

# Understanding everyday harm

A scoping review of abuse literature

Sally Robinson, Jan Idle, Jung Yoon – Flinders University

Karen Fisher, Ciara Smyth, Heikki Ikaheimo – UNSW Sydney

# Our team

## ARC Linkage Project LP210200536

Organisation	People
Flinders University	Sally Robinson, Jan Idle, Jung Yoon, Rachel High, Ruby Nankivell
UNSW Sydney	Karen Fisher, Heikki Ikaheimo, Ciara Smyth
University of Melbourne	Claire Spivakovsky
Northcott Community Researchers	Hannah Ogden, Tyra Buteux
Partner Organisations	NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, SA Department of Human Services, Northcott, Mable, Bedford, Novita, Gen U, VACRO, Purple Orange, DANA.

# Our project: Everyday steps to address everyday harms

- Many people with disability experience harm every day that can leave them feeling uncomfortable, silenced, insulted, or neglected.
- Other people might not realise the person feels this way.
- Sometimes rules in services make the harm worse.
- Our project is trying to find ways to help people with intellectual disability and their paid support workers work together and stop everyday harm.

# What did we do in the scoping review?

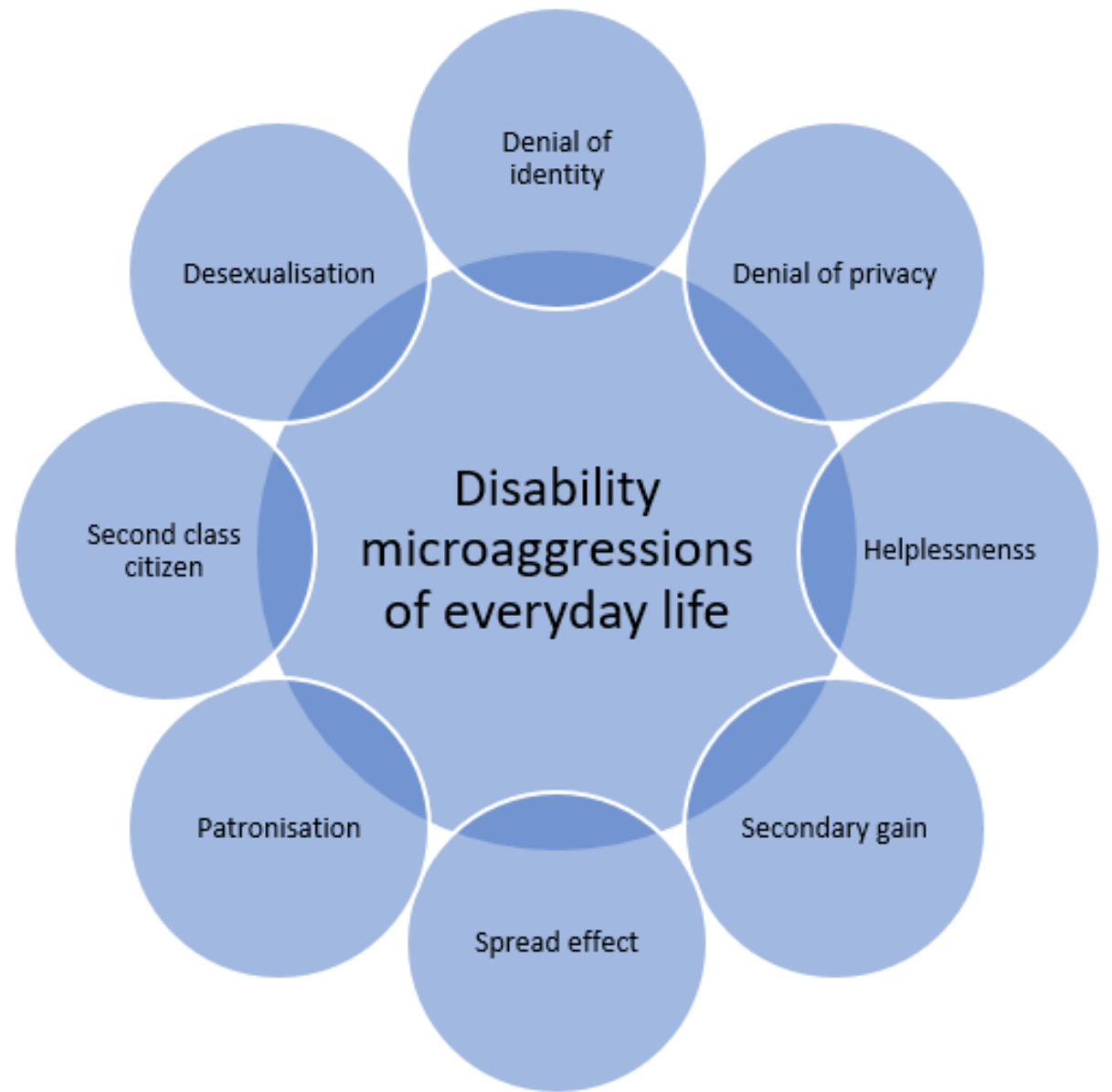
- We read research about microaggression and emotional and psychological abuse against people with disability.
- We looked for how this research could help us understand everyday harm and misrecognition.

