



CANDID Pathways Presentation

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CANDID:

**Collective of ChronicAlly ill, NeuroDiverse,
Impaired or Disabled students at La Trobe**

**Making university more supportive:
Because we CAN – so we DID**



Outline:

1. Group vision and formation
2. Development during COVID-19 lockdowns
3. Costs and benefits
4. Community feedback



Why form CANDID?

- Little things can make a big difference
- Community is key to success
- Peer support helps
- Student societies have overheads
- Golden combination:
university facilitated, student led

CANDID's vision

- Enhance student wellbeing and success
- Centre lived experience
- Provide support and encouragement by
 - Facilitating friendships
 - Sharing resources
 - Developing self-advocacy
- Be directed by stakeholders

Development during COVID

- First steps
 - Responding to Laena's call out
 - Initial interest meeting
 - Deciding inclusion criteria
 - Surveying community preferences
- Opening the 'doors'
 - Invitation to all E&D registered students
- Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing
 - support group processes





It is what it is
Face-to-face when we can
Alternate face-to-face and
online?



Group guidelines

- Strengths focus
- Growth mindset
- Trust – confidentiality
- Respect different opinions and experiences
- Inclusive and non-judgemental
- Informal – no attendance roll and no homework!
- Set expectations at the beginning of each meeting
- Invite brief introductions – no pressure
- Come and go as you please
- Peer-led, staff supported

From little things...

- Invite email sent to all students registered with the AccessAbility Hub
- 35 prompt responses expressing interest
- First formal meeting on 20 August – 17 attendees
- Attendance fluctuates
- Breakout rooms help
- Currently 65 members
- Microsoft Teams used between meetings and to share resources

Maintenance and costs

- Kathy's time:
 - Manage emails and lists
 - Zoom invites
 - Meeting facilitation
 - Teams page
- Laena and Lyndel's time:
 - Meeting planning
 - Facilitation
 - Follow-ups

Benefits

- Benefits to individuals as indicated by students:
 - Feeling less alone and forming a community
 - Sharing strategies
 - Increasing visibility within the university
- Future benefits:
 - Sharing strategies with teaching staff?
 - Building knowledge of conditions within AccessAbility team?
 - Creating resources for students and staff – list started
 - Add to the disability support literature

Student tips

DYSLEXIA TIPS FOR STUDY, WHICH WORK FOR ME by Annette Pyatt

Use your diary – I mean the physical book the uni gives you – divide one page for subjects, with check boxes for everything that is due, and the other side for classes



Wall map – semester overview, weekly timetable and assessment due timetable



Student to student

“...if there’s anything I can do for you, whether that be a chat, or questions over email, or links to resources, or whatever, let me know.”

“Thanks so much for reaching out! It's great to hear from someone who has gone through similar experiences. I'd love to pick your brain a bit and hear about your experiences if you're happy to share your story.”

“If you've got some resources, I'd love it if you could send some my way. ”

Quotes from students

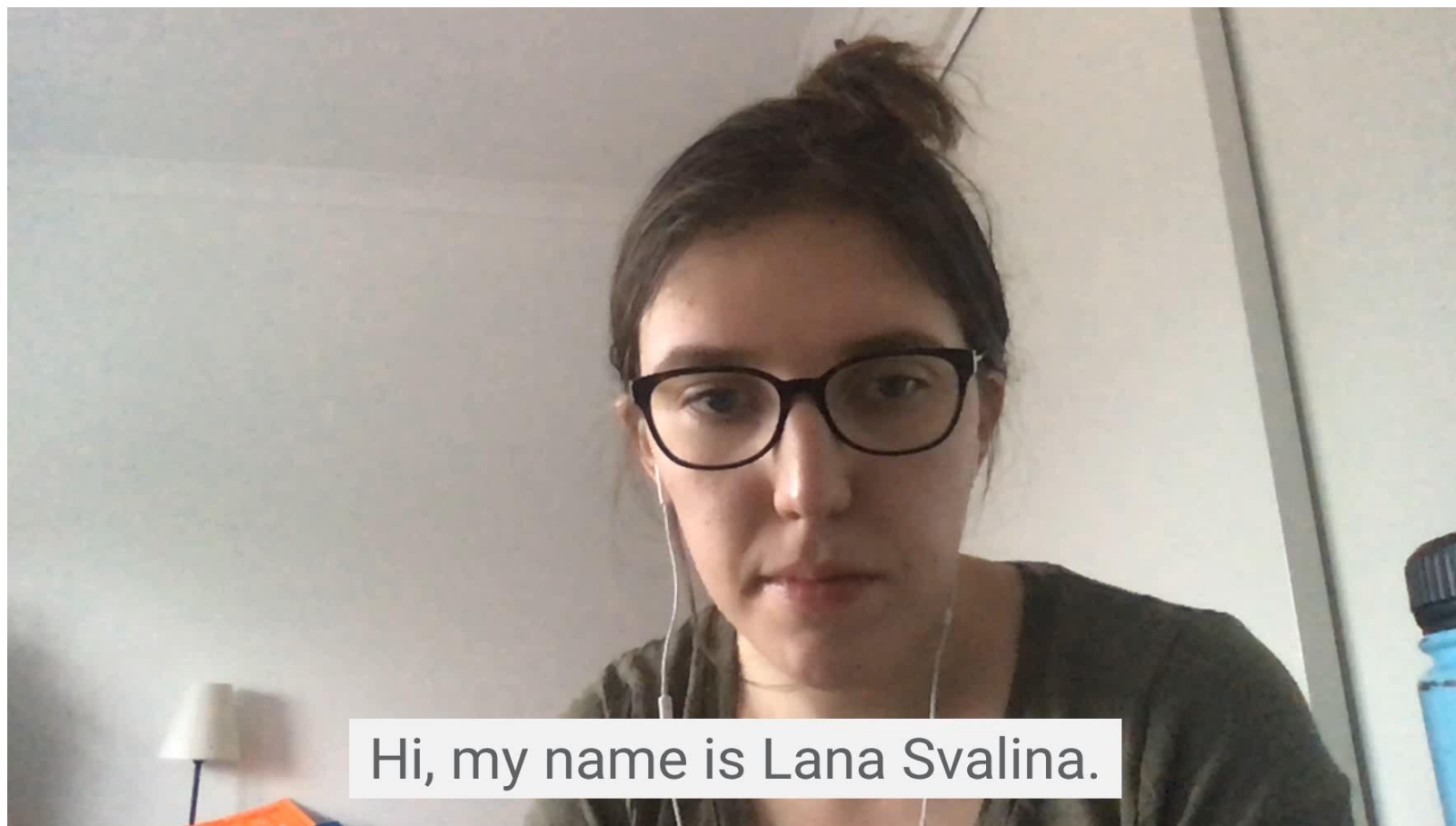
- Sabina

"Just knowing that there are other students at La Trobe that I can discuss shared experiences with provides an invaluable multi-layered level of support. I can give a lot or a little, I get to decide how to interact. The group is very diverse and inclusive."

- Bec

"It was both surprising and heartening to see so many students with ADHD in the group. I received my diagnosis last year, so to discuss with students' strategies that help in academic work was really nice. It validated my feelings that some aspects of academia are quite challenging for those of us with ADHD, and excited me thinking about the resources we could create together to make uni life easier for other neurodivergent students."

Video vignettes - Lana



Video vignette - Annette



Take home messages

- Peer support groups like CANDID are beneficial
- Lived experience is key
- They can be simple and resource-light
- Institutional support makes a difference



Thank you

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