15. Stopping Discrimination

**James**

We begin today's show by acknowledging the Kulin nation of the lands that we're meeting on today. It's elders past and present. We also pay respects to the First Nation, people and lands today.

**Heather**

We will acknowledge the self advocates who have worked tirelessly over the years for the rights to equality and human rights for all.

**Chris**

Hi, my name is Chris, and welcome to another Raising Our Voices on 3CR 855AM. We are a self advocacy group. So what is run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities. Nothing about us without us. In today's show, Heather, Shona and James will be sharing with us about bullying. I hand it over to Heather.

**Heather**

Thank you Chris. My name is Heather. And I'm a self advocate. And I'm a part of Raise for Self Advocacy and also Positive Power For Parents. I'll hand over to Shona.

**Shona**

Hi, my name is Shona. I am a self advocate and I am part of Have A Say Bendigo. I'll pass it over to James.

**James**

My name is James. I am part of a self advocacy group called Reinforce.

**Chris**

Heather, Shona and James will be talking to us about their experience as intellectual people with disabilities on bullying and discrimination, so how they affect us and how they are coping now. Shona, what experience have you had with being discriminated and being bullied?

**Shona**

I was bullied at school when I was a child. Named called and teased. I was bullied at school when I was a child. One, two of the special schools I was at, I was getting in trouble by teachers for nothing. At one of the primary schools I went to, I was getting in trouble for standing near my sisters and my sisters wanted me to and it affected me really badly.

I was treated very differently at school than other ones. Some students were getting volunteer jobs but I wasn't. And that really affected me. And I've been bullied by teenagers and I've been getting called names a lot. And I'm... I'm getting really upset about it. And I've been discriminated by bus drivers, taxi drivers.

**Chris**

So what did the taxi driver say?

**Shona**

Some of the taxi drivers just didn't talk to me much and some of them were charging too much. And some of them were asking for more extra money. One day a taxi driver asked mem nearly charged me and Chris $100.

**Chris**

And tell us about the experience you had on the bus been bullied.

**Shona**

Bus drivers have told me not to sing on the buses but they've let other people do it. And they've told me to turn my songs off. And they've never told other passengers to do that.

**Chris**

How about other passengers. They were actually picking on you too, and miming you? And mocking you.

**Shona**

Yeah and there was other passengers that were bullying me on buses and they were copying my singing but mucking it up because they were adding bad words into it.

**Chris**

Mmm.That sounds really awful.

**Shona**

Oh yes. And when I was put in care, one day I started feeling like, my family was not my family. I felt like my mum and my dad was not my dad. And felt like my sisters were not my sisters. And I felt like that for years. I still feel like it sometimes. But even though I'm out of care now, and that was my family, I still feel like it sometimes.

**Chris**

How did it feel when when you got put into care and put away for your parents?

**Shona**

I felt really upset. I didn't like it. I felt like I was abandoned.

**Chris**

And did they allow you to keep contact with your mum and sisters?

**Shona**

No, no. I didn't get to do that. When I was first put in care. The guardian would not let me and mum and my sisters talk to each other or write letters to each other. We were not allowed to do anything. And we were not allowed to see each other.

**Chris**

And so you had an experience at Human Services, didn't you?

**Shona**

Oh, yeah. An organisation where I was doing programs. I experienced domestic violence there because I was picked up off the chair by three workers. And they dropped me on the floor and then laughed.

**Chris**

"HAHAHA" - like that?

**Shona**

Very loud. And I was only playing. I said I was just pretending to be a hen, and they kept telling me to be quiet while I was sitting on the chair. But I said I'm just pretending to be hen. And then, that's when they ended up picking me up off the chair and dropping me on the floor. And I could have badly been injured.

**Chris**

That's terrible. You could have even got your back broken on something.

**Shona**

Yeah. And then I had to call the police that night. And they didn't get arrested or anything.

**Chris**

Anything else you'd like to add of any other experiences you've had in the past or that's happened recently?

**Shona**

And last year, I was nearly attacked by a worker from another organisation. And when I was doing programs, an adult social group and I was nearly attacked by that worker, and he nearly punched me in the face.

**Chris**

And Shona. How do you feel now that you're out of care and you're with your family again? How do you feel now?

**Shona**

I feel really happy I'm out of care now.

**Chris**

Well, that's good that you feel happy.

**Shona**

And I've been having bad experiences with State Trustees, because they are not listening. They think they're the boss of my money and when they're not.

**Chris**

Well, that's very important to actually stand up for yourself and that's self advocacy that you're doing for yourself, isn't it? Okay, anything else to add before we get to Heather?

**Shona**

No.

**Chris**

Okay, over to you Heather, with her experiences.

**Heather**

I've faced bullying and discrimination for most of my life. In primary school, high school, and even when I was at TAFE. I was also being treated differently from the other students. And I was even abused by my grade six teacher.

