THE DREAMSPACE: done just check over

**Gemma Mahadeo**

Hi there, my name is Gemma Mahadeo and you're listening to 3CR's Imagining Disability Justice, a special International Day of People with Disability broadcast.

**Leilani/Liv**

So before we get started we'd just like to acknowledge that this recording is taking place on stolen land. I'm recording my end on the unceded lands of Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung peoples of the Kulin nation. We pay our respects to country and all the peoples of Kulin nation, past, present and emerging. Always was always will be Aboriginal land. My name is Liv, I am 28 years old. I'm a non binary chronically ill person. And I've lived in Naarm for, oh my gosh, like 12 years now and from originally from so called Perth, Boorloo. I'm very happy and excited to be doing this today.

**Morag**

Hi. I'm Morag I am 26 years old. I am a white trans cripple, I use they/them pronouns. I was born in Scotland, and I grew up on Noongar land in Boorloo. Perth as well. And yeah, nice to meet you.

**Nakayn**

Heyo, I'm Nakayn. I'm 27, good to say that, it was my birthday couple days go. I am disabled, chronically ill nonbinary. They/them I grew up in, never lived anywhere else.

**Leilani/Liv**

Well, the whole theme of the 12 hours of Disability broadcasting is Imagining Disability Justice. Pauline set us the task of envisioning what kind of future we would want for ourselves as disabled people, as chronically ill people. What care looks like in this, in these beautiful, radical utopian visions. [giggling]

**Leilani/Liv**

So we'll be starting off with, where are we now? How has the lockdown and the paradigm shift with COVID-19, how has that impacted our lives in both positive and negative ways. Then I suppose we'll be shifting into what we want from the future. Those more, yeah, really utopian visions. And then at the end, we'll be grounding it back into sort of short term and midterm solutions, little steps we can take in the now to eventually hopefully get to that beautiful utopia of care for all. So moving on to the part one, the present. How's everyone been feeling sort of coming out of all of this, and things have been changing rapidly over the last couple weeks after a long, long period of being in lockdown.

**Nakayn**

It's very, like two things at once. It's both really good and really bad. I thoroughly enjoyed how quiet everything got during all the lockdowns. Going to the shops, it was so much calmer. There weren't as many people around, people were moving slower. Which is really good on the days that I'm walking and using a cane because I get bumped into a lot.

**Nakayn**

And everyone just-- yeah, like the entire city just moved slow. And there was less pressure to like, adhere to, you know, these capitalistic ideas of productivity. And so I really enjoyed that and kind of coming out of, you know, these restrictions slowly. People are just moving faster again, and it's really daunting. But on the plus side, I get to see friends again. So it's like, that's a bonus too?

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, I definitely relate to the... when everyone slowed down, that was such a sense of relief that the world was slowing down to a pace that more reflects our lives as disabled and chronically ill people who are isolated a lot of the time in our houses and it felt like a weight being lifted, to have everyone slow down with you. Even if they didn't acknowledge any of the you know, chronically ill voices and disabled voices of the chorus of "hey, this is how we live". It still was this relief that the momentum just slowing down and it is strange to have it reopen so quickly and suddenly it's like, "oh, there's people everywhere!"

**Morag**

Totally. I ended up becoming most social during lockdown than I had for years prior, because of the isolation I experience just as being a disabled person who finds it hard to leave the house. Part of that is just housemates being around and things like that. And then it's like, such complex feelings. Seeing like, able bodied people who like previously in the past will told me "you've just gotta overcome it, you're not trying hard enough. You're just lazy". Trying to participate in life. I really internalize a lot of that and seeing how deeply the isolation and the lockdown affecting able bodied people too, just complex feelings of like relief and a little bit of letting go of that self hatred.

**Leilani/Liv**

Were you mad as well? [laughing]

**Morag**

Yes!

**Leilani/Liv**

I was mad.

**Morag**

Yeah. Absolutely. Mad as hell.

**Leilani/Liv**

With all the bread baking and zoom events.

**Morag**

Oh my god.

**Leilani/Liv**

And their mental health spiraling after two weeks, and it's just like "ughhh".

**Morag**

Yep. Yep.

**Leilani/Liv**

Which is fair, it sucks!

**Morag**

Totally!

**Leilani/Liv**

It sucks to you know, that they still won't acknowledge our various lived experiences when we could be mutually supporting each other like, they have so much to learn from us. [laughing]

**Morag**

Yes, it's like, "welcome to our world". It's like, it's just so wild. I could go off on several tangents here I'm trying to, let me see if I can just pick one groove to get into. All of the access that suddenly became available as soon as able bodied people needed it!

**Morag**

Disabled people have been fighting for years, years and years and years and repeatedly being told, it's just not possible. It's not feasible right now, blah, blah, blah. But soon, as soon as like lockdown happening, just like bam, like that.

**Nakayn**

It just like proves that everything was always possible. They just didn't want to put in the effort to actually do it. "Uh, you guys weren't, you know, important enough for us to do anything about it".

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah.

**Morag**

Mmhhmm.

**Nakayn**

"It's too much effort. Sorry". Now we know it's not actually much effort.

**Morag**

Ugh.

**Nakayn**

And I really hope it sticks around.

**Morag**

Yeah, same. So many different ways. Telehealth is the huge one.

**Nakayn**

Yes.

**Leilani/Liv**

 So necessary. Please don't take the telehealth appointments away.

**Morag**

Yeah, really go hard for the possibility of working from home staying. You know like, as well.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes, I think that's why we wanted to start off grounded in the present with how COVID has shifted all of our lives, because there are small glimpses of this world that can include everyone in it that we've seen through this unprecedented level of access to different kinds of support.

