

Module 2: Interview with Tanya

[00:00:12] **Alison Baskerville** Welcome to our first Q&A for this course. I'm really delighted to introduce Tanya Warnakulasuriya. She is based in Sri Lanka, she's a media professional and has had extensive experience working with journalists over the past few years. And we've invited Tanya along to talk to us a little bit more about some of those issues that we talked about in the first video around our travel safety and also location security.

[00:00:43] **Alison Baskerville** It's important to get someone's lived experience of doing the work as well as teaching, because it helps us to relate it to our own personal experience. Because I know many of you joining this course are from lots of different backgrounds and lots of different reporting experiences. So thank you, Tanya, for coming along and speaking to us today. Could you tell us a little bit about what you've been up to over the last few years in relation to your work with journalists?

[00:01:14] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yes, sure. So I've been working with journalists in the news and current affairs arena for a good 20 years now, over 20 years. For a lot of the international organisations, many in the U.K., but also in Australia and in the US. And it's breaking news and also sort of planned event news on the production side and on the management side. So deployment of journalists, looking at safety, looking at risk assessments. I started in finance, but then went on to the operational side and then to the news management.

[00:01:59] **Alison Baskerville** Great stuff. And we talk quite a bit in the training about a lot of preparation that we need to do before we actually go on assignment or go into more challenging environments. But when you're thinking about travel to assignments and meetings, what are some of the top tips that you can share with us?

[00:02:22] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Well, I think, first of all, I would look at the trouble in terms of three sections. So before you travel, whilst you're travelling and then after you travel, after you've got to your destination. And, you know, every good journalist knows, when they're writing an assignment or doing coverage, they all know the sort of the what, when, where, how, who and why.

[00:02:47] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** And I think you basically apply that to your travel. So you look at why you're travelling, why are you going to this destination? You think with the end in mind and you look at what you need to take. So when I'm travelling, when I'm planning to travel, I travel as light as possible. For years I have travelled with -- if I can just get everything into a rucksack, a laptop rucksack, that's good enough for me. And I will pretty much live off of that laptop rucksack, I have it here. If I need to travel for longer, I will have a small pulley. So I try to keep my hands as free as possible.

[00:03:32] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** So stuff on the back, stuff being pulled on wheels so that I'm quite mobile and that's really important. And then also think about when -- are you travelling in the daytime? Are you travelling in the night-time? What about the climate and the seasonal side of things? Things can get very cold, things can be very hot.

[00:03:54] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** And how and who -- so are you travelling in a team? Do you have to think about, I mean, teams sometimes you ease up, don't you, on thinking about your safety because you've got a group with you. But equally, you may, depending on when you're leading a team or you're responsible for less experienced colleagues,

actually that might be more pressure on you to think about the safety of others as well as yourself.

[00:04:22] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** So for what, when, why and then how you sort of think about the mode of transport. So if you're in a plane, once you're in that tube up in the sky, there's not a lot you can do. But think about trains and buses. Who's around you? Who are you sitting next to? Is there a spare seat with something that looks savoury as opposed to unsavoury? Are you in a crowded carriage or even a lonely, empty carriage?

[00:04:59] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Think about all of these things, rely on your instincts. And when something feels uncomfortable, really, really do listen to that. So there's a sort of the planning side of it. And then there's the whilst you're actually in the travel. I'm amazed at how many men and women will bury themselves in the phone or start doing emails or something.

[00:05:25] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** And sometimes that's fine, you know, if you're in a plane, you can't go anywhere. There's not a lot you can do that. But in other times, you know, when you're on a bus or when you're in a train, you should really be keeping aware of who's around you and what they're doing and just being mindful of your environment as much as possible.

[00:05:43] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** And then when you get to the other end, there still might be some sort of procedures that you follow. I mean, if I'm going to an airport that I don't know, I would have researched the airport to know if there's an ATM that I can immediately get some money out of. Where is there a taxi rank? Is it safe to take taxis for that taxi rank? Is there someone picking me up?

