

[00:00:00.00] ANTHONY SIS: The opinions expressed by the guests and contributors of this podcast are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cornell University or its employees.

[00:00:11.12] When you hear the words, "body size", what do you immediately think of? Weight, height, or both? On today's episode, we'll be exploring the topic of body size in a very intimate way. It is by far one of the most authentic and vulnerable shows we have ever done through this podcast. Toral and I will be joined by our very special guest, Mia Ferraina on today's show.

[00:00:33.50] My name is Anthony Sis.

[00:00:35.00] TORAL PATEL: My name is Toral Patel.

[00:00:36.35] ANTHONY SIS: And you're listening to the Inclusive Excellence Podcast.

[00:00:58.82] Thank you for joining me and Toral on another episode of the Inclusive Excellence podcast. Just so that our listeners know, I'm mostly speaking on this month's show in the intro specifically because Toral hasn't been feeling well. So Toral, as we start our intro always checking in with each other. How are you feeling now? Are you feeling any better?

[00:01:18.83] TORAL PATEL: I am. So as you said, I haven't been feeling well. So it's been about two weeks of sickness and so I'm finally over that. I've gotten my voice back. I lost it for a few days in the middle. But I think I'm finally on the mend.

[00:01:30.56] ANTHONY SIS: OK. That's good to know. That's good to hear.

[00:01:33.05] TORAL PATEL: So Anthony, how are you feeling today?

[00:01:34.88] ANTHONY SIS: All right. So we got some feedback that we always say that we're good.

[00:01:40.35] TORAL PATEL: Yeah, yeah.

[00:01:41.15] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah. So I'm going to try to switch it up and be a little bit more open and say that I'm doing all right.

[00:01:46.40] TORAL PATEL: OK.

[00:01:47.81] ANTHONY SIS: I'm doing all right. The snow is still here, the cold is still here. But I'm just here surviving, thriving, doing the podcast. So I'm doing all right though, I'm not good today. Just all right.

[00:02:02.00] So before we jump into our interview with Mia, I want to let you all know that this conversation was so insightful that we are actually splitting this specific show

into two episodes. So right now you'll be listening to the first half of the interview with the second half being published in two weeks on Wednesday, March 18th. So without further explanation, here's our interview with Mia.

[00:02:27.51] Mia, thank you so much for being with us today. Why don't you start by sharing with our listeners a little bit more about yourself in terms of what you do here at Cornell, where did you grow up, as well as the pronouns that you use.

[00:02:40.00] MIA FERRAINA: So my name is Mia. I work as a career coach down in Career Services next to the campus store. So I see students in all the different colleges, which is really cool. I grew up in different suburbs around Buffalo. I've been in New York state most of my life other than grad school. And I use she/her pronouns.

[00:02:56.97] And I guess maybe just for relevance of today's podcast topic, I think it helps since you can't see us or who we are, to just kind of say a little bit about who I am or what I look like in relevance to the topics today. So I'm only 5'0" foot tall, so that's definitely shorter than average for women. And I'm just about 200 pounds, so not what some people might call [infinifat](#), or big fat or medium fat, but plus size in some sense.

[00:03:26.22] ANTHONY SIS: Great. Well, thank you for sharing all of those things and we'll definitely disclose as well a little bit about ourselves so that the audience knows how we look like in terms of our size. So as usual, we have our question of the day. And Mia, I know you're very excited.

[00:03:38.85] MIA FERRAINA: I am.

[00:03:39.51] ANTHONY SIS: Because you've listened to a few episodes now. So you're excited for this question.

[00:03:42.97] MIA FERRAINA: Here from day one.

[00:03:44.22] ANTHONY SIS: Day one, I love it. Love all the supporters that come on this show. So I do have a question, are you ready?

[00:03:49.98] MIA FERRAINA: Ready.

[00:03:50.61] ANTHONY SIS: I think this is a good one. So I heard this on another podcast and I was like, I want to ask this question for us to answer. So should the workplace feel like a family, a sports team, a classroom, or something else?