**Leilani/Liv**

So it made sense to start at where we are. Part 2: The future, external and structural issues and changes. Community and care instead of capitalism and individualism. We're primed to be pit against each other in so many ways, that are so completely unnecessary.

**Leilani/Liv**

In my vision, I would strip it right to what is the essential work that is needed? And then, instead of society treating those essential workers like they're nothing and their bodies, they're disposable and they don't matter -- that essential work would be respected and upheld as something that is necessary and beautiful for the safety and well being of all.

**Leilani/Liv**

So I'm talking about people that take out the garbage and do these essential tasks that need to be done so that we're okay. I would love to see that care based society where money isn't the motivation for everything.

**Morag**

Care work being sacred. That's just the most important thing. The most important.

**Leilani/Liv**

That's number one. Second big thing we all talked about wanting to change significantly was education. We talked about wanting access to education for all. The way the schools are right now is... it's hard for it to be accessible to chronically ill, and disabled people and to many other people. Whether you live far away from your school, and traveling is hard and expensive.

**Leilani/Liv**

Or, if you're going through a difficult life period, you don't have a safe home environment. It's hard to keep up with deadlines and assignments. In this beautiful utopia, I would just want education to exist just for the sake of it existing. For it to be leisure for people, not just something they have to do, and they have to get through or they'll fall through the cracks.

**Leilani/Liv**

I would love to be able to just study at my own pace. Without all these extensive pressures. Also for there to be online options for everything. Every class, every assignment, every single thing. It was heartbreaking to see disabled students on Twitter, and mentally ill students on Twitter, talking about how they'd just dropped out weeks before the zoom school stuff started happening because the administration at that their colleges and things told them, you know, "no, we can't provide that for you. We can't make exceptions for you". Only to have weeks later, everything be online. For everyone. that's painful to watch.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, this pandemic proves that online education is an option. I just really want a utopia where I can be in bed and join a class just by like video link.

**Leilani/Liv**

Or go into any learning institution and just be able to access the resources there.

**Morag**

Yes.

**Leilani/Liv**

That would be so great.

**Morag**

Just completely divorcing it from any of the time structures that people are expected to work within to study and do degrees. Competitive, like who's the best, who's the worst. Yeah just it being focusing on the knowledge itself. And the best way for each person to be able to learn and to want to learn.

**Leilani/Liv**

We learn a lot of stuff that isn't helpful or correct when it comes to, especially things like history class, it really shuts people out of learning environments, when there's inherited biases and bigotry and ignorance being perpetuated through school syllabus. I would really want to really radically change what -- not what will you learn about, but how we learn about it. And not just one small, often wildly incorrect view of how things happened the way they happened.

**Leilani/Liv**

One of us has written down, you know, that really lends itself to the honoring and respecting of disabled knowledge and lived experiences. I really can foresee that being part of education in the future, is learning about people's lived experiences and learning respect from a young age.

**Leilani/Liv**

That would radically change how we treat each other if we were really taught the real histories of things like medicine and of the stolen land that we're on. If this was just instilled into into us from a very young age through a respectful education system that emphasizes care and respect, and it would just be muscle memory to treat people the way that they should be treated in the same way that individualism is like muscle memory for basically when you're fresh out of high school or straight into uni.

**Leilani/Liv**

You're being prepped for what is it 12 years? By everything around you. You know, "you have to now make it you're on your own. Like you need to figure this out. You need to build a life for yourself right now ,you need to compete", and we're primed and prepped to be little cogs for capitalism, and we're primed to leave people behind.

**Leilani/Liv**

Massive changes to education and how we teach each other would really radically shift the world, I think we'd have to just completely stop sending children and young people, all these messages that you are just a body for capitalism. That you have to fight to get what is yours in this world, and that that's what is fair. It's not. Yeah, someone wrote sign language to be taught to all as well as you know, the languages of the lands you're on. Someone also wrote emergency medical first aid to be taught to all.

**Morag**

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And even embedded within that first aid stuff, it's only ever taught about acute crisis type first aid, which, you know, of course, is important to learn, like someone gets really bad cut, someone falls down and aches and things like that.

**Morag**

Just imagine, with the honoring and respecting of like disabled knowledge and lived experience, understanding and teaching about how there is no one ideal body that everyone should be striving for, like, it's all a lie. All of us have differences, learning about these differences, allowing for more like, care and compassion and understanding between everybody.

**Morag**

I think really inherently deconstruct this ideal of like everyone being abled, and if not just being a problem to be fixed, and brought back into that in any way possible, or discarded. I also imagine disabled teachers and knowledge is really helping children come to terms with their own disabilities, recognize and understand that they have them. And also that is, okay. I have a genetic disorder, Ehlers Danlos Syndrome, and I've had it all my life. But growing up, I had absolutely no clue. I knew there was something wrong with me. But I literally thought everyone else suffers the same way I did. But they would just deal with it way better. I wasn't diagnosed until I was 23. Yeah, I've - get to expose all different ways of being and disability and stuff, how much you could really, really help.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, just like having all those different types of exposure, normalize this whole...

**Leilani/Liv**

Why we shoved out of the way? Our bodies hidden from media and from life.

