

THE MOST IMPORTANT
THINGS PEOPLE WANT
YOU TO KNOW ABOUT
DISABILITY & CARING

In the words of
carers and
disabled staff
and students
at Warwick
University.



Introduction

On 20 June 2018, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team hosted a Disability and Carers' Awareness Event – a number of organisations came to Warwick to host stalls, provide information and support, and engage in conversation, so that we could increase knowledge of the issues around disability and caring and raise awareness of what support and services exist.

As disability and caring can often be invisible issues, we also wanted to put real people's voices at the centre of the event. So, prior to the event we asked staff and students to complete an anonymous form answering one question '**What's the most important thing you would want people to know about disability/caring?**'. On the day of the event we displayed these quotes on a rolling slideshow and on posters, and we received so many fantastic and thought-provoking comments we wanted to share them with the wider Warwick community – hence this booklet!

All these quotes are things real people at Warwick want their colleagues to know. So please read, learn, and enjoy.

If you'd like to know more about our work on disability and caring have a look at our website: www.warwick.ac.uk/equalops.

“

One might look bright
and happy and strong
on the outside, inside
we need some TLC.

”

“

I am profoundly deaf (wear hearing aids, but they are not always visible), when you request someone to repeat what they have just said because you have not heard them people assume that you are either not interested OR not concentrating on them.

Invisible Issues = negative judgment.

”

“

Sometimes there are emergencies which mean that I need flexibility at work.

”

“

Although I care for people I am an autonomous person in my own right, able to engage in many everyday and often enjoyable activities. It does not diminish who I am or my status in any way and I am proud to provide care where it is needed.

”

“

Carers sometimes
need to be cared
for too.

”

“

This does not lessen my
commitment to my job
or compromise my
ability to be able to do
my job successfully.

”

“

Caring has evolved greatly, and affects people of any gender.

”

“

You are not
alone! And you
can do this!

”

“

Disabilities are not a
life choice. They
could happen to you.

”

“

It means having no flexibility in my start and finish times at work.

It means that I go back home not to rest, but to work again.

It means most of my 'personal' time is really the time I enjoy at work.

It means that there are barriers to my career progression which are totally out of my control.

”

“

Asking for help will remind those who could help more that they should insist on helping rather than waiting to be asked.

”



When people judge you because they cannot see you are disabled it can be very upsetting.

For example if using a disabled toilet I have found some people who are more obviously disabled have little or no patience if they cannot see what is wrong with me. They think I should not be using this facility.

Just because the disability is not obvious that does not mean it is not there.



“

To me, caring is
hard and only love
makes it possible.

”

“

I was once interviewed for a job and, upon not being selected, was told that it would possibly be best for me because it would allow me to find a position more suited to my caring responsibilities; so I believe it also means facing discrimination.

”

“

It's good to
talk! :0)

”

“

I'm autistic. There are things you're doing to try and help me, and I'm grateful, but sometimes I think you feel it's a case of "if we give you XYZ, you'll be normal". That's not what accommodations do. I'll always be different, and I'd really like you to tell me that that's alright - rather than expecting me to mask more now I have more support.

”

“

It does not diminish
who I am or my status
in any way and I am
proud to provide care
where it is needed.

”

“
As a carer it is important to be kind to yourself too, I was often caught up in a cycle of resentment and guilt. But I was told you should try to make time to do things you enjoy and live your life.
”

“

A society, organisation or culture should be judged by how they support the most vulnerable in the population.

The challenge is not just to encourage the capable, gifted and ambitious to progress but also to facilitate the functioning and development of those that are at a disadvantage or facing exceptional challenges, in order to allow them to thrive and flourish.

The way we care for others reflects our values for cohesion in society and effective caring facilitates a meaningful and compassionate existence for all.

”

“

The level of emotional care required for the people we care for can't be underestimated.

”

“

You are never
alone, seek help.

”

“

The space to the side of an accessible WC is for a wheelchair not sanitary bins, brushes, hoovers or any kind of storage, keep this space clear.

”

“

Not all
disabilities
are visible.

”

“

Disability, caring and
being cared for can
touch our lives at any
time, nobody is immune.

”

“

When you are caring for someone else it can be difficult to find time to care for yourself, to permit yourself time to do something that is just for you. Asking for help which will enable you to have that 'you' time is ok. It will also remind those who could help more that they should insist on helping rather than waiting to be asked.

”

“

Remember that the carer has feelings and should be supported to reach their potential, don't jump in and do something for them that they feel able to do.

”

“

I am still
committed to my
work, I just need
a little flexibility.

”

“

A blocked drop kerb is a blocked access route to people in wheelchairs. Think ‘if I park here will I be blocking someone's access route?’

”

“
Not all
disabilities
can be seen.”



“

I love the person I care for deeply. Caring can be an all consuming, seemingly never-ending role, but one that at it's very heart is about the giving of yourself to another; I wouldn't have it any other way.

”

“

I haven't had a holiday for four years, all my time has gone into hospital appointments and looking after my son after operations.

”

“


Look beyond first impressions. While some disabilities are evident to the onlooker, others are not.

”


“

Accept any help offered, don't isolate yourself even though often it is the easier option.

”



A carer's life is like a big sandcastle on the beach, you know that the waves will lap against your sandcastles, break it down but you will manage to rebuild it, with all the others on the beach. You know that the tide will come in and again you will manage to rebuild it. But as time goes on, you spend more and more of your own time rebuilding. So to reduce the time, you build a smaller and higher sandcastle, until you become isolated, controlled by the waves. Then a storm arrives, smashing your world apart, drowning in the sea, looking for a lifeline, but there are none. Do I go back and rebuild or swim away to another beach? But I know my beach, I know how to rebuild my sandcastle, so I go back and the waves and the tide start again like clockwork. Such is a carers life.





I care for an elderly parent with multiple health issues. Sometimes if I have some issues at home to deal with, I don't arrive on campus till 9.30, can't find a parking space, have to park further away, and then walk to my office. I get to my office at 9.50. Comments from colleagues about "being late" are not helpful, despite the fact that they know I have care responsibilities.

I think this is a typical issue for carers – the guilt factor of being late into work, balanced with trying to get your work done. Even though any time I miss is automatically made up, being seen as "late" on a regular basis and unsupportive comments from colleagues has such a negative impact on how you feel.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Wellbeing Support Services
University House | University of Warwick | CV4 8UW
www.warwick.ac.uk/equalops | equality@warwick.ac.uk

The logo for the University of Warwick, featuring the word "WARWICK" in a large, red, serif font, with "THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, partially overlapping a dark grey triangular shape that points downwards.

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK