

AT Banter Podcast Episode 334 - Dr. Rheanna Robinson

Sun, Apr 30, 2023 8:27AM 58:48

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

disability, indigenous peoples, people, indigenous, lis, representation, community, research, happening, space, intersectionality, rob, important, represented, living, find, starting, included, regina, ms

SPEAKERS

Rob Mineault, Steve Barclay, Lis Malone, Ryan Fleury, Rheanna Robinson

R Rob Mineault 00:20
Hey, welcome to a another episode of AT Banter

S Steve Barclay 00:25
Banter, banter.

R Ryan Fleury 00:32
That's better. All right.

R Rob Mineault 00:34
Here we go. We're good. Hey, this is, of course the podcast where we talk with advocates and members of the disability community to educate and inspire better conversation about disability. Hey, my name is Rob Mineault, and joining me today ... see this is I don't know what to do now after last week. Joining me today is Ryan Fleury, Steve Barclay and Lis Malone. There we are.

R Ryan Fleury 01:02
Number two. Number two!

R Rob Mineault 01:04

I can't win, I really can't win, doesn't matter. I need like some sort of a random number generator. I don't know who to introduce first now that everybody... I don't know, maybe, maybe we're going to have to get the audience involved and just vote on what the order should be. Let you let the audience decide, because it's too much pressure for me. Because no matter what, someone's going to be mad at me.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:29

Why don't we just start alternating who does the intro each week? And at some point, we'll all be number one.

R

Rob Mineault 01:35

All right, well, okay. We can do that. We'll start next week.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:41

Okay, but Lis isn't here next week. So she's number not here. Nothing.

R

Rob Mineault 01:47

Sure. I'll be starting the policy when Lis is gone.

R

Ryan Fleury 01:55

Anyway,

R

Rob Mineault 01:55

Anyways, how's everybody?

R

Ryan Fleury 01:58

Great. How are you Rob?

R

Rob Mineault 02:00

I'm good. I mean, yeah.

R

Rvan Fleurv 02:03

Ryan Fleury 02:05
Excellent. Steve, how are you?

S Steve Barclay 02:05
I'm just absolutely spiffy.

R Ryan Fleury 02:10
Lis How about you?

L Lis Malone 02:11
Yeah, yeah, yeah. ot spiffy, but. Aspiring for it.

R Rob Mineault 02:19
She's, uh, you know, she's spunky today. Just before the mics came on your shot out of a cannon.

L Lis Malone 02:30
Me? No.

R Ryan Fleury 02:31
You should have heard her before you got here.

R Rob Mineault 02:35
Yeah, sure.

R Ryan Fleury 02:40
Yeah, so this morning before work, I was going through my list of podcasts that I look at pretty much daily, and saw that our friend of the show John Grimes from the Ambiguously Blind podcast posted this week's episode, he had our very own Lis Malone as his guest on the show. And a couple of things I wanted to bring up. First was at the end of the show, John offered Lis a chance to smack talk us and she didn't do it. She didn't take the bait. I was like, that's not Lis, she would have taken the bait. But she didn't. Did nothing bad to say about us. I was impressed.

R Rob Mineault 03:23
Are you sure? Did it sound like her? Like maybe?

R Ryan Fleury 03:26
It sounded better than her. She sounded better there than she does here.

S Steve Barclay 03:29
Sure it wasn't Chat-GPT?

L Lis Malone 03:35
It was the AI version of Lis.

R Ryan Fleury 03:36
It could have been Yeah, but it was a very good interview, I reckon highly recommend everyone go and take a listen to that. John did a great job. And so did Lis. Thank goodness, he didn't ask me to spell ambiguously, because I would have failed that spelling test. Yeah, no, it was a great show. And then the second thing I wanted to ask you about because you've never shared this story with us was living in New York. You said you fell into a sidewalk cellar? Yeah. What is the sidewalk cellar? Is that like a sewer?

L Lis Malone 04:10
Do you ever see me if you ever go into New York City, you'll see these like double metal doors that are usually like padlocked on the sidewalk. And they they actually fold up and then they there's like a, like a staircase that was put down into the depths of the cellar. And if you walk when you're walking on the sidewalk, sometimes like when you step on one, like they'll dip down a little bit and you get that everyone freaks out like, like, they think it's gonna go out from underneath them. So they actually did an episode of Sex in the City, where one of the characters fell into a sidewalk cellar. And of course, it was funny. Let me just tell you not so funny in real life. Oh, yeah.

R Ryan Fleury 04:49
Well, I was wondering if you had an alternate life as a mole person or something that you haven't shared with us?

L Lis Malone 04:55

L Lis Malone 04:55

No, I, I fell on stepped in. And then you have that moment where you You feel nothing underneath your foot and it just keeps going down. And there's just absolutely you know, it just happened so fast. And I remember I just like, threw my arms up and I grabbed, I managed to grab the handle. And I'm hanging there by one arm. And a bystander was like, oh my God, you look like Karen Allen and Raiders of Lost Ark hanging by one arm over the snake pit. Crazy. Yeah, it was pretty nuts. Crazy. So don't recommend it.

R Ryan Fleury 05:31

So it was something new I learned about you.

L Lis Malone 05:35

I see, my brush with death. That's right.

R Ryan Fleury 05:38

Well, yeah.

R Rob Mineault 05:40

I wonder how much else she's holding back on us. How come she shared that on somebody else's show? Interesting.

