

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a pink patterned top, is smiling and holding a puppet named Karl. Karl is a brown puppet with black hair, wearing a red and black striped shirt. The scene is set outdoors in front of a building with glass doors. The text "Chats with Heidi and Karl" is written in a large, blue, curved font around the central image.

# Chats with Heidi and Karl

Disability Awareness Sessions for Primary School Children.  
YouTube clips with resources for questions and discussion starters

By Heidi Buckell

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**Be Clear**

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## Introductory Message

Hi I am Heidi

One of my ambitions in life, is to create greater disability awareness, especially for Primary school children. Prior to the pandemic, in addition to my paid job as Disability Champion in HR at Watford General Hospital, I visited schools to lead assemblies, which were very well received.

Obviously, when the pandemic hit, going into schools to talk to children about living with a disability was not possible, so I therefore recorded myself giving a talk which could be used for home schooling. This recording was seen by Rev. Austin Janes of The Church of the Resurrection ( the Church Behind the Chippy, based in Grovehill) who then asked me, if I would like to do some disability awareness work with him and his puppet called Karl. Like me, Austin (and Karl!) are very experienced with doing school assemblies and have several links with Primary schools in the Hemel Hempstead area.

I have therefore spent the last few months using the material which I cover in my talks to write 10 puppet scripts. This document is designed to be read by teachers and will provide an introduction to each episode, along with some suggested follow up questions. Obviously, depending on the age of your class you may need to reword the questions, but I hope they will help you to think of the type of questions which are relevant to each episode. You will also see that for some of the questions, I have put the answers in brackets so as a teacher you can easily see the point which I am trying to make. All of the episodes have subtitles (closed captions) if they do not appear automatically, or do not appear correctly then you will need to adjust your YouTube settings.

If there is a topic which is not covered which you would like to be covered, then please email me [Heidi@beawarebeclear.org](mailto:Heidi@beawarebeclear.org). and I will consider writing a new episode.

As mentioned above, I am experienced in leading school assemblies. If your school is based in Hertfordshire, then depending on the Coronavirus situation at the time, I would be very happy to visit your school. It may be that your children would like to meet me in person. Due to not being able to drive, I would need to ask for my taxi fares to be covered. If you are based further afield then I would be more than happy to speak via MS Teams or Zoom.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could take time to email me to let me know if you are using these resources. Any feedback on the content and how you are incorporating them into your school would also be welcome as I can use this feedback to encourage other schools to engage with this project

Best wishes

Heidi Buckell

## Episode 1 – Karl meeting Heidi for the first time (running time 04:01)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

When I meet people for the first time, there is often a barrier between me and the other person, episode 1 therefore deals with some of these misconceptions. Not wanting to shy away from the fact that children may laugh at my speech, the beginning of the episode shows Karl laughing at me but by the end of the episode Karl apologises to me.

When giving talks in person, I often ask people to cut up a digestive biscuit into four pieces, using a fork only. I find this is the best way to illustrate the frustration I can feel when my food is not really soft enough to be cut up, using a fork, but I still want to cut it up myself. Independence is very important to me. After completing this challenge I ask the audience to tell me how it they found this experience,. Answers have included, difficult, frustrating

It is also good when people then try to get the pieces of biscuit into their mouth, again using a fork only. This is great at illustrating how a knife helps to get the food onto the fork. As I cannot use a knife, I often end up ‘chasing’ the food around the plate!

If you decide to do this exercise with your class, then hopefully some of these comments will come out in the conversations, which you have afterwards

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 1</a>
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### Possible questions for follow up:

1. At the end of the episode, Karl apologised for laughing at Heidi’s speech and said that he had now got used to how Heidi spoke. Did you find it easier to understand Heidi’s speech as the episode went on?
2. Did you think that disabled people were able to enjoy things which everyone else can enjoy?
3. Can you remember what Heidi said Cerebral Palsy was **not**? (Clue – you cannot catch Cerebral Palsy) (*Answer = an illness*)
4. Do you think it will be easy or hard to cut up a biscuit with a fork only? What may be some of the challenges?

## Episode 2 - Karl learning that disability means doing things differently (running time 04.57)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

At the beginning of this episode, Karl tells me how he got on with cutting the biscuit up, with a fork only. Therefore, if you are going to suggest that your class do this exercise, I suggest you save watching episode 2 until after they have had a go at doing this.

