

# Nurturing Connected Communities and Thriving Work Cultures

Partnering with Befriend



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Befriend operates on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, where connection to community has been carefully nurtured for thousands of years. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to Australian life.

We acknowledge that the sovereignty of this Nation was never ceded and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

# Kaya, hello, we are Befriend

We are a collective of community builders, change-makers, researchers and consultants, united by a shared belief: that people flourish when they feel seen, valued and connected. At the heart of our work is a simple yet powerful intention — to nurture inclusive communities where everyone belongs.



**We nurture communities where everyone belongs.**

**We help reduce loneliness**

Since 2010, we have walked alongside more than 20,000 West Australians, supporting individuals, groups and organisations to strengthen social connection and reduce loneliness. Through our work, we see time and again that meaningful connection is not accidental — it is something that can be intentionally cultivated, whether in neighbourhoods, community spaces or workplaces.

Our partnerships span government, business and community organisations and range from large-scale, place-based community-building projects to leadership programs, retreats and workplace culture initiatives.

**We partner with government, business and community organisations**

**We help build connection within teams**

Community is not limited to where we live — it also exists where we work. Organisations are powerful social ecosystems, shaping how people relate, collaborate and care for one another. In a time when loneliness and disconnection are increasingly present, workplaces have a unique opportunity to become places of connection, wellbeing and shared purpose. We invite organisations to consider: what might it look like to intentionally build community within your workplace?

Whether supporting community members directly or working alongside teams and leaders, our role is to create spaces where people can connect more deeply — with themselves, with each other and with the communities they are part of.

**We create spaces where people can connect more meaningfully**

**We deliver workshops, courses and programs**

Our partnerships are flexible and responsive, ranging from a single workshop or facilitated experience through to embedded, long-term culture and community-building initiatives. Read on to learn more about our approach and discover how we might begin building connection — and countering loneliness — together.

# Why does social connection matter?

## Impact of social isolation and loneliness

### Higher mortality

Contributes to 871 000 deaths each year (2014–2019).

## Protective effects of social connection

### Living longer

- Increases likelihood of survival over 7.5 year average of 50%
- 4% reduction in the risk of mortality

### Health risks

- Increases risk and severity of mental health conditions e.g depression, anxiety.
- Increases risk of dementia and Alzheimer disease
- Increases risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes

### Better health outcomes

- Enhances mental health and wellbeing
- Improves health outcomes and better quality of life
- Contribute to higher levels of cognitive functioning

### Less education

Leads to poorer academic performance, likelihood of lower educational qualifications

### Positive educational outcomes

Increases likelihood of positive educational outcomes by 42%

### Economic costs

- In Australia, loneliness costs to health care are AUD\$2.7 billion per year
- Contributes to lower employability
- Exacerbates conditions of people living in poverty

### Stronger economy

- Contributes to upward economic mobility
- Strengthens a community's ability to confront poverty
- Facilitates knowledge sharing and diffusion
- Increases transparency and accountability of economic policy by increasing access of enterprises and citizens to information
- Strengthens cooperation between public and private sectors

# What services do we offer?

## Development & Enrichment Workshops

Our workshops....

- Are participatory and experiential
- Utilises a range of unique relational practices including gifts discovery, storytelling, peer coaching, deep listening, Warm Data Labs. (See Appendix 1 for more information about each of the above)
- Can be delivered as a standalone event, a series or combined within a customised program.

## Consulting Services & Cultural Programs

Seeking a more indepth partnership?

If so, we would love to collaborate with you to co-design a bespoke program that nurtures meaningful change within your unique context.

See next page for more information on how we might work with you in a collaborative, intentional way.

# What is our approach?

## Relational practices



Our approach to nurturing connected, thriving communities and workplace cultures comes to life through our unique suite of relational practices. These are designed to introduce and practise enriching new ways of relating to self, others and the broader environment of your group and/or team.

## Workshop-style experiences



We mix and combine different relational practices into workshop-style experiences for community groups and teams, and can work with you to develop a program that suits your needs.

## Proven methodologies



Our relational practices are informed by a range of proven methodologies from our global network of collaborators, as well as our unique essence, and 15 years of in-house innovation through local collaborations. For more information on some of our core methods, see the Appendix (page 10).

# How might we help you explore your potential?

If you're a....