[00:06:05] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** So once you've reached your destination, there is still things that you can follow. And think about what you wear, you know, being comfortable. I know a lot of inexperienced people on their first assignments will sort of, you know, dress to be quite smart or, you know, especially here in Sri Lanka, sometimes dress very nicely because that thing of going on a trip is fun, and it is fun.

[00:06:35] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** But if you're going into somewhere that might be little dangerous or might be a little difficult to travel in, wear sensible shoes, not high heels, not jewellery, not things that, you know, if they went missing, things of sentimental value. Don't wear those, don't take those travelling with you, and just being as comfortable as possible in your environment.

[00:07:04] **Alison Baskerville** That's great, and it's good that you brought up our overall awareness, because in the teaching session, the one before this, we talk about situational awareness and the barriers to that awareness.

[00:07:20] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah.

[00:07:22] **Alison Baskerville** Especially with phones and laptops and things like that. And actually, if you're working as a videographer or a photojournalist, you're also, as soon as you put that camera up to your face, limiting your audience. Yeah, so teamwork is really helpful because they could be your back watcher if you don't have a back watcher there. So they can be those kind of eyes and ears for when you are limited to what's going on around you. As the risk escalates as well, that becomes more and more important.

[00:07:53] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Absolutely.

[00:07:53] **Alison Baskerville** And I think when we travel to places, we can desensitise a bit. And, you know, when we're going somewhere, we're probably a little bit more aware. We might be going to a new place, we might be at the start of the assignment so we're less tired. And obviously, you mentioned about afterwards, and that's kind of sometimes when things happen because we let our guard down, we're a bit exhausted, you know, we're almost home. And, you know, and the things you talked about there around travel is the same when you're leaving as well, to have that awareness.

[00:08:33] **Alison Baskerville** In the first module we talked about planning and researching, and travel is like a big part of that, as well as looking at threats and then, you know, putting those into risk assessments. But are there any sort of planning tools that have helped you to make good decisions about your personal safety, anything you want to share with us?

[00:08:54] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** I think the risk assessment log as a planning tool is really good. And, you know, I think when I first started it, it was just sort of a form-filling thing. And I was like, you know, well I don't know all the risks, you can't possibly think of all the risks. And, you know, la la la, just fill it out. It might rain, or what would be the worst thing that could happen, you know, the car doesn't start? You just fill it out.

[00:09:19] But I have to say, you know, over the years, it is incredibly important. When I have given scenarios of the possible risks that will happen, especially when you're doing it with a team, I would recommend that you do it if you are on an assignment with a team, because just as you said, as in with the cameraman, you know, their perspective will be different because of that. They're looking through a lens.

[00:09:47] So when you all come together and assess the risk of an assignment, you really do see how you are only seeing one perspective of it and everyone else, depending on their job role, will see it from an entirely different perspective. So you have better coverage of looking at all the different risks you can come across. And it is that brainstorming and that sort of collaboration of insights that can make it a really robust working document.

[00:10:16] And just the fact that you've paid mind to it before you start is brilliant, because when those things do pop up, you know, you do know what to do. You're aware of them and you've sort of planted the seeds in all of your heads, and that's really important. So I think that the risk assessment log is, you know, I'm a convert, so it's a good thing. And then the other thing, of course, which is invaluable is a team contact list. The people that, you know, are the next of kins, all the people that you need to contact, people back in the office that you need to contact to just notify and make sure that you're safe.

[00:11:01] And that is one thing, actually, going back to your earlier question about that post-travel thing of just notifying someone that you've got where you've got to, because we forget that because we're tired and sometimes don't do it. So that contact is very important, and having it, I always have it on a notepad. I'm a dinosaur, so you know, pen and pad still go wherever I go. The phone goes, the tablet goes, but the pen and pad always go, because invariably if those things conk out or I don't have coverage or I haven't charged the phone, I still have the contact details on the paper.

[00:11:41] **Alison Baskerville** Absolutely. And it's much easier to break a phone than it is to break a notepad. I even went to the stage of, like, laminating my contact list and it used

to go in my press card in like a wallet thing. I've always worn it sort of underneath my underwear, like not underwear. But underneath, sometimes I'd just put it in my sports bra that way, depending on where I was working, if there was a threat being a photographer in a certain environment, anything that involves me working for the media, I would still have it really close to me but not visible.

