Peter’s life experience helps providers improve disability supports

Posted on:
12 July 2023

Peter Dempsey’s career is going from strength to strength.

And he’s helping disability service providers improve, positively impacting the disability sector.

With support from the NDIS, Peter draws on his own experiences of disability, adversity, and rehabilitation, to help individuals and organisations achieve their full potential.

At 4 years old Peter had an unexplained stroke that left him unable to walk and talk.

The right side of his body became paralysed, limiting his ability to move and communicate.

‘I was stubborn as hell to get out of the wheelchair,’ Peter says.

‘I decided early on that no one was going to hold me down and no one was going to put a ceiling on my dreams.’

Since then, Peter’s determination has benefitted not only his own rehabilitation but also the people he works with.

After re-learning how to walk and speak, Peter became an accomplished public speaker.

Prior to Covid he travelled around Australia sharing his experience and providing guidance to schools and businesses about ways to create more inclusive environments.

Peter’s personal journey and determination did not go unnoticed.

In 2020 he won the Most Inspirational Individual Award at the Brain Injury SA Awards.

Peter went on to help other people with disabilities achieve their business and life goals.

He says it’s thanks to NDIS funded therapy that he has the physical capability to work.

‘The physiotherapist works on maintaining movement in my arm and reducing spasticity in my body, and the speech pathologist helps me with communication, which is important at work,’ Peter says.

‘I also have funded support to help me with the writing component of my work.’

Now 35 years old, Peter’s most recent career development came when he spotted an opportunity.

‘I realised disability service providers needed to understand how to truly connect with people who live with disability, and learn from them,’ Peter says.

‘I also saw that the providers were aware of that need. It felt like there was a role for me to help.’

Peter is now in demand from service providers as an independent consultant.

He helps providers improve their services by increasing their understanding of people with disability.

For example, Peter was recently engaged by a provider to go through their communications with clients and identify opportunities for improvement.

He feels comfortable talking to providers, advising them on what they’re missing and helping to improve the customer experience.

‘I love that the directors of these service organisations are open to learning how to improve,’ Peter says.

He is currently working with a group of 8 South Australian providers which collectively employ over 2,000 support workers.

‘That puts me in a good position to have a positive influence,’ Peter says.

‘The NDIS has given us the resources to live our best life.

‘That is fantastic, but for people with disabilities, learning how to make the right decisions, coordinate the support, and communicate with all the different people and organisations can be daunting.

‘The good news is the providers I work with are finding ways to make it easier for people with disabilities to navigate the system and make their own decisions.

‘Everyone in the sector has a role to play to bring people with disabilities at the centre of their own care, and there’s never been a better time to be involved.’

Related Stories and videos

After a childhood stroke, Peter is now a professional keynote speaker and mentor

Peter inspires others with disability to find the ‘gold within’

27 November 2020
Proud and soulful Polynesian singer creates her best life, and prepares to release her first recording.

From hard knocks to happiness, Tua sings from experience

19 April 2023
Born Deaf, Mark Burgess brings empathy to his role as a Local Area Coordinator

Mark uses his own experience of living with disability to help others

15 September 2022
More stories and videos