



Visibility Podcast



Dating apps, chats and mishaps episode transcript

Fiona:

Hi everyone. And thanks for listening to Visibility, the monthly podcast produced by CID, the Council for Intellectual Disability.

Fiona:

Here, we will be telling our stories, and exploring some of the issues that impact people with intellectual disability. To find out more about our work visit www.cid.org.au.

Now, settle in and enjoy.

Music:

[CID's podcast tune]

Adele:

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Council for Intellectual Disability acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Adele:

Hi, I'm Adele and I work with the Council for Intellectual Disability. You're listening to the first episode of our monthly podcast, Visibility. In this series we'll be talking about relationships. And in this first episode about dating. I'm here speaking with Ella. Welcome Ella, how are you today?



Visibility Podcast



Ella:

Pretty well thanks.

Adele:

That is good. So we've got you here because I understand that you have some really interesting experiences that would be great to share with people, about your dating career and, as an adult, how that's been for you.

Ella:

Actually, it's been pretty well, like it's been an adventure. It's like a story I would like to tell people with intellectual disability in general. I think when you go out dating people, you want to fine tune. You want a date first. What you like to do? Hobbies? It's been very interesting. I've dated a range of people.

Adele:

So in your experience, like how, how were your family about you wanting to sort of start dating people?

Ella:

I think they were a bit nervous at first, but you know how families are, you know, when you first have a boyfriend or girlfriend, they get a bit nervous because they don't want to see your child getting heartbroken. So, you know, they just kind of try and say, all right, just take care of yourself, you know, and make sure you feel comfortable. Make sure they're not going to do anything to you. You know, just, you know, be safe.

Adele:



Visibility Podcast



Absolutely. And that's, it's the same for everybody, isn't it? Very much so. You're always your parents' child, aren't you? I mean, you've got siblings haven't you Ella?

Ella:

Yes.

Adele:

Because you have an intellectual disability, did your parents worry about you just a bit more?

Ella:

Yes, because some people might take advantage of you because you have an intellectual disability or they might, you know, I'm just like I've had past people have been a bit mean because of my intellectual disability. They think, 'Oh well, she's not very smart, well I can just do this, do that.'

Adele:

So there's lots of different ways that you can meet people these days, isn't there?

Ella:

Yeah, you can go out to clubs, pubs. You can even go out on dating apps!

Adele:

Ooh. Do you want to tell us a little bit more about your experience with dating apps?



Visibility Podcast



Ella:

Dating apps have been pretty good. I met a few people from 'meet me'. It's a very good site because you make friendships, date and yeah, it's pretty good. I liked because you know, if you don't want to date, you can just make friends, build a bond with friends, you know. It doesn't have to always be dating. It's very good. Yeah, you just got to be safe on it, you know, because I feel like when I went on it, when I first went on the dating app, I didn't know how to do it.

Adele:

If you've been in a situation where you've had someone through the app approach you and you weren't quite sure about them, or you were a bit confused. Were there things that you did to help you out?

Ella:

There are some things that I was a bit alert on. Like sometimes I wouldn't understand people's writing feels too long, like paragraph, you know. I was seeing a person and they would write these long messages that didn't make sense. And you're just like, huh? What? Why? Okay. So I was always good to get a friend or next-door neighbor or you know, your parents or your brother and sister, and always, they can check their background through Facebook, Instagram, you know, anything social media. Because you know, sometimes, always good just to look at their background. It's very important. You know.

Adele:

It is so important to get to know someone before you actually start going into a relationship, and relationships are all different kinds. Aren't they? They're friends and



Visibility Podcast



colleagues as well as partners and lovers. So just you were mentioning, what I think is a really great tip, to go onto the type of apps where it's about meeting and friendships. And then if something develops from there. But I mean, it's tricky, like setting up a profile, how did you go setting up your first profile?

Ella:

Aaah well. [Laughs] I sometimes didn't understand it. So they would say put your email in or put your Facebook in. And sometimes I found it a bit weird because I thought, Oh, all them people will know me on my Facebook. Then some people just message me. That's fine. If you know them, that's all good. But I think it's better to be safe to just put your email in. And then after that, just delete it if you don't like it. Because if you put it on your Facebook all the people can just still message straight after, you know?

Adele:

So setting up your profile, Ella, did you do that yourself or did you do it with a friend?

Ella:

I did it by myself. I was eager to do it by myself. You know, I wanted to learn new skills and I did. I just went on to meet me, downloaded the app, read about the comments, if it was good or bad, make sure if it was safe. And it was, so it was good. And that's how I met a few friends actually from there. I'm still in contact with them. So it's really good.

