2021 QUALLY AWARD RFP

Mental Health Investments

Submissions Open 5/28/2020 | Proposals Due 8/21/2020

LIVE Q&A MEETING: Monday June 8th, 2020 (4-5pm Central)
In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic turned our world upside down, affecting both our personal and professional lives. Though social distancing became our most powerful tool to keep the virus from spreading, it also forced many companies to adapt and implement new ways of conducting business in this new reality. Could this be our “new normal”?

Market research consultants all across the globe were no exception to these pivots. Our industry colleagues, suppliers, and clients all had to adapt to a new landscape; adopting alternative methodologies and acquiring new skill sets, all while balancing modified project schedules.

We know it has been a challenge and we have witnessed an incredible amount of teamwork and training opportunities to help see us through. In addition, the 2021 QRCA Annual Conference theme is: Diversify, Discover, Design the Vision. The idea is to be seen as a call for sharing new points of view, unique solutions and approaches for solving today’s challenges and seizing opportunities that make qualitative research more relevant and future-focused than ever.
There is no doubt COVID-19 has impacted traditional ways of conducting qualitative research, but perhaps even more meaningful is how the virus has impacted our mental health.

These unprecedented times have arguably created new levels of unrest, with 2020 already being on alert for the worsening mental health landscapes among youth populations. People are turning to Google to learn about anxiety and depression.

Not only are people worrying about contracting the virus, but many are also struggling with altered daily routines and uncertainty about the future, while others have the added stress of having lost their job. Additionally, social distancing may have exacerbated mental health issues by making us feel more lonely than ever, hindering our ability to practice healthy coping mechanisms, and limiting access to our support systems.

The idea of developing mental health solutions is not new. In recent years there has been a rise in social conversations to help alleviate the stigma. What IS new, in our new normal, is that it’s harder for people to rely on traditional in-person therapy solutions.

In this year’s Qually Award season, we would like to focus your creative thinking on advising a team of investors who wish to find a solution as we collectively heal from the effects of the virus on mental health. We will pretend that they have been approached to help develop new solutions for mental health treatment, though are completely new to this space and healthcare in general. (Quick note: reminder that all RFP ideas are hypothetical in nature, there is not a live client commissioning this research request.)

In addition to helping the investor team understand the current landscape, as a research consultant, you will also have to adapt your services in response to restrictions imposed during a pandemic; think digital-only or alternative methods that comply with standard social distancing protocols. Keep this in mind regardless of the timing of your project or approach as the future is still very much unforeseeable.

The Qually Award not only offers an opportunity to showcase creative business solutions, it also brings an educational value to conference attendees who love learning new skills. What is something new you bring to the table to the practice of qualitative research that would benefit our community? Be sure to keep this thought in mind during your proposal development.

“The impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health is already extremely concerning. Social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment.”

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus // WHO Director General
CLIENT

A team of investors has been approached by a worldwide health organization (think along the lines of an entity like WHO) to financially support the development of a new mental health service offering. This client rarely engages in marketing research and is open to creative solutions given our current health environment. Treat them as new-to-research and new-to-mental-health in your submission. They need to ensure their investment dollars will provide a decent ROI and want to add something new to the treatment solutions currently available. They are looking for a breakthrough way to engage with mental health “patients” for greater societal good and understand there are stigmas and barriers to this topic.

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

Allocate investment capital towards a new-to-market mental health treatment solution. (This could be for any country.)

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• How has the pandemic impacted patients’ mental health?
• What may be the long-term effects of the coronavirus to mental health to plan for?
• How and why are current treatment solutions failing to meet patient needs?
• How have current treatment solutions pivoted when in-person sessions are not an option?
• What barriers to treatment currently exist and how can we overcome these with this new business?
PARAMETERS

In the spirit of adapting your practice during a pandemic and to encourage new creative thinking, we have set forth some new parameters for your consideration on this proposal:
• Research must not be conducted using a “traditional” in-person focus group(s).
• Please consider digital-only and/or alternative in-person methodologies that take into account social distancing protocols imposed during a pandemic such as limiting public gatherings to no more than 5 people, keeping a 6-feet physical distance from each other, and using protective wear (face masks, gloves, etc).

TARGET AUDIENCE

This description is focused on patients who may not need more advanced forms of therapy or institutional involvement.