[00:04:05.58] MIA FERRAINA: That's an awesome question, Anthony.

[00:04:07.09] ANTHONY SIS: I know. I heard it and I was like, you know what, I would love to answer that here on the podcast.

[00:04:11.82] TORAL PATEL: Mia, we're going to let you answer first.

[00:04:13.47] MIA FERRAINA: Oh, OK. I'm honored.

[00:04:14.65] ANTHONY SIS: Put you on the spot since you loved it.

[00:04:16.77] MIA FERRAINA: I would say I would like it to feel like a sports team. Maybe that's because I had a positive experience with sports generally. Because sports teams still get along most of the time. It's about collaborating for the greater good, which I think a staff or a team, an office team should feel.

[00:04:39.84] Whereas I feel like families have a lot more variation of drama, or people that get kind of like outcast, or things like that. So I don't know. In my mind it's like working towards a common goal, harmony most of the time. Still a little like bubbling of drama here and there, but mostly we're all working towards the same thing and everyone's included.

[00:05:03.36] ANTHONY SIS: Do you want to go, Toral?

[00:05:04.32] TORAL PATEL: Yeah, no. I think I would agree with that, definitely. That I like that there's an end goal that you're working towards as a group. It's very similar to a sports team. And then there are a couple people in that within that dynamic that you're closer to than others, which is very natural, similar to a sports team. So I would agree with you, Mia, that I believe that it definitely is like a sports team.

[00:05:23.80] It's so funny because until you said something, I've always thought family. I think when as soon as Anthony popped the question my first thought was oh, it needs to be like family. And then you explained your reasoning, and I was like, wait, no that's exactly how I feel. But maybe I've just called it a family and I really meant sports team.

[00:05:40.77] ANTHONY SIS: I think it's a challenging question for me to answer in that I don't know if there's a general kind of way to answer it for all workplace environments. So for example, I've worked in an identity based center with an identity that's very close to my own. I used to work at LGBTQ resource center.

[00:05:57.06] So I think the workplace culture in that kind of environment was much more familial because there was a personal investment in the work that I was doing, but also how related to my own personal life even outside of work. And so I think in that context it was hard sometimes to view it as a sports team when there was just so much personal and professional investment in that work.

[00:06:16.59] I think in this role though, I definitely see more of a sports team kind of dynamic. And so for me it's all about the dynamic, but also where you work. And so sometimes I think if you're working in an environment where your identity is also at play, directly or indirectly, I think there's more-- I don't know. I think it's a little bit more challenging to just generalize and say, every workplace should be like this, because it's depending on the work that you do in the workplace and the organizational piece to it too.

[00:06:43.92] Is it a nonprofit, is it a corporate? I think all those key things definitely play a role. So it can look different in those areas, like depending on your role and what type of organization you work in.

[00:06:53.91] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah, that makes sense.

[00:06:55.80] ANTHONY SIS: So to start this conversation, I wanted to give a little bit more detail than what we had already discussed about kind of where this topic is going why we're focusing on it. So Mia and I actually met through a body positivity group here that's facilitated through Cornell Health last September, October, roughly around when it started.

[00:07:15.19] So it was like a weekly lunch engagement and we got to talk about different things related to body size specifically, and weight and things like that how it's impacted us personally, professionally. And so it was just something that I just figured as a way to continue the conversation outside of that particular group, what better way to discuss it than through the podcast. And especially, I love the piece about focusing on body size in terms of height and weight.

[00:07:38.58] And so for me, in the spirit of vulnerability that Mia has already shared, I am about 5'9", 5'10", and I weigh about 190 pounds. And so technically, it's considered overweight, technically.

[00:07:50.70] MIA FERRAINA: Seriously? Wow. That's surprising to me.

[00:07:53.22] ANTHONY SIS: Technically it's overweight. But I think the assumption that people have when they see me, depending on who you ask, and I think culture definitely plays a role in this, sometimes people will be like, oh, you've got a little bigger, you've got a little chunky, or whatever. And then some people are just like, oh no, you look fine.