In my experience, people can have the assumption that my disability stops me from going out. This episode challenges this perception giving real life examples – I am able to go out with friends for a

coffee. The main point which I want to get across is, I still enjoy going out but sometimes I need to do things differently, like using a straw.

At the end of the episode, Karl realises not everyone with Cerebral Palsy is the same, after Heidi explains that she does not need to use a wheel chair

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 2</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. Can you remember why Heidi carries a straw in a bag? (*Answer = some times when Heidi goes out for a coffee the coffee comes in a cup where the handle is quite small, hence Heidi finds it difficult to hold.*)
2. Before you watched the episode did you realise that sometimes disability just means you have to do things differently rather than not doing anything at all?
3. With help from an adult could you look up what the two words **Cerebral** and **Palsy** mean?

### Episode 3 – Karl learning what Cerebral Palsy means (running time 05.56)

#### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

At the beginning of the episode, Karl impresses Heidi by telling her that he has found out what Cerebral Palsy (CP) means. Cerebral relates to the brain and Palsy relates to movement. I then use the episode to explain how my CP was caused – while I was being born, the umbilical cord got caught around my neck, starving my brain of oxygen. The episode then covers questions which children have asked me in the past, with the last question focussing on how I always like people to ask me to repeat my speech rather than pretending that they have understood.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 3</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. Like Karl did, did you manage to find out what the words **Cerebral** and **Palsy** mean?
2. Although Cerebral Palsy can be caused in different ways – how was Heidi's Cerebral Palsy caused?
3. What would Heidi like people to do if they do not understand her speech? (*Answer – not to pretend that they have understood but to ask Heidi to repeat herself as many times as necessary*)

### Episode 4 - Karl learning about determination (running time 04.20)

#### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

I chose to record an episode focusing on determination as I know when I have visited schools in the past this has often been a value which is an important part of the PHSE curriculum. Also, me having so much determination is the reason why I am where I am today. Following one talk a teacher said

to her class 'If you only have a small amount of the determination that Heidi has, then you will go far.' I therefore hope that this episode will inspire your class to be determined.

I define determination as 'not giving up when things are difficult.' After explaining what determination is I then use examples of how I use determination in my daily life. For example, when walking and the fact that I need determination to live on my own.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 4</a>
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### Possible questions for follow up

1. What does determination mean? (either using your own words or from what you remember Heidi describing determination as)
2. Heidi told Karl three things which she needed determination for (making sure her speech is understood, walking around and living on her own.) What do you need determination for, either at school or at home?
3. Which word does Heidi **not** like to use? (A word which is opposite to the word determination) *(Answer – the word can't)*

### Episode 5 – Karl learning that it is ok not to be ok (running time – 04:52)

#### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

We thought this was an important subject to address, particularly due to the unsettling times, which we have all been living through. This episode begins with Karl feeling very low and Heidi giving him some tips to help him to cope with his negative emotions. The tips are from my own personal experience, which hopefully your class will be able to resonate with.

The main point that I would like the children to take away from this episode is that it is always good to talk through their problems. Other key take-away messages include trying to see the positives rather than only the negatives and the need to look after themselves.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 5</a>
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### Possible questions for follow up

1. Do you remember the first thing that Heidi suggests Karl does in order to help to stop his problem going round and round in his head? *(Answer – to talk with someone about how you are feeling)*
2. Being thankful for things, even the very small things, is important. Write 4 things which you are thankful for
3. If I am tired then things get on top of me more than when I am less tired. What was the final tip which Heidi gave Karl?

## Episode 6 - Karl learning about the importance of understanding difference (running time 04.25)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

The first point which I make in this episode, is how important it was for me to go to a mainstream school because I wanted to be amongst able bodied people. (Not wanting to be segregated.) Unfortunately, trying to integrate into a mainstream school was not always easy, the other children used to avoid sitting with me. One of the main take away messages from this episode would therefore be for children to get to know those who seem different from themselves. During the episode Heidi says to Karl **'If they spoke to me, they would have realised that I wasn't SO different to them. That I enjoyed to play the same games as they did.'** This is key to helping children to realise even if others seem different, it is often the case that they do have something in common.

In the episode I also use personal experience of when I was at school. I used to get people (the other children), thinking that it was not fair that I had a laptop to use in class when nobody else did. I explained that, if the children either asked me, or the teacher, why I had a laptop then I am sure that they would have been more understanding.