Mental Health spans a wide range of diagnoses so please consider at least one of the following patient types in your proposal:
• Diagnosed patients who may/may not be currently receiving treatment
• Undiagnosed patients who may/may not be currently experiencing symptoms in response to the pandemic AND are not engaging in any therapy solutions

List of potential mental health disorders (not exhaustive):
• Anxiety (including generalized anxiety, panic disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and phobias)
• Situational or chronic depression and other mood disorders
• Acute or chronic insomnia
• Post-traumatic stress disorder
• Eating disorders and disordered eating
• Alcohol and/or other drug use disorders
• History of trauma (e.g. domestic and sexual abuse)
PEER-VOTING CRITERIA FOR WINNER

We've heard the feedback! This year, during the QRCA Annual Conference Finalists Presentations, we won't be asking our peers to wear the hat of the “client” when it comes to voting. Instead, we’ve found two areas that have been common in evaluations:

(1) How inspiring the proposal/presentation is; are members left with something new to consider?
(2) The immediate ability for our members to replicate similar themes in their own practice.

NOTE: Details about these peer-voting metrics will be available prior to the Annual Conference along with additional support/guidance on how to vote. At this time we simply want to inform those interested in submitting of the voting shifts.
Finalists

More new news! We’ve formally adjusted the finalist prize pool. This year, the winner will be awarded $1,000 (that’s normal).

Plus **2nd place will earn $500.**
and **3rd place $250.**

There is no longer an “all or nothing” top prize.

*Thank you, QRCA!*

**NOTE:** In the event of a finalist pair, prize money will be equally distributed between team members.

Winner

• Chosen from a peer-based vote after the live presentations during the 2021 QRCA Annual Conference
• Will take home $1000 cash, custom-plated Qually Award ‘Q’ trophy, and a spot in the Qually Hall of Fame
• Invited to join the Qually Award planning committee for the 2022 cycle
• Proposals are due by Midnight on August 21st, 2020 on the QRCA Qually Award page.
• Each should be no more than 10 pages (including a title page).
• Be sure to identify a distinctively “you” project name for your approach with your submission (included in your file name and anywhere else on your proposal you feel is necessary).
• Do not include a budget/cost analysis, nor a project timeline. If a time frame is needed to ground your methodology, consider 6-months or less.
• Do not include any personal information in your proposal, it will be reviewed anonymously. Our organization managing partner, Ewald, will proof all submissions to ensure there is no PII before the committee reviews the proposals.
• Focus on research design, we’re looking for IDEAS on how you would tackle this problem, not business pitches.
• We will identify up to three finalists to present at the 2021 QRCA Annual Conference.
• Each will be given one free conference admission (if there is a team of two, this is the equivalent to a 50% discount for each presenter).
• The finalists are chosen by members of the Qually Award Planning Committee and their extended review members.
• Proposals must focus on qualitative methods only. We know there is a lot of secondary and quantitative data available for this problem – feel free to mention how your QUAL research is flanked by other research means, yet your proposal needs to be anchored in qualitative executions among all else.

• All participants must be in good standing with QRCA. If a non-member submits and is chosen as a finalist, they must become a member prior to the 2021 Annual Conference, or will forfeit their finalist position and the next-placed submission will be granted a spot in the final group.

• No one on the current Qually Award Planning Committee (or those who participated in the planning process) is eligible to submit.

• Winner(s) from the previous award (2020) are not eligible to compete. This includes other members of the past winner’s firm. (They will qualify again in the 2022 circuit.)

• Proposals can be submitted individually or as a team. Only those team members identified are allowed to contribute to the research design and presentation of the proposal. Outside assistance will disqualify the submission.

• If desired: you may submit a proposal as an individual and a separate submission with a teammate; it is highly encouraged that these proposals be unique in their approach and methodologies presented.

• Finalists agree to allow QRCA to post their proposal on the QRCA website for members to access prior to their live presentations.

• All finalists must be available to attend & present at the 2021 Annual Conference. (Given the unforeseen future health environment landscape; any conference pivots and related impacts to the Qually Award finalists presentations, will be considered in detail with the Conference Chairs, QRCA Board, and Ewald to ensure compliance and safety for our members. QRCA does have a COVID-19 task force in place and all conference related details can be found here.)
2021 Qually Award Planning Committee:

Kayte Hamilton, Chair | 2020 Rising Star

Breyda Ortega, Vice Chair

Pam Goldfarb Liss, QRCA Board Liaison

Elizabeth McKinley, 2019 Rising Star

Marlena Mattei, 2019 Qually Finalist

Andre Sanabia, 2020 YPG Winner

Leah Lowe, 2020 Qually Winner

Jillian Domin, 2020 Qually Winner

Shamsu Bhaidani, Hatchtank

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