# Transcript: Demystifying Diverse Communication

Alisha Hill: So graceful.

Interviewer (off mic): And we’ll do your sound check?

Darryl Sellwood: Sound level

## Title: Demystifying Diverse Communication

Candice Payne: I am profoundly deaf.

I have a profound hearing loss.

Yodollah Rasekhi: I am learning English.

Margie Charlesworth:I have a cerebral palsy accent.

Steven Hellier: I was born deaf and throughout life I started losing my eyesight,

and it also impacts my balance.

Alisha Hill: I am fully blind on this side.

I’ve got a little bit of vision in my left, and I'm completely deaf on my right side, and I’ve got a little bit of hearing in my left ear.

Darryl Sellwood: I use my communication device,

known as an AAC device,

because my speech can be difficult to understand.

I use it rarely at home with support workers and friends.

Yet, I always take my AAC device with me when I go out

because it is more likely that I will meet new people

who I might want to talk to.

## Title: What are your frustrations?

Margie Charlesworth: The most offensive is to make out you understand me.

If I ask someone, “What’s the time?”

and they go, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

I know they are not understanding me.

It means people are not interested in anything I have to say.

Darryl Sellwood: People often assume that my hearing or intellect is affected,

because of my difficult to understand speech.

Thus they, either raise their voices to speak to me,

or speak to me as a child.

Neither are the case.

I have good hearing and can hold a good conversation,

if people allow the time to listen.

Alisha Hill: When I am with a support person, who I call a communication guide, I go into a shop, and I’ll ask them a question. They will talk to my communication guide. They won’t talk to me. Even though I'm the customer. I'm the one asking the questions. And that is really, really frustrating.

Darryl Sellwood: Do you know how many try to talk to me standing to the side,

slightly behind me, and expecting to have a conversation with me?

I take it that it is easier to see what I am typing on my device,

but it does nothing for my neck.

Yet, it is funny, because as I turn my wheelchair to see their face,

they move back to the same position as before.

If I let it happen, we end up going around literally in circles

for the whole conversation. So, they should let me see their face as we are talking.

Candice Payne: Sometimes it is very isolating

for a Deaf person in a room full of hearing people

because it is very, very difficult for us to keep up

with the conversations that are talking place.

And trying to lip read everyone in that conversation space.

Yodollah Rasekhi: When I can’t speak English, Australian people can't connect with me.

It’s very big problem for me. It’s a four wall four around me, when I can’t speak English.

My teacher told me, "you can......you, you try to find... uh... Australian friend."

but... I can’t. I can’t find.

Steven Hellier: For a hearing person that may not know anything

about someone that is Deafblind or anything about disability,

they can very easily be quite discriminatory about someone who is Deafblind.

Some people just don’t take any notice.

Interviewer (off mic): So would you like more people to try to connect with you, and communicate with you?

Steven Hellier: Absolutely.

## Title: How can people better communicate with you?

Alicia Hill: Some of the advice I would give is to say their name, especially if we're in a group situation. If Sara is talking, just say “Sara speaking”, and then continue.

Candace Payne: I think he should talk slowly, very clearly. Not loudly though. That won’t work.

Alisha Hill: Use touch. So touch me on the shoulder and then continue with what you want to say.

So I can see a little bit. I do have my font enlarged on my iPad. And it needs to have a black background and white font. When my iPad is set up like that, if I take my time and read slowly enough, I can read.

Steven Hellier: If I met someone that I was unfamiliar with and they didn’t know any Auslan or haptics, I would grab out my iPad and use that to communicate. So I can write on my iPad, and communicate back and forth with that person. That then gets deleted. They can write their response and I can read it.

Yodollah Rasekhi: My message for Australian people, when... me and other people like me say, “Good morning, hi, how are you?” Um... Australian people can stop and...um... conversation with me.

Margie Charlesworth: If you can’t understand me, or anyone with an accent, it is okay to ask us to repeat it.

Darryl Sellwood: Like many people who use AAC devices, I have developed a range of techniques

to assist people to understand what I am saying, and to put them at ease.

For example, on meeting people who have no experience

talking with people like me, along with using my device, I tend to talk with short common sentences to build up their confidence.This gives them opportunities to succeed, so they are more likely to continue to interact with me.

## Title: Demystifying Diverse Communication

Margie Charlesworth: People with communication disabilities have to feel comfortable to be in the world, because we are here and we deserve to do whatever we want in our lives.

Candice Payne: Please don’t feel nervous because Deaf people are just like them, just like everyone. It is just that they can’t hear, that’s all. So we can still communicate, we can still work. We can still do, you know, lots and lots of things. And you can mime. You can find a different way to communicate.

Darryl Sellwood: I would like people to know that by spending time with me, they would find out that I am a fun-loving guy who enjoys drinking wine, viewing art, listening to all types of music and traveling Australia and overseas. They would also find out that my disability is a part of who I am, but I don’t let it rule things I do.

Alisha Hill: Even though I am Deafblind, I do have what I consider a “normal” life. I do go out with friends, go shopping. I have a great job as a community development worker, and I am able to do these things because I had the supports that I need.

Steven Hellier: You know, I am a very independent person. I am able to look after myself domestically in the home. I can use my computer, I can read. You know sometimes I get bored at home, so I will go out for a walk, and do some exercise.

Might come home then have a coffee, or I might go out and order a latte. So yeah, I am quite a happy man.

(laughs)

Yodollah Rasekhi: I’m... I can say very thank you for you you sit and listen my, my speaking.

Thank you so much.

## Title: Don't let diverse communication stop connection

## Title: We thank the participants for sharing their wisdom and experience.

## In order of appearance:

## Alisha Hill

## Yodollah Rasekhi

## Darryl Sellwood

## Steven Hellier

## Candice Payne

## Margie Charlesworth

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