I hope that this episode will help encourage your class to talk about difference. This is especially important, as it is now more common for children with disabilities, to attend mainstream schools.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 6</a>
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### Possible questions for follow up

1. What difference would it have made to Heidi's time at school, if the other children took time to talk to her? (*Answer – the other children would have realised that Heidi enjoyed playing some of the same games which they did.*)
2. Was it right that Heidi had a laptop to use in class (*Answer – Yes. Heidi wasn't able to write as quickly as the other children but she still knew the answers!*)
3. I think when I was at school the other children probably thought it was strange that I was not doing the same PE as they were. They may have even thought I was not doing PE at all. Can you remember what I was doing, when they were doing PE? (*My exercises which I needed to do to help me with my movements*)

## Episode 7 - Karl learning the importance of friendships (running time 04:09)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

Like all episodes this one *is* stand-alone, but it does follow on nicely from episode six. Episode six was based on my experiences when I was at Primary school, whereas this episode is based on my experiences at Secondary school. At Secondary school I made a very good friend who was patient in terms of waiting for me rather than simply rushing to be one of the first in the playground! Being patient is a small thing which all children, regardless of age, can do to make people feel more included. Therefore, it is my hope that after watching this episode, your class learns the importance of being patient with people who are different to them.

Near the end of the episode Karl says ***'I suppose I see you as a person. Even though you have Cerebral Palsy you can still do things which I enjoy doing.'*** This is the overarching objective of all of the episodes, for children to learn that I am a person, who happens to have a disability rather than simply seeing me as being disabled.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 7</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. What did Heidi's friend do, to help Heidi not to feel on her own when she was walking around the school? *(Answer she walked with Heidi - not rushing off)*
2. What could you do, when you are in the playground, if you see someone on their own? *(Answer – go and talk with them, ask if they want to join in with you and your friends.)*
3. Now that Karl has got to know Heidi what does he see first – Heidi as a person or Heidi's Cerebral Palsy?

### Episode 8 - Karl learning about Heidi's work and also about invisible disabilities (running time 04:52)

#### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

Determination is the opening theme of this episode as Heidi explains to Karl that she needed determination to be able to find a job. (According to the Labour Force Survey 2019-20 Disabled people are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people.) The episode then goes on to explore broader issues – people other than doctors and nurses work in hospitals and unlike my disability, not all disabilities are visible. Some people have hidden disabilities. As part of my job at West Herts Trust, I want to raise the awareness of the Sunflower lanyard which people can wear to let others know that they have a hidden disability. I would also like to raise awareness of the Sunflower scheme amongst children, as it is used in all spheres of life, not just in employment.

I used this episode to mention my Be Aware Be Clear project and my website which is [www.beawarebeclear.org](http://www.beawarebeclear.org) This website is designed for adults and gives more information on Be Aware Be Clear, as well as being the place where people can find my blog. Although it is designed for adults, if children did want to look at it and show it to their parents, then they would be most welcome!

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 8</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. Do you remember why Heidi said it was difficult to get a job and therefore why she needed determination? *(Answer – People not thinking that she is capable of working (one of the reasons could be due to her speech))*
2. Heidi mentioned that some people have disabilities which you cannot see, what were the two disabilities which Heidi spoke about? *(Answer – Hearing loss and Sight loss)*

3. If you see someone wearing a sunflower lanyard, or badge, why do you think the person wants you know that they have this type of disability? (*Answer –So that you are aware they you need to be understanding and patient towards them*)

## Episode 9 - Karl asking Heidi questions about the day to day challenges she faces (running time 05:27)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

I included this episode in order to address questions, which children have asked me in the past, but which I have not managed to weave into previous episodes. The answer to the first question, that everything I do requires a lot of effort, is crucial to people having a greater understanding of my life. Not being able to speak clearly, or walk as well as other people, are obvious other difficult aspects of living with a disability, but the amount of effort I need is unseen I therefore chose to mention this one. I address other questions such as, will my Cerebral Palsy get worse as I get older? Can I drive a car? The final question was a very profound one, which I was asked once. If there was a way in which my disability could be cured, would I want to be cured? If after watching this episode the children have their own questions which they would like to ask me then please feel free to email me [heidi@beawarebeclear.org](mailto:heidi@beawarebeclear.org) As I said in my introductory message, I am happy to visit you in person if you are based in Hertfordshire, or I can meet you via MS Teams/Zoom if you are further-a-field.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 9</a>
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### Possible questions for follow up

