

'And You Think You're The Expert?'

Introduction Episode

0:00:02.0 Jane: This podcast talks about sexual violence and domestic violence. It might make you feel upset or scared. If you need someone to talk to, there are numbers in the notes for this podcast.

0:00:14.6 Alison: We would like to begin by acknowledging the people of, the Turrbal and Jagera people. They are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we recorded this podcast. We would like to pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a better future together.

Alison: Hi, I'm Alison.

0:00:41.6 Cassie: Hi, I'm Cassie.

0:00:42.9 Alison: And welcome to "And You Think You're The Expert?" introduction episode.

0:00:48.2 Cassie: And we are peer workers.

0:00:49.7 Alison: And peer workers, people with an intellectual, lived experience of an intellectual disability. [chuckle]

0:00:55.0 Cassie: Our role as peer workers is we help Jane and Kate put the workshops together, and we're also helping with the podcast.

0:01:07.9 Alison: And in this episode, me and Cassie will be interviewing Jane and Kaitie.

0:01:12.4 Cassie: Today, we'll be interviewing Jane and Kaitie about what you'll be expecting in the podcast episode and a little bit about the project and

why this happened?

0:01:23.5 Kaitie: Thank you, Cassie and Alison. I'm Kaitie. I'm one of the WWILD workers.

0:01:27.8 Jane: Hi, I'm Jane. I'm one of the WWILD workers as well.

0:01:30.1 Cassie: Can you tell us a little, the listeners where you work?

0:01:36.1 Kaitie: So we're workers at WWILD. So I've been working at WWILD for just this project. So the project's called "Listen Up!". So just for about a year, but Jane's been here longer.

0:01:48.4 Jane: Yeah, so I've been working at WWILD for about eight years. So it's WWILD Sexual Violence Prevention Association. So we're working with people who have an intellectual disability, who may have experienced crime such as sexual assault or domestic violence.

0:02:04.6 Kaitie: So you can find out more information about WWILD at their website. So it's a bit of a tricky one. It's wwild.org.au.

0:02:13.5 Alison: Can you tell us a little bit more about the project?

0:02:16.7 Kaitie: The "Listen Up" project is the name. And we were funded by this project by the Department of Social Services, and that was as part of the community-led projects to prevent violence against women and their children. So one part of the project was around prevention, and that meant we went around to a whole different bunch of places. And I know we went to Rockhampton with you Alison and Gold Coast with you Cassie. And we also went... We had two in Brisbane, we had Caboolture, Logan. So we went about bunch of places. We called it the road trip, and we spoke to women about their rights within relationships, so their rights in healthy relationship, intimate relationships, family relationships, friendships.

0:03:03.7 Jane: Some of the reason why this was a really important chunk of the project was that we know that women with intellectual disabilities often

are not involved in discussions around safety and rights. So this is a really important part of keeping safe and prevention. So that's where we started.

0:03:20.2 Kaitie: Yeah. Did you guys wanna tell our listeners a little bit about your role in that kind of part when we were going around and doing the workshops?

0:03:28.1 Alison: Our role was to help the lovely two people we're interviewing come up with resources to use.

0:03:35.2 Kaitie: Yeah, yeah. So you came up with the activities. Yeah, absolutely.

0:03:37.9 Cassie: And we helped put the podcast together as well.

0:03:41.6 Kaitie: Yeah, yeah. Awesome. Yeah, so you guys both came with us and delivered all the content as well, which was really great. And you helped us come up with the activities we were gonna use to make sure that it was easy to understand and that kind of thing as well.

0:03:55.9 Jane: The second part of our project was to create resources in partnership with our peer workers, but also with the women who attended our workshops. And the resources were based around what services and systems need to be doing to be more accessible for women who have an intellectual disability, and how they can ensure that their services are safe for women.

