permanent housing*

Pains

What are the pains your service users want to avoid?

- *Do not know how to navigate system and receive help*
- *Unable to meet basic needs such as food and shelter*
- *No permanent address to apply for jobs and financial assistance*

Credit: Sector Design Challenge 2019, Team H.E.R.E. (Help Engage Roughsleepers Early) Programme

Value Proposition Statement

Through the Value Proposition Canvas, we have a clear overview of how our service users benefit from our designed solution and can begin to craft a value proposition statement for each service user segment or persona.

A value proposition statement communicates to our potential service users:

- **A** What they should expect
- **B** Why our solution matters
- **C** How it is different from others in the market
- **D** What the expected outcomes are

Things to consider for our value proposition statement:

- What are the key benefits or impact of our solution?
- How will our value proposition resonate with our service users on a personal level?
- How is this problem currently being solved and what makes our solution different?
- Keep it short, simple and clear and avoid business jargons ('bang for your buck'), superlatives ('best in market'), and hype ('never seen before miracle solution').

6b. How do we communicate and pitch our ideas?

Importance of communication for sustained impact

As we design and implement new solutions, we are in effect driving change. Support for change is often met with resistance, but we can overcome some of these challenges through effective communication to gain buy-in and support from our stakeholders.

Stakeholder-informed design

Design Thinking is most effective when we have consistent involvement from our service users and stakeholders. Regular and consistent engagements help us to be immersed in their perspectives and to design though their lens. To co-ideate and design the solution together enables stakeholder-informed design, thus ensuring the creation of relevant and impactful solutions.

Stakeholder support

Through communication, we are helping our stakeholders to see the problem through our users' lens. Seek to foster collaborative relationships galvanised behind a common cause, where the opinions and viewpoints of all stakeholders are valued. This will create buy-in and encourage stakeholders to co-create and provide additional support for our solution.

Tip:

Take a look at our stakeholder map[8] to identify partners that can support our idea and whom we can consider pitching to.

Case Study Example

How one of the Sector Design Challenge 2019 seed grant awardees gained buy-in and support from stakeholders

Team MOHA's solution is a progressive engagement model for seniors called the Senior Active Force SG (SAFSG). Seniors are encouraged to improve their fitness, connect with one another through social interactions and empowered to make meaningful contributions through curated activities, events and tasks. During the implementation process, Team MOHA found that various stakeholders had different expectations of SAFSG's programme design. As each organisation had varying objectives and challenges of their own, it required both time and effort for the team to curate the process of stakeholder engagement so that the partnerships could attain a win-win outcome for each stakeholder's unique interests.

Consequently, the team discovered that it was essential to continually highlight and revisit the shared purpose and common direction of the partnerships – this was key to the successful implementation of the solution and its continual refinement. The team invested time and individualised effort to curate the stakeholder engagement process. With each engagement, Team MOHA made specific iterative design changes to their solution to ensure SAFSG was relevant and complementary to existing efforts in the eldercare ecosystem. Team MOHA is now piloting their solution with REACH Community Services and Cornerstone Community Services.

[8] *Page 23*

Logic vs Emotions

When we communicate, we often seek to convince people with logic and numbers. While this is important, we need to recognise that we are often driven by emotions before logic.

Imagine you are at the 103rd level of a sky-scraper and are walking towards an observation balcony with a glass flooring. What is the first thing that comes to your mind as you approach? Very likely it would be the sense of fear. Only after convincing yourself with logic, would you then step onto the glass flooring. Even then, you might not do so!

