

Co-designed Disability Awareness Training with people with disability: design, implementation and evaluation within a metropolitan and regional health service.

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Objective: To co-design, implement and evaluate an online disability awareness training course for healthcare workers in the hospital setting.

Introduction

People with disability have poorer health outcomes than people without disability (World Health Organisation, 2022). To address this health inequity, Alfred Health and South West Healthcare partnered with people with disability (PWD) to co-design Disability Awareness Training suitable for all healthcare workers (clinical and non-clinical). This was part of the Specialist Education and Knowledge (SPEAK) project.

Method

Thirteen co-design workshops were held with 41 PWD and 12 support people across metropolitan and regional Victoria. Surveys and interviews with PWD, support people and healthcare workers were also conducted.

Findings from the all three data sources informed the development of the online modules.

QUOTE

Person with disability

It’s important to realise that disability isn’t just a handful of people, it’s more people than you would think that get admitted [to hospital], and so there’s a need to be aware of what is actually best practice and what’s going to be helpful to those patients... We need to be getting it right.”

Healthcare worker

I think that there is a gap in the knowledge of how best to support people with a disability... Healthcare is such a huge part of my family member’s life, and it could look very different.

Support person

Autistic people, people with intellectual disability and other communication disability, worked together with healthcare workers, to co-design the learning objectives and content of the online learning modules. The modules were designed with principles of accessibility embedded. Accessibility features included plain language, captioning, audio-descriptions and Auslan, as well as Web-accessible (WCAG 2.2).

The online modules were evaluated in terms of efficacy, acceptability and feasibility (Bowen et al, 2009).

Module 1 – About Disability	Module 2 – Lived Experience of Accessing Healthcare	Module 3 – Making Healthcare Better for Everyone
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lived experience perspective – What is important when accessing health careDefinition of disabilityModels of disabilityLegislationDiscriminationLanguage about disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Features and challenges of healthcare settingsMini documentary videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reasonable adjustmentsCommunicationHealthcare environmentRole of support peopleDisability resources

Figure 1. Content of three online training modules.



Figure 2. Process of co-design & training development

Results

Seventy-nine (n=79) healthcare worker participants completed the online modules during the evaluation period (n=63 metro, n=16 regional).

✓	Efficacy: Participants demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge pre to post online module completion according to paired samples t-test; (t(78) = -8.347), (p<0.001). Corrected effect size was strong (Cohen’s d=0.93).
✓	Acceptability: 92% of participants rated the learning modules as ‘acceptable’ or ‘completely acceptable’ on a 5-point Likert scale.
?	Feasibility: Of 134 staff who commenced the modules, only 79 completed them (59%).

Figure 3. Summary of results.

Participants liked: videos of people with disabilities talking about their experience, accessibility of modules, & practical strategies.

Participants suggested including: more content about people with hidden disabilities, information about specific disability supports & different cultural groups and disability. They reported the modules were too long, repetitive at times, and advocated for allocation of work time to complete the modules.

Conclusion:
The co-designed disability awareness training was acceptable and efficacious. Further considerations are required to improve feasibility, so that all PWD receive high quality care.