

DE-DIFFERENTIATION: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Eddie Drury

Held on Friday, September 20, 2019

Presenters Christine Bigby (Latrobe University), Marina Re (CEO - Identity WA) and Chris Yates (Director NDIS Transition - Department of Communities) presented at the morning workshop, exploring the impacts of what can happen when the experiences and needs of people with intellectual disability is absorbed into the greater category of 'disability'.

Beginning the day, Christine Bigby presented on her research on the increasing trend of dedifferentiation in disability. She has found this can lead to

- a loss of insight into the needs of specific groups,
- development of generic, untailored support systems, and
- the backgrounding of some voices (people with intellectual disability being at particular risk here).

While the NDIS offers great opportunities, it furthers the trend of dedifferentiation, and emerging systems must address this.

Christine argued that NDIS as it is currently structured may be a system that inherently favours those who have the capacity to self-advocate. Christine argues it is based on an assumption that participants can present their own needs and no active investigation on the part of the NDIA is necessary.

Following this discussion was a panel with Christine Bigby, Marina Re and Chris Yates. As ever, discussion centred around ongoing transition to the NDIS, the opportunities and risks this brings. Panel members shared their own experiences and challenges, but also encouraged attendees to drive change that will help the NDIS realise its vision.

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