[00:12:22] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah.

[00:12:23] **Alison Baskerville** And so I just wanted to, we've touched on a couple of times now about working with a team and that's really dependent on so many different factors, budget being one of them, resources with your staff or freelance. But invariably, we can't succeed in the work that we do on our own, and especially when it comes to our safety. And often in the past, the people that we work alongside, local fixers, other journalists, drivers, those sort of people have not been well represented, I don't think, when it comes to their personal safety.

[00:13:00] **Alison Baskerville** And yet, they are obviously putting themselves at risk to work with you. And I think the dynamic of news gathering is changing for the better with people in country doing stories now instead of it being kind of the idea of international in and, you know, and doing the story. So I wanted to ask about whether you've worked with drivers and translators and what tips you've got to share to make sure that you work safely as a team. What can you do to make sure they're included in your safety? Like what sort of advice would you give?

[00:13:40] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** I think the first thing to do is, as quickly as possible and as deeply as possible, to build a relationship and a rapport with them. That's not always easy if it's just a sort of a very quick assignment. But, you know, we're in the communication industry, right? So if we can't communicate with the people that we're working with, then we shouldn't be in the industry. It is very important that they're the ones who, as you said, are key. They're the ones that are going to get you in as close as possible to the story.

[00:14:14] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** So understand their motives for being there, understand why they're there, understand the job role that they have to do. Sometimes as a woman, and the culture sometimes depending on where you are, sometimes if it's a guy, they may feel that they know better or they know how to do it or they know what you need and they might not. So they may say or they may think, you know, I want this gig, I want this job. So I'm going to say, yes, I can do something when I can't really do it. I do know how to get to that destination, I do know the best route and they might not know the best route.

[00:15:03] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** So don't always rely on them. It's got to be a sort of a two way thing. Keep asking questions, keep trying to sort of understand that things potentially might get lost in translation. And I don't mean in language translation, I mean in cultural translation as well, in gender translation as well. So just keep trying to read between the lines, find out about what do they do outside of this work?

[00:15:28] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Do they have a family? If they're a driver, have they just been on a shift before your shift? Because if they have and they're tired, and you're driving somewhere when you're doing a night thing, you know, how awake or how able to do that? Have they ever worked with news teams before or on coverage like this before?

Because if they have, they have the experience of knowing how you guys operate. If they haven't, this is entirely new for them.

[00:15:59] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** It's not like just ordinarily driving members of the public around. I mean, I picked that up quite quickly when I was here helping with production on the terrorist attack here in Sri Lanka. And so I organised the drivers and there were some who had worked with with teams before, some completely fresh. So they don't know how long you're going to be on the job. They don't know that there's a lot of sitting around and waiting.

[00:16:26] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Some of them have never been out of Colombo, and this is taking them to places which they -- it's not just going on a day trip or a pleasure trip with tourists. This is an entirely different form of coverage. So really get to kind of build that knowledge and grow with them and understand that their motivations for doing it and what they are there.

[00:16:48] **Alison Baskerville** Yeah, I think that's really key to any team cohesion is communication, isn't it? And not seeing people as an add-on or an additional thing. They're actually are completely a part of your safety, because if your driver doesn't know where he or she is meant to be, when you're reporting on a protest and you haven't had that conversation, then things can get very confusing very quickly. Like they've gone home because they dropped you off and you didn't ask them to wait.

[00:17:23] So many, in my experience, has been the simple things that have got people into a mess because there's just, you know, that simple communication and also knowing that they've been driving for eight hours. They shouldn't have been doing that, have you made sure they know to stop for food? Because sometimes you'll do an interview, and invite the driver in to join you, but they won't want to, sometimes they actually want a bit of space from you because they've been with you all the time and they just want to have a bit of a phone call with their mate or something.

[00:17:57] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Exactly, they're sick of the sight of you.

[00:17:59] **Alison Baskerville** Yeah, if you want to eat your food or hang out with the mates. So, you know.