[00:08:07.98] So for me, I think my experience with this topic is very much kind of I'm in the gray area. Where sometimes, especially in terms of height, I think for me it's a privilege I recognize I have to be kind of "average" height or normal height, whatever that means, because everyone else in my family is shorter. So I'm the tallest. But in terms of weight, it's something that I've definitely always struggled with. Even things like body size.

[00:08:29.16] And Mia and I, we talked a lot about that in the body positivity group, is that it's just been a challenge. I'm not there. I'm not the perfect norm, whatever that is, but I'm also not on the far end of anything. I'm just kind of in this spectrum area, so to speak. And so I guess to start the conversation Mia, what was kind of the interest in you to want to continue this conversation through this podcast?

[00:08:53.64] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah. I mean, like I said I've listened to it for a while, but I also think that group was helpful for me just to kind of have that unity around body size

and body positivity in general. I think walking into that room the first day, I was surprised to see the range of people that were in the room. I think I was expecting to walk in and see a lot of people who are plus size or somewhere on the fat spectrum.

[00:09:21.88] And there was people of all shapes and sizes in that room. I remember being like, wow, OK. Maybe this kind of sucks that everybody in this room is here because they hate their body, but at least there's some unifying-- I don't know, it felt very reassuring to know that other people struggled with this even though it was a negative common experience.

[00:09:41.44] So I think it's something important to talk about, not only-- That group was really focused on our personal lives I think. And it's certainly-- being shorter and heavier affects me in my personal life in a lot of ways. But I think even just since I started at Cornell this past summer I've noticed some things on campus where I'm like, I wish this was different. Or oh, this is definitely here from a much further time past where maybe more people were "standard size". So yeah, I've noticed some things even just in the eight months I've been here.

[00:10:14.79] ANTHONY SIS: And if you don't mind me asking as a follow up, what are some of those things that you have noticed that really bring up this question about accessibility, particularly for different sizes.

[00:10:24.48] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah. And I think accessibility is the key word there. Because I think sometimes people view fat folks as complaining, of you did this to yourself. Or you're big because of-- it's a very blame oriented thing sometimes. When really oftentimes it's a matter of access. And I wouldn't compare it to someone in a wheelchair. I mean, they're different experiences. But it's like can I physically fit into and/or sit at, or be comfortable in that space.

[00:10:57.90] So I do like the fact that you use the word access there. I would say at Cornell a couple of different things that I've noticed, one especially because I work near Cafe Jenny in the campus store. I'm sure there are other chairs on campus that are like this, but I actually hate meeting in that cafe, even though it's super close to my office because the chairs are really narrow. And they have these very harsh arms on them that dig into the side of my legs and basically cut off my thighs and my hip.

[00:11:30.27] It just like, oozes out the side, and it's super uncomfortable. To the point where sometimes I have trouble focusing on the conversation I'm having. So even when people are like, oh, it's just a chair. But if you're sitting in that chair for an hour. I think something else I think about is Willard Straight. That traffic flow going in and out of Willard Straight, A, it's not necessarily an accessible entrance in general because of the stairs, but the doors are so narrow.

[00:12:01.01] There's so many people going in and out there that I feel like I have trouble getting in and out of that building without bumping into people or having to wait for someone to come in or out. And I can't imagine being someone larger than I am and

feeling that way about not only those doors, but like many other hallways and doorways around campus. So that's something I've been thinking about at this older campus with some more traditional old school wooden doors.

[00:12:29.78] So I would say those are probably the two big ones that I've noticed here at Cornell. I've had some other work related experiences. But definitely the chairs have been an issue for me. And I haven't been in as many classrooms here at Cornell, but those desks that have the chair and the desk attached to them.

[00:12:47.17] ANTHONY SIS: The fold, yeah.

[00:12:48.29] MIA FERRAINA: Either that fold or you literally just have to like squeeze yourself into the space. Again, I know I have trouble with those because my feet don't touch the floor. I have trouble with those because I have to like squeeze myself into it. And sometimes for me that desk is hitting me at my widest part rather than at my waist, because of my height. So it's kind of difficult there too.

[00:13:09.89] But I also know tall people who really struggle in those chair desk attached things. Or obviously people who are bigger than I am would also struggle with that.

[00:13:18.98] TORAL PATEL: So in full disclosure. So I am a little bit shorter than you at 4'11". It's not something I admit to often. I always say 5'0 feet.

[00:13:27.71] MIA FERRAINA: My license says 5'1", which is also a lie.

[00:13:30.65] TORAL PATEL: Yeah. So it just goes back to the history of things and how it impacts you. My weight is right now around like 160, 162. But again, being short, that is considered to be obese. And so one of the things that I had to have done for me at work, the same thing because my feet always hang, is I had to get one of those desks that go up and down.

[00:13:52.17] But not one that just sits on top of the desk, because then I'm constantly looking up. And when you're short, that's usually not the right way to do it. So I had to get one where the entire desk goes up and down. It's only way. And it actually sits about two inches below everybody else's desk. That's the only way my feet don't dangle and they're not swollen at the end of the day.

[00:14:10.05] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah. I got one of those little footstool things recently. I just found it in somebody else's closet in their office. I used to just-- this is so weird. I used to just put like a box lid, like a paper box lid under my desk because it was just that little bit enough that raised my feet up so they weren't dangling. Or sometimes I would make it so that I would slouch so that my feet wouldn't dangle, but that's not good either.

[00:14:35.76] ANTHONY SIS: It's not good for your back, right. If you're sitting for eight hours.

[00:14:38.87] MIA FERRAINA: I have turned my garbage over. It actually used to be the recycle bin. So I used my trash can but not my recycle bin. And I just put my feet on it.

[00:14:49.52] TORAL PATEL: Yeah, have you ever been judged solely based on your body size and not your knowledge, skills, or abilities?

[00:14:55.07] MIA FERRAINA: I guess it's hard to say solely because you don't necessarily ask that, or have a way to prove that that's the core of the issue. But I think being a shorter person, and you might have experienced this too Toral, is people confusing you for a student. People assuming that you're younger than you are, or just treating you like you don't know as much.

[00:15:15.96] I think it can be really discouraging to have someone talk to you in a condescending way. And you're going through this mental Rolodex of why. Like why are they talking to me like I don't know what I'm doing. Is it because I'm new? Is it because I'm young? Is it because they think I'm younger than I am?

[00:15:34.32] So just kind of-- it really detracts from A, the conversation, but also that relationship to be wondering why they're treating you that way. For me, that's probably more tied to my height than my weight. I think the weight piece is more like at office events that have food involved or something like that. Those are a little more uncomfortable I think.

[00:15:56.15] ANTHONY SIS: And having to navigate that. That's so interesting you mention that because I've never really thought about it in that context. But I'm always-- I am very self-conscious of what I eat in public because I don't like the feeling of being bloated. Especially if I'm in a work meeting, or even if it's like an informal meeting with colleagues after work, I get very self-conscious about eating food or feeling bloated because then I become self-conscious about my image.

[00:16:20.03] My body image and the perception if I get a little stomach that comes out. It's so interesting that you mention that because I never thought about it in this context around this conversation. But yeah, it's definitely for me just something that's hardwired that I haven't really sat down and processed like, why.

[00:16:37.58] MIA FERRAINA: A lot of internalized body shame.

[00:16:40.22] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah.

[00:16:40.91] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah. I mean, we all have it. Even people who are fat icons or promote fat positivity, they still will acknowledge those moments of like, oh man, I did this thing today and I didn't even realize that that's stemming from. So for me things like that are, oh, I'm trying to be good today. Or oh, today's my cheat day. Or I've been working out so I'm going to let myself have this like. That whole idea of bartering exercise and food, and what's good food or bad food. Those things I think can be really uncomfortable in these work settings where you're eating with other people.

[00:17:20.08] TORAL PATEL: And do you feel the need to justify it to the other individuals to say, oh, I worked out three hours yesterday so I'm going to have a cupcake today. Other people can just pick up a cupcake and eat it, but you feel this need to let them know why it's OK for you to eat that cupcake.

[00:17:34.93] MIA FERRAINA: I think sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Again, I think it's hard because it's so much part of our culture to talk about your goals or what you're working towards. I would never want to squash someone else being proud that they've been working out or keeping up a healthy routine, or something. But it is hard to hear other people say that and then feel like you can just exist and not have to explain yourself.

[00:18:02.80] I wouldn't say that I am of the size where I constantly feel the need to explain what I'm eating. I think I'm kind of in that borderline place where people aren't judging me as much as someone who's maybe like what they would call like super fat. So I don't feel that I need to justify. But when someone else says something, then I feel like I also have to justify what I'm doing.

[00:18:23.96] So it's hard. I want to be supportive, but also I don't want to have to justify myself.

[00:18:30.66] ANTHONY SIS: So in talking about body size and especially how it affects people here at work, I mean, we started already talking a little bit about it. But Mia, do you have any examples that you feel comfortable sharing that really stand out as kind of either really negative or just problematic experiences around perceptions of your body size?

[00:18:50.82] MIA FERRAINA: I mean, personally, one that really stands out for me, and this is literally sixth grade. This is years and years and years ago, but it's still something that quote verbatim sticks with me. Lots of examples but this one in particular, was this boy that I had a crush on. He was a baseball player, kind of like that traditional slim, tall physique. And I wanted him to be my boyfriend. Whatever that means in sixth grade, right.

[00:19:18.12] But I distinctly remember standing in the hallway at the Boys and Girls Club after school and him looking at me and saying, I can't date you. The boy is supposed to weigh more than the girl. Like point blank, sixth grade, said that flat out and. I will never, ever forget that. And I think it's impacted who I view myself as-- I don't know if capable is the right word. But who I'm to date. Able sounds really weird, but like who-- that rating scale that people use sometimes.

[00:19:51.75] ANTHONY SIS: Like who should desire. Who you see as a potential partner.

[00:19:55.41] MIA FERRAINA: Right. Are you pretty enough or desirable enough to be with that person. And it's definitely impacted the way I view myself, and honestly even



the people that I think I pursued after that, like once I was actually dating. know I tended to go for people who were larger than me or taller than me, or much more masculine presenting, because I was playing a rather masculine sport at the time and presenting a little bit more androgynous.

[00:20:28.62] I think that really impacted the way I viewed myself and potential partners.

[00:20:34.18] ANTHONY SIS: So for folks who don't know what androgyny is or means, it's folks who present both masculine and feminine characteristics in terms of their gender expression.

[00:20:42.97] MIA FERRAINA: So I think that one really stood out to me as something that I just never forget. But I think there are other relationship things now. I'm in a long term committed relationship now so that's not really something I think about as much. But when I think about dating profiles or even friendship profiles if you use things like that.

[00:21:05.88] ANTHONY SIS: Oh goodness, yes.

[00:21:07.02] MIA FERRAINA: They are so visually oriented. I think we talked about this maybe before Anthony, but that idea of where is the line between thick and fat? Thick being this kind of desirable term, and who gets to label you thick? Is that something you call yourself or something that other people call you?

[00:21:26.34] And even the idea of cat phishing. Like oh, you have a pretty face but you're actually fat. That whole dynamic is really, really strange.

[00:21:36.87] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah, like you said, where is the boundary for somebody who's thick and somebody who's fat. Like even the term thick, as positive as it may be, there's still limitations to it related to body size. And I think there is this whole movement now even from when I was younger, societally speaking, of bigger people not being more desirable. And so now where are people who are not as big or not as "thick". Like what does that even mean, A. But then also who are not as thick, where are they now along this spectrum of desirability?

