

# Me and My Life



## Guidelines for Supporters

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# Guidelines for Supporters Using 'Me and My Life'

## Purpose of guidelines

These guidelines have been produced to help supporters to enable people with learning disabilities to use 'Me and My Life' as a way of saying what is important to them, including what is going well, what they would like to change and their plans for the future.

There is no 'right' way to use 'Me and My Life' because everyone who may use it is unique – what is important is that supporters remember the aims of 'Me and My Life' at all times:-

- To make sure the person is listened to
- To give people who care about and support the person a way of working well together to help them to live the life they choose

## 'Me and My Life':-



Is

Is not

- Owned by the person it is about
- A way of showing that you are listening
- Best when its used creatively
- Controlled by the person it is about
- About respecting the persons wishes

- A one off paper exercise
  - A tool for services
- Going to be for everyone
  - Fixed and rigid
- Useful unless its regularly referred to

## How 'Me and My Life' Fits with Person Centred Planning (PCP)

It can be difficult for people with learning disabilities to express how they feel about their lives for a wide range of reasons. 'Me and My Life' is aimed at enabling people to think about different aspects of their life and to build up a picture of what is good and what they would like to change. 'Me and My Life' has been designed to make it as easy as possible for the person to be supported to think about and explore different aspects of their life. Person centred planning talks about decisions being based on what is important from the persons own perspective – 'Me and My Life' is another way for people to say what is important to them so that the person centred planning process begins with the voice of the person being supported.

'Me and My Life' offers a way for people to say 'THIS IS ME', and this is how I want to live.

### Section 1

#### Supporting a person with 'Me and My Life'

To support people to get the most from 'Me and My Life' there are some important issues to consider.

##### Accessibility

The idea behind using posters and pictures and lots of accessible formats in 'Me and My Life' is to promote a sense of ownership for the person whose plan it is and to enable the person to lead the process as much as possible.

Some people with learning disabilities will find accessing 'Me and My life' difficult - the pictures and words may not mean anything to them. In this case the 'Me and My Life' supporter(s) can still use the tool to build up a picture of what is important to the person through observation and talking to other people who know the person well. The information gathered can still then be used to underpin the person centred planning process. This will help to ensure that plans are based on what is important from the persons own perspective.

##### Who should help?

Recent thinking around supporting people with person centred planning reflects concern that where a trained 'facilitator' supports a person with the plan there is a risk that the planning process becomes overly reliant on one person and that planning can collapse if the facilitator moves on or cannot continue in the facilitating role. It is preferable to bring together the people who are important in the life of the person planning and to consider how this network of people can best work together to ensure there is solid, and ongoing support to plan and continue to listen and learn with the person who is planning. Where a strong group can be established with open trusting relationships then the person is most likely to be supported to live life the way they choose.

### Take Breaks and Pace Yourself

Reflecting on your life and thinking about what is good and what you are not happy with can be tiring, so be aware of and sensitive to the needs of the person you are supporting - it may help to work in short bursts or to take regular breaks. 'Me and My Life' should be seen as an on-going way for people to talk about their lives so there is no 'time limit' and it will never be 'complete'. Having said that it is important that the person connects the process of talking about their life with things changing for the better so it may be useful to set targets for meeting to talk about what the person has highlighted. (Step 2 of the process helps the person and supporters to think about preparing for meetings).

### Confidentiality

The person should be reassured that they are in control of the information they give when talking about their life – it should be made clear that there is no pressure to talk about aspects which are uncomfortable and that the conversations through 'Me and My Life' are between the focus person and people they know and trust who are supporting them. The supporters should always be careful to check with the person who is planning if they want to talk to others about the contents of 'Me and My Life'. It is also very important to be clear about the circumstances in which supporters cannot maintain confidentiality – which for most organisations will be if abuse is suspected or disclosed or if a criminal act has been alleged.

## Respect choices and listen well

It is tempting when supporting people with learning disabilities who may find it hard to be articulate to 'fill the gaps' or make suggestions to illicit more information. It is important that supporters try as much as possible to **record faithfully what the focus person is saying**. It is helpful to check your understanding of what is being said by summarising what you think the user is saying or by reading back what you have written or recorded on posters or pages in the folder.

