

Recognition between people with intellectual disability and support workers

Associate Professor Karen Fisher¹, Dr Sally Robinson², Professor Anne Graham², Professor Kelley Johnson¹

¹*Social Policy Research Centre UNSW*, ²*Centre for Children and Young People SCU*



TITLE: Recognition between people with intellectual disability and support workers

Author/s: Karen Fisher,¹ Sally Robinson,² Anne Graham,² Kelley Johnson¹

Affiliation/s: 1. Social Policy Research Centre UNSW 2. Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University

Relationships between people with disability and carers have the potential to diminish or facilitate a good life. We seek to understand recognition and misrecognition in relationships of young people with disability. We apply recognition theory to reconceptualise support relationships, shifting the focus away from instrumentalism towards interactions that shape human identity and build mutual recognition. The action research aims are to understand how young people experience and develop their relationships; identify whether and how key modes of intersubjective recognition (love, rights and solidarity) are experienced in the acts and struggles for mutual recognition between young people and supporters; and explore the potential of action research for capacity building to enhance relationships through a focus on mutual recognition. Recognition is rooted in the acknowledgement of each other's existence. Grounded in critical theory, the work of recognition theorists is interested in social inequality and social justice. It assumes that identity is constructed dialogically, through a process of mutual recognition. Equally important is the concept of misrecognition, a form of social subordination that prevents people from participating as a peer in social life. Recognition theory concerns mutual respect for the particularity and equality of all other persons, consistent with critical disability studies.