



Reimagine Today Podcast

NDIS Back To Basics

Episode 03 - Improving the NDIS & the Role of Interpreters

(Transcript) [12 mins 32 seconds]

Charles Manila, Intro

Welcome to the reimagine today podcast where we talk to people about their stories and experiences of the NDIS. This is Charles Manila, and I'm the host for the reimagine today podcast.

This is part three of a multi-episodic series called NDIS Back to Basics, where I have a discussion with Sophie Duterte from the Centre of Culture, Ethnicity and Health and Mohamed Umar, a Support Coordinator for Neami National and an NDIS participant.

If you haven't listened to part one or part two, I strongly recommend you listen to those first. In part one we discuss Sophie and Mohamed's backgrounds, the concept of psychosocial disability and delve into some of the struggles and barriers CALD community members can face.

In part two - we delve into Mohamed's experiences as a support coordinator, the importance of goals and aspirations, cultural and linguistic misunderstandings from NDIS language and delve into Mohamed's personal story regarding the NDIS.

In this third part - we will discuss how the NDIS can improve and Sophie will go over what roles interpreters play in the NDIS.

Charles Manila, Acknowledgement of Country and Lived Experience

Before we begin, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and the Aboriginal Elders of other communities who may be here today.

I would also like to acknowledge all people who have personal experience of mental illness, whether as consumers, carers or workers. Your voices, insights and experiences are invaluable and important. Keep fighting to be heard!

Safety Message

Please note that this episode and the series as a whole involves discussions of sensitive topics that can be distressing or uncomfortable. We advise that you listen to this somewhere you feel safe and if you are affected by the content, pause the recording and take a break. We also advise that you consider speaking to someone you trust or calling a helpline for support. Thank you.

Charles Manila

This episode will start with myself, asking Sophie and Mo how they think the NDIS can improve.

So let's get to it!

Ways that the NDIS can improve

Charles Manila

So, our discussion, we spoke about things such as education, awareness... time. What else do you think is important and what do you think needs to be done to create more positive change and improvement in the NDIS?

Mohamed Umar

It's not just awareness and education, I think that should be the most important thing in terms of getting engaged in anything in life. You have to really understand what it is that you really want to address, for anyone to address anything. I think it's also important to mention, for me representation matters. Inclusion should be a priority in terms of the frontline workers, frontline providers for example, I feel like it enhances people's relationships, it enhances the delivery of services when people can understand and relate to each other. But I also understand the limitations from people from CALD communities trying actually to address these issues. I have seen one or two particular organisations that are specifically trying to address these issues. But when it comes to the capacity to actually address that, these organisations don't have that capacity. And just from the perspective that there are actually people that are willing to make a difference in this is something that's really not invested in and that's what's probably bothers me the most when I see organisations lack of relationships with little organisations that are trying to do the best that they can with whatever resources that they have. And from the NDIS point of view, there should be specifically tailored supports that are for these communities, specifically for providers that are run and managed and that are on the frontline of these services that actually be supported in this. I think that is something I haven't really seen much of.

Sophie Duterte

I think from my little corner of the NDIS which is very much about language... I agree with Mo that you need a workforce that is representative of the communities it is working with. The more culturally diverse the workforce is, the more culturally competent the workforce is and that is really important. Also, you need whoever the worker is and regardless of their cultural background, people who explain things simply. The jargon might be relevant when you are writing a report to your management, but when you are talking with people, do not use jargon. If you want to say portal, a "portal is an online account", say "online account". If you are using an interpreter, the interpreter can only be as good as you are. So, it's about the person who speaks

English using simple terms so that the interpreter can interpret that. It's obviously not the one thing that's going to make it all work but it's an element of that. And definitely to have more people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the NDIS as there should be more. It's about connecting with communities. It's about listening to the small agencies like Mo was saying who have the knowledge and have those connections. And having positive examples that you can promote and highlight so that communities are encouraged that it is a safe thing for them to do. And that's not [just] physically safe, but a psychologically safe program for them to engage with so there's definitely from the lens in which I am looking at the NDIS, there's definitely things that can be done to engage with communities and with people who are themselves of culturally diverse backgrounds.

