

Julie Smith: Building a skilled support team around a person

GETTING THE SUPPORT RIGHT

Try and imagine that for the next few years you are going to spend the bulk of your time with the same small group of people.

You haven't met them yet, but you know that they are going to be in your personal space every day; perhaps helping you eat, bathe and go to the toilet.

They will be present when you are with your friends and family and nearby when you want to be alone.

How would you choose them?

What qualities would you like them to have?

How likely is it that you would make the right decision straight off?

- The support that a person receives is only ever as good as the support worker on the day.
- You have to like someone to be with them and support them well.
- These relationships establish a culture of respect and genuine concern and commitment.

Matching is a serious business

- We recruit to a value base, not worrying about skills or experience which can be taught and gained.
- We need to think really hard about how people will get along.
- Knowing the person we support helps to figure out who will support them well.
- Once a culture is established it can help to maintain itself as there are long term supports around who truly wants what is right for people.

Presented by Julie

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Listen

- The person being supported is the right person to tell you who is right to support them.
- When a relationship is two way; both lives are richer.

Everyone is valued

- Everyone knows the directors
- The relational basis for the support runs throughout the organisation, and company values apply to all.

Staff who want to stay

- Make training pivotal to what you do, but make sure it's the right training.
- This means that staff are very clear of their roles, and what is expected of them.
- Right from induction, staff need to be aware that the work is about having a relationship with the person being supported. That it is abusive and unprofessional not to, and that our role is to ensure that relationships stay positive and safe.
- It is important to have fun together.
- The people who care about the people we support, help to keep the support right and the person safe.
- Circles of support and informal networks are an invaluable part of a good team.

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