## Fun

'Me and My Life' has been designed to be good fun to use, based on a belief that people are more likely to talk about their life if they are having fun and feeling relaxed. Supporters should not pressure the focus person to do more or talk more but should keep the work around 'Me and My Life' enjoyable.

## How 'Me and My life' fits with other documents

Person Centered Planning is designed to enable people to have a way of saying 'THIS IS ME'. 'Me and My Life' posters and folders belong to the user and should compliment existing systems which are used to support the person. These may include:-

- Support Plans
- Risk assessments
- Health Action Plans (although this may be addressed through the work on 'Me and My life')
- Guidelines for Supporting
- Communication Passports
- Life Storybooks

In some situations 'Me and My Life' may replace or supersede some of the above systems. The reference point for helpers and paid staff should be whether there is sufficient information written from the users' perspective to support them to live life in the way they choose.

## Section 2

### A Step by Step Guide for Supporters of 'Me and My Life'

The purpose of this section is to enable supporters to consider how 'Me and My Life' can best be used to support the person using it to express what is important to them, to bring together people in their life they know and trust and to make plans for everyday support and for the future.

This section of 'Me and My Life' (pages 5-12) is concerned with the perspective of the person who owns 'Me and My Life' (the focus person). The onus is on supporter(s) to learn about what is important from the person's point of view in a non judgemental way. This means that supporters should not edit or censor what people say or express but should as much as possible record faithfully what is said or communicated by the focus person.

#### Step 1 – Listening to you: Finding a way to listen



- Using the poster
- Supporting the focus person to make their own poster
- Supporting the focus person to express themselves in a different way

#### Using the Poster

The intention of the 'Me and My life' poster which came with the pack is to offer a starting point for listening to and recording what is important to the focus person. Writing important things down in one place can be helpful in giving the person and people who know them an overview of what is important in their life.

Where the focus person chooses to use the poster provided the supporter should explain the way in which it will be used:-

- The pictures and words are about different areas of the person's life.

- The supporter should work out with the focus person the best way to record what is said – this could mean the focus person talks and writes, the supporter writes, or drawings or photos are used to illustrate what is being said.
- The supporter should explain to the focus person that they can choose which areas of their life they want to think and talk about – the supporter should ask the focus person where they want to start.
- Often when the focus person is talking they may begin to talk about other areas of their life – the supporter should check if they want to record what is being said on the relevant section of the poster.
- The supporter should listen attentively and should use questions to help the person say more about what is important to them.
- Where the focus person is talking or communicating what is important to them and the supporter is recording, the supporter should check back with the focus person to make sure they have recorded what the focus person meant.
- There are 16 areas of life in total the focus person may want to think about but there is no need to work through them all – it may be that only a few areas are important to the person and there should be no pressure to ‘fill it all in!’
- The supporter and focus person should use the Ideas, Changes and Plans picture whenever they discuss a potential change or idea for doing something differently, either in terms of daily life or for bigger changes the person may be thinking about.

### Supporting the Focus Person to Make their Own Poster

It may be that the poster provided is overwhelming or not relevant for the focus person – the supporter should not be fixed in their thinking about having to complete the poster provided – it may be that the focus person wishes to make their own poster – they can do this by copying the pictures they want to talk about from pages 8 – 11 or by using pictures/drawings/symbols/photos they are already familiar with.

### Supporting the Focus Person to Express themselves in Another Way

For some people a poster will not be the best way for them to express themselves. Supporters should start by thinking about the way the person communicates and be creative in finding ways for them to say and own what is important to them in other ways. Some examples of creative ways of supporting people to communicate what is important to them:-

- A PowerPoint presentation can use a combination of digital photos, scanned images, words, voices clips or even video.

- A folder or scrap book with photos, tickets, drawings and words.
- Photo albums can show different aspects of what is important to the person.
- Talking photo albums use photos and short voice clips.
- Talking Mats can be used to enable people to show what they do and don't enjoy.
- Sensory boxes can be used where objects of reference are used to enable the person to tell others about different aspects of their life.
- Video/DVDs can be made to show what life is like for the person to build up a picture of what is working and what needs to change.