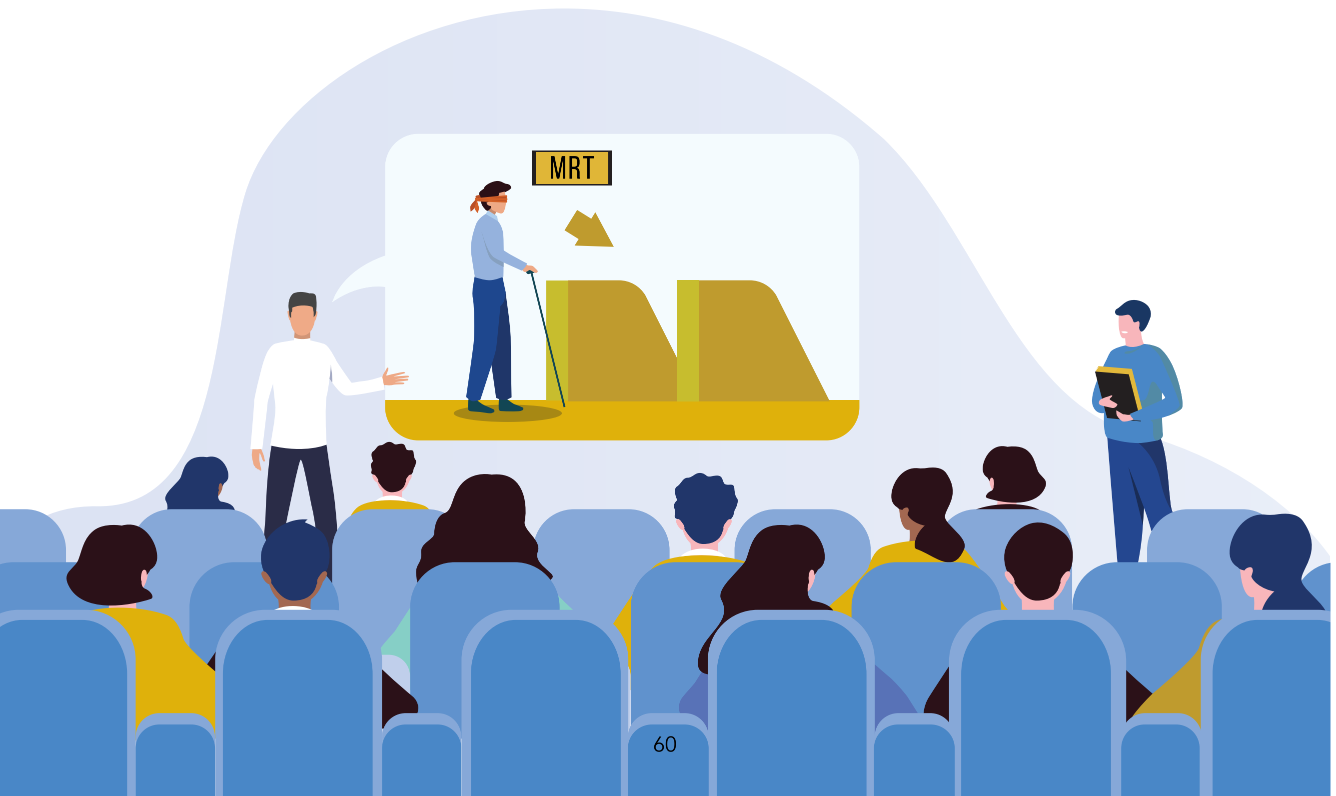
The precedence of emotions before logic is also true when it comes to communication. This strategy is employed widely in the advertising industry, where the audience's emotions are engaged through visual images or storytelling, triggering association of memories with the advertised product. This is a strategy we could also employ in our own communication efforts.

Storytelling

What we hope to establish with our audience is a sense of trust. People will trust us when they feel that what was said resonates with them, and therefore is real and relevant, and worth paying attention to.

Storytelling can help us achieve resonance by allowing people to step into our world, to see through our lens and feel what we feel. Through details shared in our story, we can demonstrate a good understanding of the issue and how it affects lives. All these amounts to a sense of credibility and trust.

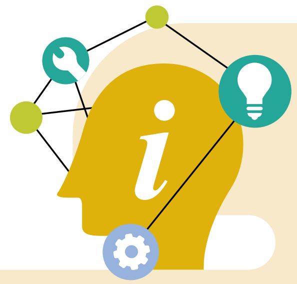
By starting a presentation with a story, we would be able to capture the hearts of our audience and give more meaning to the data and facts we are sharing later in the presentation.



