WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC) SYSTEMS IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES WITH ABORIGINAL FAMILIES LIVING WITH MJD IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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**ABSTRACT:**

Join our intercultural team of Yolŋu and Warnumamalya families living with MJD, researchers and community workers, with Balanda speech pathologists, other allied health professionals, linguists and researchers – to reflect on the ways in which our languages, culture and worldview impact our work to support communication participation for people living with MJD and progressive ataxic dysarthria.

In this 2-hour workshop, Dr Amery and colleagues will share their intercultural research processes to collaboratively develop aided AAC systems in Indigenous languages in the Northern Territory. Their work is grounded in identity, relational accountability and reciprocity. Through a culturally responsive, qualitative dominant, mixed methods research approach, including use of bilingual oral conversations and metaphor, Yolŋu ways of being, knowing and doing were prioritised to develop four bilingual, Yolŋu/English aided AAC system prototypes. Building on this and other MJD research with Warnumamalya families from Groote Eylandt, a new project has also commenced to develop AAC system resources in Anindilyakwa.

Workshop participants will be invited to reflect on their identity, relationships and collaborations in MJD clinical services and research through the Yolŋu metaphors of goŋdhu “building by hand” and gulaka-buma “harvesting yams”. The research team will share background information on MJD in Aboriginal families in the Northern Territory, linguistic and cultural diversity in this context, and the current evidence base for progressive dysarthria and staging communication assessment and therapy, including early referral for AAC assessment, education and development while speech is still strong.

Through interactive activities and oral stories, presenters and participants will explore and discuss the components and processes of culturally responsive AAC system development, including determining vocabulary needs, system layout, and organisation in Indigenous languages, and some of the cultural and linguistic considerations for development, maintenance and use in diverse intercultural contexts.