



NEWSLETTER TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Hello and Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter from the La Trobe University Living with Disability Research Centre (LiDS). LiDS brings together leading researchers who are building an evidence base to support the social inclusion of people with disability.

Each quarter, we'll provide a newsletter summarising achievements of note to you - our members and stakeholders. If there is anything in particular you would like to hear about or participate in please email us (lids@latrobe.edu.au).

We look forward to working with you on issues central to people living with disability.

Chris Bigby

About LiDS

The Living with Disability Research Centre (LiDS) brings together leading researchers who are building an evidence base to support the social inclusion of people with disability.

We aim to

- Provide a national focal point for cross-disciplinary research into social inclusion and participation of people with disability.
- Work closely with service providers to identify and integrate research evidence into their everyday practice through practical approaches.
- Train and educate the current and next generation of leaders to identify best evidence and translate it into practice.
- Work with thought leaders and government to identify and address policy issues in a non-partisan manner.

The themes of our research are

- Improving Disability Services Design
- Building the Evidence Base for Participation and Social Inclusion
- Improving Mainstream Services Design

Recent Funding Successes

Over \$2 million for disability research

LiDS researchers have attracted over \$2 million in research funding over the past month. Success has come in a range of areas including Active Support; Supported Decision Making; Community Participation; and Enabling Mainstream Services to be more Inclusive. The projects will be conducted across Victoria and Australia with partners from NSW, Queensland and Victorian Governments, care providers and community organisations. The funding has been awarded for:

- **Effective Decision Making Support for People with Cognitive Disability;** Bigby, C., Douglas, J., Carney, T., Wiesel, I., Then, S.; Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (\$495,700)
- **Maximising Social Connection and Building Relationships in the Community: Evaluation of a Multi-component Community Connection program (M-ComConnect) for People with severe TBI;** Douglas, J., Bigby, C., Iacono, T., Knox, L., Calloway, L.; Institute of Safety Compensation and Research Recovery (\$596,177)
- **Enabling mainstream systems to be more inclusive and responsive to people with disabilities;** Bigby, C., Iacono, T., Douglas, J., Troller, J., Tracy, J., Shields, N.; National Disability Research and Development Grants (\$292,456)
- **Models for facilitating community participation of adults with cognitive impairment;** Duff, G. (National Disability Services), Bigby, C.; National Disability Research and Development Grants (\$642,028)
- **Developing a Framework for Supported Decision Making;** Bigby, C., Douglas, J.; New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services (\$250,000)
- **BATYR - Peer provided services regarding Mental Health. Qualitative evaluation;** Ennals, P.; Internal Grant
- **Disability and inclusion – Education for SAH and ARN staff;** Fossey, E.; Internal Grant
- **Reading difficulties, dyslexia and university study;** Skerry, T.; DRP Grant (\$14,000)
- **Service users with intellectual disability and access to mental health services;** Long, M., Venville, A.; Internal Grant (\$11,531)
- **Peer-to-peer training for people with SCI in Pacific Island Countries;** Chaffey, L.; Internal Grant (\$15,000)

Publications

Mediating community participation

Promoting community participation for people with intellectual disability through encounters with strangers is an integral part of the mission of disability support workers. In this research paper the authors offer a detailed micro-level analysis of the practices of support workers when they accompany a person with intellectual disability outside their home. The authors explore the subtle differences which make some staff practices more effective than others in promoting more convivial encounters with strangers.

Accurate or Assumed: Visual Learning in Children with ASD

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are often described as visual learners. Resulting from a recent collaborative study involving David Trembath from Griffith Uni, Giacomo Vivanti, Cheryl Dissanayake (from OTARC) this assumption was tested in an experiment in which 25 children with ASD, 19 children with global developmental delay (GDD), and 17 typically developing (TD) children were presented a series of videos via an eye tracker in which an actor instructed them to manipulate objects in speech-only and speech + pictures conditions ([get the journal article here](#)). They found no group differences in visual attention to the stimuli. The GDD and TD groups performed better when pictures were available, whereas the ASD group did not. Performance of children with ASD and GDD was positively correlated with visual attention and receptive language. Indeed, they found no evidence of a prominent visual learning style in the ASD group.

'The biggest thing is trying to live for two people': Spousal experiences of supporting decision-making participation for partners with TBI

Researchers from LiDS set out to understand how the spouses of individuals with severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) experience the process of supporting their partners with decision-making. Two main themes emerged from the data. The first was the saliency of the relational space in which decision-making took place. The second was the complex nature of decision-making within the spousal relationship. The researchers conclude that spouses experience decision-making as a complex multi-stage process underpinned by a number of relational factors. They noted that increased understanding of this process can guide health professionals in their provision of support for couples in exploring decision-making participation after injury ([see the report online](#)).

A service effectiveness framework that moves beyond compliance to quality outcomes for consumers

[This report and toolkit](#) and toolkit were produced as part of the 'Quality Systems and Outcomes Measurement Project' initiated by the South Australian Government in response to the question: How can individuals, families and funders know that disability support services are effective in achieving outcomes?

The Framework is designed for use by individuals and families, providers, funders and external reviewers. It describes the use of organisational effectiveness indicators

to measure and monitor the performance of disability service providers in providing support that makes a difference in people's lives. A Toolkit including four guides will assist in understanding and further development of service effectiveness measures and indicators.



Resources

Every moment has potential - online resource for person-centred active support

In a four-year partnership with Greystanes Disability service, Professor Christine Bigby and Dr Emma Bould from the Living with Disability Research Centre have developed a free online training resource – 'Every moment has potential', which is an introduction to person-centred active support. As part of the partnership, Greystanes and La Trobe University created a [dedicated website hosting the video and online materials](#).



Not as connected with people as they want to be - Report

In this report, authored by Professors Bigby and Beadle-Brown (UK), they provide insight into optimising outcomes for people with intellectual disability in supporting living arrangements. You can [download the report for free from the La Trobe University website](#).

Supporting People with Cognitive Disabilities in Decision Making - Processes and Dilemmas

[In this report](#), LiDS researchers present the findings of a study that explored the processes and dilemmas associated with supporting people with cognitive disabilities in decision making. The research is part of a larger project, Supported Decision Making and Guardianship: Building Capacity within Victoria, being undertaken by Scope and its partners and funded by the Legal Services Board.

Our mailing address is:

Living with Disability Research Centre
lids@latrobe.edu.au

College of Science, Health and Engineering |

La Trobe University | Bundoora Campus | Victoria | 3086