**Chris**

That's terrible.

**Heather**

Yeah, and I was teased about the music I was listening to. I also had my personal belongings taken from me when I was in high school. And I was getting blamed for other students bullying me. For most of my life, I've had things disappearing from my bedroom. And they would never turn up. I was being abused by my teacher. I was too scared to tell my parents or even my grandmother. Because I was scared that they would not believe me or I will get into more trouble.

**Chris**

Mmm. That sounds like you had a bit of a bad experience there.

**Heather**

Yeah. And it just felt like it's one bad thing after another.

**Chris**

Did you tell anyone about those things being taken?

**Heather**

Um, back then I didn't. But I do speak up now about the things disappearing for my bedroom, but I'm not being taken seriously about it.

**Shona**

That's awful Heather.

**Heather**

Yeah. Because I was bullied and been discriminated against. It has caused me more problems in my life. And I'll let you know about that later on in the show.

**Chris**

Okay, James, what experience have you had with being bullied?

**James**

Thank you. And I have been teased at school and bullied at school and picked on at school and also teased in the community.

**Chris**

That's terrible. That's terrible.

**James**

I also have been pushed off public transport, whacked in the face with the fishing rods. And also people pushing me off of transport.

**Heather**

That's awful. James.

**Chris**

That is awful. Did you do anything about it?

**James**

I went to my local police station to report it actually.

**Chris**

Well, that's good.

**Shona**

That's a good idea.

**Chris**

And what did the police say?

**James**

I can't remember actually.

**Chris**

That's okay. Anything else I can add? Heather's got a question. Heather.

**Heather**

James, I actually get pushed around on public transport when I'm getting off the train or buses because they say I'm too slow.

**James**

Yeah, that's happened to me too actually.

**Heather**

It's not good. People need to have more patience for people with a disability.

**Chris**

They do.

**James**

 And they don't leave the part vacant. Where the wheelchairs go actually

**Shona**

I've got question too. Actually it's not a question. I've once been rushed to get off public transport too once. I got told I was being extremely slow as well. It's annoying.

**Chris**

Okay. We'll be right back after a couple announcements. And the song is RESPECT by Aretha Franklin .

**Aretha Franklin**

Hey, what you want (Oo)

Baby, I got (Oo)

What you need

(Oo) Do you know I got it? (Oo)

All I'm askin' (Oo)

Is for a little respect when you come home (just a little bit)

Hey baby (just a little bit) when you get home (Just a little bit) mister (just a little bit)

I ain't gonna do you wrong while you're gone

Ain't gonna do you wrong (oo) 'cause I don't wanna (oo)

All I'm askin' (oo) Is for a little respect when you come home (just a little bit)

Baby (just a little bit) when you get home (just a little bit)

Yeah (just a little bit)

I'm about to give you all of my money

And all I'm askin' in return, honey

Is to give me my profits

When you get home (just a, just a, just a, just a)

Yeah baby (just a, just a, just a, just a)

When you get home (just a little bit)

Yeah (just a little bit)

Do it for me now, just a little bit

Ooo, your kisses (oo)

Sweeter than honey (oo)

And guess what? (oo)

So is my money (oo)

All I want you to do (oo) for me Is give it to me when you get home (re, re, re, re)

Yeah baby (re, re, re, re)

Whip it to me (respect, just a little bit)

When you get home, now (just a little bit)

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Find out what it means to me

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Take care, TCB

Oh (sock it to me, sock it to me

Sock it to me, sock it to me)

A little respect (sock it to me, sock it to me

Sock it to me, sock it to me)

Whoa, babe (just a little bit)

A little respect (just a little bit)

I get tired (just a little bit)

Keep on tryin' (just a little bit)

You're runnin' out of foolin' (just a little bit)

And I ain't lyin' (just a little bit) 'spect When you come home (re, re, re, re)

Or you might walk in (respect, just a little bit)

And find out I'm gone (just a little bit)

I got to have (just a little bit)

 A little respect (just a little bit)

**Chris**

Welcome back. The song you just heard was Respect from Aretha Franklin. We are discussing about people being bullied and we've been talking to James and Heather and Shona and their experiences with being bullied and being discriminated.

You're listening to 3CR 855AM on your radio dial, streaming on 3CR.org.au. Raising Our Voices is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. Nothing about us without us. How does bullying as you mentioned affected you? I will start with Shona.

**Shona**

Well, because I was put in care when I was nearly 19, I have always felt like my family's not my family. I felt like I'm not part of the family sometimes. But I just know they are. But it just feels strange. And sometimes I feel extremely different than my sisters.

I feel like they're more luckier than me. That they don't have a disability. And I feel unlucky that I have a disability because of how much people with disabilities get discriminated. That they get discriminated more than people without a disability.

