Celebrating Barriers or Diversity Video Blog

[00:00:04] **Adam:** Hi, and welcome to this short video blog and today is the 3rd December 2020, um, and it is the International Day for Persons with Disabilities though I personally struggle to use that language

but we'll explore that in detail in a short while I'm joined today with my colleague, Meghan, who is the Training and Innovations Lead at Diversity and Ability and I guess we just wanted to do a video blog as today has really given a space to reflect on where we are as a society in terms of disability inclusion and really our conversation and reflections came about because we wanted to celebrate the day for the International Day of Disabled People

but it led us to think about

one language, two identity and the importance of identity and reclaiming language .and I guess finally at the end of this discussion it would be good to think about whether we should be celebrating today. for disabled people. So Meghan let's kick off with a discussion around

language, person with the disability or disabled person is as a discussion that we include alot in our trainings what are your thoughts?

[00:02:33] **Meghan:** I think it's so interesting. I guess when we're doing our training sessions, we so often hear that when we asked participants, which do they prefer, we often hear person with a disability and it's always from a really good place.

They always mean it in a really nice way, which is about how can um, I make sure that I'm always putting the person first and the disability, second. We try to explain to them the concepts of the medical model versus the social model and we think about how the social model is all about barriers around us and those barriers being disabling.

And we try and explain that disabled person is all about, um, identifying that actually a person's only disabled by societal barriers. So my preference initially. Several years ago was definitely for person with a disability before I became enlightened to the social model and these, the changing landscape of the models.

But now it's very much towards disabled person because I think it recognizes that I'm not disabled by myself. I'm disabled by society around me.

[00:03:40] **Adam:** Totally, I guess I to have been on a very similar journey. I mean,years ago I used to want to use person first language and I

still understand the argument there but I think if we all go to move forward in society and truly embrace the social model,

actually, it really is about people being

disabled by society and society that disables people, I guess

that I don't always define as a disabled person. Right now I would say I'm not a disabled person. I'm not effacing any barriers. I've got my assistive technology, I've got the support I need in place to participate in this online video blog and access to technology I need. I'd become a disabled person at points in time where I do face barriers now barriers come in all different shapes and sizes and

have different impacts, on different people,

and effect diversity differently. I think understanding the social model is a key step. I think in society in terms of really making sure that

we keep striving to that place of authentic inclusion. And actually, while I would say that I'm not a disabled person at this moment in time

politically, I would say that I was a disabled person.Why? Because I think we need that umbrella, to unite under

in order to weed out discrimination in society. I think if we can get, to that space where we are all embracing the social model in the communities that we live in and work in then maybe, we can turn the dial a little more, and talk about disablement and actually not talk about people and it being a disabling circumstance. . I don't know how you feel about that concept?

[00:06:39] **Meghan:** Absolutely. I think it's unusual that we are, um, only reflecting I suppose, on this now, but thinking about how for international day of disabled person or person with a disability, as the UN are calling it

we really are celebrating that some people experience barriers in society, and that's a really strange thing, I suppose, for us to be celebrating. I really think that honestly, we should be celebrating diversity and the strength that we have in that diversity, but completely understand and I guess acknowledge that we need a day in which we can say actually, let's challenge the current narrative and in turn

let's make sure there are steps that we can take in individual countries and again, worldwide, that will ensure that disabled people have a spot on the agenda and are also able to be supported and then ultimately won't experience those barriers. What do you think?

[00:07:33] **Adam:** I think that beautifully sums up our reflections that we've had about today. And while I think, it's important I think to celebrate, diversity

actually, that's exactly what we should be doing, celebrating diversityinstead of kind of celebrating a narrative that says people are disabled, um, but interestingly, I think that carries weight in how we think and feel about diversity. So I think the message is we absolutely need to be celebrating diversity, we absolutely need to be celebrating difference, but isn't it interesting that we're still using language around medical model?

And even almost implying that we're celebrating barriers by the language that we use on a daily basis, it's a really interesting reflectionand let's celebrate diversity and lets celebrate difference

and actually maybe in years to come this day can be called something like celebrating inclusion or international day of inclusion that would be a space that would really portray authentic celebration of diversity and inclusion. I think.

[00:09:26] **Meghan:** Absolutely. It's definitely a place that we would like to get to sooner rather than later. I think.