If you don't mind me asking... with Morgan McArthur and Graeme Crook

LUCY: Hello and welcome back to our second series of 'If you don't mind me asking...' where we ask questions and explore the lived experiences of people with disabilities. Now, as you know, I'd normally be here with my co-host Dan, but he's not well today, so it's just me. But don't worry about it, we're making up for it. We have 2 guests today, which is marvellous. So I'm Lucy Ruck, and as I said we're going to mix it up a little bit with our 2 guests. So we're joined today with 2 guests from PwC who'll be sharing what it's like, from the graduate perspective, entering the workplace, and then hearing from a member of the wider team at PwC who are part of the workplace adjustments process. So, firstly Morgan. Welcome very much. Give us a quick introduction to who you are.

MORGAN: Thank you Lucy, it's lovely to be here. My name is Morgan, I'm 24 years old and I'm an Audit Associate at PwC. So I started on the graduate scheme in September 2022, meaning that I'm coming on to my second year, which is really exciting. This entails me doing full-time work and study, so it'll be interesting to explore the different adjustments that we've had with regards to the workplace side of things, but also the transition coming from university which I recently graduated from into doing an apprenticeship as well. So I went to university and studied languages, so I had no academic background at all in finance, but here I am, and I'm looking forward to telling you all about how we've been able to transition with the disabilities.

LUCY: Lovely. We're gonna come back to you. We just thought it seemed a bit rude leaving Graeme on the side to listen for 10 minutes while we chatted on. So Graeme, welcome to yourself as well, and tell us a little bit about yourself.

GRAEME: Thanks Lucy, hi everyone. So yeah, I'm Graeme Crook. I joined PwC nearly 20 years ago now. I've always been involved in and around the hardware area, primarily providing laptops and peripherals to our staff. My current role is as an IT Asset Manager, but I also work very closely with our IT workplace adjustment and digital accessibility teams. I first worked with the workplace adjustment team back in 2018 on a part-time assignment, as at the time PwC were looking to define a streamlined workplace adjustments process through creating a smoother onboarding experience for joiners in grade staff, those who are seeking physical and technological adjustments. All in support of, at the time and still is today PwC's inclusion strategy.

LUCY: Lovely, thank you very much Graeme. So I'm going to come back to Morgan, because as we were saying before we started this recording, Morgan is the star of our show today. No disrespect Graeme, lovely to have you here. Morgan, tell me a little bit about yourself and although you've already shared that you are pretty young, let's be honest, I'm saying that as a more mature lady these days, tell us a little bit about your background and your disability journey I suppose.

MORGAN: Sure. So I was born with a condition called cutis aplasia congenita, which meant that I was in and out of hospital quite a lot growing up, having operations on my head. So that, at least for me, impacted the way that I viewed the world, viewed my access to education, and also the self-confidence levels in terms of "Can I actually go and do this?", "What are the barriers that I'm facing?", "I can't do the same things as lots of other kids are". Alongside this as well, I'm dyslexic, so that was quite a journey, especially through education, going into a different area as well, from languages to accounting and audit and finance. I recently got an ADHD diagnosis, which has been quite a journey to explore as well, and I'm looking forward to talking about that. Alongside this as well, I started losing some of the vision in my left eye whilst I was at the firm, so there's been a lot of support with that side of things as well. I also had quite a severe back injury when I was 16, so as much as I am able to compete in sports, there are still some lasting effects of that which have an impact on the ways that I'm able to work, access to physiotherapy as well. So there's a whole lot of things going on.  But being able to navigate that journey, especially in a corporate environment, coming out of education as well and trying to make the journey work, but also feel that I can thrive in an employment, I think is really important. So it will be really exciting to explore that further.

LUCY: So one of the things we often find is, graduates, if you transition from something government-funded, like the Disabled Students' Allowance that we have in the UK, into a sort of supportive workplace, where you can get things like Access to Work in place. But tell us a bit more about what it's been like, because being at university is not the same as being in a workplace, and what works at uni, you can't lift and shift, if you like, into the workplace. Can you tell us a bit about what that's been like for you?

