

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Discovering the Power in Me™

**Dr Kathryn Nicholson Perry from the School of Psychology will commence a pilot study to help people with spinal cord injury better understand how they can contribute to their own recovery. This research was funded by the Spinal Cord Injury Network.**

'After a spinal cord injury, people are left with not only significant physical challenges, but emotional and psychological ones as well' explains Dr Nicholson Perry. 'Discovering the Power in Me™ is a program that was developed by The Pacific Institute and provides participants with a better perspective on how they can contribute to their own recovery by modifying beliefs, attitudes and subsequent behaviours. The program is designed as an educational intervention using well established psychological concepts presented by peer facilitators. It has already been used quite extensively in North America, particularly with veterans.'

The program will be run with participants recruited through membership organisations for people with spinal cord injury, including Spinal Cord Injuries Australia, AQA Victoria Limited and the Spinal Injuries Association. Participants will complete a questionnaire before and after taking part, which will help to determine whether participating in the program changes life satisfaction, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Some participants will also be randomly invited to participate in semi-structured interviews before and after the program to find out about their expectations of the program, the feasibility and accessibility of doing the program, and how they found taking part in it. Those facilitating and organising the program will also take part in interviews to help identify ways in which the program may need to be further modified for this population and the Australian context.



This pilot study will provide preliminary data to evaluate and support the development of a comprehensive educational program for people with spinal cord injuries with the hope that it will assist people to recover faster from the psychological consequences of a spinal cord injury, allowing them to focus on the possibilities in their life as quickly as possible.

**Project Title:** Discovering the Power in Me:  
Evaluating the acceptability and feasibility of an  
peer lead educational intervention with people with  
spinal cord injury in Australia  
**Funding has been set at:** \$5,000  
**Contact Details:** [k.nicholsonperry@uws.edu.au](mailto:k.nicholsonperry@uws.edu.au)  
<http://www.uws.edu.au/psychology/sop>  
**January 2011**