Exploring Barriers and Impacts in an Assessment

[00:00:04] **Robin:** The very early stages of a needs assessments are typically spent checking all of the disabled persons essential information. This can include date of birth, contact information, and details of their employer or education provider, if applicable. Once this has been completed

the needs assessor would usually move on to a discussion about the nature of the person's disability. At this stage, the needs assessor would seek to document all of the symptoms, confirm whether there is any variation in the frequency and severity of those symptoms. Establish whether the underlying condition is progressive with symptoms worsening over time,

and confirm whether medication is being used to control symptoms with further discussion about the effectiveness of the medication and whether the person experiences any problematic side effects. Further to the core procedural elements of the discussion the assessor would also seek to establish additional information depending on the disability that is being discussed.

When conducting an assessment for someone with a sensory impairment, it is useful to ask the person to describe their experience of vision or hearing as this can help the assessor to approximate the impact on relevant activities. In cases of physical disability, it is important to establish which areas of the body are affected

and to what extent. Mental health conditions are often characterized by destructive cycles that reinforce the underlying problem and so it is prudent to ask whether the person is experiencing any physical or behavioral impacts that amplify the severity of the core symptoms. These can include lack of restful sleep, loss of appetite and nausea. An impact on mental health

can also be a secondary factor in the experience of a person with any other disability. Although this is particularly true of autism, as the perception of difference can affect confidence and trigger anxiety or frustration. Emotions that are often difficult for an autistic person to self-regulate.

That being said, there are a wide array of different symptoms that can be experienced by someone with autism. Not all of which are necessarily problematic. Alongside the difficulties associated with the autism. Some individuals also possess unusual talents and abilities.

The pattern of symptoms can also very significant. Some people experience acute sensory perception, which can include severe sensitivity to light, a disgust response to strong aromas or physical contact and a heightened perception of sound that's can range from intolerance of sudden loud noises through to an acute awareness of repetitive background noise.

Sometimes at very specific frequencies. The direction of this stage of the assessment interview is guided by the information that the person has provided in advance while it is challenging to conduct an assessment without any prior information about the life circumstances and activities of the person, it can be extremely difficult to conduct a needs assessment without any advanced knowledge of the person's disability.

A needs assessor faced with such a situation would not only need to review the symptoms that the person is experiencing, but would also need to attempt to deduce the nature of the underlying condition in order to be able to anticipate other symptoms and difficulties that the person might be experiencing. A needs assessor in this situation would typically expect the assessment to run for considerably longer than normal.

Which can be exhausting for both the assessor and the person for whom the assessment is being conducted. Therefore it's can be appropriate for the organization to insist that information relating to disability is provided before the needs assessments can take place.