**Nakayn**

I experienced the same thing like this. I also have a hyper mobile disorder. I was only recently diagnosed in the past couple of months and realizing that, yeah, like Morag most of my life, I've experienced these things, but I didn't realize that it wasn't normal. And if exposure around like different types of people, like "here's what's normal, here's what's not", from like a young age, I would have been able to go, "I'm experiencing this" and then being able to go seek help so that later in life, I didn't spiral because my body's just doing weird things, thinking it's completely normal for people to like nearly pass out when they stand up. [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

That helps us get to the next topic, which is medicine and how we would change that. And one of the first points that Nakayn you made when we initially started talking about it, was the way that ableism is so deeply groomed into students of medicine, through the way that they're essentially hazed by those institutions where they're, they're worked to the worst to the bone, worked to pure exhaustion.

**Leilani/Liv**

By doing this to medical staff, having them on these 12 plus hour shifts, pushing them to their physical limits of extreme exhaustion as well as pushing them mentally. It's giving them I guess, subliminal messages and subconscious messages that, about goodness, about morality. If you can't push yourself in that way to achieve your goals and your desires. If you can't physically push yourself to extreme limits, then you're of less value. And I think that can be one of the hardest things about getting through to doctors as a disabled or chronically ill person because sometimes they are just seeing you through their own sort of biases that have been deeply instilled in them through an academic world that literally pushes them to their own physical extremes and enforces disabled people out of medicine. Because who can who can keep up with that?

**Morag**

Yep, yep, and theey're considered the failures. Just reinforcing it again,

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes.

**Morag**

Those doctors who are able to get through.

**Leilani/Liv**

You know, it doesn't need to be that way for them. [laughing]

**Morag**

No.

**Leilani/Liv**

I mean, obviously, not only hurts them, but it hurts their patients, it's an ablest system that they're groomed into that is, by default, self injurious, as well as harmful to disabled people. And patients and many others that come in as patients that are vulnerable to marginalisation. The medical world is definitely, I don't know, needs a lot of changing and there will be a lot of things I would change about it in our utopia. First and foremost, for me would be the complete confronting of the inherent legacies of extreme ableism, transphobia, anti Blackness, fatphobia, classism.

**Leilani/Liv**

These legacies are implicit in these institutions that create so many barriers to care and perpetuate extreme harm and power dynamics. There needs to be a lot more training of medical staff, especially doctors who still often believe really strange things that they've been taught about, you know, racial groups, and whatever it is.Tthey'll diagnose people based on gender, or race sometimes. Racialized diagnoses are a big thing and gendered diagnoses and things like that. The way that fat people are treated different to skinny people, if you're chronically ill and fat, good luck getting legitimate serious diagnoses ,for getting doctors to take you seriously other than just to say, "lose weight" and things like that. So abolish doctors. [all laughing]

**Morag**

Honestly, just abolish.

**Leilani/Liv**

Like is so so so much harm has been done. Torture, basically. Death.

**Morag**

Yeah. Yeah. Like, they're just like cops with white coats too, you know. Like, the power they have.

**Leilani/Liv**

It's really hard to not see them that way as like, they have so much power of you.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, that power imbalance.

**Morag**

Yep.... yep.

**Leilani/Liv**

Especially when you're not being listened to.

**Nakayn**

Yeah. And it has like so much impact in like so many other different parts of your life. Like if a doctor doesn't want to diagnose you a certain way. Like the diagnosis that a doctor gives you can affect parts of your life, trying to access governmental help. If you don't get the right diagnosis, because the doctors got all these biases, then you don't get DSP or get to go on the NDIS and there's just so many different areas that it impacts.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, it makes me think of as well, it's so strange how much labour patients have to do, especially when they have long term health issues, disability, chronic illness. Often we're armed with a lot of information about ourselves and our illnesses when we walk in or come into a doctor's office, but you have to put a cap on how much you know about your own illness because then they look at you strangely or they don't trust you and they think you're scamming them for, they either think you're a hypochondriac or you just want pain meds. Do you have to like make yourself smaller, to like not spook them. Which is wild. You have to finesse them while they Google your symptoms themselves.

**Morag**

Yes! Oh my god, yep.

**Leilani/Liv**

Or they'll deny you something that they would usually give you but because you asked for it, they won't give it to you.

**Morag**

Yeah, that has literally happened to me, with no shit, a fucking saline IV bag. Like literally just as salt water infusion. I let them know, because I was like "this really helps". And what do they do? Didn't fucking give me one, they just like, and it's just one of those basic things! They're so fragile with their egos.

**Leilani/Liv**

They're like "oh no, they're gonna get off on the on the salt water infusion can't give them that. We can't encourage that".

**Leilani/Liv**

It's just yeah, there's a lot of strange notions that doctors especially have about patients that is so strange and so difficult to deal with on top of you know, what you're already dealing with. Part of that is because they're severely overworked, looping it back into what we've already said about the way that it's set up for them.

**Morag**

Yep.

**Leilani/Liv**

To be overworked and to become perpetuators of ableism.

**Morag**

Yeah and other marginalised people, like just making it so rough.

**Leilani/Liv**

Oh, we could also talk about how especially with western medicine, this idea of we're battling the body as a solution. There's a problem and a solution. If there's not a clear cut solution, then you're screwed.

**Morag**

Yeah, yeah.

**Nakayn**

Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

Is this sort of like "it's a fight, it's a battle, it's a war, you want to dominate the illness, eradicate the illness". That comes through very strongly in western medicine, rather than just, at least I feel, that a lot of GPs and specialists and things they give up pretty quickly, if they don't have clear cut answers for what's going on with you.

**Leilani/Liv**

They also won't go, won't take the steps that, you know, could help with getting the test, whether it's testing or different things, they'll sort of resist doing so. It would be wonderful if it could shift from a from that kind of dynamic of "what's the problem? The problem is not clear. Okay, I can't help you".

