



**Healthy  
Trajectories**

A Child and Youth Disability Research Hub

# Consumer Involvement Strategy

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HEALTHY TRAJECTORIES

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## 1. Establish a Comprehensive Consumer Partnership Program

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Healthy Trajectories will establish a program that allows consumers to partner with the research hub on its various projects and programs. Consumers' needs for communication, cognitive support and reimbursement for time will be accommodated to ensure their involvement, and this involvement is central to our vision and mission.

### 1.1. Vision: *Healthy trajectories for all!*

To optimise the capacity of children and youth whose lives are complicated by disability to reach their full potential for health and participation across the life span.

The *Healthy Trajectories* child and youth research hub has consumer involvement embedded in all aspects of the research process. This involvement is central to our mission.

### 1.2. Mission

By forging a deep network of research collaborators across the Melbourne Children's Campus and University of Melbourne we will leverage the impact of our work to increase the pace of change required to improve the lives of those with child-onset disability and their families and for social and economic transformation.

While involvement of consumers as advisors has long been accepted as valuable; involvement is rarely embedded using an authentic partnership model. Genuine partnership in research will require coordination, orientation, and training of *both consumers and of researchers* in how to work together.

## 2. Engage a Diverse Range of Consumer Stakeholders

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Healthy Trajectories recognises the value of diverse perspectives and experiences and will actively seek to engage with people with lived experiences of disability, including parents, children, and youths with disabilities interested in participating in research. Our priority is engaging people from diverse cultural and community backgrounds and with varying experiences and needs for communication and cognitive support.

## 3. Listen to Consumer Perspectives and Feedback

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Healthy Trajectories will value the perspectives and feedback of all consumer stakeholders. Regular meetings and communication channels will be established to ensure that consumers can provide input and feedback on the organisation's mission and activities.

## 4. Train Consumers and Researchers in Partnership Research

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To ensure that all stakeholders have the knowledge and skills to work together effectively, Healthy Trajectories will provide training opportunities for consumers and researchers in partnership research. By doing so, consumers will be more fully able to participate in the research process. At the same time, researchers will better understand the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

## 5. Promote Transparency and Accountability

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Healthy Trajectories will ensure transparency about its research activities and decision-making processes by sharing information on its website, social media, and other communication outlets. The research hub will also create mechanisms for accountability, which will include regular evaluations of the consumer partnership program and the involvement of consumers.

## **6. Align Research Focus with Australia's Disability Strategy**

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The Healthy Trajectories research hub will focus its efforts on building and using knowledge, exploring methods that build family capacity and resilience, addressing disability-related issues in critical contexts, and contributing to achieving Australia's Disability Strategy (2021-2031) through strategic partnerships that address priorities. This focus will ensure that the research is relevant and genuinely impacts the issues that matter most to people, including the optimal health, wellbeing, and social participation of children and youth with disability and their families.

## **7. Leverage Campus Expertise and Networks**

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Healthy Trajectories is a Melbourne Children's Campus initiative, enabling the involvement of a wide range of people from The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH), the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), and The University of Melbourne (UoM). People – including consumers, researchers, practitioners, and other stakeholders – within these institutions bring their expertise and interest to disability-focused work. They also have, and use, broad-reaching networks beyond the Campus that can be leveraged for impact.

## **8. Risk Management**

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This consumer involvement strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose over time. The methods will continue to be informed by research about consumer involvement. The research hub will establish procedures to allow early identification of risks and strategies to manage or mitigate identified risks. This includes:

- Adequate responsiveness, management of payment and information.
- Providing a culture of care and support.
- Conducting testing, gathering feedback, and improving technology to enhance functionality.

By doing so, the research hub can ensure the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders involved in the research process.

## **9. Evaluation and Assessment**

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Healthy Trajectories will evaluate and assess the involvement of consumers to ensure our effectiveness and to be accountable for the resources used in this approach to all stakeholders. We aim to understand how authentic our involvement is, determine what is working and what is not, and whether our systems are supported by current evidence. The evaluation will be ongoing so we can continually improve.

## **10. Dissemination Strategy**

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The Healthy Trajectories research team will share what we learn from our research and experiences of consumer involvement using a broad range of methods to ensure it reaches all its

stakeholders and beyond. Healthy Trajectories has a Communication and Dissemination Strategy that outlines our communication goals. These include increasing awareness of and relaying information about the research being conducted by the Healthy Trajectories research hub, as well as the outcomes and impacts of that research. The dissemination methods will include publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at conferences and workshops, social media posts, podcasts, newsletters, and other communication outlets. By disseminating our research findings widely, the research hub can ensure that the work has a broad impact, reaches a diverse audience, and positively contributes to national and international efforts to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

By following these strategies and approaches and managing risks effectively, the Healthy Trajectories research hub can effectively:

- Involve consumers in all aspects of the research process.
- Leverage the knowledge and skills of these stakeholders.
- Ensure the needs of people with disabilities are reflected in all research activities, optimise their health and participation across the lifespan.
- Disseminate its research findings widely.





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