**Chris**

And does that make you sad?

**Shona**

Yes, it does make me sad sometimes. Actually, all the time. It makes me sad, when I feel like that.

**Chris**

Have you talked to anyone about it?

**Shona**

Yes, I've talked to my mum about it. And she says there's nothing wrong, but I feel like things are wrong with me.

**Chris**

Have you talked to anyone else about it other than your family? Like workers?

**Shona**

Yes, but they haven't worried much. But I've even told my sisters and they've said nothing's wrong. You are lucky, that your brain has developed. Because when I was little and ended up with brain damage, when I was six and they discovered that I have a disability about the brain damage.

The doctor told mum that my brain would not work as well as everyone else's. And then mum thought my brain would not develop, but it did. But I still feel unlucky sometimes that have I disability. Because I was not born with a disability, and feel like my sisters are more lucky that they don't have one.

**Chris**

Okay, over to Heather.

**Heather**

People with intellectual disability are always treated differently And I've had that for most of my life. And I feel very unlucky about having a intellectual disability. And I feel that it's one bad thing after another happening to me, because of my intellectual disability and having the past experiences of bullying and getting discriminated against almost every day.

**Heather**

It's been very hard for me to socialise because of my past experiences with bullying. When I was younger, I used to stay in my room all day, and not go out to socialise with my family. It was very hard, it's still hard for me to trust people because of what I've been through.

And I'm always on the edge when I'm out in the community. And I get a lot of worry. When I'm out in the community because I don't know what's going to happen next. Yeah, and I think it's had an effect on my mental health as well.

**Chris**

Have you talked to anyone about your mental health? How has it affected you?

**Heather**

I am seeing a counsellor at the moment. So catching up with her each fortnight helps. Quite a lot.

**Chris**

Well, that's good.

**Heather**

Yeah.

**Chris**

Okay, anything else?

**Heather**

No.

**Chris**

Okay. James, what effects has it had on you?

**James**

It has affected me a lot in my mental health, actually.

**Chris**

What have you done to yourself to look after yourself and discrimination and being bullied? Heather?

**Heather**

Since I was 12 years old, I've been writing stories and I keep my stories on my computer and I actually write about my worst experience of being bullied and discriminated against. And it really takes the weight off my shoulders. And it helps me really helps me to speak up.

**Chris**

Okay. Shona.

**Shona**

Well, things I do is just, I always tell people what happens. If I get bullied on public transport, I tell my mum and my sisters and they help me feel a bit better. I just always tell two of my taxi driver friends. I always tell my two taxi driver friends what has happened in the taxis and they just feel really worried about me, they don't like it. They get a bit cross with other taxi drivers that have bullied me.

**Chris**

Okay, anything else you'd like to add to that?

**Shona**

Well, I also tell a lot of other friends what has happened. And they they just feel really sorry for me. That's all.

**Chris**

Mmm. Okay, James.

**James**

Yes.

**Chris**

What have you've done to look after yourself with bullying?

**James**

I've been doing a lot of things. And I know some people out in the community have been picked on and bullied.

**Chris**

Mmm, anything else you'd like to add?

**James**

Yeah, I believe that some people in the community have been picked on and bullied and teased. And I think we might need new people talking on Raising Our Voices.

**Chris**

I agree. And I reckon everybody else will agree with that too.

**James**

People need to do their own counselling and seek some counselling I think.

**Chris**

Okay, well thanks James for that. What needs a change?

**James**

People need to stand up for their rights and people need to stand up for their disability. That's what needs to be changed. And people need to speak up in the community and speak loud and clear.

**Chris**

Heather

**Heather**

If people out there do not know about disability, I would urge them to get disability awareness and just think about if you are a person with a disability, you want people to respect you. People out there need to get more disability awareness and people need to hear it directly from people with a disability. How to respect people with a disability.

**Chris**

I think I agree with Heather about things being, everyone needs to have some type of learning about what it's like to have a disability. Because most people don't understand what it's like and they should try and put themselves into those shoes and make it feel, so they know what it feels like. Shona what needs to change?

**Shona**

I think people that don't have a disability should learn about people with a disability. I think they should go and meet people in self advocacy groups and just get told what it is like to have a disability.

**Heather**

Shona I agree with you.

**Chris**

Thanks Shona.

**James**

I agree too.

**Chris**

Yeah. We all agree, I reckon. I trust that you have enjoyed Raising Our Voices on 855AM on today's show talking about people who have been bullied and also been discriminated. This may have brought up some difficult feelings for people. And if it has affected anyone in any way, they can call Lifeline number. You can call anytime on 13 11 14 at any time.

Thank you for listening to Raising Our Voices on 3CR. Our radio show is run by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities. And we've been talking to James and Heather and Shona and their experience with being bullied and being discriminated.

**Voiceover**

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