When you are building up a picture of what is important for a person who may find it difficult to tell you it is important to get alongside them as much as possible to make a real attempt to understand their world from their own perspective. Supporters can learn a great deal by spending time with the person going through their routines and feeling what daily life is like.

Posters or other methods of recording what is important will often be used at person centred planning meetings later in the 'Me and My life' process – supporters need to use methods which give the focus person a real sense of ownership of the process, and those who are involved in supporting the person a strong sense of what their world is like.

## Learning about different areas of the persons life

This part of the step by step guide will consider the areas shown on the poster and on pages 8-11 (in no particular order).

Some of the issues the focus person and their supporter may explore are summarised at the beginning for each life area before going on to list some useful questions the supporter may ask or think about to learn more about what is important from the focus person's point of view.

### My Beliefs and Culture



#### Summary

People have beliefs which are unique to them and should be respected - research has shown that the side of people with learning disabilities which is concerned with beliefs, culture and spirituality is often neglected by services which support people. A holistic person centred approach will place people's beliefs and culture at the centre of the way they are supported as these are fundamental to the way people say 'this is me!'

A report by the foundation for people with learning disabilities in which people with learning disabilities were asked about what spirituality means to them identified these broad themes as being important to people in expressing their spirituality:-

**A god which people worship and believe in** - some people talked about a friendship or a connection with 'god'.

**Having time and space for yourself** - some people said that life was so busy that they hardly ever got time alone to relax and think, people may not have a quiet space to reflect.

**Friends giving meaning to life** - people said they valued the work of carers and people who were paid to support them but having people in your life who are not paid to be there was very important in giving people a sense of themselves.

**Being able to express sadness and grief** - people who were part of the study talked about family members and friends who had died, some people had not been supported to 'let go' of the person who had died. A big part of expressing beliefs and spirituality is being able to express sadness and grief. Some times support workers think the best way of supporting people is not to talk about people who have died 'in case the person gets

upset'. People said they wanted time and space to think about people they had loved who had died.

**Belonging to a group or a community** - religious communities and other groups are important to some people in giving a sense of belonging and give people with learning disabilities the chance to contribute to the work of groups and communities.

**Expressing yourself through art, music or another creative activity** - painting, drawing, music, photography and being close to nature were all talked about by people with learning disabilities as important ways for people to express themselves.

It can be difficult for people to express their spiritual self if they have not been encouraged to do so in the past. Some people may be unclear about their beliefs and the things which are important to them. Where this is the case it is important that supporters ensure people have opportunities to explore their spirituality and that the way in which people respond in a range of situations and environments is closely observed.

Questions for Supporters to Consider:-

- Do you have a particular faith or believe in a god or other religious leader or system?
- Do you have the opportunity you need or want to express any religious beliefs you have?
- Are you interested in being part of any faith based group or other group in the community which may give a sense of belonging?
- How do you have quiet time to relax and reflect? – do you need more opportunities for this kind of time out?
- Who are your friends? – do you get support to see your friends and to develop other friendships with people who are not paid to be with you?
- Are you supported through loss and grief? – it is your right to experience the reality of your history and to think about people you have lost who have died.
- Do you have opportunities to express yourself creatively?
- Do you enjoy nature, do you have opportunities to be close to nature?
- Is your culture and background respected and understood by people in your life – are you supported to observe customs around celebrations, rituals, food, dress, routines which are consistent with your culture?

## Communication



### Summary

Effective communication and interaction are prerequisites for happiness and fulfillment. It is a fundamental aspect of effective support that people are understood and can understand what is being said and communicated to them. It is also important to consider the value of interaction in which two or more people may be simply being together, sharing time, expressing thoughts and feelings. There are many resources available now to support people to communicate - you can see a list of some of them in the help and advice section. It will always be the case however that the most important resource the focus person has in terms of communication is the people they spend time with - focused, attentive and warm support is most likely to bring about effective communication.

