Transcript of the video interview of Dr. Melissa Black about the publication: Risk and resilience in developmental diversity: Protocol of developing ICF core sets

What is the context of the publication?

Most research has focused on difficulties experienced by neurodivergent people, looking to identify those factors that place neurodivergent people at risk of poor life outcomes in terms of mental health, wellbeing and challenges doing the things they want to and need to do in everyday life. R2D2 mental health aims to shift focus to instead look at those things that can help neurodivergent people to achieve good functional, mental health, and well-being outcomes necessary for a "good life."

What is the publication about ?

This study presents a roadmap for a body of work that we will be conducting as part of R2D2 Mental Health. In this work, we will use a framework and classification system called the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (or the ICF), which was developed by the World Health Organization. In this work, we will use this ICF to identify the broad range of factors important for resilience and positive life outcomes in neurodivergent populations. This includes factors at an individual level, as well as in terms of what someone does in their day-to-day life, as well as in the environment, including physical surroundings, people, attitudes, services and systems.

To help us to capture these broad range of factors that could be influencing resilience and positive outcomes, we are going to conduct a multi-phase process where we aim to capture perspectives from a broad range of different people. This includes neurodivergent people, their families, clinicians, researchers, and others involved in the day-to-day life of neurodivergent people. We will conduct this series of studies, including a review of existing literature, a survey with clinicians, interviews with neurodivergent people and their families, and finally a study in the real-life domain, capturing resilience factors across education, employment, recreational and leisure settings. These studies will help us to gather a broad and diverse range of all the factors contributing to resilience and positive outcomes in neurodivergence. We will take these factors to a group of neurodivergent individuals and other experts, and refine these factors down only to those most important factors, that are important for positive life outcomes in neurodivergence.

This final set of factors can provide a guide that can help us to assess strengths and resources in neurodivergent populations, and help us to develop more positive interventions, that can support neurodivergent people to achieve good life outcomes.

What will be the impact on the community?

Ultimately, this set of factors will help us to specifically understand those things contributing to resilience in neurodivergent populations. By doing this, we hope to improve our understanding of how we can support neurodivergent individuals to thrive, while also providing more opportunities for tailored assessment and intervention, that can better target both strengths and challenges.