## Disability and the Violence Against Women Part 2

**Lorna:** Thank you for coming to talk to us about disability and violence against women. I'd love to hear about a bit about yourself and also the programme you're involved with.

**Lianne:** Okay, thank you, Lorna. Thank you for the invitation. I am honored to be here. Now before I introduce who I am, I am Lianne Quigley I am part of the Center for Deaf Studies at TCD. And they have a project called JUSTISIGNS 2 and that is in conjunction with Professor Lorraine Leeson. Now this project is done with TCD, the Heriot-Watt University in the UK, the University of Virgo in Spain, and the European Union of the Deaf in Belgium. So, looking at that at a European level because the European Union focuses its attention on the European deaf community. So, we here in TCD, so just bear in mind it's Ireland, England, Spain, and Europe. They're coming together to look at what are the gaps in terms of access, focusing on Deaf women and also its Deaf women here in Ireland, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and the reason for that is because, take for example, here in Ireland, the everyday language is English. For those who are migrants and others, they do not have English as their first language. So, we look at that from the point of view of access, and look at the point of view of what are the gaps? Last year we were involved in sending out a survey, one was sent to sign language interpreters here in Ireland, the Irish sign language interpreters, as well as spoken language interpreters. To find out their experiences of domestic violence and what does that entail? The other was in relation to service providers such as agencies who are responsible for dealing with domestic violence, and what the gaps are for them. And as part of the projects, we have been developing resource materials for training for interpreters, and service provider. So, if it's a case that they meet with a deaf client or a migrant, then that's part of the project is involved. It's a three-year project. It began in 2020. And we have the four countries have been meeting online, as well as research has well as the survey. And here in Ireland, I have been involved in the National Deaf Women of Ireland and we work in collaboration. The project works in collaboration with NDWI. Now I'm going to focus my attention here on Ireland. In Ireland there is practically nothing, there's practically no awareness about GBV, domestic violence, sexual violence. However, there has been an increase in knowledge over the past few years in the general sense, but the deaf community are lagging behind. So JUSTISIGNS have been working in collaboration with NDWI and doing a series of workshops that began last year. It's aimed at the Deaf community to develop an understanding. For example, before attending a workshop, we look at the words take for example, gaslighting. We have no awareness knowledge of that. The second thing is coercive control. But after the workshop, they will have the better understanding of those two types of terminology mean as an example. And that's what we've been doing with our workshop. There are more plans. And looking at Irish Sign Language itself, which itself as I mentioned you gaslighting, coercive control. It does not have a sign equivalent in ISL so you're having to spell the words out. But how can you spell a word that doesn't mean anything.

**Lianne:** And as part of the project, we're looking at creating a vocabulary bank. And this is done through the Center for Deaf Studies, where there is a module program for 2020 to 2021. And that particular training course was aimed at Deaf interpreters, of which there were 24 to become qualified interpreters. That group was given 80 words such as gaslighting, image-based violence and a list like that. So given those, those vocabulary to those students, and as part of their course of study was to create a draft ISL bank of which they're 80. This has been produced online and has been given to the deaf community and to ask for their feedback about what signs have been created. There will be another workshop that will be focusing on those who have got linguistic experience, members of the Deaf community to go through the draft vocabulary. And if it is accepted, then that Sign Language Bank can be sent out in disseminated. And it's more about developing awareness within the Deaf community. And also give them the capacity to have that conversation based on the vocabulary. Especially for those who have gone through the experience will have that opportunity to be able to express themselves in that way. And this is also good for the interpreters as well that had the capacity to understand and know what the word is alongside the ISL that is it in a summary I crammed using as much as I can. But that's what the JUSTISIGNS project is about.

**Lorna:** That seems amazing. It's well needed. I know. I'm, I'm not a Deaf myself, but I would have friends who are maybe partially deaf. That would I know that they would be they'll benefit from them. And I'd love to actually talk to you about fear within women. Violence against women and disability. Now here I have a statement here from a parent of a woman with a disability as from their eyes off the fear of them growing up. Would you mind if I share with you?

**Lianne:** Yes, of course.

**Lorna:** So, being from a parent, being a parent of a person with a disability can be very hard. When they are young. You can control most of the situations around them. But when they grow up, you have to learn to leave to let them live their own lives and make their own mistakes, make their own decisions and mistakes. There are a lot of people who will take advantage and I always I always feel I need to be there just in case there is an issue. I would be especially anxious when my daughter would want to come want to go on night out. How will she get home? Who will she be with? What can happen while she is out? Can she make the right decision or judgments on a first impressions when meeting people, we would offer most times to collect her from whatever venue she is at are we infringing on her experience of growing up? We always want to protect her but at what cost? Now with the Ashling Murphy case, puts extra anxious anxiety on us as we feel we need to be extra careful now and protect her on all her outings. Now, I was thinking about this here and there's a lot of fear around disability and violence against women because we are we are more vulnerable than a non-disabled woman. Like I could list off a lot of examples of a few cases where that I was going to Trinity to study, and I walked a little bit faster when I've seen a group of guys pass me. And then back in 2021, I was meeting a group of friends. I was so close. Probably about six times during the day. I'll tell my friend that I am not going go meet up with her friends, her, and her friends. Because I was so anxious. Who was around but I want to what do you think even like for the like the fear elements of women with disabilities have on average night or day?