Advice for Interpreters for NDIS journeys

Charles Manila

Being an interpreter sounds difficult. Just from that discussion alone, there's so many considerations to note - terminologies, cultural understanding, knowing your clients and tailoring it in such a way that makes it simple to understand. What I'm interested in hearing from you Sophie is what do you tell the interpreters that you work with? It's a really big job that's really, really important but also really complex.

Sophie Duterte

Certainly, the first thing is I'm looking at the NDIS with a very positive lens. I want it to work and when it works, I think it's really great. I'm looking as something at times, it's a working progress but the potential for it to be very good, if it is adapted to the person's needs, I think the potential is really great. Interpreters are really interesting because they really are the forefront of everything. They find themselves in the situation with the family, having those discussions. They might be just coming from a Centrelink meeting, or from court or from a medical appointment and then they are thrown into the discussion with a family. They really got to understand what's going on. So, it's really important that they are briefed when they get there. I had an interpreter tell me she went through an interpreting assignment and in the first half she didn't realise who the person with the disability was in the room because it wasn't a visible disability and nobody had actually briefed her that "it's the father, not the child." So, you can imagine how hard it is to interpret in that situation. So, I think it's really important to acknowledge that the interpreters need to understand what's going on in the room. Look I've trained more than 1200 interpreters in the past 2 years and it's always fascinating because they have so much information to share about what's happening in their communities and how they manage different expectations in their roles. Their roles are really tightly... they have a code of conduct. There's definitely limitations on what they can do. They can't explain things. They aren't allowed to explain things. They're the person in the middle. And so, it's very subtle how they can work through community expectations and people's expectations while staying within their role. It's a very hard job I think.

The role of interpreters

Charles Manila

That's an interesting factor. The clearly defined role of an interpreter. For this, do you think their role should be more expanded so they can explain things so people from CALD communities can have a better understanding of these concepts?

Sophie Duterte

No. I think yes it needs to happen. No, it's not the role of interpreters. I think it's really important that interpreters stay in that role of interpreting language. Because if you open the door of them explaining things, you have very little control. If you're the English-speaking worker, you don't know what's being said in another language. So, you got to be confident that what's being said is what you said. I think it's important that interpreters to stay in that role. But I agree, there is definitely a need for things to be explained to communities more and there's definitely a role there. And the Ethnic Community Council of Victoria does some of that through the NDIS, they run community sessions. And there's quite a lot of agencies now that run community sessions... information sessions. Yes, there is a need, no I don't think it's the role of interpreters.

Charles Manila

This was part three of a multi-part episodic series for the Reimagine today podcasts called NDIS Back to Basics, where I sat down and had a conversation with Sophie Duterte from the Centre of Culture, Ethnicity and Health, and Mohamed Umar, a support coordinator from Neami National and an NDIS participant. Join us next time for the final part of this series, where we discuss what the difference is between a support coordinator and a support worker, and Sophie and Mohamed's goals and aspirations for the NDIS are in the future.

I'm Charles Manila, the host for the Reimagine today podcast, signing off and remember, your voice matters, so keep the conversation going.

Safety Message

This episode contained discussions of psychological distress and trauma. If, after listening to this episode, you need support, please reach out and talk to someone you trust. You can also reach out to the following services: call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 for brief counselling and referrals. Or call Lifeline at 13 11 14. If you need an interpreter, you can ask these services for one. If it is an emergency, call 000. Take care and stay safe.

Acknowledgements

This podcast has been co-designed by people with lived experience of mental health conditions, it is produced by the Mental Health Coordinating Council of NSW (MHCC) in partnership with

Mental Health Victoria, and is funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) through the ILC Grants. For more information or contact details, see our website at [reimagine dot today](http://reimagine.vic.gov.au).