



***“With the right training, people with learning disabilities can become partners in research”***

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is an organisation that funds others to do Health and Care research.



In 2019 the National Institute for Health Research funded a training course for students with learning disabilities.



The research taught students with learning disabilities how to research things and how to share what they found.



The training led to people having new skills, more self-confidence and a higher self-esteem.



Some people even went on to paid employment.



The people who ran the course have said money should be available so more courses can run in the future.

## Why was it important to do the training?



It is important for people with learning disabilities to be included in research that is about them.



People with learning disabilities have a lot of experience and knowledge about learning disabilities that others might not have.



It can be difficult for people with learning disabilities to get involved without support.



The training gave people an introduction into what research is.



It taught them new skills about how to be a researcher and to have more confidence in what they can do.

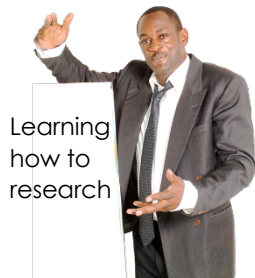


It also meant that more people with learning disabilities could work on research projects in the future.

## What was the training course?



In 2019 Kingston and St George's University of London ran a course for people with learning disabilities.



The course was called 'Learning how to do research'.

## 8 Weeks



The course ran every week for 8 weeks.

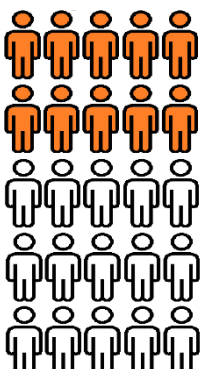
## 2 Hours



The sessions were 2 hours long.



There was also work to do at home.



25 people applied for the course but only 10 were chosen.



The course taught people how to collect, understand and share information.



Everyone did their own research project.

## What were the outcomes?



The students said they were nervous about the course but said that they enjoyed doing it.



Some of the students had more confidence in their daily lives after the course.



Some students got into Advocacy work to help others speak up for themselves.



Four students got involved in research-related projects because of being on the course.



Some of the students used their new skills when interviewing for jobs or interviewing others.



Eight of the students helped to write up the report after the course ended.

Michelle McDermott went on the course in London. She helped to write the report.



She said: "I have a mild learning disability. I beat myself up because I think I didn't do it right.

I was also nervous about meeting new people. Knowing what to expect. Will I understand it?



Each week I was petrified. I might not have shown it, but I was. Can I do the homework? Am I doing it right?

Even though I knew Irene and we've worked together before, I was still nervous.



But it was also exciting. We're not all perfect, but we all learn. And at the end of it, we all got our certificate!"

## Why was this training course so important?



This course shows that people with learning disabilities can become researchers.



Irene Tuffrey-Wijne, Professor of Intellectual Disability and Palliative Care, Kingston University London.



Irene helped to run the course.

She said that including co-researchers with learning disabilities will make for the most brilliant research.

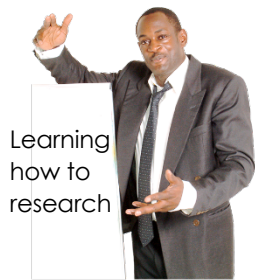


She was really impressed by how much the students wanted to learn and how many skills they picked up in a short space of time.



She said the students are not stupid. They had just not had an opportunity to learn in an accessible way before.

## What are the next steps?



The researchers would like to run the course again.



They would like to run another course for people who have already done the 'Learning how to do research' course.



They would like to make the course better to give the students more information and skills.



They would like to pair people with learning disabilities and learning disability nurses so they can learn together.



They would like to help others run a course so people with learning disabilities can be more involved in research projects in the future.



## Where you can find out more information



If you would like to read the report by Irene and the team called, "It gives us a voice. We CAN be researchers!", you can find it here: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bld.12331>



If you would like to watch a video from one of the training sessions, you can watch it here: ["A very bad research interview."](#)



You can also read more about people with learning disabilities being researchers here: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2012.00745.x>