ELIEMENTAL
CAPS GUIDE

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND USE
COMMUNITY ACCESS POINTS WITH
GROUPS VULNERABLE TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION.

ELIEMENTAL
Breaking down barriers to enterprise
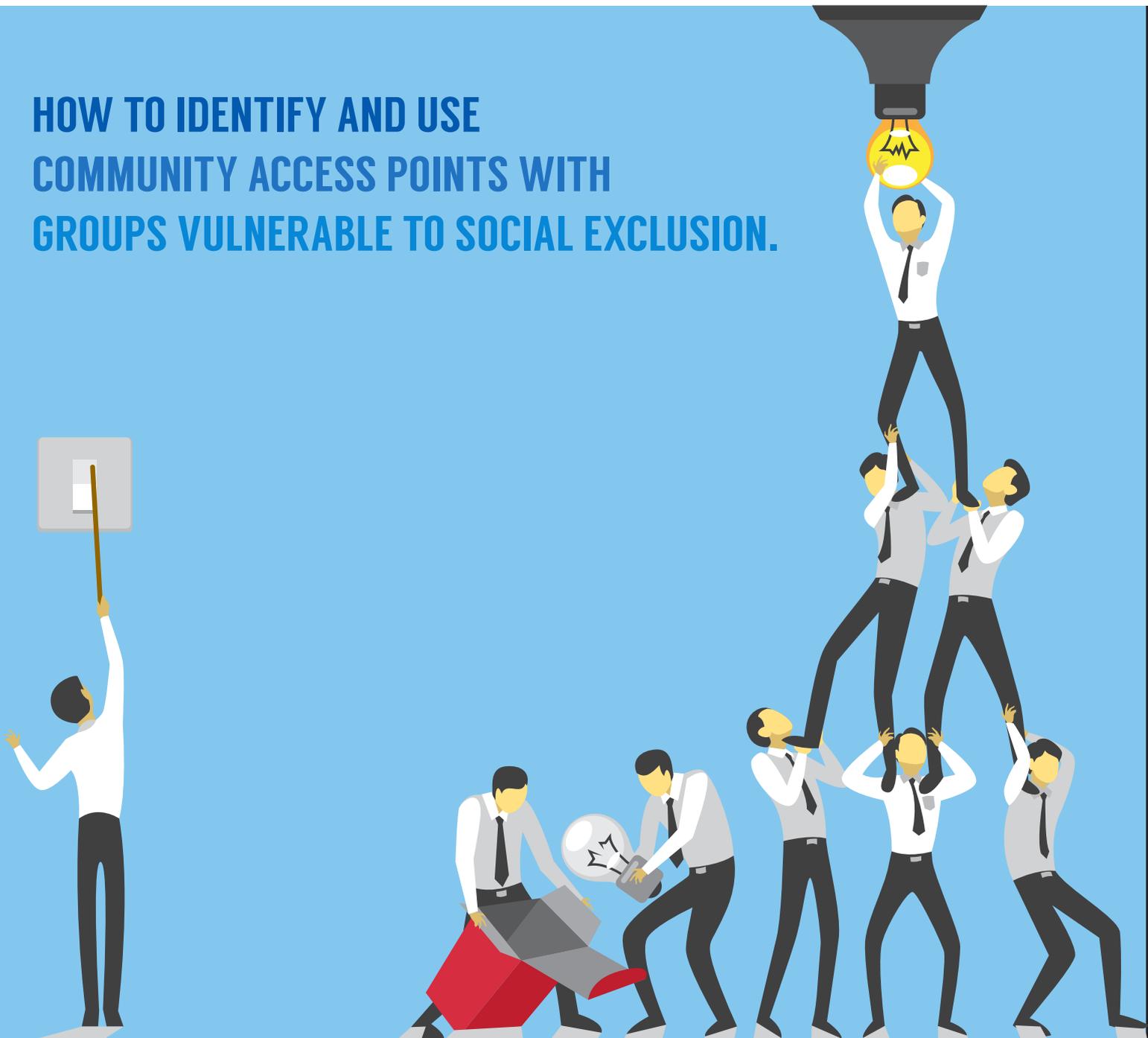
WHAT IS A CAP?