How to pitch your idea

Pitching is a presentation to various stakeholders such as investors to request for funding and support or stakeholders we hope to partner with. Knowing how to pitch our idea is critical for success. Even the best ideas can get overlooked if we are unable to communicate them well.

Here are some tips on how to deliver a good pitch:



1 Know the audience

Find out information about the audience in advance and tailor the pitch to their profile, what they might look out for or questions they might ask.

2 Who would benefit from our new service?

What is unique about our solution that differentiates it from others? Make sure that the value proposition of our solution is clearly communicated.

3 Engage the audience and create a memorable experience

Remember to engage the audience and include a wow factor so that they remember you.

4 Keep it concise and simple

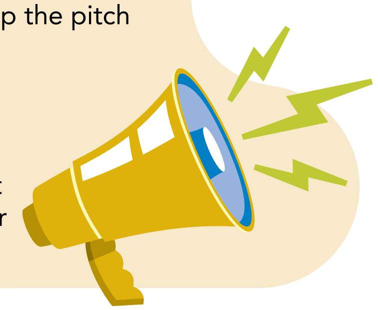
Pitching often comes with a time limit, so ensure there is clarity about what we hope to achieve for every segment of our presentation.

5 Have a clear structure

You can use Who, What, Why, When, Where and How, to help the pitch flow in a logical order.

6 What are we asking for

Have a strong call to action, so that the audience knows how to react or support us at the end of our pitch.



6c. How do we know if our idea is viable and sustainable?

We have finally come to the stage of implementing our solution! In this phase, we need to design a business model around our solution to create impact for our users.

Non-Profit Business Model Canvas

The Non-Profit Business Model Canvas will help us think about the building blocks we need in order to begin implementing our solution. As we complete the canvas, think about how each element would affect one another. This will help us develop a more comprehensive business model.

Tip:

Always start with the Value Proposition and User Segment blocks before moving to other blocks of the Non-Profit Business Model Canvas.

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Non-Profit Business Model Canvas

KEY PARTNERS
—
Who can we partner to leverage their resources or expertise to help us deliver our Key Activities?

KEY ACTIVITIES
—
Key Activities we need to perform to deliver our Value Propositions?

KEY RESOURCES
—
What Key Resources do our Value Propositions require?

VALUE PROPOSITIONS
—
- What challenges are we trying to solve?
- What value does our solution deliver to each User Segment?
- How is our solution different from others?

RELATIONSHIPS
—
How do we describe the relationship that we want to build with our users?

CHANNELS
—
How would our solution reach our users?

USER SEGMENT
—
Who are our User Segments and what are their profiles and needs?

COST STRUCTURE
—
- How much do our Key Resources and Key Activities cost?
- How much could we leverage on economics of scale to reduce these costs?
- Are there any opportunities for cost recovery?

VALUE CAPTURE
—
What are the desired outcomes of our solution and how will we measure them?

Credit: Skylance - The Nonprofit Business Model design

Service Blueprint

To know how to operationalise our solution in our organisation, here's a planning tool that can help us.

A Service blueprint depicts the processes behind critical service elements, around which the user experience is defined, much like a combination of a journey map and a process chart. It will help us visualise our solution from the user's and organisation's perspectives, and plan what processes need to be in place for us to create the experience our service users desire.

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There are 3 lines that we will need to take note of:

- **Line of Interaction:** Touchpoints between our users and frontline staff as they go through the service.
- **Line of Visibility:** Separation between the front office and the back office. All steps above the line are what your users can see, while all those below the line happen backstage.
- **Line of Internal Interaction:** Differentiates the interactions between the main service and supporting resources.

