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Plain English Summary

- Some people with disability find pictures help them to plan for their future.
- Picture My Future is a project run by Deakin University.
- It supported 29 people with a disability to use photos and pictures to tell others about what they like and what they want.

Some people with disability might benefit from the use of pictures to help them plan for their future, and identify the supports they need to achieve their goals. To investigate the best way of using pictures to assist people plan for their future, researchers at Deakin University have been working with people with disability on a project called: Picture My Future – image-assisted goal exploration. The project was funded by a Practical Design Fund grant, administered by FaHCSIA, to develop supports to implement the National Disability Insurance Scheme, specifically the individual planning process.

During the project we met with 29 adults with communication difficulties, 27 having an intellectual disability. Some already owned cameras or phones with cameras and were familiar with taking photos. Those who did not have their own camera were loaned a camera or ipad for the purpose of the project. All were instructed to take photos of people, objects, places and activities that were important to them, as well as things they would like to do or try in the future. Participants were also encouraged to source pictures from magazines, the Internet or photos they already had.

Picture My Future, also known as Image-supported Goal Exploration, uses pictures to help people with disability to explore and express their hopes and dreams for the future. It draws on techniques first used by social researchers working with people without disability, in the maritime provinces of Canada in the 1950’s. More recently, these techniques have been adapted for use with people with intellectual disability.

Through Picture My Future, a person with disability is supported to explore the people, places and things that they like and dislike in their lives, and the things that they would like to have and do in the future. They do this using images and objects that they have chosen to reflect these things.
After 7 to 10 days we met with the participants to review and discuss their photos and write captions to go with the photos expressing what the photo meant to them, and why it was important. At the second meeting the participants were asked how they would like their pictures presented. Most chose a photo album style presentation and this was put together in a third meeting. Electronic and web-based storage and presentation options were also available.

All participants reported positively about their experience of using Picture My Future, and all were particularly pleased with the resource produced at the end of the process. Staff involved reported that they gained a much greater insight into needs, goals and aspirations of their clients than they had previously. This resource is designed to support the person in any person centred planning process, so planners have a better understanding of the person’s likes, preferences, goals and aspirations.

Strategies we found particularly useful included keeping discussions very concrete and talking about things familiar to the person, and using a photo library to help prompt discussion and other ideas that had not arisen from their own photos. We also found the Easy English instructions and “Picture Me” resources we developed helpful to support the participants to remember what they had to do.

All of our resources, as well as more comprehensive instructions on how to carry out the Picture My Future process, are available at www.picturemyfuture.com

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**Bibliography**


