Understanding the co-teaching preferences of people with intellectual disability and their support networks

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Summary of what we found

Background

This study was completed by UNSW Sydney and the Department of Health and Aged Care. We want to help students studying to become health professionals to learn more about intellectual disability.

This consultation wanted to understand how people with intellectual disability and people who support them would like to be involved in teaching students about intellectual disability health. We call this co-teaching. We also wanted to know what supports they may need. This will help us let educators (teachers) at universities know how they can best include people with intellectual disability in co-teaching.

What the study involved

We asked four people with intellectual disability and seven support network members (carers, family members and paid support workers) about:

- their experience teaching others about intellectual disability
- how they like to be involved
- ideas that they have about how to teach health students about intellectual disability.

What we found

Summary of key findings:

- People with intellectual disability should be included in every step of education from planning to delivery.
- The focus should be on what people with intellectual disability think and their lived experience.
- It's important to show that everyone with intellectual disability is different.
- As everyone is different, so **educators should always ask what supports or adjustments people need.**

People with intellectual disability and their support network members said:

Include people with intellectual disability from the start of education planning

- Most participants wanted to be included in every step of education - from planning what students will learn about intellectual disability health to delivering education.
- People with intellectual disability should be asked to be included in co-teaching directly if possible, instead of through their supports.
- Depending on the person, sometimes it can be helpful to have support networks involved to support them in organising their involvement.

Focus on what people with intellectual disability think

- The most important thing to include in intellectual disability health education is the lived health care experiences of people with intellectual disability.
- People with intellectual disability should tell their own story. If they are not able or do not want to, they can agree to someone in their support network sharing their story.
- Include people with intellectual disability in planning for their lessons and other teachers' lessons on intellectual disability health.

Show that everyone is different

- Include the experiences of a few people to show that everybody with intellectual disability is different.
- Help people to think differently about people with intellectual disability for example, show all the things people with intellectual disability can do.

Provide supports and plan

Supports needed could include:

- support getting to the venue
- plenty of time to prepare and clear instructions about what they will need to do
- ability to move times around
- supports for preparing content and on-the-day supports (for example, a support person)
- making sure the venue is accessible and comfortable for the presenter
- planning for extra supports if things don't go to plan (for example, if class goes overtime)
- different supports might be needed if the person:
    - is from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background (CALD is used to describe the wide range of cultures, religions, and languages that people in Australia identify with).
    - is First Nations (First Nations peoples are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples).
    - has something else in their life that might affect them– for example has anxiety or chronic fatigue.

Other things participants said were important

- Participants said they like teaching in person more but are okay with teaching online if it's needed.
- It is important for them to be paid the same as any presenter would be.
- Participants often want to be paid with gift cards (but it is important to ask the person).
- Most participants were interested in being part of a community reference group. However, some people may prefer individual meetings to provide their advice.
- Let people know about upcoming co-teaching through groups for example LinkedIn, Carers Australia.

How we will use the results

We will use what people have told us to give advice to teachers on how they can best include people with intellectual disability in teaching about intellectual disability to health students. This will include how they can connect with people with intellectual disability, how they can plan what they will teach, and how they can best support the person. This advice will be included in a 'toolkit'. This toolkit is one that will support the new Intellectual Disability Health Capability Framework that covers what health students should learn about intellectual disability.

For more information

If you would like further information about this study or the results, please contact Claire Eagleson, Project Manager at c.eagleson@unsw.edu.au or 02 9065 9516.