Service Blueprint

Example of Service Blueprint: Mdm A's experience as a walk-in case to a Family Service Centre (FSC)*

Time or experience phases that users go through	**PHASE**	**AWARENESS**	**INITIAL CONTACT**			**ASSESSMENT**
Where does this interaction occurs?	**LOCATION**	**HOME**	**FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE**			**INTAKE ROOM**
Steps, choices, activities and actions that users perform	**USER ACTIVITIES**	Mdm A finds out about the FSC in her neighbourhood from a friend.	Mdm A is facing marital problems and is keen to seek assistance. She walks into the centre to find out more.	Mdm A fills in the intake assessment form.	After submitting the form, Mdm A waits at the waiting area.	Mdm A shares her problems with the social worker.
	LINE OF INTERACTION					
Actions and inputs taken by staff which is visible by user	**FRONTSTAGE ACTIVITIES**		FSC staff greets Mdm A and finds out about the purpose of her visit.	FSC staff passes intake assessment form to Mdm A to fill up.		Social worker conducts intake assessment.
	LINE OF VISIBILITY					
Actions and inputs taken by staff not visible by user	**BACKSTAGE ACTIVITIES**			FSC staff checks if Mdm A has an existing case file with the FSC and if she lives within the service boundary.	FSC staff informs social worker about new walk-in case. Social worker receives form and prepares to meet Mdm A.	Social worker discusses Mdm A's case with a supervisor and opens a new case file.
	LINE OF INTERNAL INTERACTION					
Processes which help support effective interaction with service users	**SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**					Mdm A's case file and information is keyed into the system.

**Disclaimer: This service blueprint is an example and not representative of any or all FSCs in Singapore.*

How do we know if our pilot solutions are successful?

A good way to assess the effectiveness of our solution is to develop a Theory of Change (TOC). A TOC maps out the key steps of our solution such as the long-term goal, short-term and mid-term outcomes, outputs and activities. It consists of a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context, based on our solution. A TOC can also aid in aligning other team members and stakeholders to the long-term goal and help them understand their roles in achieving it.

It is also useful to reflect on the key assumptions that underpin the changes, so that our pilot solution can be evaluated against these key assumptions and outcomes. We can use some of the TOC components such as observable and measurable outcomes and outputs, as a basis to form meaningful indicators of success. Find out more about TOC and how to develop one using a **downloadable guide from the Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships website on a Community Builder's approach to TOC**.

It is also encouraged to have a learning and iterative mindset, as outlined in the "Prototype" and "Test" sections. By finding out what does or does not work, we can glean useful insights to iterate on our solutions, so that our long-term goal can be achieved.

6d. What are the resources we can tap on to scale up our ideas?

Where and how can organisations seek funding?

For NCSS members, you may find more information about available funding on NCSS' website.

If you are keen to set up a social enterprise, there are available grants offered by raiSE Singapore, an ecosystem builder and membership body for social enterprises in Singapore.

We are happy to chat and share more about available resources to support pilot projects for social innovation. Do contact us at PumpkinLab@ncss.gov.sg

How do we know if our pilot solutions are ready for scaling?

Before innovative solutions are scaled, they need to undergo the process of development and prototyping, where ideas get tested and improved based on the feedback received.

For a solution to be scaled, it is important to achieve alignment with stakeholders on what success looks like and what it takes to get there. Scaling an intervention is a long-term and complex effort - you may use the **'Exploring Scalability' checklist from IDEO.org Design Kit** to better assess if your pilot solutions are ready for scaling.

Who should own and implement pilot solutions?

Project owners are responsible for receiving the seed funding, managing project timelines, and coordinating with stakeholders and partners involved in the projects. Project owners can be individuals, working on the project in their own capacity, or representing their organisations. For those who represent their organisations, seeking management's endorsement and stakeholder buy-in for the pilot solution is integral to the process of implementation.

Some attributes of project owners include:

- Alignment of project with individual or organisation's goals
- Commitment to implement solution during pilot period
- Stakeholder and change management skills
- Open to reviewing and learning

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NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450-member social service organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. Community Chest is the fundraising and engagement arm of NCSS and Social Service Institute (SSI) is the human capital development arm of NCSS.

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