S Steve Barclay 05:48

We haven't had a show on near death experience.

L Lis Malone 05:52

Maybe John just asked the right questions.

R Rob Mineault 05:55

Yeah. Wow, is to go and get some tips from him. Yep, indeed. How do we talk to Lis? How do you get something interesting out of Lis?

L Lis Malone 06:11

How do you get past all the piss and vinegar to the real person?

R

Rob Mineault 06:19

All right. Well, Ryan. Yeah. Rob? I think we should figure out just what the heck we're doing today.

R

Ryan Fleury 06:27

All right. Well, today we are talking with Dr. Rheanna Robinson, who is an Assistant Professor at the University of Northern British Columbia. And there's a whole lot more to this title here that I'm not going to have my screen reader try to read. I'll let her introduce more about herself. But Rheanna, welcome to the show.

R

Rheanna Robinson 06:48

Thank you, Ryan. It's my pleasure to be here this late afternoon.

R

Rob Mineault 06:53

Yeah, we are very excited to have you on. So thank you again for taking some time out of this late afternoon to come talk with us. So maybe we could just start with you giving us just a little bit of background about yourself, and and what you're doing up there at UNBC.

R

Rheanna Robinson 07:11

Sure. Thanks, Rob. I'm joining you today from my home at on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh nation in Prince George. And I've been living in Prince George for just over 20 years, but I was raised in the community of Smithers, just four hours northwest of here, the beautiful small town of Smithers. But I love the North. I've been here for a very long time. And I've had a long history with the University of Northern BC, including as an undergraduate and graduate students, and now an assistant professor in the Department of First Nations studies. So I've been in my faculty positions since 2016. And I've had an interesting evolution of my teaching interests, my research interests that have undeniably been influenced by my own life experiences and trajectory of myself as a person that lives with disability. So at this time, I am immersed in Indigenous Disability related research. And it's really a very rewarding and interesting and an exciting space for me to be involved in, through my, you know, my, my personal and professional passion, and what's really important to me. So maybe I'll just say a little bit more about my, my disability. In 1997, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and about five, almost six years ago, I'm gonna say, it transitioned into a secondary progressive form of the health condition. So I live with significant mobility limitations. And as my disability has accumulated, it really prompted me to realize some of the gaps that exist in research and academic literature, and particularly the representation of how indigenous peoples traditionally perceived disability and experience it in our contemporary world. I'm a mom of two teenage boys, that keeps me very busy as well. So I have a busy and very fulfilling life here in northern British Columbia. So thanks again for having me today.

R

Rob Mineault 09:32

Why don't we start, because there's so much honestly, I have so much on the list to talk to you about. But maybe we can start with talking a little bit about that the difference in perspective of disability between Western culture and First Nations culture? I did a little bit of reading of some articles that you had written and that you had participated in, and I found it really fascinating. So maybe we can start there and sort of maybe give us an idea of what some of those differences are.

R

Rheanna Robinson 10:05

Sure, it's interesting, because, like I mentioned, when I first started exploring this from an academic position, I was seeing that there was just like, you know, there just was not a substantive, you know, resource based of research that has been done with indigenous peoples about traditional perspectives of disability, and how that was really represented in community. And I found that very shocking, to say the least, and I knew it was something I needed to explore more. So there isn't, you know, there just is not a plentiful space of literature that's available, but what I have been able to find and, and also, just from my own more recent research experiences, and my life experiences generally, is that there is a distinct difference with how indigenous peoples have perceived disability amongst their Nation members, and within the context of their communities. So disability in itself, I have come to understand, and this in part is myself growing up as an Indigenous person, I don't think I acknowledged that I made tea, and I'm a member of the Manitoba Metis Federation. And if I did, I apologize for repeating myself twice. But you know, there is a distinct awareness on my own part now, that disability in itself is a very much a colonial and Western construct. And Indigenous peoples traditionally did not look at disability in a deficit orientated framework. Nor did it was it labeled in a context with a singular defined term that would relegate them to a particular space of, of inclusion in their community. You know, a lot of Indigenous communities, languages do not have a word for disability in the traditional language. And that, to me, speaks volumes of the need for there being more exploration and understanding of how Indigenous peoples were including, and valuing people that were living with difference, and able bodied or not. So it has been a very important part of my research to come to a space of understanding how Indigenous peoples are, or not being represented and disability related literature and scholarship. So it's something I'm really committed to amplifying and mobilizing more prominently in academic discourse.

R

Rob Mineault 12:38

Do we see parallels today and sort of how how it's perceived, you know, among the the Indigenous community?

R

Rheanna Robinson 12:47

So what I will say is that there is an acknowledgement that there has been an interruption of how Indigenous peoples traditionally included those with difference those with disability in their community. And traditionally, Indigenous peoples with different disability were part of the

community regardless of their able bodied illness, or not. And there's been an interruption of that. So in from a traditional context, and some of what my research is telling me and elders have shared is that people were looked at as encapsulating and holding and having a gift to offer the community, that their, that their difference actually was a way that they were able to share their experience of being in the world that was different than those that didn't have those differences that didn't have that disability. And it really offered a breadth and a gift of understanding different experiences, and communication, and relationship with one another. You know, for Indigenous Peoples' health is encapsulated on so many different levels, it's, you know, it's about your relationship with the land, about your relationship with each other. It's about your relationship with the spirit world and your relationship with culture. All of those things compartmentalize into a healthy and unanimous and, you know, a very holistic sphere of belonging and representation. So disability as a construct, didn't exist, singularly. So that very individualistic paradigm that we have within the Western societal construct is, is definitely not something that's being represented in my research or what I'm finding in the literature.