**Morag**

Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

To "what is the problem, let's really dig into this and document this over time, and, you know, collate all the information". Rather than all of that work being put onto you, as a patient, you have to do like 99% of the work to advocate for yourself to figure out what is going on to connect the dots. And then once you've connected the dots, you have to go find a doctor, and protect their fragile ego and give subtle hints about the dots and help them to connect the dots so that they will give you the diagnosis you already know that you have [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

 You know, it's such a such a game that is totally a waste of energy. And it would be, oh, go ahead.

**Nakayn**

I was just gonna say there was actually a Netflix series that I watched where this doctor who, you know, had a column in an newspaper or something. Then she started writing about patients that she'd see. She didn't understand, you know, what was happening with them. Then people from like, all across the world would write in being like, "Hey, have you looked into this?".

**Nakayn**

These were doctor and just regular people who would be like, "Oh yeah, I've experienced this before, look into this". Then she'd compiled all of that. They documented this all in the TV show in the Netflix show. These people got information from like, multiple different people. It was done with such care and like respect, that this doctor who has multiple degrees, didn't necessarily know everything, and was relying on other people for information, both anecdotal and like journals that she probably never thought of looking up. Every single person got a diagnosis because of that. Every single person found treatments, and ended up having a much better way of life because of that. I think that's the utopia I'd love to see.

**Pauline**

Yeah, me too.

**Morag**

That sounds absolutely so, that's so huge. Yeah, like the support. The exhaustive research that we all have to do. Just to try and do what we can for ourselves. And the most that I've ever learned about my own disorder has been from other people who have it too like they've been the ones who saved me countless times with different recommendations and assessments of so many things. Just imagining if that was this disabled network of collective care, as well as knowledge keeping and sharing and stuff was fully supported and respected just as much. Like our lived experiences on par with doctors. I don't even want to keep doctors in this heirarchical position at all, you know,

**Leilani/Liv**

You're right, you know, you wrote down here, "cripple-led healing". That does not adhere to that western medical structure of hierarchy. Because doctors have one part of the knowledge, but they don't have the experiences and the knowledge that comes with living in that body and how much knowledge is collated and collected by disabled people, put together. Whether it's a Facebook group or any kind of support network like that.

**Leilani/Liv**

I agree, like completely. Disabled people have saved me over and over again with helping me figure out what's happening. You know, it's definitely been nine times out of 10 it's a disabled person, not a doctor that's helped me find solutions. [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, very important. This is a little random. But I saw a point that we didn't mention that I guess sort of fits into education more, but Morag you made a point of connecting newly disabled people with disabled mentors. I think it could tie into medical as well because, you know, as someone becomes newly disabled they're in the medical realm and doctors and things could refer you to disabled mentors and to networks. I thought that was such a beautiful idea. Like I cried a little bit when when I read that, and it's even more relevant impressing with, you know, so many people becoming what are they called, the "long haulers"?

**Morag**

Yeah, yeah. Like, it's already a thing. But yeah for it to be like a fully supportive, integral part of society.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes. fully funded fully everything.

**Morag**

Yes, yes.

**Leilani/Liv**

You can't really make any of these broad changes without having really significant social changes to the way that we relate to one another. So the way that things are set up right now, with capitalism, people are overextended. They don't have the time to be so community minded. With a massive restructuring of society in such a way that people do not have to give the majority of their lives over to capitalism, in exchange for safety and security.

**Leilani/Liv**

There would be massive social changes that would allow people the time to properly take care of what needs to be taken care of whether that's themselves, the land, other people, organizations, projects, whatever it is, I randomly found this study that was undertaken in the Philippines. This is sort of out of left field again. But the findings of the study showed that people that lived a hunter gatherer lifestyle, still work a lot less than farmers. And I just think that's really relevant to the kind of structuring of society I would like to see in the future. I really believe that so much of what capitalism forces us to do is unnecessary. So I guess we've come up with a little list of social changes we'd like to see.

**Morag**

Coming from like, a second principle of Disability Justice, "leadership of those most impacted: we live by those who most know these systems". Oppression is trauma, like people are traumatized individual levels, society, culturally, collectively. Tying it really into destroying the dominance of the white, western, eurocentric understanding of like knowledge and ideas, really, really informs how doctors act.

**Morag**

They're the ones that have the knowledge and understanding because they've been able to attain all of this, they're the ones that know these things, like this individual, granted upon them. When in reality, the answers are in the communities. We know what those things are that we need, we just need the power and agency to be able to make those changes.

**Leilani/Liv**

That's such a good insight and point. We'd want to see a huge change to the way that non disabled people relate to disabled people. The stigma and the negligence and the abuse and the things that disabled people have to go through.

**Leilani/Liv**

Really, this idea that disability is wrong or bad and or even evil is wildly incorrect. It's perpetuated throughout all of media. So there would have to be a lot of changes to the way that people perceive disabled people, disabled people would be respected and honored as an integral part of the community and of society.

**Morag**

Yes.

**Leilani/Liv**

Not just as an aside that people don't like to think about, or a problem. We talked a little bit about it before, but about care work as sacred work, care work is at the core of existence. We all give and receive care in life. We would all not be here without that care that others have given us and that we've given to others in small and big ways.

**Leilani/Liv**

And yet, capitalism and other oppressive thought forms have us believing that we aren't interdependent on one another. They have us believing that if you are someone that needs care, more care than whoever, then that care becomes a begrudging task that no one should want to do. I think that these perceptions are fundamentally dangerous to people's wellbeings.