[00:18:05] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah. And, you know, I've had instances where fixers have said, "Oh yes, yes, I'll take you, you know, we'll go here." And then you find that actually that person is not very popular there, or there's been some personal issue that they're going through and fight's breaking out. It's turned very hostile very quickly, so you just have to kind of judge those things and be aware of them.

[00:18:35] **Alison Baskerville** It's amazing when, often the way that we find out about drivers and perhaps fixers or people who enable us to do our work history or the journalist or through our networks that we have, it's always really helpful to have more than sort of like small talk conversations with fixers, because you find out so much about their background, what they were doing, their kind of work, if you find out that you can do loads more, they end up being like your producer, you know.

[00:19:06] **Alison Baskerville** It's about having equity with them, really, and making sure that they're resourced properly, that they're paid properly, that if you're carrying medical kit and they don't have any, try and get some medical equipment for them as well. And, you

know, if you work in a really hostile environment where you need ballistic armour, what about your driver? What about your fixer?

[00:19:33] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:19:35] **Alison Baskerville** It's no good you're kind of rocking up looking like a ninja turtle with all your helmet, body, armour, face mask on and you driver's sat there with just a pair of shorts on. You know, they are a part of the team when you start to work with them.

[00:19:48] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah. And you know, you're only as safe as the weakest link in your team. And if, like you said, your driver is exposed or your fixer, then that impacts on the rest of you as well. You have to think collectively when you're in a team.

[00:20:10] **Alison Baskerville** And I suppose this leads on to the next question as well, about, I think with people who work on a similar story over and over again, and I include myself in this, you can get a bit risk habituation where you almost switch off to the risk, actually, because you've gotten used to it. And in our risk assessment, we lay out our plans for our contingencies and our contingencies are like our worst case scenario, not our best case scenario.

[00:20:43] **Alison Baskerville** But what advice would you give to journalists who have been working on familiar stories over an extended period of time in relation to their safety? What are some of the things that you can do to remind yourself to kind of check back in again?

[00:20:55] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah, I mean, I think it's exactly what you said. You just become a little numb to taking those practical steps and putting your safety first. You sort of desensitise to it. And I think I mean, I think we call it going native, sometimes, that everything becomes familiar and so you relax. But I think it's really important that at that point to sort of take yourself away from the story a little bit, distance yourself, get a bit of that distance, try and come back to it with fresh eyes and try and come back to it with sort of a more open mind or see it from a different perspective.

[00:21:45] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** You know, that familiarity, it's constantly changing, even those stories in environments that you're going into regularly. The stories are constantly changing, they're dynamic things, you know, they have a life of their own. So potentially sort of talking to new people and different people in that environment also gives you different perspectives. Just trying to see it from lots of different angles as much as possible, I think is the most important thing.

[00:22:18] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** And also finding out sort of how you're being perceived. You know, you may think that are very familiarized -- coming into Sri Lanka, I think, you know, "Well I'm Sri Lankan and, you know, I should just be able to blend in." And I don't. What I'm actually hearing from other people is that people think I'm foreign. They don't see me as a Sri Lankan. I don't dress like it, so I'm not seen as how I thought of I was seen, you know?

[00:22:44] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Just because I have Sri Lankan heritage, doesn't mean that the people here, locals, necessarily see me as that. So try and get, you know,

sort of an objective view of how you're perceived by other people, and I think that will really show you just how familiar or unfamiliar you are to them.

[00:23:05] **Alison Baskerville** That's really important, isn't it, the nuance of perception around your identity as well as that often in this world of foreign journalism is centred on mainly white reporters, and actually, if you're like yourself, raised in South London and then travelling to Sri Lanka, you necessarily will be seen as an outsider, right? And I know from other Black journalists that I've spoken to who have travelled to a country in Africa have been treated differently because they know, right?

[00:23:44] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Absolutely.

[00:23:46] **Alison Baskerville** This is the kind of the thing that we need to keep a perspective on, is how we are perceived in all our intersections of identity, because they do impact on our safety and there's an intersection that's particularly important to this course, and that's the safety of women and particularly women journalists. I wondered if there's anything you'd like to share about that, when it comes to location and travel safety, are there any sort of top tips or advice to share with some of the people who are taking part in this course who do identify as women.