## Community group

- How would you like to improve and enrich group dynamics?
- How might members of your group learn to communicate more authentically with each other?
- How might we deepen and enrich the quality of connections?
- What kind of environment would you like to create that helps attract new members or volunteers?

If you're a....



## Local Government Authority

- How might we nurture an inclusive community where everyone belongs?
- How might local residents become active community contributors?
- In what ways could you grow more community-led initiatives?
- How might you help nurture and develop community leaders?
- What kind of environment would you like to create that helps attract, retain and develop community volunteerism?

If you're a....



## Community service organisation

- How might you design and deliver services that are people-centred?
- In what ways could staff learn to develop authentic and healthy ways of relating with each other?
- How would you like to improve group dynamics within your teams?
- What kind of relational qualities would you like to see develop between your staff and your clients?
- How might staff learn to see fresh new perspectives of their clients while helping them feel seen and valued?

If you're a....



## Business or Government

- What are the cultural conditions that will help you fulfil your mission?
- How do you attract talent and align people development with your values?
- What is the organisational environment that you and your colleagues yearn for?
- What effects do you hope the workplace will have on people and their wellbeing?
- How do you support people to understand the system as a whole, while designing solutions that honour its interconnected parts?
- How might you factor meaningful relationships in the way you interact/connect with your customers and clients?