**Leilani/Liv**

If you taught people from a really young age, that that's part of our social contract, that care is the most important thing and taking care of one another is the most important thing, not struggling to survive, in an individual sense, then people would relate much better to the kinds of care work that needs to be done. I think education is really important in this.

**Leilani/Liv**

In making these social changes happen. Everyone fundamentally just wants to... people just want to belong to the world, and be a part of the world and to feel loved just to feel safe. If you tell people from a young age, that the way to belong and to be loved and to be safe in this world is to make sure that everyone else is loved and supported and feels safe too, then I think we could undo that capitalist brainwashing that stops -- because people always argue capitalists argue, "well, if we eradicate money, then whose gonna do the work?".

**Leilani/Liv**

If you can't imagine a world where work is only done because, with a money incentive behind it, then that makes me sad. I think that we have such capacity to envision a world where money is not the incentive for giving care.

**Morag**

I remember you saying in one of the conversations previously about reality, like all these acts of care, and everything already exists in a billion different ways, and always have because it really is at the core of existence.

**Leilani/Liv**

Absolutely. I believe this radical utopian vision that we're talking about is not just a flight of fancy. These moments of this world, they already exist in a million billion different small acts of care. You know, making your housemate a meal, because they just got cheated on, or something like that [laughing].

**Leilani/Liv**

These small, radical acts of care, of just helping each other in small ways. Helping a plant to grow, giving love to a plant in your garden, and nurturing that and fostering that. Like, I think in some way, these billions of tiny moments and acts of care are the future that we want. It's almost like if we could combine them all. We could dimension jump into the utopia. [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

It's beautiful and comforting to me to think that so much care and care work exists already in this world in billions of people and billions of moments throughout time. Transcending time, and space.

**Morag**

Yes, yes, absolutely.

**Morag**

The way I think about it, is disability is truth. Disability is truth. It is a truth of existence of every single one of us whether we are born disabled, are we become disabled, like through various events in our lives or just through getting old. It's a part of existence itself, and just doesn't have to be something to be so scary about. It really doesn't.

**Morag**

And this kind of brings me back to a little bit of a point about agency. About how for disabled people, agency is such a hard struggle to deal with. Being put in situations beyond your control. So often I know, in my experience, a lot of that harm and taking away agency is coming from people who are well intentioned, who are well intentioned in their reasons for doing things that are traumatizing, and stuff. You know, like, what is pity, but looking down from above?

**Morag**

Sharing real, real true agency for all of us - it must be done with the understanding of the interdependence of us all, in the ultimate truth. Independence is a lie. Like, we are so much more than burdens. Ability is like predicated so much on access, and whose bodies are valued more. I can't imagine truly, like how different the world would be if disabled people were respected and listened to. An understanding that we experience. I can't imagine it. I think that's kind of the point, because I am just an individual, and it's it's a collective, for us all, to find ways that work and remember the ways that work and honour the ways that work.

**Morag**

I can't imagine that either. I try to though because it feels good to try to imagine that world where, you know, we're all just, not relegated to just being perceived as a collection of stereotypes and biases. When you interact with someone who is non disabled, it's hard for them to communicate effectively with you, beyond their biases, because they're just, they're so ignorant.

**Leilani/Liv**

It would be wonderful for that to change. For that to not have to be such a constant dynamic, constant thing that disabled peopled have to go through in their everyday lives, in public spaces. In private spaces, with loved ones. It seems so straightforward, just treating people like people. But yeah. And yet, there's so much conditioning and so much...

**Morag**

Yep. Disabled people, we don't need to be rescued. We just need to be given the support and respect and understanding. So that right now, a quote is pushing its way into my brian. This is from Mia Mingus's talk on access intimacy, which is "the power of access intimacy is that it reorients our approach from one where disabled people are expected to squeeze into abled bodied people's world and instead calls upon able bodied people to inhabit our world".

**Leilani/Liv**

Deeply necessary. This seems like a pretty basic thing, too. But it flies in the face of what we know as true in our current paradigm, any one living being is infinitely more important and precious than any amount of money, or ability to perform. And I want to add also any physical possession, the fact that people value property and possession over people's lives is... what, what is that? This should be basic stuff. But you could you could tweet that and people would get mad at you and say "well, actually property is more important!"

**Leilani/Liv**

You know, but that being really embedded as a social idea, like fully completely. Sometimes I think people think that they value life more than things like property or possessions or, but then their actual actions and beliefs fly in the face of that.

**Leilani/Liv**

Valuing people differently according to one's ability to perform is something that desperately needs to. Ability really shouldn't have anything to do with value and worth. It's not real. It just isn't. The idea that we are less valuable or less worthy of existing, is... murderous.

**Morag**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, definitely.

**Morag**

Did we mention about the community centers for disabled people?

**Leilani/Liv**

No, I don't think so. Speak on it!

**Morag**

Imagining a whole space that's for disabled people. The one thing that sticks in my mind that seems to be squashing everything else out at the moment is this talk that I heard between HTMLflowers and another disabled person. Just talking about how there needs to be a hospital and community center that is specifically for disabled people, chronically ill people, that is centered around chronic ongoing care.

**Nakayn**

Yes, yes.

**Morag**

Also the conversations that we've all had before just talking about imagining there just being centers for everything. Just being able to come into, stroll in somewhere, because of course, everything is wheelchair accessible. All the other kinds of accessibility, you know, and access can be complex, because people have conflicting access needs. But being about having that communication to try and work out what's best for, like, for everybody.

