

# Working with diverse people: Video 1

## Transcript

- Alright, what does diversity mean to you?
- To me?
- Yeah, do you know this word diversity?
- Diversity, I love it.
- I'm diverse in several different ways as part of several different minorities.
- Yeah, having that, you know, one a disability, two being part of the LGBT community and having that all rolled into one makes it fun.
- I have different people from different nationalities, living together, like I guess Australia's very diverse in that sense we're a melting pot of every different culture.
- Some people like different kinds, like, they like wrestling.
- Yeah, that's right, very strange people like wrestling like you.
- 90% of my carers are from overseas and has been the case for about 25 years and I love it, I really do.
- Or maybe how you like R&B.
- Yes, I love R&B.
- But you don't like rock at all.
- Well, rock's shit then.
- We're not represent especially when so many people are diverse or part of that diverse kind of bracket.

- There's not enough inclusivity or diversity on screens or in media at all.
- R&B is a lot better because it has more beats.
- Yeah but what if they think it's not better?
- Hmm.
- I like it because I love to learn and I actually have in the business where I do work a lot with the ethnic community, I'm well aware that people with disabilities really hesitate to have someone unless they've got perfect English and I think that's interesting because yes it's important because, you know, tissue, T-shirt, people always wanna pass me the T-shirt but don't wanna blow my nose and that's about the language sort of thing but we laugh about it.
- The quick answer that he wrote, just in the side of the road so there wasn't a lot of time to elaborate on that but he said, you know, it means helping people with disabilities, so that's what diversity meant to Mich.
- Well some people like sushi and I think it's the best
- No, no, no I don't like sushi.
- Why, what wrong with sushi?
- I don't eat sushi.
- And I guess diversity, like a key point of it or embracing diversity is embracing differences and understanding that lots of people have different experiences in life and view things differently and you could actually learn a lot from others. What is it like to be in your shoes? You know, what's that aspect of life like? I think that's kind of, yeah, what diversity's all about and why it's important.
- I think life would be boring without diversity.
- For sure. For sure.
- Tell us about a time when a support worker has done something great that showed you that they were really aware of diversity and its importance? When I first started working with Rob as I do for any of our clients, you sit down and you just chat, the more you chat, the more you find out about people. Friendship is the crux of what we do, I think, I think you build a rapport with the person you're working with and they build rapport with you. We go out on adventures every Thursday and we have an absolute ball.

- Hm, we do.

- Yeah, we do and it's really varied, you know, we got to art galleries and I usually describe to Rob most of the artwork because he can't see the definition so we do that and we always have lunch and we go for lots of walks, walking's awesome, you know, and I often have people say oh you can't take someone with dementia to do those things and I go oh we do, we do it every week, we have no issues, no problems and for me it's about tapping in on what the person has not what they've lost.

- Alright, what is your understanding of the concept of privilege?

- Privilege?

- Yeah, this is a hard one.

- That is a funny one.

- Privilege, alright.

- And I'm gonna give you the privilege to answer that question first.

- Okay, privilege is something that you can have or something that you can do while others cannot.

- Privilege means like if some people are more privileged than others because they might have had a better education or a better upbringing, I guess it's not fair, I mean in Australia we try and make it as fair as possible.

- We're really, really lucky in many ways, you know, we have a great health system, we have a lot of support around us.

- For me it's when things aren't equal, whether it's in the world of disability and access or whether it's human rights or being part of the LGBTQ community.

- We're Middle Eastern and we grew up, well I definitely grew up in country Victoria before it was cool to be ethnic.

- So privilege is that some people are treated differently to others, some people are treated better than others. They have different opportunities, they might have more opportunities in life.

- Yeah so 'cause where I used to live in the boy's house, I couldn't go out on my own, had to go to bed at a suitable time the residents were rough as bad as the staff, with the staff are supposed to

be looking after you but in some ways they did but then they were quite bullies themselves.

- Okay. Do people sometimes underestimate you

- or assume that you can't do certain things?

- Umm,

- Do you get this?

- Uhh, lots yeah really pisses me off.

- All the time, yeah, definitely. I think I've also done that to myself especially because I haven't always identified as being disabled or being in a wheel chair. I think for a long time I went with what everyone else said and avoided certain things but then I think for me, I went and joined a choir and they do big choreography and I did the first choreo class and I was told, "Oh, you know, you can just sit to the side" and like sway and click and things," and I was like "No, screw it," so they were doing a 360 turn that was quite fast I'm like "Yep, everyone move out of the way," and give me the scope and I did it and it was liberating, it was amazing and so now I have adapted all the choreography.

- People underestimating you is one thing but you underestimating yourself and stopping yourself from doing those things before they can even assume that you can't do them is such a massive, massive barrier.

- I try not to, I try really hard not to, I try to get them to be as independent as they can. I use a lot of my therapeutic skills with Rob but in a fun way.

- Those people that presume I can't do things, they just, their mind is too closed. "Who's taking you out today?" No one's taking me out, I'm going with someone so it's all this sort of negative presumptions. I guess for me I just want to be able to prove to myself I can do something. I'm the first one to put my hand up and say I can't do it or I don't want to do it or I'm lazy, used to be able to do it, don't do it anymore, so it's all of that.