[00:24:28] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah, so there's a few things, actually. I mean, I think for women, it's sort of walking this tightrope between blending and boundaries, OK? So, on one end you want to blend with the environment so that you're not sort of a target and sticking out like a sore thumb. But at the other end, you also want to be able to stand your ground, have your presence maintained and not encroached on and have your boundaries clear so that people don't step over those boundaries. So it's that sort of dance between those two, blending and boundaries, really.

[00:25:13] Know your presence. I mean, I'm amazed, definitely in Sri Lanka and Asian countries, just how small women make themselves. Sometimes when I'm training students, they'll to sort of come in and sit and they perch and shrink. And you'll see the guys come in, and they spread out over two or three chairs. So own your space, whatever your space is, just own it and and breathe into your space so that you almost have this imaginary bubble around you.

[00:25:48] And I guarantee you, try it, go into a busy shopping centre or something and just breathe that space and then walk and you can see people will part because you're owning that space around you and you're aware of it. You don't stop just where body is, there's space beyond that. And don't let someone step into it. Your voice, use your voice, use the tone of your voice. I think there was someone who was in the FBI, he used to say I think it's five, 57, and 38. It's a percentage of what comes out of your mouth, as in the language, is not listened to half as much as your body language and the tone of your voice.

[00:26:36] So think about how you use that tone to speak up, speak out and just be really confident in the way you speak. It does sound really silly and a bit nath at first. But you just have to keep doing it, and the more you do it and the more confident you speak, the more empowered you feel as result of that. So your visibility, your voice and the space around you I think is very important.

[00:27:04] And the other thing that I've always found really helpful -- if you do find yourself in trouble, sort of looking to people for help or being afraid and hoping and praying that

someone will step in, sometimes people will justify in their heads why they didn't intervene or help. And they'll say, oh, I just thought it was I just thought it was a marital spat between two lovers or I just thought it was just a personal argument between, I didn't realise something's going on.

[00:27:37] When, actually, if you demand, if you give someone a very specific directive like, "Excuse me, can you come and help me? I'm being bothered." "Um, excuse me, can you come and help me? This guy's saying things to me, or can I switch seats with you? Do you mind if I sit with you because I'm being bothered." People will help. They'll be more than happy to help. So give people clear directives, tell them what it is you want and get them to do it for you. And I think that's something that I've learnt over the years that really works. So, yeah, I those are my main things.

[00:28:13] **Alison Baskerville** That's really interesting because I think the appearance as well and the perspective that people have of you, this walking tall, shoulders back, head up, is as a signal even if you're absolutely terrified inside, is that don't mess with me.

[00:28:33] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yeah.

[00:28:35] **Alison Baskerville** It's like something that you're sharing about yourself, rather than submitting, being more timid. Because your body is sort of like signalling how you might feel inside, which is perfectly legitimate, right? We're all absolutely worried about something internally. But in the in the first session, we talk about what I call a circle of safety and people getting into your personal space. That invisible line like arm's length is kind of your space, really, isn't it? So, yes, you need to protect that.

[00:29:08] **Alison Baskerville** And I think what's also really good to hear about is often when we talk about safety relating to women, there's so many judgemental terms that we hear around us being victims of something, to almost change the way we are to be able to protect ourselves, which is not what we want to be doing. When we talk about clothing in relation to safety, it's about how you usable it is, how functional it is, how sturdy it is so you can, deal with rubble, debris.

[00:29:48] Kick up your knees and your legs, clothes that aren't made of polyester, so they'll stick if they burn, you know, in a protest. And that's what we're trying to help get out of this mindset about how we appear in the sense of how we dress or how we look. But more about our behaviour, our attitude, how we feel about ourselves can actually give good signals to people to leave us alone. And also that advocating for yourself, saying to somebody, I need some help over here, or back off or leave me alone.

