

# Research Program



Richard was part of the Research Program in 2015.

“I had spent a lifetime trying to find out where I fit in, and through the program I learnt I could be myself.”

Richard says he always thought his perspective wasn't valued, but through being in the program he learned that his views and lived experience was a helpful asset in research.

Meeting other autistic people and established autism researchers at the workshop helped to solidify his own ideas for research. This coupled with the confidence and perseverance he developed in the program led him to complete his honours thesis.

Richard is now undertaking a PhD centred on creating a diagnostic tool for clinicians and GPs to differentiate autism, anxiety and depression from internet gaming disorder.

This work will allow clinicians and GPs to give a more accurate diagnosis for their patients, reduce diagnostic error and help to develop targeted interventions, while establishing evidence-based guidelines as to when social benefits diminish due to excessive video gaming.

Richard is also on the board of directors of the sex chromosomal variation charity, Australian X and Y Spectrum Support (AXYS). He credits participation in the Research Program as what led him to be appointed as a director.



Above: Richard with the 2015 Research Program participants.

He says he felt “empowered after learning in the program, that you need to have the lived experience in organisations in order to affect change.”

*The Research Program upskills autistic adults and autism researchers to work together as research co-producers. This ensures that what is being researched, and the way it is being researched is relevant to, and appropriate for, the autistic community.*