

# RESEARCHER PROFILE

My name is Bernadette Curryer, I am a Director of ASID and a student researcher at Sydney University, nearing the completion of my PhD.

## *What animal would you describe yourself as?*

Perhaps a tortoise – as a ‘mature’ student entering into the research field later in life, I am hoping that slow and steady wins the race?

## *What do you hate that everyone else seems to like?*

Not much that I hate other than bigotry and closed minds, but I expect many people feel this way. Oysters are one thing I refuse to eat – don’t understand why people enjoy them!

## *What led you to work with people with intellectual disability?*

As the mother of a daughter with an intellectual disability it seems like it occurred naturally; there are so many unanswered questions and research will hopefully move us toward the answers, resulting in improved quality of life for all.

## *What have been your career highlights?*

Presenting at both national and international conferences, with a successful summary of my PhD findings at the IASSIDD Conference in Glasgow last year.

## *What is your PhD about?*

I am exploring the lived experience of adults with intellectual disability and their key family support person (most commonly the mother) as they receive or provide support for choice and control. This came about from hearing the NDIS promise of ‘increased choice and control for people with disability and their family’ and I wanted to understand these relationships and how choice and control is negotiated within families.

## *How will your research change practice?*

I am hoping it will provide the basis for a program to support the development of self-determination of people with intellectual disability whilst recognising and working with the important, complex relationships they have with their family.

## *What’s next in your research journey?*

Submission of my thesis in the next couple of months, then looking for further opportunities to work on the findings.

## *Any advice you can offer people thinking about doing research in the field of intellectual disability?*

Go for it!! It is not an easy undertaking however the rewards are immense – you will meet a wide range of interesting people, expand your knowledge and skills and hopefully have the satisfaction of making a difference, no matter how small, to the lives of people with intellectual disability.

### *How does ASID support research students?*

I think ASID is a great organisation for student researchers to join – it provides a place for all stakeholders, including people with intellectual disability, families, service providers and academics to come together and discuss current issues relating to intellectual disability. It is a wonderful opportunity for early researchers to meet a wide range of people and discuss ideas. I am hoping that ASID is able to encourage more student researchers to become involved – the rewards are plenty.



**Bernadette Curryer**

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