[00:22:08.28] Which is strange in many ways. And I think the whole thing with dating profiles it's just so like-- Tinder is I guess the first one that started using the swipe right, swipe left, or whatever. I thought that was just so weird. It's just like you're just like literally just looking at somebody, looking at their stats.

[00:22:24.09] MIA FERRAINA: Judging them.

[00:22:24.66] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah, looking at their stats. Looking at their age, their weight, height, and using that as a determinant for whether or not you swipe left or right. For me the concept of it's just so weird. I don't even know the person but yet here I am judging them based off of these hard core statistics and numbers and I know nothing

about their personality. What happens if their personality just blows me out the park and I'm like, wow, they're amazing, regardless of that.

[00:22:48.55] But you need to know that information in order to meet them or have a conversation with them. It's so weird.

[00:22:54.09] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah I don't know if either of you have used Bumble BFF, but there's friendship part of Bumble that I also think is really strange. Because it's still, it's very picture focused and picture oriented. And I'm like, for me, I don't care what my friends look like. I just want to jibe with them. It doesn't matter to me. So it really surprised me how similar the friendship part of that app is too, to the dating part of it. It's very interesting.

[00:23:21.47] ANTHONY SIS: It's so strange.

[00:23:23.49] TORAL PATEL: So I want to go back to your example that you just shared earlier being in sixth grade and having somebody make that kind of a comment. Because I'm sure we all have-- and I distinctly remember my comment to this day. How do you overcome something like that and really accept who you are as an individual? Because to go through that in sixth grade, that impacts how you view yourself for not only the rest of your school days but also I think as an adult too.

[00:23:49.82] And so how have you overcome that to be here today where you are willing and open to talking about body size?

[00:23:58.97] MIA FERRAINA: Yeah. Well, I will say I haven't totally gotten over it anyways. I'm more comfortable talking about body size for a few different reasons. Some of those being solidarity. Definitely helps finding other people who are struggling with similar challenges. I think social media in a weird way is both good and bad for issues like this. Seeing people out there who are unapologetically fat and reclaiming that word. Seeing people who are different in lots of different ways related to their body, whether it's disability related or body size, or anything, I think can be empowering for others to see.

[00:24:40.34] While at the same time, there's also a lot of "picture perfect" bodies on social media that make you feel bad about yourself. So I wouldn't say that there's anything that really helped me overcome that. I think it's something I'm still struggling with. But it seems more maybe socially acceptable to talk about now. And honestly, living and working in Ithaca and at a college University setting, I think a lot more topics are on the table than in other settings too, so I think that's part of why I'm comfortable talking about it for myself and also maybe feel a little bit obligated to talk about it for the sake of students who might not be comfortable speaking about it from their own perspective.

[00:25:23.72] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah, definitely. We're talking about body size and there's so many-- there's the weight and the height aspect that we're talking about. But I

think there's also just a general acknowledgment. We're speaking about our own experiences, but that this also affects people who are thinner or might be really, really tall as you had mentioned, Mia.

[00:25:43.40] So there's a lot of articles that have been written about bias and the role of bias in terms of weight especially, and how people perceive people who are bigger to be lazier and less likely to get promotions and stuff. So from your own experience, from your experience in the workforce as a whole, have you ever encountered any type of bias based off of assumptions around your body size?

[00:26:05.99] MIA FERRAINA: I don't know that I faced bias in terms of not getting a promotion or something like that, but definitely the ability to fully engage in a experience I think has been impacted for me, and students that I've worked with. So just as an example, you've probably heard some kind of like team bonding ropes course type things that happen in different settings. And obviously, there's a lot of issues with that in terms of just ability in general.

[00:26:33.35] But body size as well. They're talking about pick this person up and put them over here, or balance out the weight of your team on this teeter totter. Or try to rearrange yourselves while standing on this really narrow pole. So a lot of those activities, regardless of whether you are "able-bodied", if you're big it's hard to do some of those things and can be really uncomfortable for that student as well as their team. It's like, do you acknowledge this, no pun intended, elephant in the room, that the student physically is not able to complete this activity or the discomfort around that.