Adele:

Like knowing what's real and what's not though, like, you know, the internet is an interesting place, isn't it? How did you find it?

Ella:

That's absolutely right. Because you can tell who's fake and who's real.



Visibility Podcast



Adele:

Oooh. [Laughs] How?

Ella:

Okay, well, I have a story. It's a bit embarrassing. But it's funny. So I thought I had this person as my friend. Then I realized it was a robot. It was not, it was, you know, those people that, you know how. I was talking to one of them.

Adele:

It's an automated kind of generated, not person thing.

Ella:

Yes. At the end of the day. And I was embarrassed!

Adele:

I'm sure I've heard of that. And it's very, very common. And so how did you know that this, that the supposed person on the other end of the chat, wasn't really a person. How did you find out?

Ella:

Because I asked him to send me a picture, and they wouldn't. Then I just thought, well, this is a bit weird and shady. So I'm just going to.

Adele:



Visibility Podcast



Yeah. Well, Ella, that's a really good point. So I guess how do we know what's real and what's not? That's a great story. And you know, millions of people have been in that same situation. But you were smart enough to go hang on a minute, if you can't send me a picture of your face so I can see who I'm talking with, then clearly you're not a person. So that would be a good, sort of hint, I guess.

Ella:

And if they have a fake profile picture - which you'll know straight away if it's a fake profile picture - don't talk to them. Just move on.

Adele:

How do you know it's a fake profile picture Ella?

Ella:

Because there's people who have real pictures like me. I put a real picture. I don't put fake profile pictures. Its people assume that you're that girl when you're not.

Adele:

How can you tell though?

Ella:

Actually, funny story is, I had one person that looked really good and a person who actually looked like that actually. It's funny, but sometimes people put Photoshop to make them look skinnier. To make them look, like they have a big bum you know? You can tell straight away. I've learned with dating apps that you have to make sure if they're real or not. Because at the end of the day, you could be just talking to someone you don't know. Like oh no gee what have I got myself into. But I've been stuck in that situation, and that's how you learn.



Visibility Podcast



Adele:

OK, so this idea of trusting your instincts and safety while dating sounds like something we should really talk more about. Let's just go to a short break and then we'll get straight back into it.

Fiona:

You're listening to visibility, the podcast produced by the Council for Intellectual Disability. If you're enjoying this episode, you can support us by reviewing us through Apple, Podchaser or your favorite listening app.

Adele:

Welcome back. We're talking with Ella about dating when you have an intellectual disability. Before the break, we'd started to talk about trusting your instincts when dating. But I'm curious Ella to know your thoughts about if there are other steps that people could take to stay safe. So, you know, just say you've been chatting with someone and you're ready to meet up with them. Can you give us some thoughts or advice about how you might do that safely?

Ella:

Uh, yes. Always meet in a public place. That's always a good tip. And make sure if it's the afternoon, or the morning, if you feel comfortable. I feel like it's always safe to do, I feel like for me, it's always better to do morning because you have the whole day to plan what you want to do. If you do the afternoon, you know, it might be, you know, you go out by four or five or six in the afternoon or evening, that is going to get too late and you kind of get a bit scared. Where oh my God I'm going to be stuck. How am I going to get home? It's always better to do it morning or the afternoon. Or if they're going to be home, that's always good too. But you always got to be safe. You know, you've got to get to know them more, not just take them straight away in your car, you know.



Visibility Podcast



Adele:

Ella, would you say that, I mean, you just mentioned that perhaps you'd feel safer during daylight hours. So would you say that, like maybe you might, you know, meet up at a cafe or something like that? So to have a bit of a day date to start?

Ella:

Yeah. If it's a real date, like a day date, where you're getting to know the person and you two are like, oh, okay. Let's catch up here. All right. Awesome. Um, and you know, and you see where you go from there in the morning, and if you guys are still doing really good then maybe do something in the night time. Like take a break, go back home, do whatever, then go back. You know, you can plan the day by going to Lunar Park, or go to the zoo. You know, you just got to pick what you want in your day. If you're into hiking, horse riding, bushwalking, anything. But like I said, get to know the person more before you go on a date.

Adele:

Yeah. That's a really good tip as well, Ella. So I'm hearing things like, you know, if you need support to set up your profile, do that. I'm hearing that. It's really important to get to know someone as a bit of a friend first. So maybe consider some of those, um, apps that are more like friendship based to start with. I'm also hearing that you need to consider the times of day that you feel comfortable meeting with someone. And always meet someone in public, in a public place.

Ella:

And oh I forgot - always missing something - always make sure you have someone as a backup call if the date goes wrong.



Visibility Podcast



Adele:

Oooh, I've seen this in movies. Explain the backup call, Ella.