Effective communication is key to understanding people with learning disabilities and supporting them to be in control of their lives. There are many ways of effectively communicating with people and they are based on the same principles of effective communication that apply universally.

Listening – it is important to show the person that you are actively listening to what they are saying. Some people with learning disabilities may speak slowly, or use only a few words. Others may speak very fast or not use words at all. In these circumstances it is very important to listen attentively and to check you have understood what is being said or communicated in other ways.

Clarity – for some people with learning disabilities it is important that you do not over complicate what you are saying. Some people may find it hard to follow a complex series of statements so may be able to respond better to short sentences or simple suggestions.

Time – some people with learning disabilities need time to formulate their thoughts and ideas and to express them. It may also be important to give people time and space to understand what has been said to them.

Creativity – for some people pictures and drawings, photos or videos are an important way of communicating. Others use objects of reference where certain objects are associated with activities so that the person can make choices and be supported to understand what is about to happen.

Being Inclusive – a common experience for people with a learning disability is being talked over as if they are not present. Questions should be addressed directly to the person even if the person needs support from people around them to answer the question.

Learn from others – observe other people who know the person with learning disabilities well and communicate well with them.

Questions Supporters could ask or think about:-

- Is it easy for you to understand other people? – What other things could people do to help?
- Do you have regular opportunities to be with people you like?
- Do the people who support you know how to help you communicate?
- Do the places you spend your time help you to communicate with other people?
- Do people who support you help you in the same kind of ways?
- Do supporters all know the best ways for you to communicate?
- What do supporters need to change or learn to communicate well with you?
- Do you get any help to learn to communicate more?
- Have your supporters written down anywhere how you communicate? – do you have a way of saying this is how I communicate and what helps and what makes things difficult?



## Health

### Summary

It is widely acknowledged that there are inequalities in the way people with learning disabilities access the healthcare system when compared with the general population. People with learning disabilities as a group have greater healthcare needs than the rest of the population but in many cases needs are unrecognised and unmet.

The reasons people are not getting the same access to healthcare are varied but include:-

- Communication problems where it is difficult for the person to express clearly pain or other symptoms.
- People may have low expectations of health services due to previous poor experiences.
- People may fear the consequences of contact with the medical profession.
- Family members or paid carers may feel that problems do not warrant making contact.
- A difficulty of physical access which may include lengthy periods in waiting rooms, which for some people can be difficult.
- Communication problems with the doctor where it is difficult for accurate diagnosis to be made or where doctors assume the user understands more than they do.

The acknowledgement that people with learning disabilities may have additional healthcare needs and the unequal access people have to services led to the notion of the Health Action Plan which formed part of the Valuing People White Paper in 2001. Valuing People says that people with learning disabilities should get the chance to have a Health Action Plan to make sure that people get the help they need to get the right services from the NHS. A health action plan is a personal plan about what a person with learning disabilities can do to be healthy, and includes what help they may need.

Health action plans are important because you cannot achieve what you want to in life if you are not emotionally and physically healthy.

There are some circumstances in which it may be particularly important to support people to develop a Health Action Plan:-

- Where people have complex healthcare needs.
- Where people are supported by a wide range of professionals.
- Where people are getting older.
- If the person's health changes, like when people go into hospital.
- When you are going through a big change, like leaving school or college, or moving home.

The Valuing People white paper says that the person centred plan and the health action plan are closely linked and in some cases should be supported by the same person.

Talking about your health can be sensitive and is very personal. As mentioned previously it is very important that the focus person is supported to work on 'Me and My Life' by

someone they know well and trust. In some situations the focus person may want to be supported by a different person if they want to work through the health section. The health picture is not intended to be a place where the person feels checked up on to make sure they are living a perfectly healthy life! Many people without learning disabilities make choices in their lives, which others may judge as unhealthy and people with learning disabilities should be allowed to be in control of their bodies and the decisions they take. Health action plans are about information, support and fair access to healthcare.

Supporters should check if there are any particular issues the focus person wants to raise in relation to their health – the focus person should be made aware of the opportunity to complete a health action plan (if they haven't already done so). Health action planning enables supporters to work through a series of questions which will enable the focus person to build up a picture of what is important in terms of their health.



