

# DISABLED PEOPLE AND COVID-19:

## EP. 1 - FOOD AND SHOPPING

### TRANSCRIPT - ENGLISH

Director: Jason Boberg    Producer: Kera Sherwood-O'Regan    Kaiwhakamāori: Hinerangi Rhind-Wiri

#### PRUDENCE WALKER

Kia ora my name's Prudence and I'm a disabled woman. I live in central Wellington in an apartment in an apartment on the 13th floor. I'm the Chief Executive of the Disabled Persons Assembly New Zealand.

Getting food and lockdown, well... that was quite a challenge. I was not able to leave my apartment. Going to the supermarket is a physical challenge for me at any time and I don't receive formal supports to have someone help with getting my shopping.

So I rung the supermarket that I usually order most of my shopping from and get it delivered. For the nine months before lock down every time I ordered from that service they bought the shopping up to my door. They couldn't tell me over the phone whether the driver would do this and they told me on the intercom when they arrived that they couldn't bring it up. I replied that I couldn't collect it.

They did [then] bring it up and I thanked them very much. They then proceeded to tell me that this was the last time and they were not supposed to and I found their responses really threatening and abusive.

I was quite rattled by our exchange. That made me feel pretty useless, really... and it made me feel really different- like I was expecting something extraordinary when all I want is a solution to be able to get food.

It would make my shopping experience better if I just knew what service I could expect to receive. I just want to get a basic human need met in a safe way.

#### JONATHAN GODFREY

My name's Jonathan Godfrey. I am the national president for Blind Citizens New Zealand, a disabled people's organisation mandated under the United Nations Convention. I'm also a senior lecturer in statistics.

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I guess the greatest thing that was different for me and perhaps a little difficult was that I take a huge responsibility for things like the shopping in my household.

Suddenly rules were imposed that says "No, only one person from your bubble goes shopping." and of course for anyone who was used to doing shopping with an assistant, meaning there was two of you together, that suddenly became a challenge... and that definitely threw our household out, because that one person couldn't be me. It had to be someone else.

The way we operate in our household as a team... that, you know, I do the bits I'm good at and someone else does the bits at they're good at... that was broken down.

So what was going on outside our bubble actually interfered with how we operated inside our bubble.

So one of the challenges that I find very, very frustrating with online shopping is the absence of meaningful product descriptions that give me the confidence to buy something. But reading descriptions of products and trying to work out if that's the one you really want when everything you've been able to go by in the past is - "I want the tomato sauce bottle that feels like this" because the shape of the bottle is enough. Or to be able to go shopping with my eight-year-old daughter and tell her- "Grab the one we always get." "Is it on special?"

You know those are the sorts of things you can do quickly in a personal shopping environment but not so when... when you actually go online.

But... practically speaking that excluded me from the shopping experience and my feeling of ... what is that I was contributing before lockdown to our family environment? and what do I need to do now? It took me a while to get used to it and work out what my place was.

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Ordinarily I go about my life in a way that works for me because there's lots of options around so just by making specific choices or purchasing specific services I can get my needs met that way.

But in lockdown of course a whole lot of those options were not available for people ...which in turn actually meant that it was much harder for me to meet my needs.

I appreciate in the COVID situation that there's all sorts of health and safety issues to manage but I do think that it's an opportunity for food suppliers whoever they may be to think about how they can meet the needs of the whole population because I know I'm not the only one.

I guess that's that typical thing that disabled people face a lot of the time about that internalised ableism and feeling like we are the ones that are the problem when we're just trying to get a basic need met.

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