**Leilani/Liv**

If there were disabled community centers around, I would have a space to be in!

**Nakayn**

Please!

**Morag**

Please!

**Leilani/Liv**

That would be great. I would love to see centers for people just dealing with whatever it is. Like housing instability, abuse, trauma, chronic health stuff, you know, there should just be somewhere you can actually go. There should always be somewhere you can go, "Centers for everything" will be my slogan for the utopia

**Morag**

Yes! For surviving and thriving,

**Leilani/Liv**

Flourishing.

**Morag**

Yes.

**Nakayn**

And those centers like also tie into what we were talking about earlier, with, you know, disabled-led care. I think one of the things that we talked about in preparation for this was how the center's would be something that, like, all of the people in there with all of the staff and all that would be trained in the ways that we spoke about earlier, like understanding, listening, trusting that, you know, we as disabled people know, what care we need for ourselves. Yeah, just that disabled led care.

**Morag**

Yes, yes. Supporting people from their own truth.

**Leilani/Liv**

We came up with some therapeutic things we'd like to see and then kind of all fit into social as well. And, you know, these things overlap. We'll just mention a couple of them now.

**Leilani/Liv**

Time, we spoke on our last conversation about time and the passage of time, the processing of time how the pandemic has, you know, sort of collectively messed with people's sense of time. Which for me, I was quite delighted at, because as someone who is, whose brain doesn't work very well and has a dissociative disorder, time barely exists. For me. It's hard to perceive oneself passing through the passage of time. And I think we kind of spoke about how these rigid, this rigid adherence to time especially within the within western societies, is really oppressive.

**Leilani/Liv**

For like, a lot of people you know, so the embracing of crip time, of island time, of POC time. I saw the beautiful angel Bhenji Ra, just posting on Facebook yesterday. You should follow her. But she was talking even about trans time, you know, trans POC time. Like taking the time to slow down to your natural pace, rather than time being stolen from us by capitalism.

**Leilani/Liv**

So, I would love that if in the utopia, time wasn't such a commodity, and such a force of... such a concept that can instill so much anxiety and distress in people, whether it's, "oh, we've wasted our time we've wasted our youth, being unwell" and whatever. That's a false concept that's been, you know, pushed onto us through the concept of time. And people being more forgiving of time shifting, it took us multiple attempts to set this day down to get this discussion done, because things would pop up. I would love to, I would like to have time, just be slower, and that'd be okay. I think that's, I think that's how a lot of people would prefer it to. That's why there's so many people that - that's why there's so many different things like crip, time, island time, POC time, like it's real. You know, we want to go slower, and we genuinely enjoy doing so. It's better for us. So, yeah [laughing].

**Nakayn**

Hi I'm Nakayn.

**Leilani/Liv**

I'm Liv.

**Nakayn**

And you're listening to Imagining Disability Justice on 3CR,

**Morag**

 A 12 hour broadcast for International Day of Disability.

**Nakayn, Liv, Morag**

Stay tuned! [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

One of us has made a good note as well, about throwing out the concept of progress and the linear concept of progression. And especially when it comes to healing, quote, unquote. That changing is really important, because I think even when people have periods of their life that are a struggle, there is so much pressure to get through that struggle, and to get better from it and to bounce back from it quickly so that you can continue performing your life [laughing].

**Leilani/Liv**

And that's not how being okay works. You don't experience a bad thing, or have something set you back or incur illness, injury, disability, and then you bounce back from it immediately. Or through a linear progression, it's usually more cyclical than that. There are ups and downs. The idea of that linear progression is harmful to everyone and specifically to disabled people, like the amount of disabled people that have to hear "I hope you feel better soon". Or, you know, "I hope you get better soon".

**Leilani/Liv**

And it's like, it's not helpful to anyone. It's microaggressive. It just is limiting other people's understanding of, like reality. Yeah I think doing away with that idea would be good for everyone's brains.

**Leilani/Liv**

Particularly would save disabled people a lot of exasperation, especially in public spaces, where that kind of sentiment is often impressed upon you by random people, strangers and things. Even people that you've known for a long time who know your condition, sometimes forget. Or, like become less aware of it, they'll still say little things like that. Like there's an expectation on you to heal from an illness that does not have a cure [laughing].

**Nakayn**

Yeah, the idea of wellness as a standard, and then that's something that everyone has to come back to, rather than something that just exists. Like, people can be well and come back to that, but not everyone does. And that's okay.

**Leilani/Liv**

Perfectly okay. It's such a common misconception that is easily disproven, not everyone will be well, not everyone can return to wellness. They value wellness a certain way, and illness and disability another way and that's really about non-disabled people. It's not about disabled people.

**Leilani/Liv**

It would be wonderful to have mutual understanding, have a meeting of the minds and for that expectation to be well, to just fade from existence entirely. Especially when there's more and more people getting becoming chronically ill.

**Leilani/Liv**

I hope to see that shift and change with, you know, there's probably unprecedented levels of amounts of people becoming sick. And chronically ill post COVID. You know, I'm curious to know, this is another discussion, but I'm curious to know if this will have any significant impact on society in terms of society coming to terms with and grappling with the reality of disability and accepting it as just a part of the world.

**Nakayn**

Like, go from "I hope you get well, soon" to "I hope you get relief soon". That's been one thing that I've really felt comfort in. Like, when people hear that I've had like, a bad couple of weeks instead of being like, "I hope you get well soon". Hope you get relief soon is a much better mindset to have, because wellness isn't always achievable but relief can be.