- If they're feeling sorry for me it means they care for me.

- Okay.

- That's what I like but people who treat me rude and badly and treat me arrogant and all that, I don't like being rude to but I felt that I've done something wrong unless you tell me nicely instead of yelling at me 'cause sometimes I walk out, I just don't want to be around people, it's not 'cause I don't want to be, it's the way some people treat me and it makes me, I start crying.

- So you live in a group home Terry is that correct yeah?
- I mean I got me own room. I like my house, I like the people but what I also like my privacy, I give them their privacy, they should at least have the courtesy to give me my privacy.
- What about reading?
- Yes.
- 'cause people think you can't read very well?
- Sometimes yes, sometimes no.
- Can you read this one?
- Do people,
- Mitch actually was able to go through mainstream schooling, he actually finished year 12 along with some special school as well and he had aids with him, supports with him at school but yeah, maybe that is the case that some people didn't realize how smart he was or you know, he still had the intelligence of everyone else in the class as well just because he couldn't communicate in the same way.
- I remember one time we were out and you went to order a beer at the bar.
- Yeah.
- And people assumed that you were underage because you're short.
- But I'm not a shorty.
- Yeah you are a shorty.
- No I'm not.
- What did you do then? You've got your ID?
- Yes.
- And you showed them?

- Showed them,
- That you're older than you look.
- I showed the ID,
- Yeah.
- If I'm look, I order the beer.
- Can you think of anything else?
- And nightclubs.
- And nightclubs?
- Yeah. Nightclubs, sometimes I get drunk, have fun and have a chat,
- With some girls?
- Talk to, yeah, talk to some girls.
- Okay, how does who you are affect how people treat you?
- Um, well.
- All my life, I've been in a chair all my life, I get excited when people make a comment about the clothing. Now right now I'm getting into these beads I'm loving them, because it's one of those things where it helps me communicate, but people are going to comment on the beads. And they'll start talking about the country that I'm from, why do I use it, and that's just so nice, 'cause they're not seeing the twisted little hands on a wheelchair. So I get a real buzz when people are picking up on other parts of me. They notice just not the disability, that's what I like because they start seeing John.
- I once dyed my hair a ridiculous color of rainbow, and when people asked me why I did it, it was because I said to them that if I was in a crowd, I want someone to be able to point me out by saying, oh yeah that chick with the rainbow hair, rather than the girl in the wheelchair.
- And he had a funny answer to that one, 'cause he said "In a good way." He felt that his identity, made others treat him well.

- Every aspect is affected not just by having a disability for me, but by my sexuality. People do treat me differently, like they may kind of you know, walk on eggshells or just kinda be really avoidant of every part of conversation, it just seems like automatically people are different.

- Growing up in a community of like 2000 people where you're the only gay in the village. You know I can say that, yeah. Yeah pretty much the only gay person around. They take that as being your whole self, as well you're the gay. Yeah your short but like you're gay, like you know, and that's their whole interaction with you is like oh, the gay one. Like that's what it is, you know, I'm Ben first. And you know being short, people either don't want to deal with you at all, they don't wanna get involved, they think you're too much effort. Or people on a night out or something, they'll come up to you, and chat away to you and then suddenly they wanna like protect you and look after you all night and it's.

- Baby bird type thing.

- Do people know you have downs when they meet you?

- Down's syndrome?

- Yeah.

- Yes.

- Because I know sometimes you can see other people with down syndrome.

- Yes.

- Do you think people can see that you have down syndrome?

- Yes.

- And did how do you think that makes them treat you?

- Everyone's different we like.

- Everyone's different and what, we like different things?

- We like different things.

- What is inter-sectionality.

- Um.

- I don't really know.

- Well, inter-sectionality basically just means having a lot of identifying characteristics, like a disability or like being LGBT, and having those crossover and impact on your life at the same time.

- You know, not just thinking of people in terms of a single characteristic, not just thinking of man and woman, and disabled and not disabled, or White, Black, Asian, you're taking all those aspects of a person's life and putting it together and saying, actually this makes their experience really different. So not all women have the same experience, not all men have the same experience, not all people with disabilities have the same experience, not all people of different ethnicities have the same experience. So if you have multiple identities that intersect, how does that impact your day to day life?

- Here we go.

- In every aspect of it ever.

- I guess they're all either gay or bisexual or intersex, then they've got their disability on top of that, some have multiple disabilities on top of that too, so it can affect them in many different ways. Like some have got intellectual, and mental health issues as well.

- It leaves you so more prone to mental illness, so that's a big impact on my life, depression, anxiety.

- PTSD.

- All those things.

- All of it yeah.

- Yeah so that's a major impact on life. But you know also, just everyday interaction.

- Well a prime example is dating. You've got a disability and you're part of the LGBTIQ community.

- It impacts on you trying to be just a person, like you're trying to be you.

- Yeah, even with the friends that I've had for a really long time, the focus can often sway towards, illness and disability, and sometimes you just want to be a person..