**Title:** “All of our contributions are valued and valuable”: Disability, Youth and Leadership in Research

**Speakers:** Dr Kirsty Liddiard (School of Education and iHuman, University of Sheffield, UK); Sally Whitney-Mitchell (Living Life to the Fullest Project Co-Researcher); Katy Evans (Living Life to the Fullest Project Co-Researcher)

**Abstract**

In this talk, we detail the politics and practicalities of co-produced disability research with disabled young people. We centre an arts-informed, co-produced research project – *Living Life to the Fullest* (ESRC) – that brought together a Co-Researcher Collective of disabled young people. Co-production is an established approach; however, our collaborative approaches as a diverse team led us to develop inclusive research practices that engage with virtual, narrative and artistic social research methods in innovative ways. We routinely engage/d in Crip time, distributed leadership and a shared ethic of care in our approaches to research leadership. We discuss our processes as a diverse team and conclude by emphasising the importance of always committing to disrupting power dynamics through centring flexibility, accessibility and inclusivity when co-producing knowledge with marginalised communities.

**Linked resources**

* [Why Can’t We Dream? A Co Production Toolkit](https://whycantwedream.co.uk)
* Liddiard, K., Whitney, S. Watts, L., Evans, K. Vogelmann, E., Spurr, R., Runswick-Cole, K. and Goodley, D. (2022) [*Living Life to the Fullest: Disability, Youth and Voice.*](https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/doi/10.1108/9781839094446) Emerald

**Biographies**

**Kirsty Liddiard** is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Education at the University of Sheffield and a theme co-leader in iHuman. She is the author of *The Intimate Lives of Disabled People* (2018, Routledge) and the co-editor of *The Palgrave Handbook of Disabled Children’s Childhood Studies* (2018, Palgrave) with Tillie Curran and Katherine Runswick-Cole. She is also co-editor of *Being Human in Covid-19* (2022, Bristol University Press) with Warren Pearce, Paul Martin and Stevie de Saille. She tweets at @kirstyliddiard1

**Sally Whitney** has a specialist interest in the lives of disabled young people, their access to work and the impact of assistance dogs in their lives. Using methods of co-production and virtual technologies, Sally works and writes (both academically and for wider audiences) from the comfort of her home as a co-researcher in various projects with universities and non-governmental organisations. She has consequently led the Canine Care project in collaboration with Canine Partners, who partnered her with her own assistance dog Ethan. Both Ethan, and Sally's strong faith, have helped her navigate her chronic, complex illnesses and spur her passion to make the most of every situation.

**Katy Evans** works as an associate for Changing Our Lives, a rights-based organisation

which champions the rights of disabled people and people with mental health difficulties to

live ordinary lives. Katy was also an advisor to the government during the 2014 Special

Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms. Alongside this, she worked with the

Council for Disabled Children to improve co-production with disabled young people

nationally. Katy writes about her lived experiences of disability and being a trauma survivor

and her difficulty accessing appropriate, non-pathologising mental health services. She tweets at @KatyRoseEvans