**Leilani/Liv**

That's so true. Oh my goodness. Um, we also randomly said floatation tanks.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, those things are really cool. [all laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

Um, you know, just general access to floatation tanks.. for all.. that would be great. [laughing]

**Leilani/Liv**

Morag, you said in home care.

**Morag**

Yes, absolutely. In home care, the freedom of disabled people to just be able to stay in their own home.Llike, where they want to live and be supported in that. This has always been evidenced. Now these pandemic times, hearing about the horrific conditions of nursing homes that people have been subjected to. It should just be out of there, like just gonezo. These medical institutionalisations. Like psych wards. Yeah, because it's all still the same. It's the same thing, of just people who are considered problems or burdens or hindrances, to be locked up and shoved away.

**Leilani/Liv**

I mean, obviously, in-home care exists for people now, but not for everyone, it's very hard to access that and set that up. And I know how much that would improve my quality of life as someone who just can't leave the house very often, and who can't feed themselves every day, and can't perform things, like tasks. Like showering regularly.

**Leilani/Liv**

And, you know, there's so many things I need help with that if I had someone come to my house every day to help me with I would have had them done years ago. Like being able to drive and things like that.

**Leilani/Liv**

There's just so many people that need support, that don't have it. These, these are problems that can be resolved for me quickly, like I could have had my license 10 years ago, if I had someone by my side, that was able to help me with that, too. That would have improved my life by 1,000,000%. Yeah, I would love to just be able to have a person to help me like that. And for them to be able to come to you, that's really important.

**Morag**

Part Three: Short to midterm reality.

**Leilani/Liv**

So the decriminalising of all medications and medicines, as well as putting them on the public.... BS thing, the PBS thing. That allows for these medicines to be acquired a lot more easily. We also wrote down mobility aid is freely available. The fact that wheelchairs cost so much and other mobility aids cost so much is just really not okay and needs to change.

**Morag**

It's ridiculous. How stigmatised it is. It's literally a thing that helps you move places. Cars are mobility aids. affiliates, bikes and mobility aids skateboards, rollerblades airplanes are oldest forms of aid you in being able to get around somewhere. Just the stigma of being associated with disability makes it, "Oh, no, you're giving up". Just fully and freely available and encouraging people to try it out. Like as a form of harm reduction too, for disabled people. I know for me like, if I had access to a wheelchair years ago, my body would not be as messed up as it is. Definitely not.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, removing the social stigma around that could really help so many people not get as hurt, not get as hurt or injured or sicker. If they have early access to mobility aids, and for there to be no stigma that doesn't stop them from accessing them. And for them to be freely available.

**Nakayn**

And like easily customisable, as well, like make it as pretty as any other accessory. I have a pink cane with flames on it. That's really cool. That's really helped with the stigma surrounding it. People will like "yeah, loves the colour of your cane". And I'm like, "yeah, it's really cool".

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, that's really important. They should be decked out decked the eff out and easily customisable. So we're kind of running out of time. So I think we should just go through these last sort of solutions, just, you know, shoot them off. So some other short to mid term solutions would be to, as we said before, extend the PBS to cover more medications, extend Medicare extend NDIS, making DSP a lot more accessible to people. Creating, supporting and majorly expanding positions for patient advocates to ensure needs and rights are met such as interpreters, plain language translators for intellectually disabled people. Position to hold medical staff accountable for their duty of care, and reduce the likelihood of that happening, of harm occurring.

**Nakayn**

With DSP, I've written, transparent, like for DSP, transparent information on how to apply. Have the rubric, because there is this rubric that they go by, have that available for everyone to read through so that they can easily go to their doctor and be like "hey, I need this this this and this". Actual disabled people being part of that process.

**Leilani/Liv**

That is so important. Oh, my goodness. Yeah, there's nothing like being analysed by non-disabled people who get to decide if you're disabled enough to access a small amount of money that will keep you alive [laughing].

**Morag**

Yeah.

**Nakayn**

This would be the perfect year to trial. Like universities having no ATAR entry.

**Leilani/Liv**

That's, that's so cool.

**Nakayn**

Yeah, I've seen people requesting it. The next few years would be great to continue it because this pandemic, it's going to affect people for years and years, I've been talking to my mum who's a teacher. She's been saying anyone from ages three, like playgroup age who haven't been able to socialise or anything, anyone from that age onwards, is going to be affected by this. So it's going to last a long, like a decent amount of time to be playing catch up for quite a few years. So this year would be perfect to start ATAR free entry, and then keep going with it.

**Leilani/Liv**

That is such a cool point. Oh, my goodness, I would love to see that happen for people. Wow, and that would be such a shift as well, because it's, you know, it's like a huge acknowledgement like this. Collectively, people have been through it, and kids have been through it. And we should slow things down and make things easier for people to achieve and access.

**Nakayn**

And like speaking of accessing, um, I'm not sure how many people known about this, but the 10 psych sessions were increased to 20 sessions this year, and next year, they're doing it again. I think that it should be made permanent, because that's been absolutely amazing. So many people would be able to benefit from having 20 therapy sessions a year, 20.!Like, that's just such a small change, it would make a huge difference.

**Morag**

Yes.

**Leilani/Liv**

it really, really would. And you know what, while I'm here, make it even cheaper, because I still got to pay my therapist $80 even with the sessions. So make it even cheaper. You know, that's more for individual therapists. But I would like that, what else we got here?

**Leilani/Liv**

This is a good one, ensure patients are made aware of their rights plainly and in their language when entering medical institutions, informed of all different legal organisations to contact.