MORGAN: Yes, of course. So I did have Disabled Students' Allowance at university. I was in university during the time of COVID, so my penultimate year and my ultimate year were done in COVID time. That did obviously impact some of the access arrangements that I would have had, but fortunately I had DSA from my second year. When it comes to what - I quite liked what you said there, about you can't just like up and lift it and take it into the workplace, because coming from school, something that I was quite aware about was at least what I would need. So when you're at university you can go right, it's the same kind of studying from school. You assume that extra time is going to help, you assume that having a coloured overlay is going to help. But going into the workplace, if you don't know what the job is and you're learning on the job it's very difficult to know what you're going to need until you get there. So with Disabled Students' Allowance the measures that I had were quite practical. So things like a coloured overlay, I had a printer, printing credit, I was given a laptop as well, and also had a microphone for recording purposes in lectures. But the way that I was given these felt quite disjointed from the system. So I was able to get access to the arrangements, but then being able to use them I think was very different from university to university. So I was on a course where I did lots of different languages, and different tutors would have different approaches. Some tutors actually felt quite uncomfortable with the idea of me using a recording device just so I could listen over in my own time and make my own notes and process it differently. So that was quite a barrier, and also a lot of my degree was quite handwritten. So if we're talking about tech and the tech access arrangements, I'm sure Graeme will be able to demonstrate how my job and our firm is not as handwritten. So comparing that to the workplace, I do feel - I think the first thing is just that it's so much more connected. So when I - even before I joined the firm, I was matched up with an occupational health specialist, so I was able to talk to quite honestly and openly about my disabilities, what I was going through, any kind of mental health concerns that I had as well, who's independent from the firm, and she could make recommendations to the firm about suitable arrangements for me, or suitable people that I'd need to be put in contact with to have these arrangements put in place. So as much as I didn't know when I came into the job exactly what I would need, it's still good to know that the structures are there and they are all connected. So my occupational health specialist recommended I have a desk assessment, as an example. So with the workplace side of things when I do my client work, and with my teams, I did have a workplace desk adjustment, which means I had a specialist come and look at the way that I sit and the devices that I use and the different desks I'm at as well, because it's not just in the office but you've got client space, you've got college. So they did actually do quite a comprehensive look into that, and there were some changes which I've been able to implement and I'm using at the moment and I'll have a review of that later on. Yes. As well, with the tech, I know Graeme is going to talk more about this, but just from a graduate's point of view, one of the first things that we saw on the client side of things was being able to use software called Read & Write. So for me this gives me a colour overlay on my screen, which compared to university, so much different than holding a piece of plastic and having to put that on every single page. But this has been brilliant, because it also has voice software. So instead of reading, if my eyes get tired especially, I've had some issues with my eye, I'm able to have the words on the screen spoken out to me at different speeds, and I can write at the same time. It's so much easier for processing. But these are measures that I wasn't aware about. So it's not things that I had to ask for coming in. These are the very basic level, you go to occupational health, or even just you hear about the podcasts around the firm, which I'll come on to later as well. You just hear about this, and it all feels like a part of the integrated culture, which I feel is really valued. And it makes me feel really valued as well. In terms of college support, because I'm on an apprenticeship, so there is a levy fee, so I've got some government-funded there, but I mostly spend the time with my provider. So I have a learning support plan and I have a support specialist there who I can talk to once every 6 weeks, just how I'm doing, how the measures are, I have extra time and rest breaks in my exams, which again the firm were really supportive with, and they helped me through the application in great detail. And in terms of that as well, being able to just have these open and honest conversations is the key part. Not just with your employer, but also with the apprenticeship provider and any other clients that we're able to work with as well in teams. I think being able to be honest and open has just been the key thing for me, when at university it's so disjointed you don't know who manages what, or it's quite subjective, lecturers will do things their own way. Coming from a top-down approach in the firm, we have our leaders saying this is important, this is how we're going to understand inclusivity and this is how we're going to live inclusively. I think that's made such a difference for me coming in and being able to just speak to anybody quite openly that I'm working with, and say 'look here's what I'm going through' or 'I've got this doctor's appointment that I can't miss'. The understanding is really what pushes this movement forward, and being inclusive and actually feeling that I belong here, rather than just 'oh actually, me going to occupational health is just another thing out of someone's day'. It's actually, no, this is really important to the whole journey that you're in. So there is that, the accessibility on the funding side of it, but I think a lot more of that comes the holistic approach, which is what I really get in the workplace.

LUCY: And it's almost like that's the culture. And that's just fine, if you need something doing differently then that's fine, or actually it's not even a thing almost. And that that's where it needs to get to, where people can ask for stuff that's going to help them to be their best selves at work by just doing things maybe differently. But we all have different needs and strengths and stuff anyway, so that just makes sense doesn't it?

