



Visibility Podcast



Out, proud and included 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.

Hi and welcome to the Council for Intellectual Disability Visibility podcast. My name is

Adele. I'll be chatting today to someone who's both a person who identifies with an intellectual disability as well as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

I'd like to welcome Cameron. Hi Cameron. Thanks for chatting with us today.



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Cameron

Hi, how are you? That's all right

Adele

Yeah I'm good. I'm very good. I'm really excited to have you on the visibility podcast.

Today Cameron, can you just tell us a little bit about yourself and what you what you do in the space with regards to disability rights and queer rights

Cameron

Yeah not a problem. My name's Cameron. I'm a self-advocate with a group called [Rainbow Rights](#) which is a group in the LGBTIQ+ community and we meet like fortnightly discussion of issues to bring them to into the community and I also do [Voice at the Table](#) which is an organization that goes around training organizations how to include people with cognitive disabilities in meetings.

Adele

Oh that's so good. Isn't it because inclusion for everybody is really important?

Cameron

It is.



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Adele

I guess you know for you, being someone who is part of two groups that sometimes the community can struggle with. Sometimes people don't understand people with intellectual disability or maybe can't relate to somebody in the queer community. Was that more difficult for you?

Do you think being seen as a sexual being in a way?

Cameron

Yes, it is because some people don't understand that if you have a disability you also have also a sexual choice preference as well. You can either be a straight male with a disability or female or you can be in the LGBTIQ+ community. You do have options to choose out of if you identify as LGBTIQ+.

Adele

Did you find that it was harder for you to come out because of that?

Do people take you seriously because you take you seriously, but was that difficult?

Maybe you could tell us how you came out?

Cameron

When I came out I was in the custody center in Melbourne. My mom come and visit me and at the casting center you don't have contact visits so it's all behind a box. You're in a box with the screen protecting you in front of you and my mom asked me if I was gay and I turned around and said "Yeah I am gay" and then she said "Why are you telling me now?" I said "You see this window, you can't get to me" (laughs)

Adele

[Laughter]

It was safety for you, wasn't it?



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Cameron

[Laughter]

Yes

Adele

As much as that's a funny story and thank you so much for sharing that Cam. You have to go on a journey sometimes, don't you?

Cameron

Yeah sometimes you do. When I come out wasn't sure how my parents would react. If they would be happy because they're sort of in the old school. When I say old school as in back when they were younger. It wouldn't have been as open as it is today.

Adele

Yeah that is the case for people regardless of ability, isn't it? Equality is important and uniqueness is important and we're all just as important as each other, aren't we?

Cameron

Exactly.

Adele

What pushed you into becoming more of an advocate? I mean you could be someone who lives with disability and is queer but doesn't really talk about or isn't part of any sort of group. What made you feel like you needed to speak out and be a self-advocate?



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Cameron

I just thought it's about time that I stood up for myself and I just do it for myself and brought it out into the community. Saying "Hey look yes there are people with disabilities in the community and yes we do have a sexual choice and a preference"

So don't judge us, don't put a label on who we are.

Adele

Is this also about representing? So you're sort of saying look not everyone's necessarily going to speak up about this but you feel compelled to do so. What do you hope the outcomes of that are? What do you hope to do when you speak up?

Cameron

It's more of the acknowledgement, the recognition that we should get instead of being treated like second-class citizens.

Yes we already have a disability but we also want to be recognized to fit it in part of the community. We've got an intellectual disability we also want to say "Look I have a disability and I'm gay" I want people to accept me for who I am in the community not saying "No look you've got intellectual disability you don't know what you're talking about"

Cameron

Cameron do you now find that you surround yourself with people who understand you more and can give you that support?



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Adele

Yeah I do find myself surrounded by people who give me the support and the Respect that we need and deserve

Adele

So Cameron because you're part of different groups that help you to push your message forth about being a person with intellectual disability who also identifies in the queer community and you understand the barriers that people face. What are some of the things that you know some of your peers share with you or some barriers that you've faced well?

Cameron

Some of these like peers have gatekeepers in their life. A gatekeeper which pretty much means that someone controlling their life for him, not letting them do anything. Not letting them have a partner or stepping in you know not letting them be active in the community or have choices or have anything to say or even you know sometimes people got asked permission for what to do and where to go and what to eat and how to spend their money.