Ella:

OK, well, it's kind of funny. If the date goes pear shaped, I get someone to call me to get me back. Like, "yeah, sure. Okay. I need to go home. Oh. So I need to help someone at home. See you later, but thank you so much. Good day. Bye"

Adele:

So it's a bit like a pretend call, like a get out of jail free card. You get one of your mates to call you an hour in.

Ella:

Yes. If the date is good, just leave it to say, yeah I'm doing great, talk to you later. Or if the date's going really bad, just give me a call please.

Adele:

That's also a good safety thing too Ella, isn't it? That you have at least one person who knows where you are at the time and is clocking, whether you're okay. Yeah. So funny in the movies, but also I think yeah. And I....

Ella:

And in real life, because you know, the date goes pear-shaped, like I said, sometimes dates do not end very well. And sometimes you think oh my God, what if I got myself into? This guy's so boring me out talking about trains or buses.

Adele:



Visibility Podcast



Is that your, is that your sign? That this is not going to work? As soon as public transport comes up, you're out.

Ella:

[Laughs]

Adele:

So I guess, you know, we're really talking here about opening up to the idea that everybody wants relationships on some level and everybody wants access to like-minded people. And everybody wants to be attracted to someone and fall in love.

Ella:

Of course! It's like, you know, you want that experience. You don't want to miss out. You know, you want to have a good life, you know, a healthy life. You've just got to be careful what places you go and [take] steps with who you date. Like, but if you know the person, then you're going to be fine. And if they do like you, all warts and all, then they are good, good heart. You don't want someone that's not going to treat you respectfully and is just going to use you and not like you.

Adele:

Yeah. I agree. And so speaking about the elephant in the room, at what point, did you find that it was important for you to talk about your disability? Not talk about it at all? How did that work for you? Because I imagine there was different responses from different people.



Visibility Podcast



Ella:

I think once you build that friendship up and we get to know you more, I think telling your story is good. But you know, if you feel comfortable telling them the story straight away, then they should understand. Or maybe if they don't understand, maybe just move on and move on to the next person. Because you know, there's always the Mr. Right there. So you just got to be sure that the person you want to date the guy or whoever girl, you know, can respect you. Because everyone in this world wants respect and love, not want to be treated badly, you know? And at the end of the day, everyone wants respect.

Adele:

Totally. Don't we all? Ella, tell me what is the weirdest date you've ever been on?

Ella:

So I went on a date with this guy, and it was awful. So we went to a restaurant, like a restaurant cafe. And we sat there, we got some drinks, like some Coke and lemonade and he didn't talk at all. And he was on his phone, just flicking through, and I was chatting, you know, trying to get to know him. And he was just, didn't give a damn. He was just like, nuh, nuh. And I said, "Oh, what would you like to do after?" And he goes, "I probably just want to go home." So after like an hour or two, he just wanted to leave. And then I was like we never talked and then we just kind of left.

Adele:

Well, that made that easy though. Imagine if he wanted to see you again? That would have been very confusing. And I mean, Ella, that is a great example though. You don't know someone until you actually meet them face to face. So being able to do that in a cafe where you're safe. And so, as much as you can chat on an app, you can text chat people. Have you, have you ever done, like where you phone chat with people again before you meet them?



Visibility Podcast



Ella:

Oh yeah. I've done video chats. I said, oh would you like me to do a video call? I think it'd be better if we do the face to face and they go, sure. That's great. If they're not, it's just like, okay, well then just leave it alone and see from there, or if they're just a bit nervous, you can always talk to them on the phone, and go, okay now we've talked on the phone a bit more, why don't we do a video chat?

Adele:

That's a great idea to really get to know whether the person is real and genuine. Ella, thank you so much for chatting with us today. I think your experience and your insight into the world of dating when you're a person with an intellectual disability. And you're someone Ella who has always been a really positive advocate for your peers. And I really thank you for your time today here at CID and our visibility podcast.

Ella:

Oh thank you. I've enjoyed it. And I hope people out there who listen, enjoy it and learn. I'm saying to everyone, who's out there, you have a right to date, whoever and whenever. Don't let people stop you just because you have a disability, you know? Say I'm proud I have a disability. Even if I have problems, I'm still human. You know, I may have a few issues, but at the end of the day, everyone has a few issues.

Adele:

Thanks so much, Ella, for everything you shared with us today, it's been really interesting and valuable. You've been listening to CID's visibility podcast. And next month we'll be talking with Judith about the joys and challenges of family relationships



Visibility Podcast



when you have an intellectual disability. We look forward to having you join us again then. Thanks for listening.

Fiona:

You can support our podcast by leaving a review at Apple or the listening app of choice. Until next month.