R

Rob Mineault 14:41

You know, it's absolutely true that you know, in Western culture, it is very much an isolating experience. We, with disability, we immediately put people into sort of, you know, a different bucket from everybody else immediately. Just through that label, you know, we talk all the time about the disability community and the importance of things like social networks, and because it gives people in the community a chance to connect with each other, which is great. But it's still it's, it's separate. It's like these separate communities. And it seems to me that that that must be such a Western way of thinking.

R

Rheanna Robinson 15:24

Yeah, I agree with you, Rob. And, you know, there's, there's a, you know, one of the one of the things that I talk to my students about this often, you know, even considering the different models of disability that exists in the world for the conceptualization of like, what disability should look like, how it should be included, how it could be, quote, unquote, managed, and, you know, the medical model of disability is one I always gravitate to as an example of it being so in opposition, that how indigenous communities would look, because the medical model really looks at me, like, there's something wrong with me that needs to be fixed. And, you know, the literature talks about how, because I can't, there's no cure for Multiple Sclerosis, there's management for it, but I have a progressive condition of it, I'm only going to get worse. It sort of labels me and puts me categorically, in a space that's deterministic in nature, that sort of lends me to a space that I can never be perceived as being equal as those without this disabling condition. And I have serious problem with that. So you know, there doesn't exist an Indigenous model of disability. And it's something that I'm really committed to mobilizing further in my research, because I do believe that indigenous communities have much to teach us about how we need to be re thinking and reconceptualizing how disability can be included within our, within our society, within our, our common spaces with each other, within our schools, within our, all of our systems of of where we are, and and how we need to be having relationships with one another. So it's, again, it's, it's, it's really been a very enriching and rewarding space for me to be involved in.



S

Steve Barclay 17:24

I'm curious, historically speaking, are there examples of Indigenous people with disabilities, you know, being specifically mentioned and how they, how they interacted with their societies?

R

Rheanna Robinson 17:40

Well, there, there are, and there, there's not a lot, I wish there was more. But there are definitely some there's emerging literature that's, that's coming internationally. I've been really drawn to a scholar historian out of the United States, Dr. Susan Birch. And she's just recently published a book in late 2021, about an insane asylum that was established in the United States in the early 1900s, where Indigenous Peoples were being taken from their communities and put in this insane asylum. That was, you know, deplorable, and many people perished in it. But her research is really demonstrating how removing peoples with difference that were perceived as not able bodied by settler communities was really taking away important and absolutely imperative knowledge holders, from communities. These were the medicine people, these were the people that were offering a gift to the community. And it really interrupted that intergenerational transmission of knowledge, that representation of culture, and again, that sphere of relationship and what that meant to have a communal representation of everyone, regardless of able bodied pneus or not, or the perception of able bodied units or not.

R

Rob Mineault 19:05

You know, here we are fighting for things like inclusion. And it strikes me is really interesting, because, you know, we wouldn't have to be fighting for inclusion if we didn't put people with disabilities into a different bucket immediately. Like, it's really that sort of systemic change in perspective that needs to happen. We need to look at things in a very different way. And that's why I think that, that, you know, doing studies is important because we we need to understand that the way that we are viewing things is not necessarily the only way to look at it and certainly not the best way to look at it.

R

Rheanna Robinson 19:44

I agree and you know, I like I have my own struggles that I still battle daily, internalized ableism the shame, the stigma, the you know, I always say that, you know, yes, I have lots of struggles with environmental built environment barriers, but my, my biggest struggle is definitely with that of an attitudinal barrier. And, you know, my living with MS was not something I shared for many, many, many years, until I absolutely had to. And even within that framework, I was very, you know, cloaked in a space of fear and uncertainty. And again, that shame that I, you know, really have to contend with on a daily basis, and I do, but you know, it's some, I think, it doesn't have to be this way. And I'm, I'm really finding this really important space of support. And, and a representation of a different way of me being able to see myself because Indigenous peoples don't are like, already, there's already that space of, you know, grappling with, you know, race and the marginalization of that, but also the marginalization of disability, it's, it's a, it's a compounding experience, that is something to reflect on. It's important.

R

Rob Mineault 21:09

Well, and that's a, that's a good segue, because something else that I kind of wanted to talk to you about. And we've touched on it in the podcast, but we really haven't dug into it too much. But it's this idea of intersectionality. So it, maybe if you could just give like a bit of a brief overview of what we mean, when we talk about intersectionality, just for the audience, and then we can sort of step into sort of what some of the, the impacts of that can be, both from your own lived experience, and just kind of what you've learned.

