



Being a Network Member

Handbook

*Information about joining
a Network Group*

What is a Network Group?

A Network Group is a group of people who choose to come together in order to help each other grow. A group usually consists of nine members and each member has skills & talents that make them unique. The members use their skills & talents to help each other, while forming lasting friendships.

A network is about peer support

Members of a Network can help each other by...

- sharing ideas**
- sharing experiences**
- sharing dreams & goals**
- using their strengths to help other members**
- offering advice**
- looking out for each other**
- helping each other learn more about their community**
- having fun together**

What does a Network Group do?

Here is a list of some of the things a Network Group might do:

- Have regular meetings** (usually every week)
- Plan get togethers**, e.g. meeting in town, visiting each other's homes, going out for coffee, seeing a movie together
- Find out what's going on in the community** e.g. markets, festivals
- Check out local groups & clubs**
- Share hobbies, try new things**
- Help each other solve problems** and offer support when things get tough
- Celebrate each other's achievements**
- Offer encouragement and advice**
- Plan a project together**
- Help the community** e.g. volunteering, spreading the word about things you are passionate about, using your skills to teach others

How does a Network Group work?

The members of the Network Group get together for regular meetings and activities in the community. The members make the important decisions in the group, like deciding how often to get together and what they want to do. When a new Network Group forms, the members decide:

- What's important to us?**
- What are our values?**
- What are our skills?**
- What are our goals?**
- What are some good rules for being a member of our group?**

A Network Facilitator is someone who comes to the meetings and helps the group achieve their goals. The members interview and choose the person they want to be the Network Facilitator for their group. The network facilitator may discuss some of your support needs with you.

What does the Facilitator do?

The Network Facilitator can help by:

- Talking with each member individually to find out what their skills, talents, dreams and goals are**
- Finding out what each member wants help with in their lives**
- Helping to connect members with other members who can help them with their goals**
- Talking to people in the community who might be able to assist the group**
- Finding out what is going on in the community that the group might enjoy**
- Helping to resolve any conflicts in the group**
- Keeping in regular contact with members (and their families)**
- Helping to organise projects, events and activities**

How does a membership work?

There is a cost for being in a Network Group. This is so that the group can get the help it needs when it needs it.

The Facilitator will discuss this with you and your support team to make sure this will work for you and your life.

- If you receive supported living from a support worker, 2.5 hours of your support each week can go towards The Network.**
- If you receive home management or personal cares, 3.5 hours of your support each week can go towards The Network.**
- If you receive individualised funding, we will discuss this with you individually.**

What are my choices as a member?

If you join a Network Group, you get to decide:

- **How often you want to join in with events & activities**
- **How you want to be contacted, how *often* you want to be contacted, and whether you would like to share your contact details with the other members**
- **Whether you would like the Network Facilitator to keep in touch with your family**

Whether or not you want to join the Network Group is up to you. You can also choose to leave at any time.

What is confidentiality?

Confidentiality means keeping things private. We want you to feel safe and be able to trust your Facilitator.

How will the Network Facilitator keep my information safe?

- **What you tell your Network Facilitator will be kept confidential**
- **Sometimes they may have to talk to their Network Manager about it**
- **Sometimes they may have to talk to your support team about it**
- **They will only tell people what they need to know**

You have a right to ask to see any personal records of information kept about you.

What about transport?

The members of your Network Group and your Facilitator can help you plan how you will get to/from meetings and activities. This may involve buses, taxis, family members cars or walking. If you catch the bus or a taxi, you will be responsible for paying for it.

A little bit about the first Network Group in New Zealand...

The Our Voices Network first began in 2013. A group of men & women came together and decided to try something new. They talked about what they felt was great about life now, and also what they felt was missing. They wanted to create a place where they would feel a sense of belonging, purpose & leadership.

They created a set of rules for their Network, including:

- **Respect each other**

- **Everyone gets to have a say**
- **Look out for one another**

It took time to get to know each other and build up friendships. The members are proud of what they have achieved together. They now feel they can rely on each other, trust each other & help each other. They call their group “The Our Voices Network”.

The Our Voices Network is proud of...

Doing renovations at Plunket such as painting the rooms, cleaning, putting in a garden & new bark in the playground.

Hosting a high tea at Hotel Coachman for their friends, family & local council members including the MP.

Giving their presentation at nationwide conferences & events.

Creating art for their own successful art

exhibition at Square Edge.

Donating baking to Kind Hearts for the children's ward at the hospital.

Being nominated for Community Volunteer Awards & receiving an Arts Award.

Receiving a donation to start their own micro business making and selling cards.

Advice from The Our Voices Network...

“Get to know people first”

“Work as a team”

“Everyone can help make things happen”

“Spend time getting the rules right”

“Make sure everyone has fun”

“Listen to what people are saying”

“Use everyone's connections”

“Teach each other to be good members”

“Use what people are good at inside and outside the meetings”

“Support each other to take control of your own group by doing as much as possible”

“Be patient – sometimes it takes time to learn things”

“Don't give up on ideas – find other ways to make things happen”

Our Network Group Information

The members of my Network Group are...

Our weekly meetings are...

Day:

Time:

Place:

What if I have a complaint?

If something happens that you are not happy about, you can:

- **Talk to the person about it**
- **Talk to the group about it**
- **Talk to the facilitator about it**

If you are still not happy about it, let your facilitator know and they will help you make a formal complaint.

Community Connections has a complaint process. (brochure available)

A Network Group is meant to be a safe place where you can feel respected, listened to and included. If you are not

**feeling respected, listened to and included,
talk to your facilitator.**

If you have any questions you can contact:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

“Just turn up! It's about having fun, helping people and looking after each other.” - Craig Morgan

“The Network is about fellowship, friendship & being part of the community. Have lots of Group meetings.” - Vincenzo Vaccarino

“The Network helps you make new friends to hang out with & work out what you want to do.”
- Jesse Williams

“Make sure everyone understands.”
- Callum Freebairn

“I enjoy expanding my computer skills – typing & emailing, & baking cakes for member's birthdays.”
- Tithi Ghosh

“We've each got a special talent we can bring to the group.” - Philippa Brewer

“My dream is to work in a cafe & meet the cast of home & away.” - Robin Chok

“I enjoy the get togethers & pizza nights at my house.”

Community Connections recognises and embraces the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), the principles of partnership, protection & participation. We value a bi-cultural pathway with primary objectives to ensure Community Connections can welcome & embrace Maori who choose to join the support partnership in a culturally inclusive manner.

Vinnie Vaccarino