# Methods

- Articles from last 5 years
- 5 databases
- 193 articles – 63 after preliminary review - full text review of 44 articles (8 excluded)
- Final sample for scoping review: 36 articles
- Analysis framework:
  - Keywords
  - 3 modes of misrecognition (lack of care, respect or value)
  - organisational context (Honneth, 1995).

# Microaggression

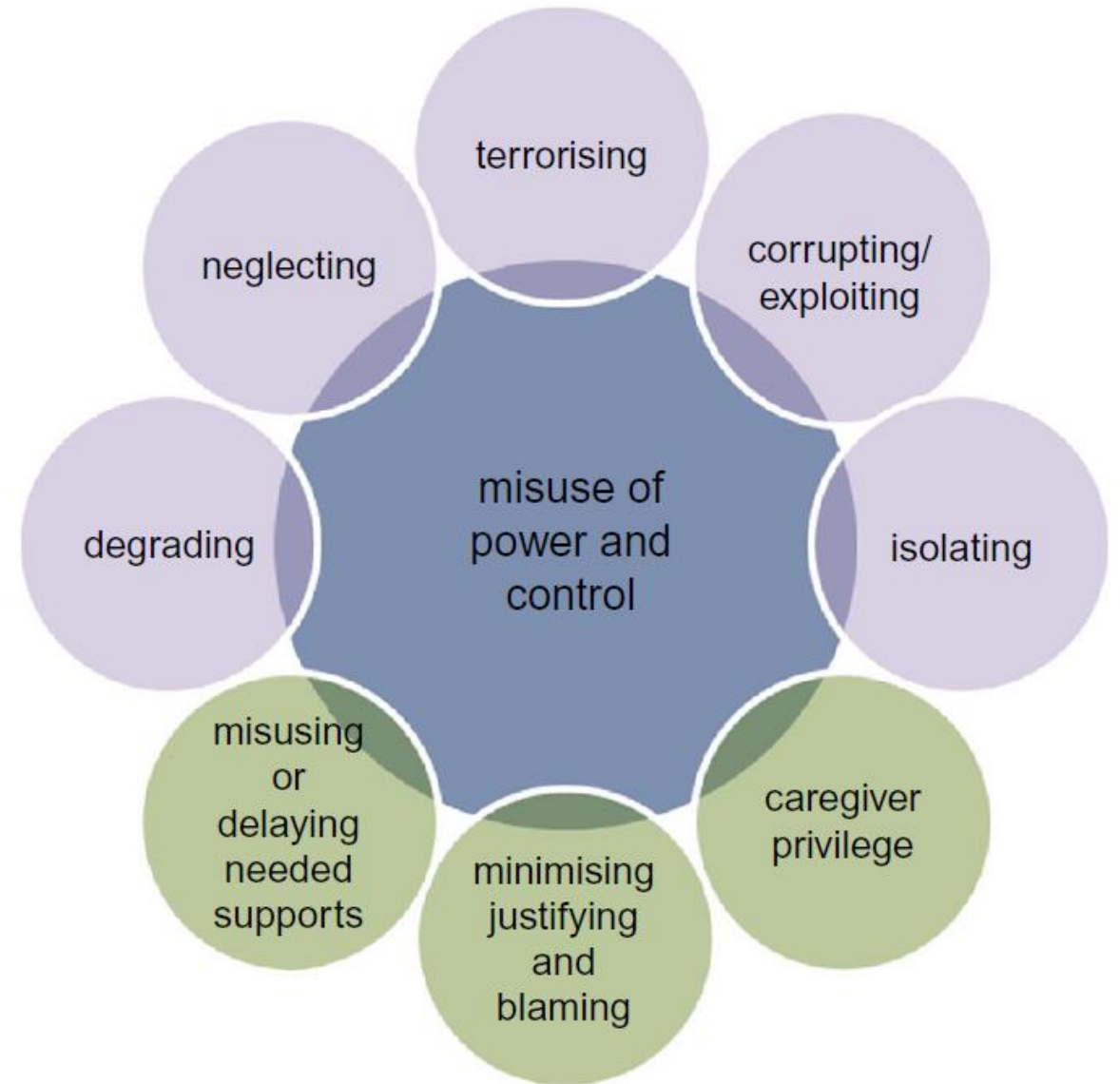
- Everyday actions – unconscious or unintentional acts of discrimination
- Send messages about a person's world view



Keller & Galgay (2010). Disability Microaggressions of Everyday Life - taxonomy

# Emotional and psychological abuse

- Infliction of anguish, pain or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts and/or behaviour
- Results in harm to a person's self-concept and mental wellbeing (WWDA, 2007)



Robinson and Chenoweth (2012). framework of emotional and psychological abuse and neglect

# Microaggression, E&P abuse and disability

- **Intentional and/or unintentional**

- Acts may be ambiguous, but a call to consider from perspective of those targeted

- **Experiencing and understanding harm**

- Some forms clear
- Others harder to understand – subtle; positive and negative at the same time
- Oppressive accumulation of self-doubt and damage to identity
- Responsibility on the person to act/not act

# Harm as an everyday experience

- **Interpersonal everyday harm**

- Many examples –being ignored, insulted, excluded, when bystanders overlook public victimisation, being infantilised, having experiences disregarded.