R

Rheanna Robinson 21:40

Sure. Intersectionality was it was a term coined in the late 1980s, by Kimberly Crenshaw, and it was really, you know, trying to amplify and have a representation to understand the those intersectional spaces between race, class, gender, and other other individual characteristics that one may be living with, and what that can look like in a world where there is these underrepresented and marginalized peoples that are trying to ensure that they are rightfully finding their place in the world, and having opportunity, and having a voice and having a space of understanding. So intersectionality is something that I've seen emerge really strongly in the academic sphere that I'm in at a university. And I'm seeing so many ways that people are identifying how their own intersectional lived experiences are indeed impacted by, you know, the historical realities that we have in our world. So from my own lived experience, it's definitely become something that I acknowledged outright. And I've tried to unapologetically place it as something that I do embody and represent, and what some of those histories are, that are aligned with my intersectionality as a female, indigenous disabled person. You know, there is a reality that a lot of histories have been silenced. And I think that indigenous history, disability history, they're no exception. And so part of my work is really to change that entire representation, and just have a have a different space for voice and understanding.

L

Lis Malone 23:44

Rheanna, one thing that I do feel that we, that we share, is, as you were just discussing the intersectionality is that you and I both are, of ethnicity, we have both faced in our own individual ways, different forms of 'isms' beyond the ableism and probably predated the, the feelings of internalized ableism. So and I guess what the the point I'm trying to make is that, in my personal lived experience, I almost feel that the fact that I have had to overcome racism and the feelings in the in the comments and the things that we have been projected onto to me, in a lot of ways helped prepare me to face the ableist views that I face as a person who lives with a disability and I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that as well.

R

Rheanna Robinson 24:45

It's a really, really important and interesting space to talk about, you know, because I've had this I've had this really this really important life experience where on the one hand with my eyes Identity identity being a Metis woman, I've really held on to that strongly. And I thought every single way to not be, quote, unquote, assimilated into sort of a mainstream platform of representation. However, simultaneously, as my disability has evolved, and I've had this dramatic evolving lens of disability, I have fought so hard to not have so you know, to be assimilated to just be considered in a sort of a sort of an equal space, I'm going to say and representation where I didn't want to have that label associated with me. So it's been this, I've

talked about my students about this tug of war that I've sort of had with those two spaces of identity that I live with. And it's something I'm still trying to intellectualize, I'm going to say, because I'd like to write about this a bit more, because I think it's really important. And I don't think I'm the only person that may find themselves within that space of trying to understand how I'm still fitting into, you know, a representation of who I am and what I'm bringing an offering to the world through these lived experiences. So trying to try to manage that sort of those two spheres of understanding myself with those different spaces of identity, I'm going to say it hasn't been an easy road for me, but I'm working through it, and undeniably my my research is, is helping me along the way. And just me being able to understand more distinctly some of the historical influences that have brought me to these places of having that tug of war. And that's definitely an important part of my my life experience and my lived reality.

R

Rob Mineault 26:53

So in terms of this field, is this sort of an evolving field? Is this something that more and more people are beginning to talk about? Are you starting to see some some traction in and conversations happening in this space?

R

Rheanna Robinson 27:08

Oh, Rob, I'm seeing so much. I get so much outreach from people it's been really, it's been so humbling. And I'm, I'm really grateful for the interest from community and for people wanting to talk to me about what I'm what I'm reading, what I'm learning what I'm researching. It's been, it's been, it's been utterly, utterly impactful for me, and tells me that I'm doing I'm doing the right thing, and that I am raising a profile that needs to be represented. So yes, Indigenous disability studies studies, categorically, as an academic program doesn't really exist. I mean, it does exist on the periphery, I'm finding of a lot of other places unless I'm missing it, which I don't think I am. But it's really something the the representation of the indigenous, you know, the indigenous perspectives is definitely starting to evolve and emerge more prominently. And it's really, it's really exciting for me.

R

Ryan Fleury 28:11

Well, and that's why I'm glad you reached back out to us, because probably for about a year and a half, if not longer, I've been trying to find a guest from the Indigenous community to come on and talk about Indigenous persons and persons with disabilities. And there's been no buddy reached back out to me. So, you know, just the fact that you you did and can talk openly and honestly about it means means the world and I'm sure there's people who will get something out of this conversation.

R

Rheanna Robinson 28:40

Thanks, Ryan. And you know, Indigenous peoples are definitely overrepresented over represented with disability in Canada. And, you know, I strongly believe it's aligned so directly to colonization and the impacts and what's happened with community and to indigenous peoples. But that representation, it's so ironic that while there's that very, that distinctly larger

representation of Indigenous peoples with disabilities, but there's not Indigenous perspectives aren't largely represented in the literature, or in policy or practice. So I'm really hoping that sort of my research can start to influence that. And ultimately, I, my, my entire philosophy about moving forward with my research and working with community is about building relationships. And I really find strength in that. And I find strength in being able to profile the voices of those that haven't yet to be heard. Yeah, you know, there's lots happening, right. We have things happening at a federal level, we have things happening at provincial levels across our country, like legislatively, and this is this is really I think, timing is is it's really important. It means that we take opportunities to be able to share, you know, a diverse diversity of experiences and diverse perspectives in this regard.

R

Ryan Fleury 30:11

Well, if you want to be included, you got to speak up. Right?

R

Rheanna Robinson 30:13

Yeah, it's true.

R

Rob Mineault 30:15

Well, that that was something that I did read that I was actually kind of surprised that is that, you know, Stats Canada had this survey that they did straight up that Indigenous people are experiencing higher rates of disability than non Indigenous. And the fact that we've been doing this this podcast for like, six years and you know, we've talked to tons of different organizations, and we had to really struggle to try to find someone to come on and talk about it. And so I'm just wondering, from, you know, in terms of, of resources and accessing health care and support services, like what, what is that kind of look like for Indigenous folks right now? Are there a lot of barriers, I guess?

