



VOICES OF INDIVIDUALS:
Collectively Exploring
Self-determination

Information Pack



This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 638768)

About the Project

The Voices of Individuals: Collectively Exploring Self-determination (VOICES) project aims to change the law in relation to the right to legal capacity for people with disabilities. The right to legal capacity is the right to make decisions which have legal consequences and to have those decisions respected by the law. This project will take a radical approach to legal capacity law reform by using the stories of those with lived experience of disability and pairing them with legal or social sciences scholars to develop grounded recommendations for reform. Eight stories and eight responses will be published in a book at the end of the project.

Contact Us

Centre for Disability Law and Policy
Institute for Lifecourse & Society
Dangan, North Campus
NUI Galway
Galway,
Ireland.

Email: ercvoices@nuigalway.ie

Website: <http://ercvoices.com/>

Phone: +353 (0)91 494272

Twitter: [@ercvoices](https://twitter.com/ercvoices)

The Project Team



Dr Eilionóir Flynn
Principal Investigator

eilionoir.flynn@nuigalway.ie



Dr Anna Arstein-Kerslake
Partner Investigator

anna.arstein@unimelb.edu.au



Cliona de Bhailís
Research Assistant

cliona.debhailis@nuigalway.ie



Dr Liz Brosnan
Research Associate

liz.brosnan@nuigalway.ie

Key Dates

2016

February	Kick Off Conference
April	Workshop 1 – Pairing Process begins
August	Workshop 2 – Contractual Capacity
November	Workshop 3 – Criminal Responsibility

2017

February	Workshop 4 – Consent
May	Workshop 5 – Open Theme
November	Workshop 6 – Book Workshop

2018

January	Deadline for submission of pieces for the book
October	Final Conference and Book Launch

Each workshop will involve up to 60 people on the first day which is open to the public. On the second day up to 30 people will come together to share ideas and experiences on how the law could be changed. This second day will be private and information shared there will not leave the room unless people want it to.

Taking part in the workshops and conferences is entirely voluntary and this will only take place once you give your consent. Agreeing to take part in the does not mean that you have to share anything you would like to keep private. We only want people to share their experiences and knowledge with the group if they feel comfortable doing this

How to Get Involved

Roles within the Project

- **Storytellers** – For people who would like to have their story included in the book. The book will include people's personal stories and ideas about how law and policy should change. There will be about 8 personal stories and 8 ideas for change in the book.
- **Participants** – For people who would like to take part and maybe share their story but not have it included in the book.
- **Respondents** – For people who are interested in writing a critical legal or policy response to a lived experience.
- Submit a piece of art connected to the central theme of legal capacity and personhood for one of our workshops.

Stories

We are looking for people to take part in the project by sharing their stories of exercising their legal capacity as a person with a disability.

The stories and experiences could include:

- Making decisions about relationships including intimate relationships and decisions about sex,
- Making decisions about medical treatment such as deciding to take medication or to have a medical procedure,
- Experiences with the criminal law or police,
- Making decisions about buying or selling things.

Participants

If you have experience or knowledge to share on the issue of legal capacity and decision making but do not want to have your story included in the book you could be a participant. Participants are welcome to attend our conferences and public workshops and can contact us about sharing their story on our blog as a video or guest post.

Storytellers

What do I have to do to become a storyteller?

If you would like to become a storyteller and have your story included in the book we will publish at the end of the project you must attend at least **3 workshops** over a 3 year period. These are Workshop 1, one of the four thematic workshops (2,3,4 or 5) and Workshop 6. If you don't want to take part in writing the book you can still attend as many of the events as you like.

In the private session of **Workshop 1 in April 2016**, everyone will discuss what areas of policy and what kinds of decisions they are most interested in. This will help us to decide what thematic workshop you might like to attend. If people would like to join up with others to write something for the book together, this workshop will be a good place to start making those connections.

If you are still interested in writing the book you will choose a thematic workshop to attend. People writing the book will attend at least one workshop, but if you don't want to be part of writing the book you can still attend these. There are four options which you can see on the **Key Dates** page of the pack.

In **Workshop 6**, people who are writing the book will attend to discuss and develop their ideas and get feedback from others about what should be in the book. If you are writing something for the book you must attend this workshop and finish writing your piece by January 2018.

What happens if I don't want to carry on with the project?

You can choose to withdraw from the project at any time, without giving a reason. This includes after the end of the workshops and before the book is published.

What will happen after the workshops?

If everyone consents, the private sessions of the workshops will be recorded by the VOICES researchers at NUI Galway and partially transcribed for our own notes. If you are taking part in the workshops and would like to use information from the private sessions for what you write in the book, we will ask for all participants' consent to share the transcripts. If a direct quote is going to be used from anyone in anything that is written, that person must be asked and has to give permission before their name and the quote can be used.

If you decide you would like to tell your story or share your idea from the workshops you will be asked if you want to write something for the book. Even if you don't want to write something for the book you might choose to share your story or idea on our online blog, or at a public session of one of the workshops, or at one of the conferences. You do not have to share anything if you don't want to. If you want to share something on the blog, talk to Cliona about how to do this and what the rules for posting are.

Confidentiality

All discussions from private sessions of the VOICES workshop will be kept confidential. This means that your name and any identifying information will not be used unless you decide that you want to share your story or ideas with the public, or write a piece for the VOICES book.