

In 2013 Motivation Australia and ARDS carried out the project *Yolŋu information sharing and clarity of understanding* funded by FaHCSIA's Practical Design Fund. Discovery Education sessions were carried out in Ramingining, Mililingimbi, Galiwin'ku, Gapuwiyak (East Arnhem Land) and Darwin to investigate Yolŋu language and worldview

of disability (building on earlier work in Galiwin'ku & Yirrkala).

After many years working in the field with Yolŋu people, ARDS have developed a successful educational methodology that allows for the sharing of knowledge covering a wide range of often complex subject areas.

The approach uses two

way dialogue between Yolŋu and the educator in Yolŋu language. ARDS staff attempt to provide people with the 'full story' that many Yolŋu people request. The use of people's language, worldview and existing knowledge enables what ARDS call 'Discovery Education'. Refining these stories is an on-going, long term process.



In preparation before visiting community

- Prepare all personnel by attending comprehensive cultural competency training;
- ARDS can help to identify a professional translator who has the skills to translate bio-medical information;
- Develop the foundational story for the person's disability (see inside);
- Identify someone from the local community to act as an intermediary who knows the Yolŋu you want to visit; and let everyone know you're coming in advance and why you're visiting. Allow time for them to educate you, correct wrong understandings and provide guidance on cultural and linguistic protocols;
- Be clear about what the objectives for the visit are;



True story

Telling foundational stories about disability in Yolŋu language

Motivation Australia and ARDS would like to thank the Yolŋu people with disabilities, their families, carers and elders who discussed Yolŋu language & worldview of disability with us.



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Picture: ARDS 2013

The overall concept of disability, and the details of individual impairments, health conditions and disabilities are not widely understood by Yolŋu. In fact many Yolŋu with disabilities do not understand *how, why or what* is happening to their bodies. For Yolŋu it's important for them to come to understand the foundational story about their particular disability.

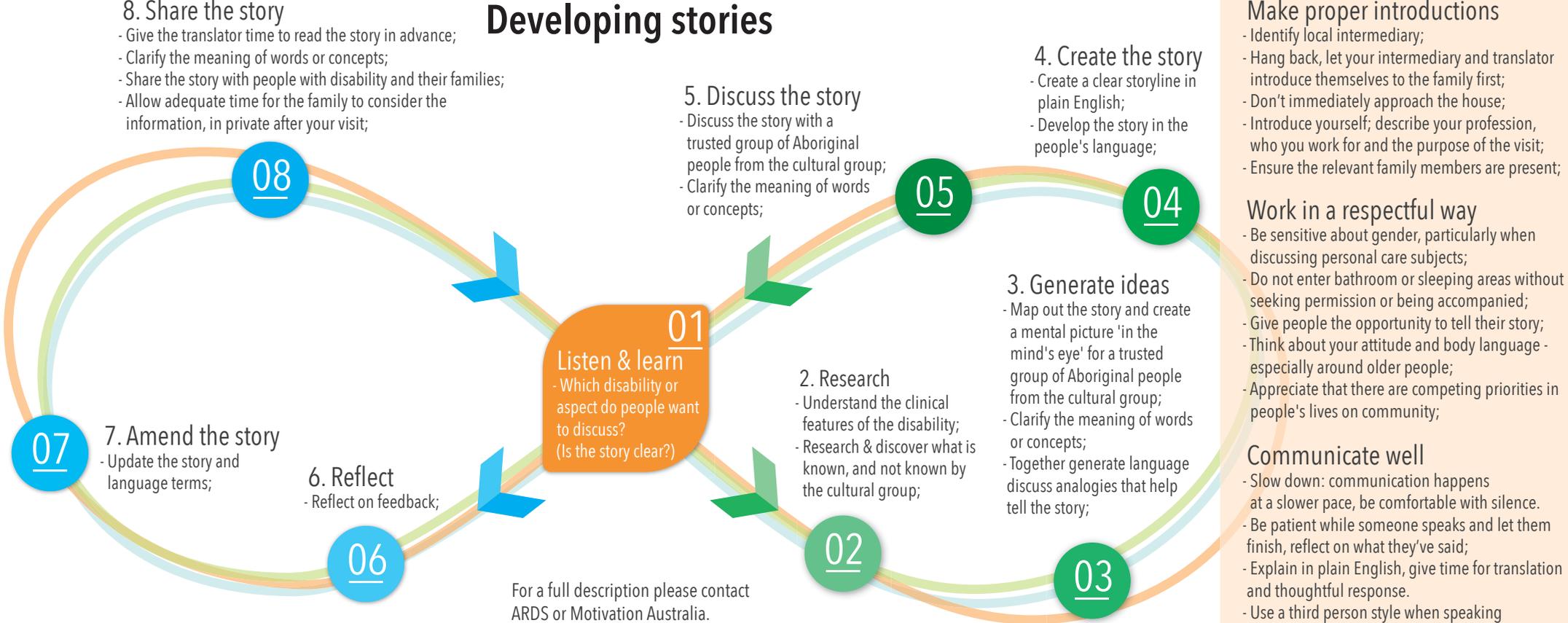
In order to make informed decisions, Yolŋu expect accurate and detailed bio-medical information about their disability in a language and format that they can understand.

Culturally and linguistically appropriate information is needed, which explains the story of disabilities in a way which is meaningful for Yolŋu. Developing the

information in Yolŋu language requires expertise built up over many years and detailed clinical knowledge.

The intention of this booklet is to raise awareness of the need and processes necessary to expand the bio-medical understanding of Yolŋu through developing foundational stories.

Developing stories



Make proper introductions

- Identify local intermediary;
- Hang back, let your intermediary and translator introduce themselves to the family first;
- Don't immediately approach the house;
- Introduce yourself; describe your profession, who you work for and the purpose of the visit;
- Ensure the relevant family members are present;

Work in a respectful way

- Be sensitive about gender, particularly when discussing personal care subjects;
- Do not enter bathroom or sleeping areas without seeking permission or being accompanied;
- Give people the opportunity to tell their story;
- Think about your attitude and body language - especially around older people;
- Appreciate that there are competing priorities in people's lives on community;

Communicate well

- Slow down: communication happens at a slower pace, be comfortable with silence.
- Be patient while someone speaks and let them finish, reflect on what they've said;
- Explain in plain English, give time for translation and thoughtful response.
- Use a third person style when speaking