[00:27:14.03] So aside from just uniforms and giveaway sizes, and just polos and that kind of stuff, I think while that is certainly an issue, I think the bigger thing for me is this is meant to be a unifying event and sometimes it is the least unifying thing for some people or some teams.

[00:27:33.26] ANTHONY SIS: And some people might enjoy it too. I think there's also that assumption that maybe it is going to serve a huge barrier. But some people who are bigger might also be like, yes, sign me up. So I think there's that understanding of I think just really getting to know your teams and who you're working with as you're putting things like events like team building activities together. And to just get as much input as possible and to really understand your team as a whole and not make any assumptions of well, they may not enjoy this.

[00:27:57.71] And it's like, well, have you asked them? Have you engaged a question with them or a conversation of the planning of that particular experience? And so I think about recently I went to Mexico and I went to this zip lining experience where there were people of varying different body sizes. And for some of the bigger folks they had an additional harness. But in no way was it-- like they were never treated like a barrier.

[00:28:19.70] Like we weren't like ah, they've got to add another harness so therefore it's going to extend it. No, it was just kind of like, OK, cool. We'll just add another

harness and call it a day. Like, that's just like a standard protocol, so I think just in terms of streamlining processes of just getting as much input as possible on your team, and really getting to know them without the assumption that people may not be able to do so or are uncomfortable doing so.

[00:28:42.17] MIA FERRAINA: Or if it's like a large group where you can't possibly ask everyone or you don't know them. If you're training a huge staff of RAs or something you're not going to know you plan something like that.

[00:28:53.36] TORAL PATEL: But it's also something about how you ask them. And so to approach you and say, the rest of the team wants to do this. How do you feel? That's not the right way to do it. So it's about the how is also just as important as actually asking the question, to me.

[00:29:08.33] MIA FERRAINA: Definitely.

[00:29:09.23] TORAL PATEL: Because you've already told them what you want to hear.

[00:29:11.15] MIA FERRAINA: Yes. There needs to be like a survey in advance or a question in advance, not like, we're planning this thing and you're an afterthought. It needs to be, we are trying to proactively seek input before we make a plan. And there needs to be a good alternative. It can't just be oh, I guess we won't do that. Because then everyone resents that person.

[00:29:33.74] ANTHONY SIS: Yeah. And I think and even in planning the alternatives it's just a good practice to do the plan beforehand and not during or after the fact. Because then at that point it's like they're seen as an afterthought. And then it becomes this whole issue of feeling like a nuisance, the entire team. So it's trying to be as proactive as possible for when those things happen, even if they don't, that way the whole team doesn't feel this disconnect in any way.

[00:29:58.73] And like you said, it's just kind of like, OK, we'll just accommodate or we'll do xyz thing for this group or this person. No constraints to the actual team dynamic or session itself.

[00:30:16.76] Wow. This has been a fascinating conversation with Mia, with Toral. So this now concludes part one of the episode. Be sure to stay tuned for part two coming out in a couple of weeks.

[00:30:30.10] TORAL PATEL: That's it for the first part of this show. If you like what you heard today. Be sure to subscribe and submit a review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or SoundCloud. It helps new listeners find Anthony and I as well as the show.

[00:30:42.39] Also, if you or a fellow colleague we'd like to be interviewed for an upcoming episode, please email us at [ie-academy@cornell.edu](mailto:ie-academy@cornell.edu) My name is Toral Patel.

Episode 18: Weighing In on Body Size, Part I  
Released on March 4, 2020

[00:30:53.28] ANTHONY SIS: My name is Anthony Sis. Thank you for listening to another episode of the Inclusive Excellence Podcast. Stay tuned for part two of this episode on March 18th, 2020.

[00:31:04.10] TORAL PATEL: This podcast is a production of the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity in collaboration with Cornell Broadcast Studio. A special shout out and thank you to Bert Odom-Reed, our sound engineer for making it sound wonderful each and every episode. Thanks Bert.