

Workshop: Making Sense Together – Hearing the voice of children, young people and adults with learning disabilities

Co-presenters: Della Money, Nick Gore & Balwinder Sandhu

The **aim** of this workshop was to explore ways services demonstrate inclusion and involvement using innovative and creative solutions to understand the views of individuals with communication needs.

The **objectives** were to:

- Discuss and identify what needs to happen to ensure all children, young people and adults, together with their proxies, are heard?
- How can we move this from theory to practice?

Outcome

- Two key action points were brought to the plenary Action Planning session.

Workshop discussion

Initial discussion of the above questions focused on the use of technology for communication:

- Possibility to use assistive technology for communication.
- However, iPads can be difficult to use for some people.
- Staff also need the ability and confidence to put communication methods and supports into practice.
- Along with the use of technology, interactions need to be based on focusing on each other, not just around a computer or gadget.

Following this, there was discussion of the importance of time and good quality interactions:

- People need to take the time to interact.
- In times of crisis, the voice of the individual and those that care about them can get lost and people don't spend time with them. However, during a crisis spending time with them and listening is essential. We shouldn't take things away, we should add more support.
- Staff could use activities in the home (e.g. housework) as opportunities to interact. Active support could be used more.

Suggestions for how to give staff a better understanding of their role and the individuals was then considered:

- Staff need a better understanding of their role, e.g. through inductions, building rapport etc.
- The person with a learning disability could be involved in staff training.
- Use of multimedia methods, e.g. having a communication passport on DVD in order to show the individual's body language etc. could be useful.

Other points also raised were:

- Change also needs to happen from the top levels of organisations.
- Staff need to be 'allowed' to make physical contact and to take time out to interact with the person.
- Contracts – commissioners and CQC to enforce these issues.

Actions

Two key priority actions to feed back to the CB-NSG, LD Professional Senate and other stakeholders.

Action	Who	When
Pull together existing communication guidance – use as a mandate for inclusive communication and share among professionals.	Della Money and Nick Gore to link with facilitators from communication workshop	Six months
Make sure the CQC are using the guide for inspectors to assess quality of communication in services.	Della Money and Theresa Joyce to action and link with facilitators from communication workshop	Will forecast timescale.
Raise awareness on the frontline of importance of interacting more and developing communication skills.	LD Professional Senate to ask Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists how this may be approached	
Support care staff to interact, get to know people they work with and use opportunities in day to day life.	Provider task force to consider, action and report back	
Practitioners to ensure that time is spent getting an individual's view in assessments, reviews, CTR's etc., despite the person's communication ability.	LD Professional Senate to discuss how this can be achieved	