R

Rheanna Robinson 31:00

Well, indeed, there's barriers that exist within, you know, the health care system, generally, for indigenous peoples, that, that there's, there's ample research out there that that identifies barriers related to, you know, racism, and, and then there's the geographical barriers for really remote communities and peoples with disabilities that are in those remote locations, and what that may, may include for them. But it does, you know, it does, really, it makes me think about how how important it is that the categorically disability is represented very boldly. I often find that disability is not overly, you know, it's just not, it's just not overly represented as a bold sort of space of acknowledgement and understanding. And so trying to trying to trying to include that, in a way, when contemplating how indigenous peoples their own experiences with the health care system generally, are being articulated, I think is it deserves more attention, and deserves more research and awareness. Yeah, I think that's really key. And it's interesting that you brought up geographic challenges because we've talked about that on the show in terms of it can be a real challenge for people who, especially in a province, like British Columbia, that's very large, it can be really hard to access resources, when you're in Fort St. John, or, you know,

all of these sort of, you know, remote communities. There isn't a heck of a lot of resources for folks that may need them. And maybe we need to look at how we were delivering resources and, and work that out. Yeah, I mean, I'm, I always, I always feel so, so lucky that I grew up in northern BC, and, you know, I've traveled our entire practice, I've traveled our entire country, and there's so many places that I, you know, prior to me, being so much more disabled, physically, I would, I would have such difficulty being there now. And I'm thinking more prominently in like, the very north Northwestern areas of the province. And I really feel that, you know, this is, this is a reality that is not well understood, and it's just, it's not well acknowledged. So there's, you know, these, these are things that we have to think about, as a society as a society, and we have to be, you know, more, we have to be more understanding and respectful to these, to these differences, and what that looks like.

R

Rob Mineault 33:56

So, I guess, in in your mind, what sort of needs to happen to sort of break down some of these barriers and, and really sort of start to move some of these issues forward?

R

Rheanna Robinson 34:09

Well, I'm really hoping that through my you know, through my work, through my research, my scholarship, my teaching, there starts to be, you know, a ripple effect of some of these conversations. And there starts to be a larger investment towards funding new initiatives that are going to be exploring these areas of research. And these areas of understanding because of course, disability is multifaceted, and it's it, there's so many ways that we could be, we could be we could be providing a new platform of representation, and a new understanding of how peoples are being included in the consideration of what we need to think about when we contemplate disability and its impact on communities and Indigenous communities in particular. So it's I think it's really important that we're, we're being more bold, I guess, I'll say and how we, and how we try to move forward with this. So I have lived with MS for almost 30 years. And you know, as someone who is Indigenous living with multiple sclerosis, I, very early on started to see that I wasn't, I wasn't, I wasn't, I wasn't seeing myself, let's say, represented, you know, in the doctor's offices and seeing the neurologist and, you know, in different different visits that I was having. But I really knew because of where I live, I live in northern BC, I knew that Indigenous people do live with MS. And for a long time, I was really told that my MS was Metis. So my father is not Indigenous, and my mother is Metis. But I was I was being told that the MS is likely coming from my European ancestry. And I've just always felt that that is not something I totally was aligning my the belief of where my MS was coming from, was situated. And so my, another part of my research that I'm really trying to, to move forward right now, as well, is being able to have a representation of Indigenous peoples living with Multiple Sclerosis, and what that looks like for us, and how it's, you know, progressing for us how it is, you know, how we are having similar opportunities for clinical trials for being able to access different medications and support systems. So it really lends to a similar conversation about disability amongst rural and remote indigenous communities and for indigenous peoples. But I know, the Multiple Sclerosis profile is something that it needs to be amplified, you know, data is really important to have in a lot of a lot of these spaces. And because it doesn't form so much. And it's important, you know, for me, personally, at a very personal level, that I'm seeing a representation and an understanding of how indigenous peoples are living with Multiple

Sclerosis, and where there are, you know, higher incidences, lower incidences, I think all of all of that information is really critical to inform, you know, again, inform research, and inform ultimately, for me finding a cure for further disease.

R

Rob Mineault 37:45

Do they have a really good idea of some of those numbers, like, has there been a lot of research yet, or this is all still just now it's, it's starting to get going?

R

Rheanna Robinson 37:56

It's just starting to get going. I was really fortunate to be a co-author on a paper with some other other authors on the incidence and prevalence of, of MS amongst Indigenous peoples in the Americas. And, you know, it's, it's something that is emerging, and we really need to be having more of an investment in that understanding, there's some really interesting studies that are happening in Canada. But I'd love to see even more, I'd love to see just a larger representation. And I think this is important, you know, because it does, research does inform so much when it comes to policy and, and program development and support systems. So I see this for me, it's at a very, very personal level, I see it as something critical, and pretty timely, you know, without the other awareness that's emerging with disability related, you know, conversations and understanding.

R

Rob Mineault 38:56

Yeah, I mean, absolutely. Although I'm of two minds you know. On the one hand, like, I'm with you, I'm thrilled that this is all happening, but then, you know, the other side of your, your brain kind of goes it's kind of angry that it's taken this long, and it's only this these things are only starting to happen now.