[00:30:21] Use your voice, really important. And in the next module, we're going to talk about being an active bystander. When you do see it happening to someone who is too scared to say something, but you have probably got the resources to say, right, I'm going to step up for this person or, you know, distract them.

[00:30:44] And I think what I also sort of like to ask as well is, we've got this idea and it sort of does tie in to sort of being an active bystander, but this course is also for allies to women journalists. And we often talk a lot about what we can do as women and as people in the LGBTQ community who will often have to advocate for themselves in many occasions. But what can people who are supportive of us do to help around safety for us?

[00:31:24] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** I think having that conversation is very important. I'm not generalising, but what works in terms of empowering a woman's safety for one woman doesn't necessarily work for empowering women's safety for another woman. We all different, we come in all shapes and sizes. And we, in terms of our internal safety standards and what we feel we can safely do ourselves or what we need assistance with, varies for us to ask. Ask us and find out.

[00:32:00] I think it's a case of, you know, with all these things, sort of the disempowerment or the lack of people doing things comes from a standpoint of ignorance, really, and people being unsure what to do and a bit uncomfortable as whether they're overstepping the mark or whether by stepping in and helping, they might be disempowering us in some way or because we are strong.

[00:32:27] And so the only way you find that stuff out is by asking, you know, and I think women are very open to being asked, anyone or any gender, really, of just asking what it is that I can do to make you feel safe or if you need me for something, tell me what it is you need. And knowing that you have that person there as an ally that you can count on.

[00:32:55] **Alison Baskerville** Yeah, that's great. Just even asking somebody, saying something specifically, I need to know what's going to affect your safety that might not affect mine so I can support you. But also, there's Google.

[00:33:11] Yes.

[00:33:11] Google things. I know if you see some pronouns, like they/them pronouns, instead of sort of questioning somebody for that, just Google it. There's so much information out there now, you know? Watch a series of Pose, get familiar. Like, you know, that these things are not new. They've been visible, well they've been in society for hundreds of years, but they're now visible more because of the Internet. So it's just understanding that. So you can support, say, someone on your team who's a trans woman or a trans man, you know, be aware.

[00:33:50] Absolutely.

[00:33:52] There are so many people, journalists, who are in the closet because of fear in the environment they work in, where it could be homophobic, could be illegal to be gay, but they will go on that assignment with that extra stress that you might not have if you're a cis heterosexual person. So I think it all goes back to good communication.

[00:34:16] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** You know, it all goes back to good communication. And just, you know, again, being curious. I mean, as journalists, we should be curious, right? We should be curious about everything, about people, humanity, stories, environments. So be curious about each other, you know, when I have some curiosity or some question, I will ask a friend.

[00:34:38] I'm very happy to answer questions from a heterosexual point of view. If I have a confusion about something, I'll ask. I've worked for a number of years over here with the disability community, with differently-abled community. And even things with how they like to be termed, my preconceptions about how someone who's visually impaired would like to be handled or guided, you know, and that varies. And actually, there's conventions between countries that vary. So What's done in the U.K. that's considered the proper way

of handling, is not done here. It's considered very different, OK, because the cultures are different.

[00:35:24] So I do know that there was a disability specialist who came over to give some talks over here about working with and co-working with disabled colleagues who was talking about how to guide or have to give guidance or how to give assistance to a visually impaired person. And it was entirely not the way they do things here. So, again, be curious, don't think just because you got even a specialist knowledge about something or that you're experiencing, it changes with cultures. It changes the countries, it changes through time, continually keep asking questions. And I think that's really important.

[00:36:14] **Alison Baskerville** Yeah, great, and I love that you brought up about as journalists remaining curious, absolutely. And about how we're all a work in progress.

[00:36:26] Absolutely.

[00:36:27] We haven't got the end of anything, so we've all got stuff that we have to navigate internally about our own prejudice as well.

[00:36:34] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Absolutely.

[00:36:36] **Alison Baskerville** And just to end on a slightly more, not so much lighter note, but I'm always curious to know what people pack because I love a good pack list. What does Tanya pack in their grab and go bag? What's your what's your packing list look like?

