



Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group (CB-NSG)

Are we ALL ready?

Wednesday 26th May 2021

Workshop 9: Building Positive Relationships between Support Workers and Families

Workshop Facilitators: Sally Warren and Liam Doherty

CBF Note-taker: Liam Doherty

Workshop agenda

Time	What
14.05-14.10 (5 mins)	Introductions and facilitators' overview of the issues
14.10-14.25 (15 mins)	Project presentation
14.25-15.05 (40 mins)	Discussion and action planning

Workshop objectives:

- Share work that has made a difference
- Identify key actions that have a positive impact.
- Agree actions to develop/implement/ share more widely

Key Areas to address through this project:

1) Improving communications/routes for communications

- Practical means through which support workers and families can enter productive dialogues (increased frequency of discussions, forums, and supervisions)
- Helping families and support workers to navigate the barriers to communications (GDPR policies, managers' interventions)

2) Clearer provider policies on how families are to be included, set out in such a way as to ensure these are enforced/accountable

- Providers to have policies surrounding involvement in recruitment (co-production of personalised job adverts, families' involvement in interviews)
- Providers to have policies surrounding involvement in provision of support (co-production of care plans, supervisions)

- Services should have a 'Family and Carer Policy' due to Care Act, but this is often not in place/followed

3) Clear 'friendships' policies, which either prevent the loss of relationship following support staff leaving, or mitigate the feelings of loss and bereavement which can affect individuals with learning disabilities in this situation

Issues identified:

- The role of the manager should be addressed, as solutions will likely have to operate through managers/providers – managers/providers set out policy on how these groups will interact
 - Managers will often set the institutional culture which affects whether relationships flourish
 - Issues which are not resolved directly can also be directed through managers, exacerbating the issue (either families directing criticism of support workers to their employers, or support workers using managers to voice concerns and criticism)
- It is important to understand and address what isn't working for the staff team, and where family involvement is unproductive. Families may not understand what the support teams' strategy or goals are, and so dialogue is needed to prevent disruption.
- Relationships that are lost after support worker leaves service can be difficult for individuals with learning disabilities and their families to manage.
 - For individuals with learning disabilities, particularly those who do not understand the reasons for departure, this can also lead to a mental health and behavioural risk, and often resembles bereavement
 - Maintaining this relationship following support worker's departure will have to navigate associated risk and safeguards without losing organic, human element
- Families are often traumatised by prior experiences of care
- There are many opportunities for family involvement in support process/strategy, but this often doesn't occur
 - Families should be involved in recruitment as well as in designing care plans
 - Families can be involved through supervisions, 'forums', and other methods, but these should occur more often than simply an annual review.
 - Involvement of families should be designed in such a way as it doesn't resemble a CQC 'inspection' – families' suggestions should be engaged with productively and proactively, in such a way as families' involvement is more than extra scrutiny
 - Maintaining relationships with families is enshrined in Human Rights law, and shouldn't be treated as an 'optional extra'
- Important to remember that while families sometimes have to raise concerns about support workers, support workers will also sometimes have to navigate situations where families *don't* have the individual's best interests at heart, risks of abuse (particularly financial abuse) and neglect.