

The Lifeways Group

Positive behavioural support

The Lifeways Group provide support services for people with diverse and complex needs, and were asked to support Jeremy in 2014 following a breakdown in his current placement and a subsequent admission to an in-patient unit. Jeremy's 19 and has a severe learning disability, Downs Syndrome and Klinefelter syndrome.

Jeremy exhibits behaviour which challenges services, which could sometimes last up to nine hours at a time and can make it difficult for him to engage in activities or his local community. Previous support services reported that on some occasions this could lead to staff injuries when supporting him, and often he would be supported by up to five staff at a time.

When The Lifeways Group started supporting Jeremy, they wanted to ensure that staff had the right skills and knowledge to provide high quality care and support. This included shifting the mind-set of some staff from viewing Jeremy as intrinsically violent and aggressive rather than as an individual hugely frustrated at being unable to get their needs met.

They applied for funding through Skills for Care's Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) and autism training fund, to ensure their staff had the right skills and knowledge to provide high quality, person-centred support.

The fund provided financial support to:

- develop skills around the person
- encourage inter-agency and multi agency work at a person centred level

We assessed communication challenges as being a significant factor underpinning his behaviour, and in staff's fundamental attribution error, where they tended to explain his behaviour on internal factors such as his personality, rather than external factors such as the environment around him.

We also wanted to improve his community participation as when we started supporting him, he hadn't been out for around three months.

We hoped that this would improve his quality of life, reduce the number of incidents of behaviour that challenges, and reduce the risk of staff injury."

What we did

"We accessed the funding and commissioned training for staff who supported Jeremy, that was specific to his individual needs.

As part of the PBS training with the staff team we helped staff to see Jeremy as a person rather than 'a problem'.

We focused on enabling Jeremy to exercise choice over his life and develop his own communication skills, as well as ours. We made a video of the Makaton signs that Jeremy uses (they're very much his own versions of Makaton) and all staff watched this to learn and refresh themselves about how to understand Jeremy's needs and to make themselves clear.

We also used a verbal and visual timetable of 'now', 'next' and 'then'. This helped Jeremy know both what was happening and what



Skills for Care recommends

We have lots of resources to help employers and their workforce to support people who need care and support, including people with autism and behaviour that challenges.

Supporting people with autism

These resources can help you support your workforce to care for people with autism, including the skills and knowledge needed to provide a high quality autism care and support.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/autism

Supporting people with learning disabilities

These resources can help you support your workforce to care for people with a learning disability including guidance about positive behavioural support.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/learningdisability

Restrictive practices

This guide supports employers who want to minimise the use of restrictive practices.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/restrictivepractices

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