## Interests

### Summary

Person Centred Planning is about growth and development and as we change, our interests tend to change and develop with us. This area of 'Me and My Life' is a place where the focus person can think about what they are (and are not) interested in so that they can be supported to develop their interests and try new things.

Questions Supporters could ask or think about:-

- What are you interested in? (Activities, people, environments, sensory experiences)?
- Do you get the support you need to explore and develop their interests?
- Could you develop your interests with people you know or by meeting new people?
- Are there particular things you have achieved that you are proud of and would like to share or celebrate?
- Do you have any aims or goals in relation to developing your interests?

- Are their activities or things you have tried in the past that you do not want to do again?
- Are there activities you have done in the past that have stopped that you would like to do again?
- Is there anything you do that you love or are really passionate about? – are there ways you can express your passion?!



## Learning

### Summary

One of the key ideas behind person centred planning is the notion of developing independence - learning is central to developing the skills, knowledge and confidence to live as independently as you are able. There is an element of teaching and learning in many everyday tasks and people with learning disabilities need skilled support to develop their independence.

There are many areas of learning the focus person may want to think about:-

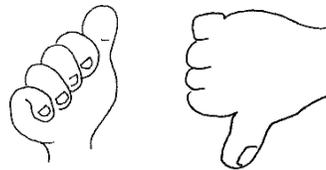
- Literacy and Numeracy skills
- Using information technology
- Independent living skills - cooking, maintaining a home, domestic skills, traveling, using money, budgeting.
- Social skills
- Developing relationships
- Hobbies and interests
- Keeping yourself safe
- Teaching others
- Work based skills

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

- What are you good at?

- What are your gifts and talents?
- Are there any skills or new things you would like to learn?
- Are there things you have learnt that you are proud of and would like to tell other people about?
- What support and help do you need to maintain the things you can already do and develop new skills?
- Is there anything else you would like to learn about?
- Do people help you to do as much as you can for yourself? – do you get involved in everything in your life? – are things sometimes done for you by other people when with the right help you could do them yourself? – What would you like to change about the help you get?

## Things I Enjoy/Things I Don't Like



## Summary

The most important thing to remember when thinking about likes and dislikes is that they change over time! Many people with learning disabilities express a preference or make a choice at some point in their life, which becomes part of the way they are seen...

'John doesn't like curry' (because he chose not to eat a chicken korma 3 years previously!).

Or

'Mary doesn't like busy places' (because she got stressed in a busy shopping centre at a time when she was living in another house).

This area gives the focus person the chance to express some preferences which they may feel clear about. In some areas the focus person may not have any definite views which could be due to a lack of experience in that area.

When thinking about likes and dislikes the supporter could ask questions about:-

- Music
- TV
- Food
- Drink
- People
- Places
- Times of the Year
- Rituals
- Routines
- Moments
- Colours
- Activities
- Work
- The things they do

The supporter could also learn more about the persons likes and dislikes by asking questions in relation to feelings or responses:-

- What makes you smile?
- What makes you laugh?
- What makes you sad?
- What do you worry about?
- What do you get excited about?
- What makes you feel relaxed?
- What is your favourite time of year?
- What is your favourite day of the week?
- What would you change?
- What do you worry about?

## Home



### Summary

This is an important opportunity for the person to express how they feel about where they live. Many people with learning disabilities live with people they may not have chosen to live with and have to make many compromises in sharing their home with others (both tenants and workers). Other people may still live with their families and may not have had many opportunities to talk about how they feel about home now and in the future.

### Questions for the Supporter to ask or think about:-

- Who do you live with?
- What's good about where you live?
- Are there things you don't like about where you live?
- How long have you lived in your home?
- What would your dream home be like?
- Who are your neighbours?
- What would happen on a really good day for you?
- What would happen on a really bad day for you?
- What are the rules where you live?
- What would you change about the rules where you live?
- Where have you lived in the past?
- What do you do at home?
- What would you do differently at home if you could?
- Do you share your home with other people? – What is this like for you? – What would you change if you could?
- What help do you need at home?
- What do you do without help at home?
- Are there things you need more help with/less help with?
- Are there situations at home you find difficult?
- Are there situations or times at home you enjoy?
- Are you comfortable and relaxed when you are at home?
- Are you involved in the everyday running of your home? – How could you be more involved in the running of your home?