# How might we understand your needs?

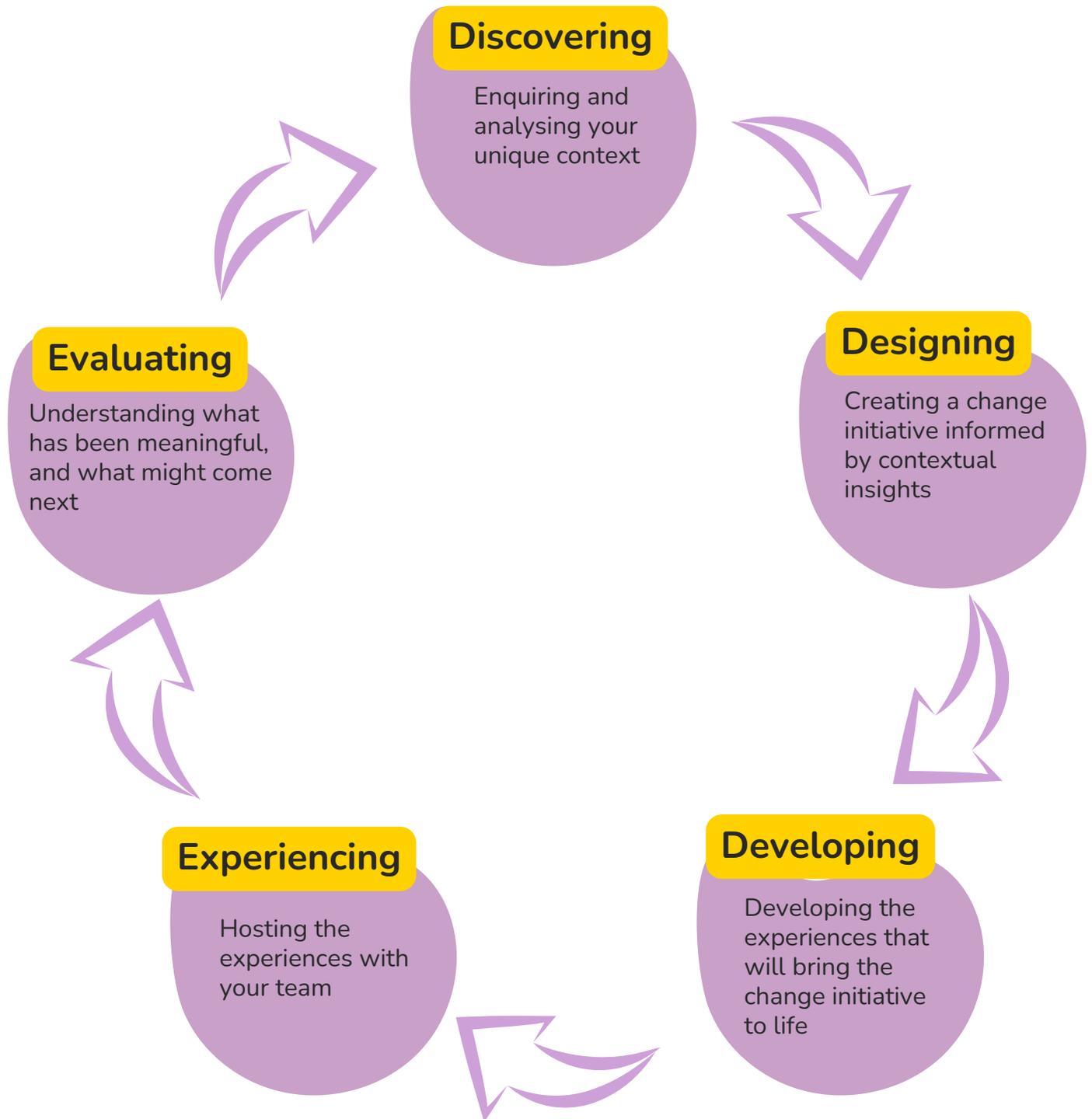


Figure: Befriend's cyclical process of partnering together on consulting projects and cultural programs.

# Who have we worked with?

We are grateful to have worked with over 100 organisations, including the following partners, collaborators and supporters:

## Local Government



## State & Federal Government



## Community Organisations



## Industry



# Who are our facilitators?



## **Elaine Olsen | Partnerships Lead & Facilitator**

Elaine is a seasoned learning facilitator with expertise in Compassionate Systems Framework, Theory U, Warm Data Labs and Core Gift Discovery. She brings a unique blend of methodologies and a systems perspective to community development and leadership training. Elaine believes transformation occurs when we develop our own internal being and capability in a deep relational way with others.



## **Peter Le Breton | Thinking Partner & Free Range Elder**

Peter, with a PhD in Transformative Studies and decades of experience in adult education and corporate training, is an innovative program designer, presenter and facilitator. He has received accolades from UWA, Murdoch University and the Australian Government for outstanding contributions to student learning. He co-creates and co-leads The Possibility Fellowship, which is grounded in living systems, complexity, trans-contextuality and “warm data”.



## **Nicola-Jane Le Breton | Thinking Partner & Story Weaver**

Nicola is a gifted storyteller and facilitator, dedicated to creating inclusive spaces for individuals to discover and share their unique gifts. With a deep belief in the transformative power of story, she guides meaningful encounters through writing circles and storytelling journeys. A co-founder of The Possibility Fellowship, Nicola is also a certified Master Facilitator of Core Gift Discovery.



## **Zena Ferguson | Learning Experience Practitioner**

Zena Ferguson seamlessly blends the art and science of nurturing social connections in her role. For over four years at Befriend, she has been meticulously crafting spaces that nurture joy, curiosity, connection, and growth. Deeply immersed in social connection research, Zena aids connection-seekers and community connectors across Perth in their journey to find, connect and grow thriving communities.

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# Connect with Us

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# Appendix 1: Overview of core methods

Our seasoned Facilitators and Consultants draw upon a range of developmental methods that underpin and inform many of our relational practices. Some of these core methods are outlined below. We apply these methods uniquely in 'the Befriend way.'

## GIFTS DISCOVERY



Gifts Discovery methods are:

- Designed to help individuals and teams to discover and discern their innate, unique gifts
- A way of clarifying and identifying personal purpose, meaningful contributions and a development pathway
- A practical way of aligning personal purpose with organisational mission

## THEORY U



Theory U is a systems-thinking methodology useful for:

- Learning to listen at a deeper level
- Developing higher levels of self-awareness
- Developing systems-thinking capabilities
- Finding key points of potential for significant change
- Developing relational competencies essential for enacting change through collaboration

## WARM DATA LABS



Warm Data Labs are group processes for:

- Drawing different stakeholders, people and teams together to explore a complex topic from multiple diverse perspectives
- Nurturing mutual learning and stronger relationships between diverse stakeholders
- Discovering how lived experiences are trans-contextual (eg. family, education, economy etc.)
- Seeing new possibilities and ways to be in community

## STORYTELLING



Storytelling methods are useful in helping to:

- Communicate more effectively using stories
- Enrich relationships
- Find deeper meaning and shared understanding through the use of analogy
- Discover opportunities for closer collaboration