**Demystifying Diverse Communication Video Transcript**

*This video is a montage of 6 people with diverse communication needs explaining how they communicate and interact with the world, and what tips and advice they have for people communicating with them.*

So graceful

*(Off mic) And we’ll do your sound check?*

Sound Level

Titles: Demystifying Diverse Communication

I am profoundly deaf. I have a profound hearing loss.

I am learning English.

I have a cerebral palsy accent

I was born deaf and throughout life I started losing my eyesight, and it also impacts my balance.

I am fully blind on this side. I’ve got a little bit of vision in my left, and I am completely deaf on my right side, and I’ve got a little bit of hearing in my left ear.

I use my communication device, known as an AAC device because my speech can be difficult to understand. I use it rarely at home with support workers and friends. Yet, I always take my AAC device with me when I go out because it is more likely that I will meet new people who I might want to talk to.

Titles: What are your frustrations?

The most offensive is to make out you understand me. If I ask someone, “What’s the time?”, and they go, “Oh yeah, yeah yeah.” I know they are not understanding me. It means people are not interested in anything I have to say.

People often assume that my hearing or intellect is affected, because of my difficult to understand speech. Thus they, either raise their voices to speak to me, or speak to me as a child. Neither are the case. I have good hearing and can hold a good conversation, if people allow the time to listen.

When I am with a support person, who I call a communication guide, I go into a shop, and I’ll ask them a question. They will talk to my communication guide. They won’t talk to me. Even though, I am the customer. I am the one asking the questions. And that is really, really frustrating.

Do you know how many try to talk to me, standing to the side, slightly behind me, and expecting to have a conversation with me? I take it that it is easier to see what I am typing on my device, but it does nothing for my neck. Yet it is funny, because as I turn my wheelchair to see their face, they move back to the same position as before. If I let it happen, we end up going around literally in circles for the whole conversation. So, they should let me see their face as we are talking.

Sometimes it is very isolating for a deaf person in a room full of hearing people because it is very very difficult for us to keep up with the conversations that are talking place. And trying to lip read everyone in that conversation space.

When I can’t speak English, Australian people can’t connect with me. It’s very big problem for me. It’s a four wall full around me, when I can’t speak English. My teacher told me you can you, you try to find Australian friend. But, I can’t. I can’t find.

For a hearing person that may not know anything about someone that is deafblind or anything about disability, they can very easily be quit discriminatory about someone who is deafblind. Some people just don’t take any notice.

*So would you like more people to try to connect with you, and communicate with you?*

Absolutely.

Titles: How can people better communicate with you?

Some of the advice I would give is to say their name, especially if we are in a group situation. If Sara is talking, just say “Sara speaking”, and then continue.

I think he should talk slowly. Very clearly. Not loudly though. That won’t work.

Use touch. So touch me on the shoulder and then continue with what you want to say.

So I can see a little bit, I do have my font enlarged on my iPad. And it needs to have a black background and white font. When my ipad is set up like that, when I take my time and read slowly enough, I can read. If I met someone that I was unfamiliar with and they didn’t know any Auslan or haptics, I would grab out my iPad and use that to communicate. So I can write on my iPad, and communicate back and forth with that person. That then gets deleted. They can write their response and I can read it.

My message for Australian people, When me and other people like me say “good morning, hi, how are you?” Australian people can stop and uh conversation with me.

If you can’t understand me or anyone with an accent, it is okay to ask us to repeat it.

Like many people who use AAC devices, I have developed a range of techniques to assist people to understand what I am saying, and to put them at ease. For example, on meeting people who have no experience talking with people like me, along with using my device I tend to talk with short common sentences to build up their confidence. This gives them opportunities to succeed, so they are more likely to continue to interact with me.

Titles: Demystifying Diverse Communication

People with communication disabilities have to feel comfortable to be in the world, because we are here and we deserve to do whatever we want in our lives.

Please don’t feel nervous, because deaf people are just like them, just like everyone. It is just that they can’t hear, that’s all. So we can still communicate. We can still work. We can still do, you know, lots and lots of things. And you can mime. You can find a different way to communicate.

I would like people to know that by spending time with me, they would find out that I am a fun loving guy who enjoys drinking wine, viewing art, listening to all types of music and traveling Australia and overseas. They would also find out that my disability is a part of who I am, but I don’t let it rule things I do.

Even though I am deafblind, I do have what I consider a “normal” life. I do go out with friends, go shopping. I have a great job as a community development worker, and I am able to do these things because I had the supports that I need.

You know, I am a very independent person. I am able to look after myself domestically in the home. I can use my computer, I can read. You know sometimes I get bored at home, so I will go out for a walk, and do some exercise. Might come home, then have a coffee, or I might go out and order a latte. So yeah, I’m quite a happy man. (laughts)

I’m, I can say very thank you for you, you sit and listen my, my speaking. Thank you so much.

Titles: Don’t let diverse commincation stop connection

Titles: We thank the particpants for sharing their wisdom and experience. In order of appearance: Alisha Hill, Yodollah Rasekhi, Darryl Sellwood, Steven Hellier, Candice Payne, Margie Charlesworth

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