- **Harm at organisational levels**

- Workplace culture, workers' attitudes
- Many examples - formal and informal norms preventing participation, failures in policy or management to respect rights; clinical misdiagnoses; withholding necessary care; failure to recognise intersectional identities; having to re-prove need repeatedly; inadequate resourcing.

# Ableism, stereotyping and stigma

- Negative social attitudes and structures.
- ‘Everyday ableism’.
- ‘Interactional trouble’ - challenging, patronising, critiquing visible identity and body; or not ‘disabled enough’ (Calder-Dawe et al., 2020).
- Undermining value through labelling, stereotyping, status loss.
- Stigma – barriers to participation, rights, access.

# Implications

- The literature on microaggression and emotional and psychological contributes to our developing understanding of everyday harm and misrecognition of people with intellectual disability.
- This is important for informing questions about safety and quality in the relationships between people with intellectual disability and their paid support workers.
- Better understanding subtle and pervasive harms will contribute to improving quality.

# The review demonstrated...

- Close connection between the concepts of microaggression and emotional and psychological abuse.
- Actions and omissions that were sometimes subtle, and often not understood or responded to.
- Consequences for people with disability – overlooked, disrespected and disregarded in interpersonal and institutional encounters.
- Important concepts
  - Unequal power
  - Ambiguous intent
  - Subjective feeling of harm
  - Cumulative harm

# Is the new term 'everyday harm' helpful?

- A more accessible language for daily use.
- Reframes microaggression about groups who find the broader theory inaccessible.
- Informed by recognition theory, our framing focuses on interpersonal harm and how it affects the quality of the relationship.
- Stretches microaggression theory by identifying and evaluating the effect of harm.
- Opens opportunities for exploring possibilities for repair and prevention of further harm in the relationship.

# Next steps

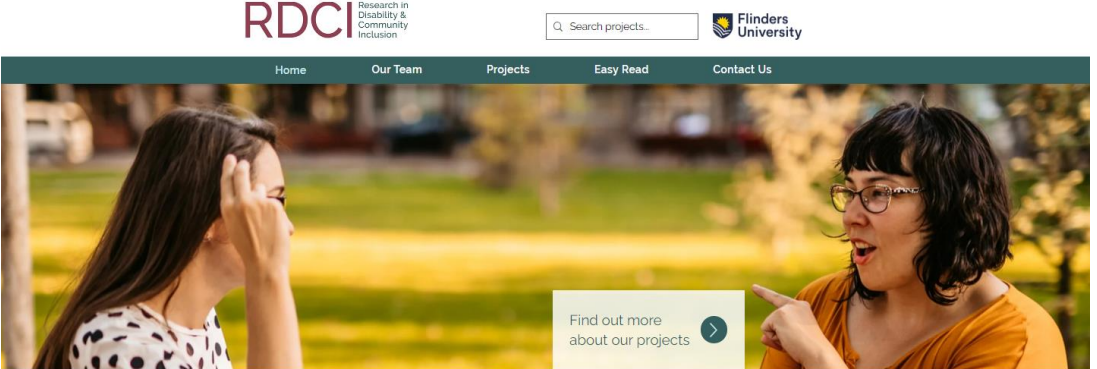
- Fieldwork with young people with intellectual disability and support workers
- Fieldwork with managers and board members
- Capacity building resources

# For further information

- Our website:

<https://www.researchdci.flinders.edu.au/>

- [sally.robinson@flinders.edu.au](mailto:sally.robinson@flinders.edu.au)



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Research in Disability & Community Inclusion (RDCI) website. At the top left is the RDCI logo, and at the top right is the Flinders University logo. A search bar is located between them. Below the logos is a navigation menu with links for Home, Our Team, Projects, Easy Read, and Contact Us. The main content area features a large photograph of two women in conversation. A call-to-action button in the bottom right of the photo reads "Find out more about our projects" with a right-pointing arrow. Below the photo, the text "Welcome" is followed by a paragraph describing the website's purpose: "Research in Disability and Community Inclusion (RDCI) is a website to share the research of academic staff working in Disability and Community Inclusion at Flinders University." This is followed by another paragraph: "Working in partnership with people with disability and a wide range of government, community services, and advocacy organisations, our research aims to:" and a bulleted list of four research aims.

RDCI Research in Disability & Community Inclusion

Flinders University

Search projects...

Home Our Team Projects Easy Read Contact Us

Find out more about our projects >

## Welcome

Research in Disability and Community Inclusion (RDCI) is a website to share the research of academic staff working in Disability and Community Inclusion at Flinders University.

Working in partnership with people with disability and a wide range of government, community services, and advocacy organisations, our research aims to:

- Promote human rights
- Privilege the experiences and priorities of people with disability
- Develop understanding about how we can jointly promote social inclusion and challenge marginalisation of people with disability
- Generate knowledge useful for policy and practice