1. What do you think are the things which Heidi needs to put effort into? (*Answer – the short answer would be ‘everything’ but if the children can list a couple of things, for example, walking, talking, getting dressed, shopping... then this would be great.*)
2. Does Heidi need help with everything and therefore needs a carer? (*Answer – No, Heidi can do a lot for herself but there are practical things which she sometimes needs help with, for example, cooking, shopping and cleaning.*)
3. Why did Heidi say that she would not want to take medication, even if it made her Cerebral Palsy disappear forever? (*Answer – Heidi can still enjoy life and she can ‘use’ her disability in order to make other people understand*)

## Episode 10 – Karl introducing Heidi to his friend Bert (running time 05:22)

### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

I was very grateful to Rev Austin Janes who introduced me to another puppeteer and his puppet Bert. The main point that I wanted to make in this episode is that my friends come to see me as a person who happens to have a disability, rather than seeing my disability first and foremost, Although this was covered at the end of episode 7, which looked at the friendships, I wanted to reinforce this message. Bert was surprised that Karl had not told him about Heidi’s Cerebral palsy but rather he had told him about all the exciting things which Heidi and he gets up to. I hope by the

time your class have watched all 10 episodes they will also want to share what they now understand about disability. Equally, as a teacher please do let your friends/colleagues know about the work which Rev Austin Janes and I have done. Be Aware Be Clear relies on word of mouth!

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 10</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. Karl corrected Bert when he said that Heidi does not talk properly, can you remember what word Karl used instead, to describe Heidi's speech? (*Answer – Heidi talks differently.*)
2. Were you surprised that Heidi has been on an activity holiday?
3. Why did Karl forget to tell Bert that Heidi had a disability? (*Answer – Karl has spent time getting to know Heidi as a person*)

### Episode 11 – Bonus episode Heidi talking to Karl about her Christian Faith (running time 05:32)

#### Introduction to the Episode and YouTube Link

My Christian faith is very important to me as it gave me an answer to the 'why' question – why am I disabled? Realising that God allowed me to be disabled in order to help to educate other people gave me the motivation to try and live life to the full and to educate people while doing so. I make reference to two stories in the bible, 1 Corinthians 12 v 12 - One body but many parts and the story in Luke chapter 14 v15 – The parable of the great feast. I chose to talk about these two stories as they both speak about inclusion. This episode then ends in prayer and Karl making the point that God must be the one person who always understands my speech. God is indeed the only person who ALWAYS understands my speech.

YouTube Link	<a href="#">Episode 11</a>
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#### Possible questions for follow up

1. Why does Heidi think that God allowed her to be disabled? (*Answer – to help other people to understand about disability.*)
2. God gives us all different gifts, serving teas and coffees is definitely not Heidi's gift! Can you remember what Heidi said that she is able to do which some people, in her church can't do? (*Answer – work the church's computer*)
3. Who is the one person who **always** understands Heidi's speech? (*Answer – God*)

## Appendix 1 YouTube links to all episodes

Episode 1 – Karl meeting Heidi for the first time <https://youtu.be/NF-4VahSDnY>

Episode 2 – Karl learning disability means doing things differently <https://youtu.be/eTdbOO1-5jg>

Episode 3 – Karl learning what Cerebral Palsy means <https://youtu.be/ucbyqg66SFc>

Episode 4 – Karl learning about determination <https://youtu.be/q9YzOM4dHKg>

Episode 5 - Karl learning that it is ok not to be ok <https://youtu.be/0MQVuNcRrT8>

Episode 6 - Karl learning about the importance of understanding difference  
[https://youtu.be/NUO\\_VXzmLro](https://youtu.be/NUO_VXzmLro)

Episode 7 - Karl learning the importance of friendships <https://youtu.be/x942lQGRym8>

Episode 8 - Karl learning about Heidi's work in a hospital and hidden disabilities  
<https://youtu.be/BY5mlk6klfk>

Episode 9 - Karl asking Heidi questions about the day to day challenges she faces  
<https://youtu.be/6ijQvypC2cl>

Episode 10 - Karl introducing Heidi to his friend Burt <https://youtu.be/8USPQkQn7vw>

Episode 11 – Bonus episode Heidi talking to Karl about her Christian Faith  
<https://youtu.be/KlCdewvCDGc>

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