**Lianne:** Thank you for this. Yes, there is fear with any woman, but particularly women with disabilities. That also applies to Deaf women. And there are many cases that can be cited. Now from the studies that have been undertaken in the states and at an international level, there are similarities that can be made between this country and other. Now when a woman reports or talks about in relation to access, if there is no interpreter. They will bring in a family member or a partner. That means the woman can't say anything for fear of possibly the family member or the partner. The other thing is if it is a partner that is hearing, they may say a different story in comparison to the woman what she has to say that's one type of fear. The other is in terms of reporting. Trust is an issue, not knowing who is the interpreter and that is hard and that is frustrating. Can I trust the interpreter and also if it's a case that there are regular meetings, then what happens is that there are different types of interpreters that come in and that makes it difficult because they're constantly having to be subjected to change? So, they're quite limited in what it is that they have to say. So, there is silence. So, trust and fear are issues in terms of talking about anxiety now for me is at nighttime because I don't hear behind me. So, I'm very conscious of it. What if, What if, What if. Because I won't hear anything, but during the day it's different. Now, it's very rare that I think about safety during the day, but it's just think about what about something behind me What about something around the corner? So, there's that type of anxiety that comes into play. So yes, there is fear in Deaf women every day. But when you are feeling more vulnerable, you become somewhat paranoid a little bit more. And you become your eyes are watching everything. Now I have to say that that doesn't apply to nighttime. It can happen during the day when it's a very quiet street and you're not familiar with that place.

**Lorna:** Yeah, like I completely agree with what you're saying there Lianne. I find that like the What If, what if, what if scenario happens constantly, even if it's to the bus stop, because you're thinking for me, I'm thinking what if someone comes up behind me because my balance isn't that great? What happens if, like I get I get attacked or and I can't fight back to what to anything else. We'll be able to do to be able to do like, I think it's well it's gotten too sad for us is the fact that we're a lot more vigilant and how where we go about like, say we're if there's specific routes that we'd go home, were a bit more apprehensive of actually going on those routes or like texting family members say I'm on the bus. Sometimes it's actually very hard to find. It takes a little bit of the Independence away from disabled women. What would you think?

**Lianne:** Looking at Independence, let me think about this. Of course, every day. Everyone is vulnerable. Once I'm outside the home and vulnerable everywhere. There's the likelihood of been attacked is going to be possible but I'm determined to be independent. It's very rare that there's anxiety. Yes, you do lose independence when you're having to ask someone for me when it's dark and I don't hear behind me. So, it's about having some but to have. It is very, very rare for me to have to ask but I know that every other Deaf woman, they will each have their own experience. Some are okay. Some will have anxiety. Now on a night out in a group. I always text the others when I get home. We text each other to say we're home. So, there's that sense of relief. And once we know that we've texted each other we all know that we're home that we're all safe, but actually we're all relieved for each other and thankfully, we have mobile phones, text messaging, but if you go back decades ago, there was no mobile phones. Those women were even more vulnerable than we are today. Because you wouldn't even know people got home okay. So having access to the mobile phone, and also, I remember about 20 years ago, we have the Taxi app. Yeah, the Taxi app we didn't have that before. Now I would be anxious way back then. Of course, there, you have to prepare. Take for example, I'll always have the key in my hand, because you just don't know what's going to happen. I have to keep having the app is a little bit of a reassurance. Because this is a professional service. It's not just a fake random taxi driver. because way back in the day, they weren't registered. They weren't licensed. So, I do have a key in my hands and also in terms of getting the last bus home. I walk quicker with the key in my hands and as a deaf woman myself. It is very rare that I use my phone. Now I know that I'm deaf. So, let's say there was a random person if there was a feeling of someone in front of me plus I will do is keep the phone in my hand to look as though that I was busy.

**Lorna:** Yeah, and that's actually a really great strategy because the least and if you're not if you kind of look like you're busy. It kind of distracts away from the idea and can even try and keep yourself safe in a way like we are I think as well. We all learn to we all learn how to develop different strategies as we grew up. What best suits us, as you said, like looking at your phone and to pretend that you're busy. And it's as well. It's a lot more about being self aware than being like savvy and self aware of your surroundings. And so like would you say that they say growing up you learned a lot more about how to adapt to your surroundings.