Adele

Nobody wants that over the age of 18, do we?

Cameron

We don't.



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Adele

I mean it must be interesting because you know all of us have our stories and being able to share our stories with one another often gives you hints and tips about what you might do yourself. Do you find that having that sort of peer support helps you in that way? It's informal but it is sharing advice and maybe helping other people to navigate their way a little bit.

Cameron

Yeah I do sometimes. Like to give my advice out to people and that and if they choose to take it it's up to them. I also try and stick up for my fellow members and all that.

To help them out if they need help.

Adele

And that's it, isn't it? I think you know for all of us. We all need varying types of support in our lives whether it be someone to help you be more organized someone to just come and do some gardening around your house or whether it be around navigating something that you've kind of been through yourself.

Cameron

Yeah

Adele

Thanks Cameron. It's really great chatting with you. We're just going to take a short break and then we'll be back to continue our conversation with Cameron on the CID Visibility podcast



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[Music]

Fiona

You're listening to Visibility podcast produced by the Council for Intellectual Disability.

If you're enjoying this episode you can support us by viewing us through apple podcaster or your favorite listening app.

Adele

Welcome back you're listening to CID's Visibility podcast and we're here today with Cameron who's chatting about being a person with intellectual disability and identifying in the LGBTIQ+ community.

Welcome back Cameron.

Cameron

Thank you.

Adele

It's really great chatting with you about your experience and the way that you're able to share a lot of your wisdom through some of your work with rainbow rights and I want to chat to you a little bit more about socializing and maybe talking about how you if you're in a partnership or if you know how you've sort of gone navigating dating in this space.

Cameron

Yeah not a problem.



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Adele

Do you have a partner at the moment Cameron?

Cameron

I do have a partner at the moment yes. He's a lovely guy as well.

Adele

I'm so pleased to hear that. How did you guys meet?

Cameron

We went through Facebook.

Adele

That's great. Did you both feel comfortable introducing yourselves to each other's families and things like that when you got serious?

Cameron

I guess yes. We did. It was easy. Sometimes nervous because both of us have disabilities and it was just nervous because with more his family. They are more protective. Make sure you know that their child doesn't get used or abused.

Adele

That's a big deal, isn't it? Because you mentioned before the gatekeeper where some people really have very well-meaning family members perhaps friends etc who are really trying to protect their loved one who has a disability but there's a fine line between being worried about someone and over protecting so I hope that you won them over with your charm.



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Cameron

Well I did and they weren't I would say they weren't gay teams. They're just been over cautious because we met on Facebook and the last time he organized to meet up with someone for the movies they never showed up. So they'll just rode and if I would show up for the first time.

Adele

And that's it. It's more about that they wanted to make sure and I think that's like what friends would do too

I'm trying to think if I've ever been on a date through an app and I'm pretty sure that I let a friend know exactly where I was and what I was doing and I think that that's important, isn't it? For anyone to be protected. Is for you to kind of know who you're meeting, where you're meeting them? That it's in a public place

Cameron

Exactly

Adele

And that you feel safe. That you feel really safe all right.

How long have you guys been together?

Cameron

For nearly three years. We lived separately so he lives with his parents and I live in a place of my own. But yeah we've been nearly together for about three years now.



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Adele

That's great and do you ever find that you get any kind of community negativity or barriers when you spend time together in public or when you're out in the community?

Cameron

No we don't we don't actually everyone you know

So if we did we'll just tell them to mind their own business. It's none of their business.

Adele

That's it, isn't it? And I think anyone can get that humans are naturally inquisitive creatures, aren't we?

I wonder if you had much experience in LGBTIQ+ social spaces.

Do you otherwise go out socializing clubbing, go to specific places where you particularly feel comfortable and welcomed?

Cameron

To be honest I don't go social clubbing because I reckon it's a waste of money. It's easier to drink at home.

That's just my thing because paying like eight ten dollars for a bourbon when you can buy you know a big bottle of bourbon at home and it'll be a lot cheaper and you can use a bigger glass

Adele

[Laughter]

Absolutely I couldn't agree more you. You choose your own music, you can choose your company. It's a beautiful thing being able to socialize at home.

So it's not about you not feeling included, is it? Just not your vibe.