0:04:18.7 Kaitie: So to do that, we did some consultations in that first kind of road trip we did around, but that was a very small consultation. And then we divided the participants up into groups of interest, so there were some kind of workers that kept coming up in discussion a lot. So for example, police, mental health workers, DV workers, sexual violence workers. And so we kind of got people into interest area groups wherever possible, if they were close enough in proximity. And then we had another round of consultation where we went back to these new groups and we had a chat with them around what kind of things they wanted this particular worker to know about accessibility,

what makes it easier for services. So what makes it easier for them to access services? What makes it easier for them to engage with those services? So and yeah, that's kind of what's made up the base of this podcast.

0:05:15.2 Cassie: Can you please tell the listeners why we made a podcast?

0:05:18.5 Jane: Sure, thanks, Cass. So a really important part of what we were doing with this project overall, is to really be led by what the women wanted. So a lot of in our consultation workshops that Kaitie spoke about earlier, going on the radio was a very popular choice as a way of sharing messages around accessibility and safety. So we decided that a podcast might be a good way to... sort of like radio, but it can be accessed at any time. So that's how we landed on podcast.

0:05:52.3 Kaitie: But the problem with radio is that, I suppose, one of our goals was to make something that was a lasting resource, and radio was a very time-limited thing. So that's kind of how we landed on the podcast. So we end up having a lot of discussions around podcasts and how they're similar or different to radio. [chuckle] Basically, the premise for the podcast is based on what one of our participants said early in one of the workshops, and she raised up a hand in the workshop when we were asking about what we should make and what we should do, and she said, "I think we should be the teachers, we should interview the workers on how they work with women who have a disability, we are the experts." And we just thought that was such a great quote. And it got a great reception, from everyone else in that workshop. And we thought, that's such a great idea, you know, that people with intellectual disabilities are often the people being interviewed, they're really the hosts. And that they are the people with the expertise, so they should be leading these discussions. They shouldn't just be consulted, they should be leading them.

0:06:50.8 Jane: By doing this, our hope is that listeners can see that people with an intellectual disability can use their voice, can have a role, and can be involved in really important discussions around their lives and prevention and violence and what needs to happen so women with intellectual disability don't continue to experience violence at the high rates that they are.

0:07:14.3 Kaitie: Just like you guys who have absolutely been really strong leaders in this project and contributed so much and shared all your expertise in making this possible.

0:07:24.8 Cassie: Yeah, I think that's... That's good.

0:07:26.8 Alison: I agree. Yeah, I think it's really good. Can you please tell listeners about what happens in each episode?

0:07:34.3 Jane: Thank you, Alison. So there'll be a number of different episodes that you can tune in for, [chuckle] and in each different episode, we've actually invited a guest speaker to come along from the different service or system, so we have invited police, sexual violence workers, DV workers, support coordinators and support workers, and so in each episode, we will have our experts interviewing the professional on how they work with women who have an intellectual disability, and then we'll be over to the experts to share their wisdom around what they think workers should be doing in this space.

0:08:08.9 Kaitie: And our listeners will also hear your voices, Cassie and Alison, quite a bit, as you each did three episodes each and helped our participants come up with the questions and also helped them ask the questions and added your own expertise in your episodes as well.

0:08:23.9 Cassie: What's the link to violence?

0:08:27.5 Kaitie: Yeah. So I think we've been a little bit vague on that so far, so I suppose that at the core of this project was around violence prevention, so that's kind of why we did the workshops around rights, 'cause we know that when people have information about healthy relationships, when they know what to expect, when they know what their rights are, they're more likely to seek help if they do experience violence and they're less likely to experience violence, so that's kind of what that first workshops were about. So the other link is, when we're talking about accessibility, we're talking about accessibility for women who have an intellectual disability and have experienced violence

or experiencing violence. So the workers we've chosen, a worker is someone who's experienced domestic violence or sexual violence or another form of violence, so I suppose disability-related violence, like carer violence or worker violence, the people that they might... The services they might encounter on their road to recovery or their road to safety, so support workers being in the home with them, the people they see every day might be the first person they disclose violence to, or they might be the first person to pick up on violence. DV violence workers or sexual violence workers, specialist workers in that area, a police officer, when they're reporting crimes, and a support coordinator is often the person helping navigate their service systems around leaving a violence situation or getting support afterwards, and then a mental health worker, because we know that a lot of women who go through violence experience poor mental health because of the trauma they've been through.