MORGAN: Absolutely.

LUCY: So I know that PwC now offers some more support around getting that diagnosis. So I know you recently had a diagnosis around ADHD. Do you want to tell us a little bit more about that?

MORGAN: Yes, absolutely. So this is - with the ADHD it was something that I was aware I probably had, just by looking at school reports and looking at the ways that you interact with family, in the workplace. And when I joined I was - obviously you're quite nervous when you start a grad scheme, and there's lots of pressure in terms of "oh, I need to do this right, XYZ, there's got to be a process to follow". And it was actually when I spoke to one of my managers and I said "Look, I'm really struggling to keep on top of this", or "How people organise these things, it doesn't feel logical". He said "Actually, we do offer routes to get support and a diagnosis for ADHD." And it's the same with dyslexia as well, and autism diagnosis, same if you're a parent and you have a child in that position, I've been told. So I submitted my initial inquiry about the ADHD process and diagnosis, and actually by the end of that month I had already been able to talk to nurses, clinical psychologists, and get a diagnosis on paper that said, not just "here is the condition", but exactly all my scores, whether it was the hyperactive side or the inattentive side, what the scores were for that, what the scores were on all of the tests I took beforehand, and that was actually something which I could send to people. As much as I knew my diagnosis, it's quite different having it on a piece of paper. I'm very lucky to work somewhere where I do feel that we have an inclusive culture, and where people are going to be understanding. But for a lot of examining boards or other documents, you'll often need documentation for a lot of these things. And actually having that was so key for me getting the further support. Not just the cultural support within the firm where I can speak to people who are in a similar position, but actually having the access arrangements in place does often need a diagnosis, and I know that a lot of younger people in particular struggled to get this because of the waiting lists on the NHS. But also feeling confident enough to speak up about it as well. So when I submitted my inquiry, I remember thinking "oh right, my graduate apprenticeship is 3 years, maybe I'll get a diagnosis or a conversation with someone at the end of that". But I was really surprised at how much of a priority they placed on that system as well, clearly with the understanding that this is going to help me do better, not just in my job, but feel more confident about myself and be able to contribute my whole self to what I do. So that felt quite liberating I think, getting a diagnosis, especially as a young adult, when you've already been through quite a lot as a young person, there's a few - not, like, preconceptions, but ideas I had about myself, and ways that I thought I could cope with things. Or whether it was coping, or trying to change the mindset. Now with these new tools in place, and a diagnosis, and something I can take to managers, how I can speak up about that. And how I can manage it, not just in a way that I see as being different, but actually in a way that I can thrive, and what I can bring to the table in that front. So yeah, getting the ADHD diagnosis was very very good for me. And I'm still working through - I got the diagnosis a little while ago, but the support doesn't end there. So I'm still working through some of the, like educational psychotherapy that you can get with that as well, I know there are group support sessions that you can get, and some people have medication as well. But I have felt really supported with whatever route I've chosen to go down, and again I really allude back to what I was saying about that open culture. Once I had been through the initial stages, I was able to talk to my managers about it very openly, and just feel that I wasn't going to get judged. And that was such a key part of me actually accepting the diagnosis, and feeling that it wasn't an inconvenience to the people around me. And then once the diagnosis had come through, again because it's all integrated in the way that you're able to - like, if I go to my occupational health person, immediately I will know that it will go to this department, or the accessibility department, and the digital department, and that's such a reassurance, because it takes the burden off us. There's already so many barriers that we have to go through to feel that we're on the same level. I mean - I was saying this in a pre-call, that actually I feel like I have to put in double the work to get half the score sometimes. So it actually takes a lot of pressure off you, knowing that it's a community, that if everything's connected then I don't have to repeat myself and justify myself so many times. But we'll come on to that in a bit. I felt very lucky to have that support, and the ability to get the diagnosis, especially as young adult.

LUCY: One thing I've noticed a lot with people is, that when they've had that ADHD diagnosis or any neurodivergent diagnosis as an adult, that it's been quite empowering, and they've really helped them to understand themselves a lot more. Is that something that has resonated with you?