R

Rheanna Robinson 39:15

Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, I was I was teenager when I was diagnosed with MS. And I remember thinking that was only I was only 19 was diagnosed, I had symptoms earlier on, but I remember thinking even then I'm like, oh, in 10 years, you know, they're gonna find something, it's gonna be okay, I'm gonna be fine. And you know, as I've lived with the disease, and I've been very aware, I'm very well read on the research. I know what's going on. I know that people are working so hard to try and find, you know, answers for a cure. And I think that you know, the in terms of having a particular representation of different population groups living with living with MS and especially for the Indigenous population, it just hasn't been. And there just has not been that prominent of a research study that's gone forward. So, yeah, I'm hoping that something happens.

R

Rob Mineault 40:09

Changing perspectives on the way that we that we view things doesn't happen overnight. And I get that, but, you know, when you're an advocate, it's, it's frustrating.

get that, but, boy, you know, when you're an advocate, it's, it's frustrating.

R

Rheanna Robinson 40:19

Yeah, it's, um, I feel, you know, I always tell everybody, I feel so lucky that I'm a professor and I get to do this research, and it's my passion, it's stuff I love. And, you know, I get to kind of be really immersed in, in so much of the literature and the research that's going on. So I feel really lucky that I'm, I'm at that I'm in that space where I can sort of mobilize different things that are that are important to me. Right. So I'm, yeah, so I'm really, I'm taking advantage of that.

R

Rob Mineault 40:51

So if, if there are people out there that that are interested in learning more? Are there resources that you can kind of point them to?

R

Rheanna Robinson 41:01

Yeah, I mean, I've been really, I've been really lucky. And I felt very, very privileged that I've had so much outreach from different organizations, you know, the Rick Hansen Foundation, and, and I'm a director for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, MS Canada, and, you know, so there is definitely, you know, there's definitely an increased profile of me being able to find spaces where I'm having opportunity to share and to talk and to be represented, you know, on social media, media platforms. But definitely, because this is still an emerging area of research there are, you know, waves of people being able to see and, and look at different, you know, just different. I'm gonna say conference opportunities are things that are happening with these other really prominent allies and advocates across our country that are doing this work where they are including Indigenous peoples and they are including indigenous perspectives. So it's, it's definitely increasing. I'm really grateful that you reached out to me and I had this opportunity. I, I'm really grateful. I think that you know, there's, there's a lot of, you know, there's a lot like I said, this is emerging for me, and it's it just, it just deserves these like this, this, these conversations deserve different spaces. And so I'm grateful for that to have the opportunity. So thank you.

R

Rob Mineault 42:30

So if anyone out there is interested in in contact you, where can they do that? What's the best way to do that?

R

Rheanna Robinson 42:38

Please look for me at the University of Northern British Columbia. So if you go on their website, and you just type my name 'Rheanna Robinson', you'll be able to find my email and my phone number and feel free to contact me.



R Rob Mineault 42:56
Wonderful. Well, we once again want to thank you so much for coming on.

R Ryan Fleury 43:01
Wait, wait, wait.

R Rob Mineault 43:03
Oh my god. What?

R Ryan Fleury 43:04
I still need to know what her favorite fruit is. She'd never said.

R Rob Mineault 43:10
She said she didn't like fruit.

R Rheanna Robinson 43:12
You know what I do like? Berries. Blueberries I can tolerate.

R Ryan Fleury 43:16
Oh, awesome. Yeah, my favorite fruit. Oh, a super fruit.

R Rob Mineault 43:22
Are blueberries a super fruit?

L Lis Malone 43:23
It's like a high in antioxidants.

R Rob Mineault 43:25
No kidding. I had no idea.



Lis Malone 43:28

Yeah, yeah. If you're gonna eat a fruit, that's the one you should have.



Rob Mineault 43:31

I'm already taking vitamins. I don't know. Can you guys handle if I have an antioxidant as well?



Steve Barclay 43:39

You might you might just completely go off the rails, having having subsisted entirely off of Kraft Dinner and Chef Boyardee.



Rob Mineault 43:52

Those blueberries are gonna have to do a lot of work. A lot of heavy lifting. Sorry, we got derailed again.



Steve Barclay 44:03

First time first time a super fruit ever ran into its kryptonite.



Rheanna Robinson 44:13

All right. This was super fun. You guys. This was super fun. Thank you. Thank you. So are all of you guys in the Lower Mainland? Is that where you're at?



Rob Mineault 44:22

No. Three of us are.



Ryan Fleury 44:24

So Lis is in North Carolina,



Rheanna Robinson 44:27

North Carolina. That's so awesome.



Ryan Fleury 44:32

And then Rob is in New Westminster, Steve's in Burnaby and I'm in Coquitlam.

R

Rheanna Robinson 44:37

Okay, I was born in New Westminster.

R

Rob Mineault 44:39

Love it here.

R

Rheanna Robinson 44:39

Yes. Oh, wow. That's great. We have this like massive geographic representation here. That's very cool.

L

Lis Malone 44:45

I'm the token American.

R

Rob Mineault 44:45

Yeah, we do. Yeah. Lis is our North Carolina representative. She gives us all the hurricane updates. Chinese Spy balloons, it's great.

L

Lis Malone 45:05

We get it all down here in North Carolina. Oh my god.

R

Rheanna Robinson 45:10

Oh, well, you guys have lots of fun. So thank you for having me. This was really this was great, awesome perspective. Okay, have a good evening. Thanks.