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Cameron

Yeah it's just yeah it's just not my vibe. I'm not a part. I've always been like that. I'm not a party go person who likes to go out nightclubbing with the loud music and the whole bunch of strangers.

Adele

Yeah and I mean it's important to I guess get out and about in the world though otherwise. I just wonder within your peer groups because I mean.

You're representing as a gay man but within the LGBTIQ+ community we're covering and talking about lesbian and gay and bisexual and transgender and create queer relationships so I wonder do you find that you have a mixture a bigger variety of friends being part of different advocacy groups as well ?

Cameron

I do have more of a variety of colleagues I would say. Not necessarily I wouldn't say everyone that I work with or know is work friends they're more acquaintances. I've got a variety of quite acquaintances that are out there that know who I am and I know who they are. So it's just yeah

Adele.

That's great and I think that just knowing it and having people that you identify with in the community. Do you think it would have helped you growing up like when you're a kid to have seen people who seem to like you in the community or known anyone who perhaps also had a disability but identified in the queer community?



Visibility Podcast



Cameron

Well when I was a kid I wasn't really, I didn't really come out as a kid. I just hung around with people and I went to mainstream school for a bit and it was just people I was just friends I was hanging out with. They didn't care if I had a disability or not.

That's the best thing about being a kid. They don't care.

They don't judge.

Adele

That's so great to hear. It's really important, isn't it?

Cameron

Yes, until you get older and then everyone judges you.

Adele

It sounds to me like you didn't have too much of a rough time with getting to grips with your identity yourself?

Cameron

No, I didn't. I didn't have much a hard time. Other people may have had a harder time than I did.

It's more of the gatekeeping around people and unfortunately without our group with the Rainbow Right it just worked out to be apparently all males.

We have one female member now but most of it is males. We want more female members but it's hard. It's harder for females to either come out or I'm not sure.



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Adele

In your experience Cameron you're saying that sometimes it's a little bit easier for men to come out. In your experience in the LGBTIQ+ community with people with intellectual disability, it's a bit easier for men than it is for women and so that's maybe a bit of a gap in people's sort of understanding or women's confidence.

Cameron

Yes, that is a bit of a gap.

It just makes it harder. Because, I don't know many women that with an intellectual disability that have actually come out.

Adele

That's really interesting.

I wanted to talk to you about sexual relationships and sexual health. You don't have to reveal anything that you don't want to but I just wonder about...because it's about information and access so understanding your body, understanding the impact of different sexual contact to your body.

Do you feel like you had access to that information as much as everybody else?

Cameron

Yeah I reckon I did. They briefly talked about saying for example when I was younger sex education in school it was just normal, straight sex education. I've got more information now like through [Thorn Harbor Health](#) in Victoria.

I can access more information now as an adult than I can, did when I would have been younger



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Adele

Yeah and do you think that that that's because things are more readily available and say like pamphlets in easy read, in accessible language for you?

Cameron

Yes, it's more available now because back when I would have been younger it wouldn't have been highly highlighted for to do things in easy English.

Adele

That's quite a new thing and that's really about having a picture and then a simple statement to describe what's happening, isn't it?

Cameron

Exactly

Adele

Do you think that that's something that's important to have that information for kids and for everybody no matter how they identify?

Cameron

Yes, that is important. It makes it go everything go a lot easier and smoother



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Adele

What would you say to anyone out there who's listening who maybe is someone with an intellectual disability and thinks that they might be identifying in the queer community

What would you say to them Cameron?

Cameron

Well, what I'll say to him is just be honest and hopefully the support you've got around you at the time where they will be respectful of your decision and especially you can also reach out to [Rainbow Rights](#) if you've got intellectual disability and just mainly hopefully that people can you know respect your decision that you make.

Adele

Thank you so much Cameron. It's been an absolute pleasure chatting with you today and I really appreciate.

Cameron

Thank you

Adele

It's just been so good hearing interesting, an insightful information and I think it's a good takeaway for people to really just in general for a more equal society be respectful of individuals and all of our wonderful quirks, decisions choices and to respect one another, isn't it?

Cameron

Yes it is.



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Adele

And to those of you listening thank you as well. Please join us next month for our episode on friendships from the perspective of a person with intellectual disability

Until then, take care.

Fiona

You can support our podcast by leaving a review on apple or your listening app of choice.

Until next month.