

RE: Disability Advisory Touch Point

3 April 2020

Disability Advisory Touch Point

Background.

In this concerning and unprecedented time, MDI recognises research has to be fast and responsive to people with disability' needs. Through bringing together an interdisciplinary research community with varied interests, we hope to plant seeds for an interdisciplinary informed, capable and constructive program of research that will have clear benefits for people with disabilities, families, friends and support networks. We hope to include research which benefits in the short, medium and long term.

However, keeping people with disability' voice is central to useful, accurate and relevant disability research. Not only does proper consultation and collaboration assist in better outcomes for all, but it also reinforces the importance of empowering people with disabilities to be involved in research about themselves.

In order to be as responsive to COVID 19's risk, but also to balance the importance of the lived experience throughout, we are developing an agile touch point for researchers to get quick and accurate advice on disability, from a small group of people with lived experience and networks to others.

This will be available free of charge to researchers in the MDI COVID 19 funding rounds to expediate research response.

(1) Description of the touch point

The touch point will be a small group of people with disability with extensive lived experience who can offer timely and constructive advice to researchers looking to fast track their research.

The touch point is a tool for researchers (and any involved in the process) to keep research integrity through close and multiple contacts with people lived experience, as needed.

The touch point will be managed by MDI Program Manager, Campbell Message who will act as a first point of contact for researchers and a connector to others with disability as required.

We aim to connect with a small group or motivated people to be available to assist predominantly online or by phone, with a range of disability experience.

The touch point will:

- Offer touch point advice throughout the research (from design to implementation)
- Thoughts on person first language and social model (critical realist) sensitive design.

- Provide advice from people with specifically valued impairments (either directly or through connecting with individuals/ organisations with that expertise.
- Assist connecting with communities of interest, with a view to sensitivity to potential vulnerabilities in these communities at this time.

(2) Members of the touch point can:

- Be available online or by phone to offer their thoughts and advice on disability elements, to the MDI Program Manager, or to researchers themselves.
- Have professional or personal contacts that can draw upon for quick advice.
- Be comfortable talking about their lived experience. (This can be done through the Program Manager if desired)

(3) To engage with the service:

Please contact MDI Program Manager, Campbell Message to find out more to discuss needs.

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