



Sophia Borovick

Profile:

Sophia Borovick has many chronic health conditions and is a manual wheelchair user. Sophia chose to participate in this study because she wanted to help researchers understand how their practices could be more inclusive when carrying out research.

Sophia hopes that, by providing this information, her taking part in this project will also contribute to at least some participants feeling like their accessibility needs have been thought about.

Having more inclusive research practices, such as including scheduled rest breaks and a separate quiet room to rest in and not making participants write down on paper their thoughts, ideas and answers, will enable more disabled people to participate in research.

Transcript:

[00:00:00] Uh, I'm Sophia Borovick. I'm a wheelchair user. I've been chronically ill and disabled since birth, I'd say. Uh, and I've been a wheelchair user for about 10 years.

(Voiceover) Why is it important to have diverse inputs in research?

[00:00:16] I think it's important for research to have a diversity of opinion, or people from diverse backgrounds giving their opinion, because it can affect change and people won't necessarily think of everyone. So it's important to have quite a widespread viewpoint of people with different abilities.

(Voiceover) Have you been involved in contributing to co design or as a research participant?

[00:00:42] I've done, I've contributed to research. I haven't done co design though, but it's been interesting. The limited experience that I've had with, uh, research.

[00:00:53] It's been interesting to see how it can be so different one to another and realising what's good and what's not so good and what they could have thought of to improve. I have a tremor and so I have difficulty writing but often when you do research they'll ask you to write on a post it for example and then it'll be put up but I was thinking for me it's difficult.

[00:01:20] So if rather than singling out one person, you could have everyone having an iPad or something digital which they could type on or stylists use or voice activation if you can't use your fingers. But that's one big thing that I've noticed.

(Voiceover) What advice would you recommend to early career researchers to create inclusive settings when co creating or conducting research?

[00:01:39] Um, I think it's important to really try and think of um disabilities and maybe even people who got into, I don't know if you call it intersectional disabilities, so it might be, uh, neurodivergent and a wheelchair user, for example. Just simply- for wheelchair users or disabled people to find their way to, to where they're going to go and do the research, for example, uh, planning out, sending them information ahead of time, how it will be, creating a schedule of what you hope to get achieved in that session, so that the person is aware and knows at this time we'll have this, at this time we'll have that. And also potentially, um, creating rest breaks as well, because probably you'll have people who'll need rest breaks during or in between.

(Voiceover) In terms of your lived experience, what have you seen done well, or what has worked well for you in the past?

[00:02:36] What works well is sending ahead of time a schedule of what to do: what's expected or what they're hoping to achieve. Also what the building looks like inside that I'm going to end up going to.

[00:02:47] Whether photographically or a video that helps. Uh, people who offering to make sure that you've got somewhere to go and rest in between for five minutes. I'm trying to think what else. Yeah, I think that's it.

(Voiceover) Is there anything else researchers should be mindful of when working with the disabled community?

[00:03:07] I think actually sending out a form ahead of time asking about specific things like does the, does the room have to be a certain way? Um, well, do you need some, do you, are you allergic to anything? Do you need, in order to participate in the research, do you need to be able to type? Or, will that be okay? Or Yeah, I think just in general, a questionnaire, but that's very specific and giving ideas of what that possible thing could be.

(Voiceover) Do you have any final tips or recommendations you would like to share?

[00:03:46] Talking to disabled people rather than assuming you know what they'll need. And in general, there isn't really a wrong question as long as you approach it politely. I think people will rather be asked rather than people assume, or you get somewhere and you feel like nobody's really thought about you and you don't, maybe you might not, people who do, who, uh, like me might feel they can't say, well, I put their hand up and go, well, actually I need this once they're there.

[00:04:20] So finding out ahead of time is quite useful. Yeah, I definitely think also another point is making sure that you've, the people conducting the research have allowed enough time because one of the ones I went to was they, it felt like they'd only left an allowed an hour when they probably should have allowed maybe two to three hours and I don't know whether they got much out of it really, um, because you, by the time you get in the room, uh, everyone's, I'm, I'm this, I'm that, whatever, then it's.

[00:04:52] It feels like it's time to, one question or two questions, it's time to pack up. So I think allowing time and allowing, yeah, time and space for people to do that, yes. Also when it's group work, it can, one person on their own could feel embarrassed, awkward, whereas group can, you know, You see other people and they might think of something and it might trigger something in your brain and go, Oh, I agree.

[00:05:19] That would help. Or that's a good idea. So I think group actually is probably a good idea. Um, even if it is people, and actually probably people with different disabilities, I think.