

Human rights led practice: Video 3

Transcript

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Hello, today we are talking about human rights led practice in disability work. We all know that the aim of the National Disability Insurance Scheme is to support disabled people to live ordinary lives, in line with the human rights under the 2002 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. But, in reality, getting the support we need through the NDIS can be complicated if you don't have accessible housing already in place. My guests today are Amanda Roe and Trevor Kinna. Amanda is a disability advocate who was called in by one of Trevor's support workers to help with his housing situation. Although he's only 56, he's been living in aged care for the past five years. Now, Trevor, you're 56, why are you living in an aged care facility?

[Trevor Kinna]

Well I had a stroke, I went to hospital and then when I came out of the hospital I went to this other place, wanted to find a joint, they took me to this aged care place and told me I to live there, I didn't have a choice or--

Anything else even.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Amanda, how did you get involved with trying to get Trevor more appropriate housing?

[Amanda Rowe]

I was first contacted by Trevor's support coordinator. So Trevor has funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and one of the things that that funds is a support coordinator who, as the term indicates, coordinates supports. So the support coordinator was visiting Trevor in the aged care facility, talking to Trevor's support workers that were also paid for by the NDIS, and also Trevor's therapy team, and all of those people were very concerned about the standard of the care that Trevor was receiving. They felt that they were not really in a position to advocate for him. They couldn't be sort of independent I suppose, even though they were very concerned. The support coordinator had raised a number of issues with the facility management, but nothing was really changing. And so, one of the advantages of advocacy is that it is independent, so you can go in there and, you can't wave a magic wand but you can get people acting on things, perhaps easier than other people who are employed by different agencies and that sort of thing.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Now, how important was the role of Trevor's disability support worker in drawing attention to Trevor's plight?

[Trevor Kinna]

I found them to be a lot more supportive and a lot more caring, and when they're not there they say things and do things that aren't really for ya. But when they come in, oh yeah, you know, they're all really nice and really this and that and really good.

[Amanda Row]

Are you talking about the regular staff at the nursing home..

Yeah.

Yeah, that they, there's a noticeable difference when your outside support workers come in.

Young people living in nursing homes, if they don't have those informal supports like family and you know, a big friendship circle, you can be very isolated too. So the support workers that work with you ensure that you are not isolated in institutional care, because really, that's what a nursing home is, you know, it's not like supported accommodation.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Is it common for younger people to be in aged care facilities and things like that? Is this--

[Trevor Kinna]

No.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Is this normal, or?

[Amanda Row]

Well, it shouldn't be common, but --

It shouldn't be common or--

It is relatively common--

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Is it?

[Amanda Row]

In terms of, particularly if people are relatively high physical support needs, because generally

they require specific equipment and properly trained staff, which usually a nursing home will have. And nursing homes have a lot more beds, so there's generally, if there's a shortage of accommodation there's generally a place in a nursing home where supported accommodation, you might be waiting a while for something to come up. But the ratio of residents to workers is very different in disability-specific supported accommodation and nursing homes, so if you were living in supported accommodation, there might be three or four residents and two staff, whereas a nursing home, you might have 30 residents and two to three staff, so it's very different in terms of the level of care.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Trevor, where would you like to be living if you had real choice and control over your situation?

[Trevor Kinna]

I want to live where there's a good backyard.

So it'd be, and I would also have a dog, whereas to buy one now is silly. But he could run around in the backyard, you know. Carer's room, or that sort of thing. And the place I want to live would be, it would be a house that would be easy to get into and out from.

[Amanda Row]

And Trevor, you have also spoken about wanting to live with people your own age rather than very very elderly.

[Trevor Kinna]

Yeah, Yeah.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Amanda, what do you think new disability support workers can learn from Trevor's situation?

[Amanda Row]

Well I always say that support workers are really at the frontline of human rights, you know. And I don't think they realize the importance and also the level of responsibility that that carries. Now, some agencies are not happy with that sort of inherent advocacy role that a support worker has, because you might be the only person that's seeing something that you don't think is right, or the person's human rights are not being respected, you might be the only person. You really do have a responsibility to act on that. And, you know, a lot of support workers, they don't feel that they have, they don't feel they're allowed to do that too. And it doesn't mean that they then have to do the work of trying to get things changed for the person with the disability, but they can then refer on to an advocate or an advocacy agency. I think that for new support workers it's more than just personal care and taking people bowling and that sort of thing, you know. That there is always a human rights and an advocacy component to your role. And however you choose to interpret that is up to you, but I think it's a really important part of the job.

[Madeline Stewart presenter]

Thank you so much, and thank you Trevor and Amanda for coming and sharing your story, we really appreciate it, thank you.

[Trevor Kinna]

No worries.

[Amanda Row]

Thank you Madeleine.