

Consumer and Community Health Research Network

For over 20 years the Consumer and Community Health Research Network (CCHRN) has been enabling researchers, policy makers and others seeking community views, to capture the voices of the community in a broad cross section of their research work. During this time we have become a world leader in assisting organisations involve consumers and community members in a wide variety of ways.

Consumer and community involvement in health and medical research has a number of potential benefits, including improved relevance of research to patient needs, improved quality and outcomes, more effective research translation, and improved public confidence in research. CCHRN has experienced growing recognition and involvement from those in the research sector including, Universities, Medical Research Institutes, Health Service Providers and organisations regarding the importance of consumer involvement in the practice of medicine and in medical research. With the advancement of involvement in the WA research sector, we have also been encouraged to see a parallel growth at a national level with the National Health and Medical Research Council and other key funding agencies implementing statements and guidelines regarding the necessity of consumer and community involvement in research. It is anticipated that this growth will continue with support from both Federal and State Governments to embed and develop consumer involvement in research as an element of best practice.

An explanation and account from WA researchers and community members of why we do what we do can be found here – <https://youtu.be/oaACJ1nL6Yo>



CCHRN has a team of Consumer and Community Involvement (CCI) Coordinators who work directly with researchers throughout WA's Health Service Providers, Universities, and Medical Research Institutes to plan and implement strategies for consumer and community involvement. Most recently, CCHRN has established a

pool of community members interested in being involved in research relating to COVID-19, and our CCI Coordinators are working hard to support partnerships between these community members and researchers working in this area.

Support services provided by our CCI Coordinators include;

- ✓ **General Enquiries** – CCI Coordinator can assist with enquiries regarding consumer and community involvement needs for a COVID-19 research and assist with the development of an individualised involvement plan. Support is also available for administrators and executive regarding opportunities and processes relating to consumer and community involvement.
- ✓ **Drop in Service** – CCI Coordinators can host a ‘*Drop in Service*’ with researchers. Researchers needing support for applications with regards to planning and budgeting for consumer and community involvement meet with the CCI Coordinator at a *Drop in Service* event and talk through their proposed project and their corresponding CCI needs.
- ✓ **Matching Service** – bringing appropriate and ‘matched’ consumers and community members to be involved in COVID-19 Research. Expressions of interest for membership to a COVID-19 Community Representative Pool is ongoing. We collate applicant details, speaks to each applicant and a referee, summarises the short listed and most suitable applicants and then assist researchers in deciding the successful applicants. Our team communicates with all applicants and supports the first meeting with the researcher and consumer or community member. This is an international best practice concept offered by CCHRN, who are the only group to do so within Australia.
- ✓ **Research ‘Buddies’** – found using our matching service, research buddies are a particularly appropriate method of involvement for laboratory based COVID-19 research. Meeting the specific needs of the research project, research ‘buddies’ meet semi-regularly with the research team to discuss the research and its results. They help to provide the link between research and those with the lived experience. Amongst other things, research ‘buddies’ use their lived experiences to help the researcher understand the impact of their results from a consumer perspective, raise awareness of the research, and explain the research to the community in plain language. CCI Coordinators support and facilitate these partnerships through attendance at meetings, and training of consumer and community members.
- ✓ **Document Reviewer/s** - consumers or community members review COVID-19 research documents for plain language and readability. Documents can include information sheets, consent forms, plain language summaries, grant applications and media releases.
- ✓ **Consumer/Community Representatives on teams/groups/panels/committees/boards and councils** – found via our

matching service, appropriate consumers and community members can become members of COVID-19 reference or steering groups, representatives on research teams, together with membership on advisory councils, boards and committees.

- ✓ **Community Conversations** – are an event using an abridged version of the [World Café method](#), and is a friendly and constructive way to have open video conferencing ‘conversations’ around questions of importance to a specific COVID-19 topic. The CCHRN team facilitates the event with up to 40 people and effectively captures discussion points and thoughts. A report is compiled by the COVID 19 research team and provide data for informed decision making on research projects, processes grants and priorities.
- ✓ **Promotion, Presentations, Training and Forums** – specific to teams and opportunities within the organisation to share the benefits, processes and outcomes of consumer and community involvement in COVID-19 Research.

Additional services provided on a fee for service basis include;

- ✓ **Research Priority Mapping Workshops** – are a half day or full day workshop designed specifically to meet the need of the organisation or COVID-19 research topic. In consultation with the research team, we would bring together consumers, community members, health professionals and/or service providers and organisations/agencies to facilitate conversations and then map priorities for future COVID-19 research and new opportunities and strategies.

Attendees are surveyed prior to the workshop regarding their lived experience and perceptions of COVID-19 research priorities/issues which are then used in the mapping workshop to highlight key issues and formulate the top priorities according to consumers and community members.

This format is used to assist in strategic planning processes and also to inform allocation of funding and resources according to current and future COVID-19 research priorities.

CCHRN is committed to continuing our partnership and support with WA researchers to deliver COVID-19 focussed research and health outcomes that involve and capture the voices of people with lived experience. Involvement of consumers and community in this research is becoming a fundamental element of best practice and as such, we look forward to providing and expanding on our tailored service to researchers in our Health Service Providers, Universities and Medical Research Institutes across WA.

For more information please contact:

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