R

Rob Mineault 45:25

Oh, that was so that's really interesting. I love it. I'm so relieved that we finally got somebody to come in and talk about this because obviously this is a field that really needs some attention and some awareness. Yeah, I'm really happy to hear that it's it's starting to happen.

S

Steve Barclay 45:42

S Steve Barclay 45:42

Be nice to nice to see a better public perspective around disability in the Indigenous community. Because I know for years, it seems the only thing that we ever hear about here for, you know, with respect to that is when, for example, somebody who who's Indigenous and has CP can't get help, because, you know, people are just assuming they're drunk. Yeah, it's, you know, not even considering that it could be disability. Yeah, no, it's, it's unfortunate. And it's definitely something that needs to change.

R Rob Mineault 46:18

A lot of people are, you know, all spread throughout the province in in various sort of remote locations, and there's no resources there.

S Steve Barclay 46:29

Yeah, they're starting to get more certainly Assistive Technology resources available, but I'm not sure what the awareness is of it now.

R Rob Mineault 46:38

Yeah. Yeah, no, exactly. You know, I think that that's, you know, again, that's going to be a really big thing is to really, you know, get some awareness but just there's so much work to be done.

S Steve Barclay 46:50

Yep, we got a ways to go.

R Rob Mineault 46:54

It's happening. It's hard.

S Steve Barclay 46:55

There's good people doing the work. So that's, that's great news.

R Rob Mineault 46:58

That's right. Unlike us, who can't even find our Instagram password, let alone solving any societal problems.

R Rob Mineault 47:00

R Ryan Fleury 47:08
Instagram's dead. We don't need Instagram.

R Rob Mineault 47:11
No, we're gonna I'm telling you there's gonna be a triumphant reemerging of our Instagram account. I've already got it planned out really bring out where we're gonna go for I was gonna bring my camera when we go for breakfast.

R Ryan Fleury 47:22
People don't need to see me eating pancakes.

R Rob Mineault 47:26
Our audience demands it, Ryan. But watch, we'll go out for breakfast and the jerk won't order pancakes.

R Ryan Fleury 47:34
That's right.

L Lis Malone 47:35
I wanted to see you hula hooping but I'll take pancakes.

R Ryan Fleury 47:41
How about hula hooping while eating pancakes?

L Lis Malone 47:45
My little brain is blown.

R Ryan Fleury 47:52
'Glitter and Spangles' playing in the background.

R Rob Mineault 47:57
I would open a tic tokk account iust to nost it and it would go viral.

I would open a tik tok account just to post it and it would go viral.

R Ryan Fleury 48:03
Probably would. Probably. Numbers would skyrocket. It'd be like what the hell happened

L Lis Malone 48:10
Have you scheduled our anniversary show?

R Ryan Fleury 48:15
I haven't been to yet but it's in May.

R Rob Mineault 48:18
Sometime please after May 6th.

R Ryan Fleury 48:19
May 6. Yeah. So it'd be around middle of probably third week in May.

L Lis Malone 48:24
Why May 6?

R Rob Mineault 48:25
That's our Blind Beginnings Gala.

R Ryan Fleury 48:29
Hectic time for Rob.

L Lis Malone 48:31
That's awesome. It's my birthday.

S Steve Barclay 48:35

Oh, it's a day before my wife's birthday.

R Rob Mineault 48:37
Oh my god.

L Lis Malone 48:38
And it's when frickin King Charles is going to become King.

R Rob Mineault 48:43
Really?

L Lis Malone 48:44
I was like, how dare he?

S Steve Barclay 48:47
Usurping your birthday? My goodness.

L Lis Malone 48:49
I think that's so rude. Because it will no longer be my birthday. It's gonna be like King Charles day.

S Steve Barclay 48:55
Well, it's a good thing that you're rebel scum.

L Lis Malone 48:58
Sure, yeah.

R Rob Mineault 49:00
Is anybody really gonna care when Charles becomes King?



- S** Steve Barclay 49:05
I certainly don't. I don't.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:08
I mean, is anybody going to tune into that? It's not really all that interesting.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:11
Millions of people will tune into it.
- S** Steve Barclay 49:14
The monarchy is a wasted institution.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:16
I don't think they will. I don't think anyone cares about Prince Charles.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:20
Oh, they don't. They'll tune in.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:23
Yeah, we'll see.
- L** Lis Malone 49:26
Everyone's just gonna see if Harry and Megan show up.
- R** Ryan Fleury 49:29
Yeah, probably.
- R** Rob Mineault 49:33
Yeah. Anyways, monarchs are stupid. Well, hello to all our new listeners from England.

R Ryan Fleury 49:48
We love all of you.

R Rob Mineault 49:53
Blimey, I don't know I can't do an English accent.

R Ryan Fleury 50:01
Why not England not have a hockey team?

S Steve Barclay 50:04
They do? They're terrible.

R Ryan Fleury 50:06
Oh, do they? Okay. Wait, a hockey team? England has their national hockey team in England?

R Rob Mineault 50:14
Yeah, that's a good question.

R Ryan Fleury 50:15
in Scotland teams Sweden's got teams but ...

R Rob Mineault 50:28
I don't know, I think we got their hands full with trying to figure out how to play cricket.

R Ryan Fleury 50:40
No.

