

Melissa Gilbert

LIVED EXPERIENCE: Disability



Melissa Gilbert is an accomplished woman with extensive lived experience of invisible disability; including rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, asthma and adenomyosis. Wanting her lived experience to have a meaningful impact, she has been actively involved in committees, boards and as a group leader for support groups across a number of consumer-focused health organisations, with her receiving the Margaret Strang Award from Arthritis Victoria in 2012. Combined with a doctorate and professional experience as an academic researcher, Melissa has contributed to 16 publications across topics such as autism, women's health, wellbeing and employment, transport for the elderly and disabled and family violence. This has equipped Melissa with expertise in lived experience engagement and co-design in research, and how to best facilitate other researchers to engage in a meaningful way, through her 'lived experience lens'. Melissa's lived experience draws on crucial areas of intersectionality that must be supported and understood by intersecting systems supporting people with disability - in her case; being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and as a single mother. Melissa is particularly passionate about reducing discrimination when accessing healthcare; after experiences that have caused her to be misdiagnosed and face barriers to accessing equitable treatment. With Melissa's interests, experiences and expertise combined, she is a true asset to system change.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPERIENCE:

- PhD in Psychological Science
- 15 years experience in academic research and study coordination (Research areas: autism; women's health, wellbeing, and employment; occupational therapy - driving and transport for the elderly and disabled people; family law and family violence)
- Co-author of 16 publications, including peer-reviewed journal articles and government reports.
- Recipient of the Margaret Strang Award - Arthritis Victoria 2012
- Relevant previous board experience:
 - Committee member: Melbourne Meeples Incorporated August 2017 - current
 - Group Leader: Young Women's Arthritis Support Group July 2015 - 2018
 - Board Member: Health Issues Centre October 2013 - September 2015
 - Committee member: Victorian Perinatal Safety and Quality Committee, a sub-committee of the Perinatal Services Advisory Committee - Department of Health, State Government of Victoria December 2013 - June 2015
 - Research Advisory Panel Member & Speaker: Arthritis Victoria November 2010 - May 2014

KEY INFORMATION

Place of Birth: Melbourne, VIC, Australia
 Current location: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
 Age: 40 years old
 Language/s: English only
 LGBTQIA+: No
 CALD: Yes - Filipino-Australian
 NDIS Participant: Yes
 Diagnoses: Rheumatoid Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Asthma, Adenomyosis
 Healthcare Access: Primary Health Care, Allied Health, Secondary care

LINKS:

- 'Melissa Gilbert - [Research Publications](#)