[00:36:53] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Oh, well, so as I said, I have the two bags, generally. And what I will do is I will have a change of clothes, even if it's just a shirt and knickers in the laptop bag as well. I will always have -- so in terms of travel, you know, it would be an ID, permit to travel, so that's your ticket, whatever that is. A credit card, and I always carry a couple of hundred dollars because that's a currency, that can be exchanged anywhere, and then local currency if I know I can't get to an ATM.

[00:37:33] I carry plasters, I carry electrolyte satchets, a barometer or something where if I'm going to a hot country I get dehydrated very quickly. So climates, I sort of react to the climates, not very favourably sometimes to heat. So I do a put sort of electrolyte solutions, or they have something called jeepney over here, but it's something that gives you salts and electrolytes and peps you up.

[00:38:04] Masks, obviously now. I've always carried hand sanitiser, even before COVID, always, because it's just easier when, you know, if you're going somewhere where they don't have clean toilets and they dingy bits of soap that look disgusting, just hand sanitiser is so much easier. So that's always been with me for years. I carry a little know the little travel packs of Vaseline, because they're great. Anything that's multifunctional. So just like our phones are multifunctional because they do phone calls and photographs and notepads, any other thing that's multifunctional.

[00:38:44] So Vaseline, it's great if you put a little papercut or a nick or something, to just seal it as well as the dry bits and pieces and everything it's great for that. Plasters, sanitary towels, always pile those in the bag and, what else to have? Mints or anything, if I get sick from motion, I keep mints or chewing gum mints, because mint is actually quite good for settling the stomach. So yeah, I think that's mainly it and just -- oh, and headphones.

[00:39:25] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Headphones and a hoodie and a headscarf. So a headscarf for sure because I generally get cold when I travel. The hoodie is great again for zipping up again, sort of making a bit more androgynous if you don't want to draw attention to being female or your identity or whatever it is, and the hood can actually just cut you off from people. So it's a very obvious way of saying, I don't want to talk to you, I don't want to be bothered or I'm asleep or I'm here in my casing.

[00:39:59] And the same with the headphones. I mean, I have these, but I also still have one big, very obvious cam. So I've had, you know, drunk people sitting next to me in a plane deciding to strike up a conversation and sort of tapping you. And when you put these on, they immediately go, "Oh sorry, you're watching a movie?" And they leave you alone. So those go on because it just means I'm you know, I'm not to be spoken to in a way.

[00:40:24] That's a great coping strategy.

[00:40:29] **Alison Baskerville** Yeah.

[00:40:30] We all got comfort items, don't we? That's sounds like yours.

[00:40:33] Yeah, that's my comfort item for sure. Noise cancelling headphones -- brilliant.

[00:40:38] **Alison Baskerville** Amazing, well great. Well thanks so much, Tanya, for sharing. Is there anything else you want to leave here for our students, our delicacies, I don't know what to call them, our people joining in?

[00:40:53] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Yes, our friends, our friends. I'd just say yeah, just to remember that your safety is your responsibility. And yes, there should be policies and legislations and your management should make sure you're safe, all of those things should happen. But those are sort of out there, and sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad and all of that is sort of open to interpretation as to how that's used. So think about your safety and place it as very paramount for you and don't focus on what we can't do. I'm 5'0, I'm very short and I'm very unfit, I'm very overweight.

[00:41:33] So don't focus on those things, focus on what you can do. You have a voice, you have a presence. Everybody has a presence. Everybody has space around them. Use those things. Use your clothes to your advantage. You know, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks, use them to your advantage, for what you feel is right for you. And then practise all these simple techniques that are very simple, they're kind of no brainers. If you just continue using them so that they become so familiar, then you just they just become second nature to you. And that gives you a sort of an increased confidence and empowerment is really about getting familiar with the unfamiliar. Once you do that, that gives you your empowerment and that makes you stronger, and that's what we want.

[00:42:23] What great advice to end on.

[00:42:25] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** Right, thank you.

[00:42:26] **Alison Baskerville** Thank you so much, time for joining us.

[00:42:29] **Tanya Warnakulasuriya** It's a pleasure. Thank you Alison.