MORGAN: Oh absolutely. And I really like that word that you've used there, "empowering", because one of the things that I remember when I got, my when I first got my diagnosis, was "hang on, is this going to make me feel really behind? Is this going to make me feel that I'm different? How do I process this?" But it's something that we can work with, because - for example, when I'm in college and you've got the tutor saying one thing and other people will be taking it in a different way, I'll think "Hang on a second. How am I how am I able to write that down quick enough? How do I process it?" And it's the same when you're in calls with your teams. They're all able to look at a computer for -

or it feels like everyone's able to look at a computer screen for so long, for example. And I think "Well, how am I going to engage? How am I going to feel really present? How am I going to feel that I can do this?" And it's actually changing that mindset from, "Actually, what can I bring to the table? How can I do this differently? There's no one correct way to do things, so how can I do this differently that works for me and allows me to actually thrive in it?" So that's been quite exciting to work through. But yeah, it's thinking about what you can bring to the table that's a bit different. So I know that with my ADHD, one of the things that I've noticed especially coming from a non-financial background into finance and audit and accountancy, I remember thinking "I'm not going to pick this material up as quickly as other people", but when it comes to the learning and the revision side of it, that's been quite different compared to how I would be with my colleagues, and we're able to sit together and actually all of us coming in together with different perspectives and different solutions, we end up doing well. So that's been really nice to actually have more of a community in that sense. And on the work side of things as well, there's different ways in which you can come about solutions in a team. So if you've got a new client, or there's a new problem or a new solution that we need to come to, there are different perspectives that you can bring that originally, especially when I was younger I used to think "oh I don't get why this is different. I don't understand why I why these people have come to this conclusion and I thought to do it this way. But there isn't a right way to do things, and I think being in a workplace, compared to being in education, really brings that out. In education you've got kind of a right answer and a wrong answer, or you've got like an A grade or a B grade or a C grade, and it's very structured. It doesn't feel like it's there for the holistic learning, or actually helping, especially young people with disabilities, develop in that. Not everybody's going to learn in the same way. But in the workplace, you've got that space to grow. And that's why I think it's quite empowering having a diagnosis and understanding how that works for me, to think "okay, I really can thrive here". So, one of the things that we also get with all of the different - we've got a network called DAWN, which is Disability Awareness Network, and there are lots of different disabilities which are represented more so, within the communities, and they have their own subgroup. So I'm in the ADHD group, and it's really nice to actually just meet people in a similar position. Because even just in our own group, we'll share ideas and share solutions, because we all do things differently as it is there as well. And we'll - it could just go from anything about like, advice to oh how - "I've got this meeting coming up, what's the best way to structure it" because some people will be, you know, some people will thrive in different things and some people will struggle with different things. But even just understanding that, it feels quite empowering, to not just know that I can help other people, but to know that other people can help me, and it will help me come to the best solution for me and for the job that I'm doing.

LUCY: Yeah, absolutely. And Graeme, I was going to come back to you as well. One of the things Morgan was talking about was how - with the adjustments process it was just one point in and then you hand it over almost, isn't it? Can you tell us a bit more about how colleagues go about accessing this service at PwC, and maybe any nuggets of best practice that other organisations could think about doing, and why it works so well? That's like 3 questions I've just fired at you there.

GRAEME: Certainly, yeah. I mean it's still an evolving journey, but no, it's been brilliant hearing from Morgan and her positive experiences to date, and long may that continue. As a bit of deeper background, so PwC, we use an online asset management tool, and as part of creating a kind of joined up process we created a specific entry form to that. So that's for staff members requiring a workplace adjustment, but also as Morgan suggested, for those onboarding in the near future as well. So anyone can use it. It can be submitted directly by the requester or it can be requested on behalf of somebody else. And obviously you can put on there - it's got kind of common items that you might want as an adjustment, but then you've got free text to request whatever you may feel you need as well as an adjustment. And of course we can't guarantee that what you've requested will be provided, but we've got the teams involved in the process now that will be able to help and make suggestions where necessary, particularly obviously if we can't provide the equipment or the software that you have requested. Just as an example on that, you may have used a particular piece of software in a previous company or at university, higher education, etc, but we may not be able to offer that and we have to offer alternative technology for varying reasons, one of which could be data security considerations, which as you can imagine is very important. Clear guidance is provided on the technology options that are available. The digital accessibility team are always investigating new software solutions that present themselves to us against the backdrop of what we already offer, so we're not kind of offering too many solutions for the same conditions. But yeah, ultimately we want everyone to be able to fulfil their their potential whilst with PwC.

LUCY: And I know there's career coaches there as well, to help and sign post to stuff, isn't there? And is that part of the same process?

