



Video: Annaliese's Story

Annaliese:

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My mental health impacts me day-to-day, on a good day it might mean that

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I lack some motivation, I have a lot of self-doubt and feel a bit anxious

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but I push through, and I might be questioning

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everything that I'm doing, but on a bad day, it might mean

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that I can't leave the house, I have a lot of fears for my safety,

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I'm a bit paranoid, and question my self-worth, and really

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think of myself as a burden to other people and really, really struggle with

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hopelessness and worthlessness.

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I've had numerous experiences of stigma, discrimination and isolation.

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Isolation is a big symptom for me of my mental illness

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but often it's in result of an experience of stigma and discrimination

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so I will tend to isolate, or not feel particularly safe navigating the world

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because of those experiences of stigma and discrimination.

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I've experienced stigma and discrimination as a woman, as a queer woman,

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experiences of violence, verbal abuse, that type of thing.

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And I wrote this language out and put it on a USB for my GP for her to follow

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when she wrote supporting documents for my application. She didn't follow

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the language the first time so I asked her to do it again, she didn't follow the

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language the second time so I went to a new doctor, and that's what I would recommend

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other people do. It's very frustrating that there isn't a clear list of what, definitively,

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I can and cannot spend NDIS money on. Once I applied for the NDIS and was

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successful, I then found that I was required to continually apply within the NDIS

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for further access to what I needed. Stick to your guns,

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no one knows your health and yourself better than you do.

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Don't let anyone tell you what you are and are not capable of.

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Think about and ask the people around you who's available to support you

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and how they're able to support you. Finding a great GP who's going to help you

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navigate that system and really get the ball rolling and refer you to

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all of the particular other supports that you might need is really important,

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but for me the most important resource were the people around me in my

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personal life, and my psychologist, and things like that, so the people

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who supported me emotionally to navigate an extremely frustrating and stressful process.

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And if you decide that you're going to apply, to stick with it, and I thought

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of stopping lots of times, and lots of people had to convince me to keep going

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and I'm really, really grateful that I did keep going, and it has really

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afforded me a lot of independence since I was successful in my application.

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I've never met with the NDIS on my own, I always take a support person. I always

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leave time to debrief after those meetings so that, because I always have feelings

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that come up during that process, and then I have someone there to discuss those

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feelings with. When I do have any kind of communication with the NDIS, I take

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thorough notes, I get the name of the person, the time of the call, all of the

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information that I've gotten from them, and keep documentation of that, because

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I will get a lot of conflicting information advice from differing organisations and differing

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people, and then that way I have my own record of what's going on.

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My NDIS plan helps with inclusion in that it allows me to participate in

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social and community activities a lot more. I have funding for a support person to come along

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and support me when I wanna do something that might be challenging for me.

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For instance, I have a lot of trouble going into shopping centers and going to health appointments,

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and so having someone with me means that I can go and do those things.

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It also means I've been able to engage a support person who is helping me

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participate in more creative endeavours. At the moment

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I have just applied to be part of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival for the first time,

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and the support that I've gotten through the NDIS means that I have a level of independence

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and a level of support to get that independence so that

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those types of things are possible for me now.