0:10:05.3 Jane: Yeah, I think just adding on what Kaitie said, we know that women who have an intellectual disability experience really high rates of violence, and what we're hearing in our workshops is that we know they're experiencing violence, however, we know that the response that they receive when they disclose their violence, when they seek support is not great, it's not good enough, and that is a really important reason as to why we're doing these podcasts, to share experiences and wisdom around what needs to happen so these services can be accessible and respond better, because what's been... Some of the things we've heard are just not good enough.

0:10:46.4 Kaitie: So... And I suppose accessibility is both for seeking help when they are experiencing violence, so being able to go to a DV service and say, "I'm experiencing violence," and receiving support which is accessible and easy, but then also being able to access these services for support around information around relationships, information around violence, information around safety, which is often... A lot of experts said that they didn't feel they could approach these services or weren't receiving that support.

0:11:18.6 Jane: I think what we heard overwhelmingly is that a lot of women who have intellectual disability had never had any education around safe relationships, sex education, or if they did, it wasn't presented in a way that was accessible to them. And so this is a part of the reason, as Kaitie described

earlier, as to why we started the project by running a series of workshops, where we discuss rights, where we discuss safe relationships, where we discuss where you can seek help, as it's an important... A really, really important step to prevention against women who have... Prevention of violence against women who have an intellectual disability.

0:11:53.3 Cassie: Thanks for that, Kaitie and Jane.

0:11:55.0 Jane: The other thing that you can look forward to in each episode is, at the end of each episode, we actually have a myth-busting section. And why we do this is because there are many, many, many myths that surround people who have an intellectual disability. These myths are extremely dangerous and mean that women who have a disability don't receive the support that they deserve. So I won't go into what they are, 'cause you have to listen! But we'll be talking to the professional around what they think about this myth, and then we'll do some busting.

0:12:30.8 Alison: How many women were involved in this project in total?

0:12:34.3 Jane: Thank you, Alison.

Kaitie: I think it was 32 in total.

0:12:37.2 Jane: 32.

0:12:38.8 Kaitie: But not everyone ended up being involved in the podcast, I think that came to about 28 or 29 women. So I think you'll hear from the number, there's a... [chuckle] A really large amount of number of women who contributed, so you won't hear all of their voices. Some of them have opted out just to kind of come up with the questions and do some of the background information. Others have opted to be our hosts and you'll hear their voices, some people came along to the podcast but didn't wanna speak as much, so... Everyone's kinda contributed differently. So if someone wasn't able to come, we have tried to read out some of the things that they told us, some of their quotes, so that you can still hear their opinion, but you'll also hear me and Jane throughout and Cassie and Alison, kinda giving some overviews of what

the group thought, so obviously, people had experiences in a wide range of areas, so sometimes they might be part of one group, but they contributed to several others, so we try to read out generally what the group said or particular things from other people, even if they're not included in that particular episode.

0:13:45.1 Cassie: At all the workshops, we got the girls to do a photo, like a picture of themselves, what will that be used for?

0:13:54.4 Jane: Thank you, Cassie. Great question. [chuckle] Yes, so we did a little bit of arts and craft in our workshops, this was really fun, and the reason we did that is that we have created a booklet to go alongside the podcast.

Kaitie: So everyone's drawings were kind of turned into little cartoon figurines. So we kind of did this because a lot of women were worried about putting their photo in the booklet and that kind of thing. So we've got a cartoon version instead of an approximation of what everyone looks like, which will also be with their pseudonym or fake name, so everyone has done that for privacy, but in the booklet that goes with this podcast, you can contact WWILD to get a copy of it. Basically, we've put down people's expertise, so when we talked about expertise, we talked about that in the way of lived experience expertise, so people have put down whether they're a survivor of violence, their other identities like being First Nations or LGBTQIA or that kind of thing. As well as some people have also put in things they like doing and kind of a little insight into who they are.