These are places where people experience informal public life

- They are not a home

- They are not a workplace

- They are a place where there is social interaction such as conversation

- They are a place where people feel welcome and equal to others also using the place

SO WHAT SORT OF PLACES?!

Good places for CAPS are diverse, and can be best identified by your target group.
They might include:

- Cafes
- Parks
- Markets
- Launderettes
- Libraries
- Small, local shops

We found that groups vulnerable to social exclusion may not access training opportunities because they are intimidated by the venue. We therefore developed a toolkit for identifying local community places where our target groups would be comfortable learning. We also limit each training group to people with similar life-experiences. This method has helped our retention rates stay high.

WHY ARE CAPS IMPORTANT?

People need safe places where they can socialise alongside managing their daily lives

• CAPS allow people a safe place to explore ideas and relationships they might not otherwise engage with

• CAPS can signpost people to new opportunities

• CAPS help with community cohesion and development

• Having access to a CAP may improve well-being

WHAT IS SOCIAL EXCLUSION?

Individuals or groups in society unable to fully access the rights, resources and opportunities that others in their society take for granted. Rights, resources and opportunities might include education, employment or housing.

"Groups that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. Ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled people, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, isolated elderly people and children all often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment' (di Nardo, Cortese and McAnaney, 2010).

HOW CAN CAPS HELP?

• Resources that can help people become less socially isolated can be located in a CAP.

• Many CAPS already act as an informal information exchange for users, through providing a place of conversation

• Once CAPS are identified they can be approached to take part in initiatives aimed at reducing social exclusion

IDENTIFYING CAPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- A good CAP is somewhere that is affordable, is socially and physically accessible, has a convenient location and is available at times suitable to the target group.
- Different target groups, even if living in the same community, will almost certainly require different CAPS

SUGGESTED ROUTE FOR IDENTIFYING CAPS...

Work closely with a trusted, local gatekeeper who has some access to your target group

- Schools in local community.
- Charities working with target group.
- Existing community groups in the local area.

DISCUSSIONS WITH GATEKEEPERS...

- Arrange to meet your local gatekeeper.
- Explain what a CAP is and why you want to identify them.
- Your gatekeeper may enthusiastically suggest a number of local places for CAPS.
- Thank them for this, but explain the importance of the target group feeling ownership of the CAP. Input in making the choice of CAP means they are more likely to make use of it.

INVOLVING YOUR TARGET GROUP...

- Your local gatekeeper can help you meet with already-engaged people from your target group.
- These people will hopefully help you identify the most effective CAP(S) for your project.
- To do this we suggest setting up a workshop (with refreshments) to explain what help you need. See our workshop plans on www.eliemental.org

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS...

- Hopefully one or two people from your workshop will volunteer to do some research amongst their community to identify CAPS
- On our project we had many more volunteers than needed.
- All your volunteer needs is some guidance (provided at the workshop) and a means of collecting information and sending it back to you.

WHAT DO COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS DO?

- Talk to their friends and family and either record or jot down some notes of the conversation
- Take photos of places where people in their community feel comfortable chatting to others
- Get the information back to you

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY PLACES

- Using the information provided by your community researcher you will be able to make a short-list of CAPS
- Arrange to visit these sites and talk to the people responsible for the CAP about your project and how they can help

WORKING WITH CAPS

- CAPS can help with accessing target groups in a wide variety of ways.

- At the most basic level they can be places of information exchange

- Leaflets and Posters

- Community Noticeboards

- Verbal information via the person or people responsible for the CAP

- Some CAPS can offer spaces for meeting representatives from target groups

- Particularly cafes, indoor markets, larger shops, schools

- They might need to charge for this though

- Some CAPS can offer spaces for training or education

- Community centres, libraries, schools, some larger cafes or community health facilities

- Again, they might need to charge

- Some CAPS can share facilities with your target group

- Computing, telephone, copying printing

- Equipment for children, for DIY or for carers

- CAPS have also provided mentors for people in our target groups, and supported our project with advice

- CAPS can be a great way to work with groups vulnerable to social exclusion.

- They offer flexible, safe spaces that allow people to develop confidence, meet with others informally and learn new skills

- The potential of a CAP is only limited by your imagination. Be creative and make use of this great resource.