

## Why this study is important.

There is a world agreement called the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.



The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities says:

- People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else.
- Countries must treat people with

disabilities fairly.

Fiji agreed to the CRPD in 2017.

But many people with **psychosocial disabilities** still find it hard to join in community life.



A psychosocial disability is when a person has a mental health condition and faces barriers that make it hard to think, feel, or connect with other people.

These make everyday life harder.

## Why we did this study.

Fiji wants all people with disabilities to feel included in their communities.

This means making sure everyone can:



- talk and connect with other people.
- join in community activities.
- feel welcome and that they belong.

To make this happen, we need to understand:

- what helps people with psychosocial disabilities join in.
- what makes it harder for them.

### How we did this study

To learn about what helps and what makes it harder, we:

first read key papers about Fiji's **laws, policies, and services.**



- People joined the study if they had a **psychosocial disability**, or their **carers or family.**
  - We talked to these people in different places in Fiji.
  - We listened to their stories.
  - We collected ideas.
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- We met with government groups and **Organisations of Persons with Disabilities.**



Organisations of Persons with Disabilities are groups where people with disabilities speak up for their rights.

### What we learned about exclusion

Most people with psychosocial disabilities had been left out.

This happened in many parts of life.



This is often caused because people in the community think people with psychosocial disabilities cannot be included or are unsafe.

The media, communities, and old laws make this problem worse.

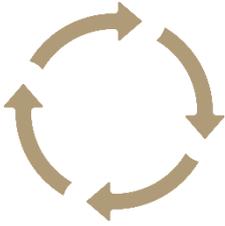
It is also harder for people with disabilities to use health, law, and

### **social protection services.**



Social protection services are supports that help people when they need money, care, or basic needs.

It takes a lot of effort and energy for people with disabilities to tell their communities they can belong.



This creates a cycle, where people who are left alone find it harder to take part.

### What the study found helps inclusion

Inclusion means feeling valued.



Inclusion means support from family and community.

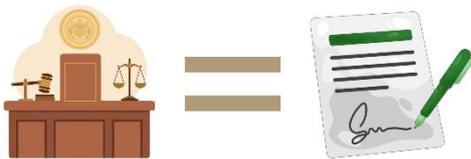
Inclusion means being part of decisions.

Feeling accepted improves wellbeing.

Peer support groups help people learn and feel safe.

Better understanding and acceptance by the community would help wellbeing.

### How governments can use this research

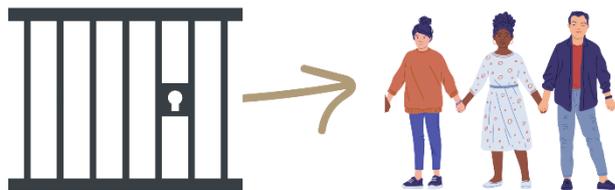


Make laws match the Convention of Rights for People with Disabilities.

Remove unfair rules.

Listen to people with lived experience when planning social and health care systems.

Improve support for people with psychosocial disabilities and their families.



Move away from **institutions** and towards community-based care.

Institutions are the big systems that shape how people get mental-health support.

They can be things like hospitals, government rules and even what a community believes.

Provide support for people with disabilities to make decisions for themselves.

### How service providers and organisations of people with disabilities can use this research

Make sure people with psychosocial disabilities everywhere can get affordable, good-quality support.



Focus on community-based help, not institutions.



OPDs should check and report how their country meets the Convention of Rights of Persons with

Disabilities.

Raise awareness about rights and respectful mental health support.

Build and expand peer support.



Advocate for laws that keep people with disabilities safe and help them to make their own decisions.

Create simple models for supported decision-making, like support circles.

### How families and people with psychosocial disabilities can use this research.

Treat Psychosocial disability as a real disability with real support needs



Remember stigma is not your fault.

Learn your rights.

Practice saying your needs and choices.



Learn that everyone's journey is different.

Join peer support groups.

Start small by joining family or community activities.