0:15:01.8 Jane: The other thing that you can find in the booklet is we did not have enough time in the podcast to share all of the quotes and all of the great wisdom... Yes, that we learned in all of our consultation workshop, so the booklet also contains a lot of wisdom from all the different groups around what systems and services need to be doing better to prevent violence against women who have an intellectual disability, but also to respond better.

0:15:26.7 Kaitie: So it's a great accompaniment, we hope, to the podcast, so if you've listened to the podcast and you want a bit more information, definitely have a look at the booklet 'cause I think that kind of goes a little bit deeper and

expands on some of the points made here.

0:15:42.5 Alison: And it's also got a bits that me and Cassie wrote and there are pictures of us also.

0:15:46.3 Kaitie: Good point Alison, so it does also have little reflections from you both around how you found the project and what you liked about it and what you got out of it. Yeah, absolutely. Which I think kinda brings us to something we haven't been asked about, but I'm just gonna sneakily chuck it in is more about your role in the project. So you both were hired by WWILD last year, shortly after I was hired, and your role has been really, really important 'cause you have helped us come up with what we should be doing in the workshops, how we should be running them... You've helped run it, so there's heaps that you guys have contributed to there as well.

0:16:29.3 Alison: I've enjoyed getting to know the participants, and I've liked also being involved with helping to come up with the project and also the good old booklet and podcast.

0:16:41.3 Cassie: Overall, I just enjoyed learning more that I haven't known of and just learning all the different things from the participants, what they've gone through, the experiences, and just knowing that it's gonna help people out there that have got an intellectual disability, knowing that they're not alone, there is people out there that have lived domestic violence, sexual assault, and you can get through it, it just takes a lot of determination and hard work.

0:17:23.8 Kaitie: We had some pretty amazing participants didn't we?

0:17:25.3 Alison: We did.

0:17:26.3 Kaitie: Some people shared some really great advice and really great information. Yeah, I think the other really great thing about the peer worker role is how much everyone really enjoyed that role, we got some great feedback around that, and people were really excited by the fact that we have people with lived experience on the team, and they were kind of leading the

way.

0:17:47.4 Jane: And I think for us, for myself and Kaitie, having the peer workers on board was amazing in many ways, but I think we're talking about accessibility, so it's really important that women with an intellectual disability are involved in those discussions. So, both Cassie and Alison helped us with making sure we were using easy language, making sure that our activities were making sense. And this is really invaluable because as you'll see in the podcasts, they are the experts.

0:18:16.5 Kaitie: So that's actually a good point. Throughout the episode, you heard us refer to our participants as the experts, and that's what we'll do from here on out, so that's based on the wording that that participant used, "we should be the experts". So, we refer to all the women who are involved in this project as our experts or our hosts throughout all the episodes. Well, I hope everyone listening enjoys it. And that you get something out of it.

0:18:45.0 Alison: I hope they'll find out a little bit more about DVs and other support services, where you can go to contact support.

0:18:54.1 Cassie: I hope all the listeners understand people with an intellectual disability are normal human beings, they're just people with special gifts and they shouldn't be judged no matter what shape and what type of disability they have.

0:19:15.4 Kaitie: Yeah, well said, Cass.

Jane: I guess. I really hope that that listeners after listening to all the wisdom that our experts share in each episode, I really hope that particularly workers have a think about their practice in the way that they're working with women who have an intellectual disability. As accessibility takes many forms, and you'll hear a little bit more about that in the podcast. So that is the end of the introduction episode, so tune in for all the wisdom or the advice, all the laughs. Um, thanks!

0:19:48.6 Alison: We have made a booklet with information about the Listen

Up! project, this is information about our hosts, how we did the project and some other stuff that may help workers. You can find it on our website. See the notes for this podcast for more information. If you find some of the things we spoke about today upsetting, you can find numbers for the support if you live in Australia in the notes for this podcast.

0:20:16.3 Jane: This podcast was created as part of the Listen Up! project at WWILD, we were kindly funded for this project by the Department of Social Services as part of their community-led project to prevent violence against women and their children. What we talk about in these podcasts is not advice, WWILD expressly disclaims any liability howsoever caused to any persons with respect to any action taken in reliance in the contents of this publication.