

# Tips for successful partnerships with organisations outside academia for better mental health research

This infographic was created from contributions in a #MentalHealthResearchMatters webinar, focused on partnerships with non-academic organisations.

Lived experience collaboration is also a crucial component in mental health research, which we have explored in another infographic.



## Why are research partnerships with organisations worthwhile?



Together you can approach a challenge with different expertise.



You can all benefit from access to different networks and perspectives.



Charities and organisations may be a crucial link to the populations you are trying to reach. Both to shape research and carry it out.



Organisations can put research into practice, and help amplify research findings.



Decision-makers rarely have time to read long research reports. But they need to know that the public and stakeholders will support an approach and read summary briefings.



Partnerships help to create high-quality, practical research grounded in the real challenges that people are facing.

## Challenges



### Different timelines

Organisations may have higher turnovers of staff or shorter-term goals than academics. Aligning teams to deliver timely research to meet all partner needs can be tricky.



### Risks of tokenism

Partnerships need time to develop with roles emerging that suit everyone's needs. A risk is that non-academic organisations are brought into collaborations 'last minute' and are poorly resourced with small, inadequate budgets.



### Language challenges

"It's not what you say, it's what people hear". - Partner organisations will want to use language that is approachable and impactful for an audience and light on jargon. This can be at odds with the language typically used in academic papers.

## Tips for better partnership working

1

Give a lot of thought to who you'd like to partner with and why. Find the organisations that align with your values or goals.

2

Approach a partnership with curiosity and an open mind. Share openly the challenges that you face and the topics that you are interested in. Take the time to get to know one another.

3

Explore differences in opinion early on. Jointly agree shared ways of working together. Discuss, debate and test any changes that might need to be made - for example the language you use.

Think about what you can offer an organisation, as well as what they can offer you.



Evidence to highlight policy problems and support policy change.



An independent, authoritative voice that can communicate the case for change.

## LISTEN

Listen to one another about what the different pressures are, and be positive about the differences partners bring.

## THINK TEAMWORK

Everyone is important and adds value. Communication is key.

## PLAN

Reasonable proposal, evidence based with clear potential

## FUNDING

Ensure the contribution of all partners is well resourced from the beginning, not as a minimal add on.

## Build long-term relationships for better-quality partnerships.

A successful partnership isn't just one project - it can lead to future projects too!



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