R Rob Mineault 50:42
Very confusing.

S Steve Barclay 50:43
It's got to be explained.

R Rob Mineault 50:48
I had someone explain it to me and I still don't understand it.

R Ryan Fleury 50:51
you get to take up cricket or why were you interested? I

R Rob Mineault 50:54
listen, I had one of those things where I just thought I don't know. I have no idea what this cricket thing's about so ..

L Lis Malone 51:03
With the ball and those hammer things.

S Steve Barclay 51:11
They have a bat. Yeah.

R Rob Mineault 51:14
It's not like a bad bad it's like a paddle. Right. And then someone throws a ball underhand and I don't know, then from there, I don't know what happens.

S Steve Barclay 51:26
They gotta hit a wicket or something.

R Rob Mineault 51:30
Yeah, sounds it sounds crazy. Clearly, clearly invented by a bunch of drunks in the 1700s.

S Steve Barclay 51:39

Wow. And just for your information here Great Britain according to the International Hockey Federation is ranked 18th.

R Ryan Fleury 51:47
Yes Great Britain, the world team that's correct.

R Rob Mineault 51:51
Or you just didn't recognize them with the 'great'.

R Ryan Fleury 52:13
Tuesday of every month is now crap on a country day.

S Steve Barclay 52:16
Get it out of your system for the UK, because my my nephew showing up from Northern Ireland May 1.

R Rob Mineault 52:22
Listen Ireland is cool.

S Steve Barclay 52:28
Northern Ireland is part of Great Britain.

R Rob Mineault 52:29
Great Britain. Pretty Decent Britain maybe.

R Ryan Fleury 52:37
You live in British Columbia.

R Rob Mineault 52:40
That is true. That is true. Yeah, we have Victoria Day coming up in May from I guess we're celebrating Queen Victoria's birthday still.

S Steve Barclay 52:57
So in May we'll be loving all over the Commonwealth

L Lis Malone 53:03
Don't forget your friends in Regina.

R Rob Mineault 53:12
Just went straight to Regina again...

R Ryan Fleury 53:16
Regina Regina.

L Lis Malone 53:19
I think I said with it with a V and that sounds like ..

S Steve Barclay 53:24
Just remember it rhymes with fun

R Ryan Fleury 53:43
There you go. Fun times.

R Rob Mineault 53:45
Yeah, all right.

L Lis Malone 53:46
Sometimes in Regina.

R Rob Mineault 53:50
I wonder I wonder if their marketing team got fired over that. I mean it got them publicity.

R Ryan Fleury 54:01
People will tour to Regina just to see the sign. Yeah.

L Lis Malone 54:07
Everybody wants a piece of Regina

R Ryan Fleury 54:17
Rob fell off his chair.

R Rob Mineault 54:19
Didn't see that one coming. All right.

S Steve Barclay 54:28
You could always go to their food festival. Taste of Regina.

L Lis Malone 54:35
That's a taste of Regina

R Rob Mineault 54:46
All right, that's enough.

L Lis Malone 54:48
Oh god. Steve and I could go back and forth on this.

R Rob Mineault 54:50
I know. You have your own podcast. It's spin off podcast. I really do. Hey, you know what I thought you came up with somebody came up with a really good idea last week.

S Steve Barclav 55:10

If you happen to be in Saskatoon you're in the wrong hole.

R

Rob Mineault 55:29

Bunch of 12 year olds.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:34

Play all these outtakes are the anniversary show. We won't even show up. You can just play all these outtakes.

R

Rob Mineault 55:44

Oh, that's a good idea.

R

Ryan Fleury 55:50

Fold the top.

R

Rob Mineault 55:53

I don't know. Whatever. Anyways, okay, let's get out of here. All right. Hey, Lis.

L

Lis Malone 56:03

Hey, Rob.

R

Rob Mineault 56:04

Yeah, I know. You're tempted to say something. Just couldn't think of it fast enough.

R

Ryan Fleury 56:12

She's gone.

S

Steve Barclay 56:13

I know it's gonna be one of those wraps. We're gonna be we're gonna be here a while boys.

- L** Lis Malone 56:25
I have to get I have to say I keep now I'm getting flooded with Regina references. I have to cleanse and purify and wash. Gotta wash. Wash, Regina.
- R** Rob Mineault 56:51
God. Okay, Lis.
- L** Lis Malone 56:58
Yeah, Rob.
- R** Rob Mineault 57:00
Where can people find us?
- L** Lis Malone 57:02
www.atbanter.com
- R** Ryan Fleury 57:12
that's the best delivery you've ever given us.
- R** Rob Mineault 57:14
There you go. What else? They can also drop us an email if they so desire and want to complain. Cowbell@atbanter.com Hurry up, Steve. Let's get out of here.
- S** Steve Barclay 57:29
All right, well, rumor has it that you can find us on social media, although we can't find us on social media. So why should you? But yeah, there's some there's some stuff at Twitter. There's some stuff at Facebook. And apparently, there's going to be a fabulous new reemergence that it's a triumphant return of Instagram. And who knows maybe a tick tock channel involving Ryan too. So stay tuned for that.
- R** Rob Mineault 57:55
Yeah, well, I think that is gonna do it for us this week. Big thanks, of course, to Dr. Rheanna Robinson. for ioinina us. and we will see evervhodv next week.

Robinson, for joining us, and we will see everybody next week.