GRAEME: It is, yeah. I mean, if you want to talk to somebody about what you require, you've got career coaches there, you've got trusted colleagues, you've got your relationship leaders or your business unit leaders. I think it's just - you've got the network of people you can speak to. I mean, as Morgan mentioned as well, there are different groups like the ADHD group within DAWN. You know, you can speak to people in there, and even if you can't find out where you need to be signposted from there somebody will be able to help for sure.

LUCY: Yeah, fantastic. Morgan, I know you were really impressed with the recruitment process at PwC, along with the way they spoke about disability and accessibility online, you know, employees who are there at the moment talking about this stuff. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

MORGAN: Yeah, I was actually really impressed with the recruitment process at PwC. I don't know if anybody listening has or is applying to graduate schemes, but it can feel like a full-time job. So you're having to do lots of different stages for lots of different companies. They'll all want lots of different information and there'll be different ways the assessments are done. And a lot of the tasks can feel quite time-labourous but also quite intense, especially if you're reading a lot of information or you're constantly having to disclose disabilities that you have, or feeling that you have to fight for fair access arrangements. Especially if you've got timed exercises or exercises that require you to do lots of things within a certain time frame. So I say that I was really impressed with the recruitment process at PwC. When I applied it was a really short online form to start off with. I stated my disabilities, I stated what access arrangements I had at university. And I'll be honest: I just thought it was going to get lost. You know, it's a big company, they might not even hire me, I thought, why would they care. People might just see this as an inconvenience, or why would an employer want to take me on if I've written a really long list of everything that I need or everything that I've been through. So I heard back really quickly about the first stage, which was a game-based assessment. I don't know how I passed this, but it felt really nice that it was actually quite inclusive, and it's something that I felt everybody could take part in. It wasn't a verbal exercise, it wasn't a written exercise, it was just using your own initiative. And I think this is quite inclusive, because it means that people with different disabilities, especially neurodivergence, that's not visible from the outset, but it means that everybody's going to react a bit differently to the exercises that are in front of them. And I instantly heard back once I'd submitted that, that I'd made it through to the next stage, which was a huge relief because one thing that - especially with ADHD - if I'm managing lots of different things, things can get lost. So hearing back about that stage it was a pre-recorded interview. So I got 3 attempts to answer some questions. And I remember thinking "oh, goodness". The first thing that crossed my mind is: I have a full-time job. I'm applying to lots of different jobs. I don't know what I'm going to be doing. How long do I have to do this? And that was a genuine genuine worry for me, you know. I want to bring my best self to this, but that's really difficult if you feel that there's a time limit on something which, especially as a neurodivergent person, is quite difficult. And I was really surprised that I actually had 3 weeks for every stage of the interview process at PwC, which is longer than I'd seen for lots of other companies, and longer than what my friends had done even in different areas as well. So I did the pre-recorded interview stage, which was, I have been told, checked by a human, which is always nice to know that there is some personal care on the end as well. And actually, before I had done the call, before I'd done the pre-recorded interview, I received a call, and I remember thinking it was a spam call, but it wasn't, it was actually PwC, saying "Ah, we know that you've made it through to this stage of the application process. Is there anything that we can do to help, given that you've had your - you've disclosed your disabilities." And I was really shocked. At that point I'd said no, and that if I made it through to the next round I'd let them know. So I did get through to the final stage, which was a day-long assessment in front of a computer, which is quite daunting I think, for anybody, especially when you're nervous and you know that there's lots of different things to do, and that's the final stage before getting an offer. It's big. And I actually, again, I had a call from PwC beforehand, saying: "Look, there's quite a lot of written content in this, can we send it to you on a different coloured background that would help? What colour font might help?" And even just having someone take that initiative was huge. And this was a good couple of days beforehand as well, so I wasn't going to have to worry about that on the morning, or say to the invigilator: "Ah do I get a bit of extra time for this?", feeling that, you know, not having to ask for it, feeling like it was expected, that they want everybody to be on a level playing field. Rather than, oh, do I come across as inconvenient asking for something which I think is allowing me to perform at the same level as everybody else? So that was really lovely. And alas I did pass. I got through the interview stage. Again I had 3 weeks to book that. So I had time if I needed to prepare, do some research, and feel that I wasn't rushed. And from that, yeah it - I got the job, which was amazing. And it came in a phone call. The feedback was really intense as well, which is always good, because it means that not only can I grow and develop, but also that they had taken into account everything that I'd specified and the ways that it helped me out. So once I joined I was actually really happy to see this culture continue. So one of the things that we've spoken about already is the Disability Awareness Network, but even from the outset, as a new joiner, when you don't know about the people or the individuals involved, you can see that in their newscasts or even on their social media, it's really prominent that there's a big emphasis on disability and disability enabling bias. Like, LinkedIn posts as well. But even just around the firm we've got firm-wide news, and they'll be so proud to promote everything that the disability network are doing, and understanding different cases and they'll work with, like, throughout the year on like, Disability Week, and actually you'll hear from other employees. And I remember being quite shocked, but in a really good way, when I joined, that actually this was quite at the forefront. And even my office do their own events for Disability Awareness Network as well. That's the same with lots of different networks but I was really really proud, actually, to feel that I had a community and a voice before I'd managed to work out who the individuals were and get fully into the job myself as well. So day-to-day I still think this is really prominent, I don't think it's just been for show. I wouldn't be here today if I genuinely thought that there were organisations out there who were just doing this to get people in the door and then feel abandoned. So I've been really impressed and I have felt really supported throughout. As I've said there's lots of different people in the same situation and there is a conscious effort to put you in touch with other - at least put me in touch with other people that have ADHD. So, I've - yeah, I've just been really impressed, and it's still good, whenever I check LinkedIn, I don't check it much, but whenever I do I still see, kind of, 'PwC has invited you to this event', which is a disability podcast or they're doing a livestream about an event that they're doing in the office about disability. And that's - it just makes me feel really proud. So yeah, that was, you know, even going from recruitment all the way through, still today I'm learning about the ways that PwC view disability, and the way that we're embedding that into our culture.

