

The Lifeways Group

Positive behaviour support

Supporting Jeremy through the Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) and autism training fund 2016-17

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

- provide training in line with PBS competency framework or good autism practice
- contribute to the discharge (or avoided likely admission) or one or more person.

I never thought Jeremy could make so much progress in so short a time, thank you for all the support you have given.

Family member

What we wanted to achieve

The Lifeways Group told us more about how they used the funding to improve the care and support for Jeremy.

They said:

“Our primary focus in supporting Jeremy was to improve two areas:

1. communication with him
2. communication from him.



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.

Staff used to be reluctant to work with Jeremy but now they can see past his behaviours to him as a person.

Jed Thomson, Principal Behavioural Practitioner

We also used a verbal and visual timetable of 'now', 'next' and 'then'. This helped Jeremy know both what was happening and what was coming up, and provided structure and predictability about events. For example 'now' we are doing 'bricks' (manipulating building bricks), 'next' will be 'food' and 'then' will be 'trike' (going out to ride your trike).

The training also covered using functional assessment to learn from his behaviours and how we can minimise the risks of his behaviour, with a strong emphasis on low arousal and withdrawal rather than hands on physical intervention."

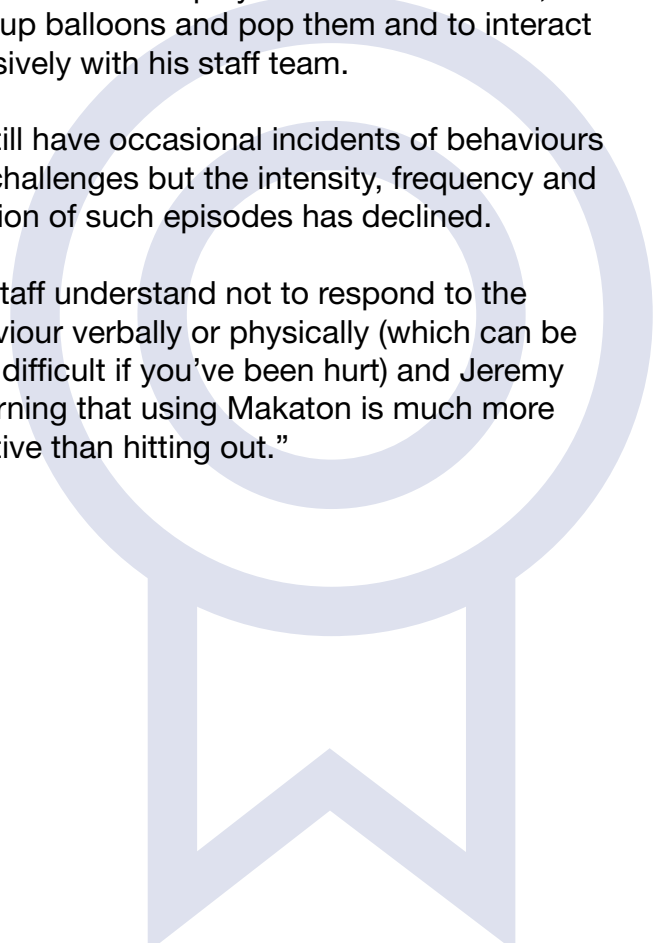
What we achieved

"The training was successful. Jeremy now needs support from only two staff at a time rather than five as previously. He's also supported to access the community every day including to ride his trike, go for walks and play football; he has also just been for a day at Alton Towers.

He has regular contact with his Mum, which previously was non-existent. When he's at home he's keen to play on his Wii with staff, blow up balloons and pop them and to interact intensively with his staff team.

We still have occasional incidents of behaviours that challenges but the intensity, frequency and duration of such episodes has declined.

Our staff understand not to respond to the behaviour verbally or physically (which can be quite difficult if you've been hurt) and Jeremy is learning that using Makaton is much more effective than hitting out."



What we learnt

The Lifeways Group has learnt lots from the training. They told us:

“Staff learnt to see the person and not the behaviour, and to have empathy and understanding, to be proactive and good communicators.

As an organisation, we learnt to use practice leadership to help train and motivate staff.

Staff need to see that others can work with the same challenges they do and that working as a team is both effective and supportive.

We learnt to use functional assessment to understand why Jeremy did some of the behaviours he exhibited and we learnt how to use these assessments to develop positive experiences for Jeremy. We looked to gain ‘illumination’ rather than focusing on ‘elimination’.”

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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