**Lianne:** Going back to the phone. Yes. Now I also use FaceTime on the phone. So, it's a video call. And if there was somebody screaming behind me, how do I say that I'm deaf that sometimes I can turn around and say that I'm deaf. But you want to see how they communicate so I can call a friend and do a very quick video call. So, if they're looking at me, they will see me using sign language and then they can put that I'm deaf. Now I am walking and signing. They look like I'm talking to I can see that I'm talking to someone but when I do make a video call as another example of keeping busy. It's just the way that it looks, you know what I mean

**Lorna:** I don't think as well. It's some time we don't necessarily look think about it beyond violence against women and disability.

**Lianne:** Oh sorry. Sorry, if I may, if I may. So, when you talk about being savvy you talk about in relation to the environment. could you just clarify the last point that you made? Could you just expand on that?

**Lorna:** So, I meant that like as we grow up, they learn how to protect yourself from any anything that could hurt us in any way. And what like what would you say would be the things you've learned? Strategies, say like your phone so you've learned how to protect yourself

**Lianne:** There are many. As you know, I don't hear my surroundings. So, I have to be a lot more vigilant with my eyes. It's not enough to say that you know, I still have to be vigilant, and I still have to be alert. I still have to watch everything around me. Occasionally. I look behind me. Now when it's dark, near home, you know if it's a nice house or whatever. Like Take for example getting the last bus home at nice. I have to look behind me constantly. That gets just a few seconds. Just to be assured that there's nobody behind me. If there is somebody behind me, then I will have to decide, do I need to walk faster, do you know what I mean? And I'm really keeping an eye out on and that was a big learning growing up. That was definitely one thing growing up. And as I mentioned earlier, me using my phone signing into the phone and of course, walking faster. Then sometimes when we're with a group of friends or a group of people, then if they're going home in the same direction, it is great. Now, when there's another one that lives near me, we get a taxi home together. Yeah. Now I remember one time when we were at the deaf club and there was a party and one deaf woman said she knew where I lived. We knew of each other. But we didn't know each other but she had approached me and said can I go home with you? For me? Of course, yes. So that's an example of how the deaf community will know where to go what to do. So being more vigilant being more alerts and also texting family members, friends and texting them things like just to let you know I’m on the way just to let you know I've got home.

**Lorna:** And then lastly, I'd love to ask you what would be like your message as a whole. What would you want society to know about Deaf women and violence against women or even disability in general and violence against women?

**Lianne:** So, the message in terms of safety or it can be about safety so it's a message from a Deaf woman perspective. In general. Yeah.

**Lorna:** So sorry, your message as like for you, as a woman as yourself. What is your message to wider society?

**Lianne:** Okay, lovely. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, so the message for everyone. What is important is that service providers, anyone who is involved in violence against women, consider Deaf women, children, and men. And it's all about access, access. That is critical for the deaf community because we get very little access to information services in relation to domestic violence. Take for example, this podcast, we don't have this conversation in the deaf community. As an example, this is something that can increase awareness in the deaf community. So, engage with the deaf community, provide access to the deaf community. The fact that we use our sign language and that's our sign language be on service provide your websites that contact details would also be inclusive of a text number, email address, provide ISL interpreters, and not many service providers do that. A few do and they are to be commended for this. Now there are some agencies restricted on budget also dependent on the locality around Ireland. But it's about having open access. We're often told no we can't No, no, no. And like I said, the deaf community are unaware and do not know about violence against them and they need to know that they deserve to know that it's important to have a dialogue. It is important to share concerns. Now look at the two of us today, talking about anxiety, and how do we walk? Not because of the questions that you've asked me thinking about me going out walking? That's something that I need to share with the deaf community. Yeah. Now as a deaf woman it is important to engage with Deaf people do not assume we that other people know what's best for us. Ask Deaf women about their experience. Ask them and then create safety tips. Take for example, I've given you safety tips for me. There could be other women who are deaf that may have different tips. An elderly Deaf Woman could be different from me again. So, looking at it from all of those perspectives.

**Lorna:** Thank you so much for talking to me. Today, I really, really appreciate it and this is going to be a valuable conversation to be had and it will probably stand for a long time.

**Lianne:** Thank you for inviting me. Now some of the questions you have asked you have caused me to think allow more and have not had this kind of conversation. So, you've actually made me realise that I need to explore the issue of safety, a lot more with other deaf women. It is very rarely that we've actually talked about this. And this is important. This is why it's important to have open dialogue. We need to show society about the issue of women with disabilities, the fear, the vulnerability, we can't assume that they know we have to know for sure that there is anxiety that there is fear. And you're right we are more anxious in comparison to our non-disabled counterparts. Yes.