LUCY: Yeah, just going to skip through a couple of questions here, and one of the things that really struck me when we first met, Morgan, that for such a young person you've had to deal with quite a lot. Now we skimmed through at the beginning of this, around your list of disabilities and everything else without really talking about the impact. But do you think that - you seem to have a huge amount of resilience. And do you think that's helped you in the workplace and given you a level of maturity that some of your peers who haven't been through the things that you have might have? And this is to kind of go, do you know what Morgan, that's - let's turn these things into a positive and look at that. Does that resonate with you at all?

MORGAN: Yeah, I think resilience is a really interesting word, because there's no - at least I haven't seen a set definition for it, and it's people working through their own environments and their own situations to come out on top, whatever that means for them. So, as I said earlier, there's no doubt that we do have a lot more barriers to face and there have been times, at university for example, or even trying to get access arrangements for the exam board, which as I said I had a lot of support with, but there are still - there's still an awareness that not everywhere is like PwC. You know, there are still lots of people, lots of organisations where there are red tape for getting through things. So with these barriers it does feel like a lot of the time you have to justify, not just your existence, but why you should be getting arrangements. And I have felt that a lot, especially since I had the ADHD diagnosis, but more so in school as well, when I was getting extra time at university, going through the DSA process as well. And as I said earlier I do feel that sometimes even though I'm having to put in double the work, I'll be in college with everybody else but then I'm also looking at whether this process went through, or whether this desk space adjustment went through, or when my next physiotherapy appointment is for my back and shoulder. There's a lot more going on around that we have to be able to manage as well. And I think that does - that can make or break. So there were times at least, when I when I first got my diagnosis, at least for ADHD, there was a part of me that almost felt a bit defeated, kind of "Why is this happening? Why do I have this? What do I do?" My mind just went blank there, because it's a genuine, you know, just what do you do? How do I manage this? Should I just kind of leave it, almost? It's a really sad thing to think, but when you're already in a really fast-paced environment, it's like, well why don't I just keep playing catch up, because that at least has got me this far, and I'm still here. But when it comes to that resilience, I think one of the things I was really keen to do is actually stand up for myself in that. Because if I'm not doing that, the company and the firm are not going to know what people in my position are going to need. And that does take a bit of a mental toll on you sometimes. I mentioned earlier about how I felt the firm had done some really good things for lifting the weight off my shoulders, in terms of if I talk to one person, whether it's like, my career coach or a manager or Occupational Health, they will do the work already because it's so connected. And I think it's just having had that, having had that resilience in in school and university, and having to do a lot of that for yourself, it is lovely having that at a firm, but it still doesn't take all the pressure off, and there is a lot of self worth and self-empowerment that you have to do to feel that, not only do I deserve to be here, but I can do a really good job of it as well. So I think it is, of course I think it's a transferable skill. I think that there's lots of skills that are transferable generally, but I do think the resilience is a key part. Because that's something which everybody's going to have a different perspective of. And actually one of the best pieces of advice that I was given is that you never know what anybody's going through. And I know that this is really true for hidden disabilities in particular. But just because my colleagues might not have ADHD or dyslexia, and they might not particularly understand exactly the barriers that I'm having to go through that may be different to what they have, because they don't have ADHD and dyslexia they don't have the same barriers as me, they might also have things going on. So I think everybody does have it, but it's a different level when it's disability, because it almost makes you feel like you're being questioned for who you are. So I've been trying to explain to people at work about my head, and sometimes - I will sometimes let people feel it. I don't like - don't touch, don't touch if it's not asked.

