**UQ Winter Research Project Description**

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| **Project title:** | Co-Design of a Web-Based Communication Partner Training Program for the Australian Aged Care Workforce |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | Duration: 4 weeks (30 June – 25 July 2025)  Hours of engagement: 20-30 hours per week  Delivery mode: Hybrid/remote arrangement \*Students will be able to complete most of their work remotely. |
| **Description:** | Communication is an essential human need and human right. It enables individuals to express needs and preferences, to form and maintain relationships, and to participate in decision making across all areas of their life. During ageing, people commonly experience a complex array of sensory, speech, language, and cognitive changes that can negatively impact their ability to communicate and participate in conversations and decisions about their care. These changes can occur during healthy ageing (e.g. age-related changes to hearing, vision, speech, language, and cognition) as well as from disease processes associated with ageing (e.g., dementia and stroke). Moreover, one in five older Australians is from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background, meaning they have additional cross-cultural communication needs.  Effective communication relies on the successful interaction of two (or more) people. Therefore, as the communication needs of older people increase, a greater burden of supporting successful communication is placed on communication partners. Within the aged care sector in Australia, personal care workers and nurses are primary communication partners for older adults, comprising 93% of the direct aged care workforce. They play an integral role in supporting aged care recipients to voice their opinions and participate and make decisions about their daily care. However, aged care workers currently do not routinely receive training in skills to support communication. Evidence shows that they have unmet skill needs in interpersonal, intercultural, and intergenerational communication, and subsequently, do not feel prepared to support the communication of older people.  Communication Partner Training (CPT) interventions aim to improve communication by providing communication partners with education, training, and the provision of resources to support conversation. CPT programs have been shown to be effective in improving the communication skills and knowledge of health professionals who work with people with dementia, stroke and traumatic brain injury**.** However, existing communication partner training programs are designed for specific populations and fail to address the complex co-occurring communication needs and diversity in older populations. Current CPT programs are commonly delivered by a trained facilitator and are time and resource intensive. An effective, sustainable, and scalable approach to communication partner training in aged care is needed.  In this study, we aim to co-design and evaluate a web-based communication training program for the Australian aged care workforce (personal care workers and nurses). |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | Students will gain skills in at least one or more of the following areas: reviewing literature, qualitative data analysis, preparation of research materials for co-design workshops, academic writing. Based on the student’s interest and level of ability, they might also have the opportunity to contribute to research outputs including publications/oral presentations at the end of their project. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applicants in their 3rd or 4th year of the Bachelor of Speech Pathology (Honours) program, or 2nd year students from the Master of Speech Pathology Studies program. We are seeking a highly motivated applicant, with excellent written communication skills, who can complete work independently with appropriate supervision. Students should have an interest in qualitative research methodologies. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Kyla Hudson |
| **Further info:** | If you would like further information, please contact Dr Kyla Hudson via email: [k.hudson@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.hudson@uq.edu.au) |