# PERSONAS

Personas or profiles are a realistic representation of different types of people in different kinds of situations.

Personas help us visualise:

- who the different people within our communities are

- what is important to them and their needs

- why they feel and act the way they do, i.e. motivations

- how any services or interventions fit into the context of their lives

Personas are developed from information gathered through quantitative and qualitative means. They are not a stereotype. Personas communicate people's different core motivations and needs, rather than just demographics.

SCENARIOS
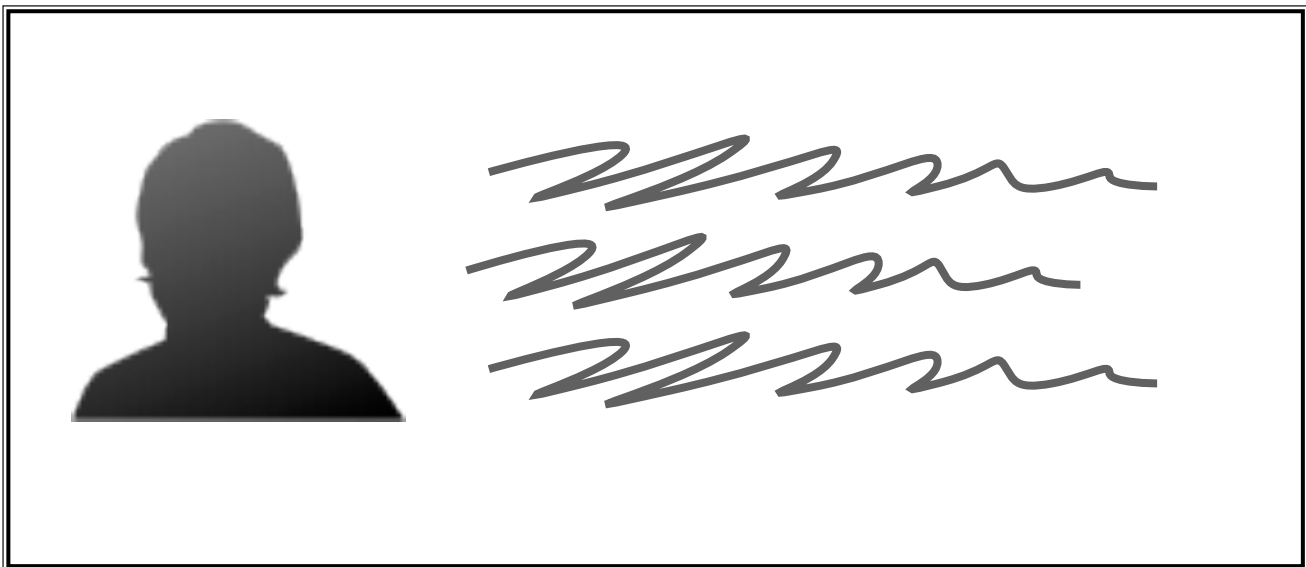
Scenarios tell a story about a particular situation. They describe people's experiences and actions and the context in which they take place.

Scenarios can describe current or future situations and can be visual (e.g., storyboards) or short narratives.

SCENARIOS & PERSONAS FOR COLLABORATION & PARTICIPATION

Some different ways we've used them to support understanding, collaboration and participation in health and social contexts include:

To stay focused on the people

When working with health management teams for example, we might start a workshop with participants reading and introducing personas of people and families/whānau from the community. This helps them work together and remind and ground the team that the focus needs to be people-centred, and decisions grounded in the impact and benefits for people.

To check our understanding of different groups of people with those people

When working with young people we might start by asking them to create an online profile for a simple persona. So converting 5-6 lines of text describing a young person into an image that visualises what would they be saying, hearing, posting, tagging, listening etc. This allows us to check if our understanding and data about those young people is accurate (young people will tell us if the personas don't ring true).

To make sensitive discussions safe

We've used personas in lots of workshops where we want to explore sensitive or private topics. For example young people can tell us about why a persona might act in a certain way - rather than having to disclose specific things about themselves. This is especially useful when talking about sensitive issues such as mental health, sexual health or illegal activities.

To generate people-centred interventions and responses

It's common for people to have lots of ideas about what should change or the solutions needed. Using personas to test ideas or to generate them, is one way to help ensure that proposed solutions are responding to the needs of real people, and that they account for the reality of people's lives.

To bring to life the people behind data and statistics

We often use scenarios to give meaning to and communicate quantitative data and statistics - what is actually happening for people on the ground? Scenarios can quickly show this.

To help explore the impacts of systems changes

Scenarios can help stakeholders explore the implications of system and policy level changes on a human level. To help envisage change, cross sector stakeholders can work together to develop a future scenario that shows how people's' lives might be different as a result of a change in policy for example.

To facilitate discussion and planning for cross sector systems change

To work out how to achieve a change, cross sector groups might create the ideal scenario, and then work backwards (backcast) to identify the steps we'd need to take to get there.

To co-create interventions

In workshops we've asked young people to create their own scenarios, to show how or why someone would or wouldn't interact with a particular service intervention. Using half finished story boards for example, and asking young people to fill in the gaps that show what would need to be in place for them to want to use or do something (e.g., access a health intervention).