**Leilani/Liv**

Moving on to social solutions that we could see, you know, representation is a big buzzword, but it really does make a difference, more disabled voices, people just in general being around in, you know, in media, in films and television and things that aren't just, you know, these heartbreaking stories or stereotypical stories that perpetuate harm.

**Leilani/Liv**

I just want to see more disabled people like on my screens and in the mainstream. Keeping telehealth kept and expanded. Beyond the pandemic, obviously, as well as work from home, these are the two biggest things I would say, it's been such a relief, such a release, the fact that we get to just chill at home and do this whole thing, without having to come into the studio.

**Leilani/Liv**

That is immense and huge and such a relief. Yeah, that should be kept 1,000,000,000,000%. Another social change we'd like to see is the teaching of how the medical industrial complex is another form of incarceration.

**Leilani/Liv**

That's a solution that we can, you know, put into place now that will eventually change things. You know, education is really important. It's really necessary that people learn about this stuff. Everything has slowed down during the pandemic, it'd be really nice if people worked on keeping those kinds of constructs. Interrogating ablest language, it's a pretty basic thing, but it's something that can really be done more and is really necessary, especially considering how many ableist words there are. And that we're still learning about and people take it less seriously.

**Leilani/Liv**

They don't take it seriously at all. So teaching people about the histories of ableist language is I think, yeah, really important and something that can be easily achieved, um, especially, you know, non-disabled allies, that's an important thing for you to involve yourself in.

**Leilani/Liv**

Interrogating the concept of laziness. Rethinking that, talking about it, understanding that it has ableist, it has an ableist undertone, and as well as linking it to capitalism, and, you know, concepts of worth and value related to ability.

**Leilani/Liv**

Getting rid of garbage pandemic restrictions that only allow one on one hydrotherapy for disabled people by paying physiotherapists, which bars 99% of disabled people from access. Local council providing all forms of mobility aids including beach wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, cars, for loan all for free.

**Leilani/Liv**

Abolition of below minimum wages for disabled people in sheltered workshops, same with work for the doll. No cashless card rollout for those on welfare, in home care centered and prioritized over nursing homes,

**Leilani/Liv**

Serious interrogation and exposure of private and old nursing homes. Yeah, there needs to be a lot more transparency around that. Raised payment for medical staff and carers, raised payments for all, TBH. Notice well ahead of time for any word works. Oh my goodness, this is really important. We experienced this recently. Notice well ahead of time, for any word works, loud council maintenance being undertaken in local vicnities. That really affects chronically ill people and people that have audio sensitivity, it would be nice to be informed. All houseless people housed. That might seem like a radical idea that can't be done. But that's just not true. There is many properties that are empty that could house all of the houseless people. It's really about people changing their minds about their bigotry.

**Pauline**

So the conversation that you just heard, went for a lot longer than what we've been able to air today, to listen to the full show, visit the 3CR website after the broadcast.

**Leilani/Liv**

We'd like to also encourage all of you to engage in this imaginative exercise too, what does a disabled utopia look like to you? So to conclude, we'd love to encourage listeners to participate in this imaginative exercise too. What do you envision for a just, caring society? What is Disability Justice to you? What does care mean to you? What is unfair that you would change? And how would you change it?

**Leilani/Liv**

You can draw it out, sketched out, write a story. I tried all of these methods in attempting to prepare for this show today. And send it in to 3CR, we want to see it, we want to see your beautiful visions of a utopia, because it is a collective dreaming. And yeah, we want to see.

**Leilani/Liv**

We'd also like to invite disabled people and allies to join our discord that we set up in the planning for this. It's called Disabled Dreamspace. And we'd like to invite all of you to join us on discord to start a little online community and hang out and vent and whatever you want.

**Leilani/Liv**

We'd also like to say that unpacking ableism as well as every other form of oppression is an ongoing process. And it's important for all of us to do that inner work and continue to analyze and reflect on where we're at and how we treat each other and how we treat ourselves.

**Leilani/Liv**

We encourage you to seek out texts by disabled people, media by disabled people. A couple of the quotes that Morag has shared with us have been from Mia Mingus, Morag specifically referenced Access Intimacy, which everyone should read.

**Leilani/Liv**

It's hard to speak about without tearing up. Its beautiful, radical words that are so deeply healing. We'd also like to leave you with a quote or two just to think on. Thank you so much for having us here today. I'm so happy to have done this with you and to be able to share this.

**Nakayn**

"Access for the sake of access is not necessarily liberatory but access for the sake of connection justice, community love and liberation is".

**Morag**

Yes. This quote is also from Mia Mingus. Liberatory access calls upon us to create different values for accessibility than we have historically had. It demands that responsibility for access shifts from being an individual responsibility to collective responsibility. That access shifts from being silencing, to freeing. From being isolating, to connecting. From hidden and invisible to visible. From burdensome to valuable. From a resentful obligation, to an opportunity. From shameful, to powerful. From ridged to creative. It is a way of doing access that transforms both our today and our tomorrow. In this way, liberatory access both resists against the world we don't want and actively builds we do want.

**Leilani/Liv**

Dope. Do youse want to say say goodbye?

**Nakayn**

I just want to say, I know for at least, I know for all of us this has been quite hard, analyzing everything that's wrong with our society in terms of access. And there's been times where it's been like really depressing. Acknowledging all of this, so, if you're listening and feeling that, we get that. Take some time, chill out. Message us on the discord if you need to.

**Morag**

Yeah, we'd love to hear from you. Building community-facing spaces online together.