LUCY: Yeah. Yeah.

MORGAN: I know we spoke about this, and it was like, oh, especially with physical disabilities, some people go: "Oh, that's nice, I want to look at it." No no no no, you've got to wait for me to let you, but put your hand on my head and you can feel it for yourself kind of thing. But it's almost feeling that like, there is a place for that. And there's had to be a lot of resilience with that, because you know, I haven't had the same access to like, sports for example. When I had my back injury, and with the head operations as well, that was just one thing that I had to miss out on a bit more in school. But then, I know that coming into that there are other ways that I felt I've had to catch up, or other ways that I felt I've had to be in the situation, which I think is, you know, that is that is resilience for me in a nutshell. I don't think there's a set definition of it. But again you never know what anybody's really going through and at the end of the day you are all there. You've all gone through the process, you're all in the job, you're all in the firm, you're all valued, so it's making sure that you feel that. Because you are, but it's just being able to feel that as well. So there are a few times I've had to talk to different managers or different teams and go "Look, actually this isn't unnegotiable, I need this. I appreciate that not everybody else might need this, but I need it, and it's being able to stand up for yourself in that way. I think "stand up" is quite, it's kind of a standoffish word. There's a kind of empowering yourself in that scenario, and knowing what you need, which isn't always talked about in schools, because again the system's so regimented. So being able to have the confidence, I think, to speak up. It's interesting you mention maturity with that, because again I think that's different for everybody, but there is definitely an element of self-awareness that I've had to have. An understanding of "Okay, I do need this", or I know that if this happens, or if X happens it's going to make me feel like Y and that means I have to do Z. So I was working through this a lot when I was going through my OCD treatment. And there were ways and words and triggers that people would say, and that would make me react differently. And there's a lot of fear within that as well, so being able to have the the mental coping strategies and mechanisms to be able to process that, that does make, me at least, I feel that I understand myself better and I'm more resilient to how I approach situations and how I'm able to deal with anything. Change is a big thing, but dealing with any kind of change, whether that's, oh it's a different manager, or we've had to move this meeting around, or actually this client has changed this, or XYZ, it's being able to deal with that, but feel that it's in a proactive way, and feel that you're contributing as well. So there there's 2 parts, I think, for me, is feeling that I'm there, and feeling that I deserve to be there and that I'm empowered to do so, but then feeling that I also can thrive in it as well.

LUCY: Yeah, absolutely. And one of the things that we're aware of with our Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey we've done in the last year or so, is around if people ask for adjustments and push for stuff they're more likely to get it. And actually it's people like you Morgan, pushing for stuff that enables that to happen. I'm going to move on to Graeme quickly now. Graeme, very quickly, what piece of advice would you give to graduates who feel they're facing barriers in the workplace due to their disability?

GRAEME: Thanks Lucy. Just picking up on what you said there, actually. I think it really does vary on a case-by case basis, because as you sort of say, some staff are very comfortable talking about their disability, whereas, you know, understandably others are hesitant to do so. They don't want to feel judged, even though they should not feel judged, they may feel that they are being judged. I mean being PwC-specific, as we mentioned earlier there's lots of places we know that our staff can turn to to get help, but I think my biggest piece of advice would really be, you do need to speak up. Whether that, you know, it's finding the right person within your organisation to speak to, but it's definitely to speak up to get yourself the assistance that you require.

LUCY: Yeah, absolutely. I'm going to end it there, because we have run out of time. Thank you ever so much Graeme and Morgan for joining us today. I know PwC will have your LinkedIn channels and other things, we'll post that in with the text at the end of this podcast as well. So thank you so much for joining us, and we shall be back soon with another episode. Thank you and take care.

MORGAN AND GRAEME: Thank you.