- Do the people who support you at home help you do things for yourself? – How could your support at home change so you could do more for yourself?
- Would you like to move home at some time in the future? – would you like to live differently in the future?
- Do you enjoy being the garden? – would you like to spend more time in the garden? – what would you like to do in the garden?
- Are there people you would like to invite home? – What would you like to do socially at home?



## My Past

### Summary

Talking about the past can be difficult for some people and this area should be approached with sensitivity to the kinds of experiences people may have had. Many people with learning disabilities may have experienced institutional settings and it is widely acknowledged that many people will have experienced some form of abuse or neglect.

Having said that keeping the past hidden or buried may affect people's everyday life and talking about past experiences can be liberating and cathartic. It is important to remember the guidance given on confidentiality in the introduction section - the helper should respect the focus persons right to confidentiality unless abuse or a criminal act is suspected or disclosed.

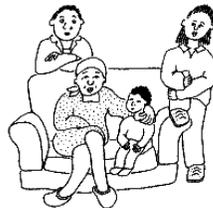
It is important that people are supported to say 'this is me' and 'this is where I have come from', as often there are many people who come into and out of the life of people with learning disabilities. Knowing peoples history helps to develop empathy and respect.

Some people have little information about their past - current helpers should be clear that it is part of their role to enable the user to keep information about their experiences so that a sense of the persons history can begin to be built. In the years ahead we all need a way of looking back, this is particularly true for people with learning disabilities who may find it difficult to remember or to communicate about their past.

Supporters should think about ways in which the focus person can be helped to remember the past – photographs can be a good prompt or visiting places the person has spent time in the past.

### Some Questions for Supporters to Consider

- What are your earliest memories?
- What are some happy memories for you?
- Do you have any difficult memories?
- What do you remember from your childhood?
- What are your memories of your family growing up?
- What do you remember about school?
- Where have you lived in the past – what was it like where you lived?
- What have you achieved you are proud of?
- What has been difficult about the past?
- What support do you need to think more about the past?
- What is your family background ?(you could do a family tree together)
- Which people have been important to you in the past – are there people you have lost touch with? - would you like to try to get back in touch with anyone?
- Would you like help to keep a record of what you do so you can talk to other people about things you do now and in the future? – how would you like to keep a personal record of what you do?



### People Who are Important to Me

#### Summary

A self advocacy group in Brighton was talking about friends and how important they were in their lives. Most people in the group saw their friends during the day but very few had invited people round to their house or arranged to meet up for a chat, a film or a walk. One member of the group decided she would like to invite another person from the group round

that weekend for a cup of tea and to watch a film. The person was supported to phone her home as she felt she would need to 'ask the staff'. The response of the staff was to ask the person why she was inviting her friend round! People with learning disabilities have the same right to develop friendships and loving relationships - this is a very important aspect of giving effective support to people.

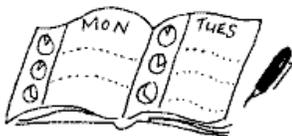
Developing relationships with friends, families and other people in the focus person's life is very important to building a life where the person is included, is contributing to their community and feels valued. Having a network of people that look out for us is what makes us feel safe and secure - no one should have to rely solely on paid people for this sense of belonging.

There is a national organisation called the circles network, which works alongside people with learning disabilities to build supportive networks of people the person can rely on. The networks and how they develop are unique to each person but what they have in common is a concern for the person being supported and a belief in the rights of the person to live the life they choose and to be fully included in their community. This notion of a supportive group of people with a shared commitment is important in ensuring the person is listened to and energy is sustained over time to enable them to get the right support and live the way they want to. Supporters and the focus person should think together about how this supportive group can be brought together.

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

- Who are the important people in your life?
- Who do you feel you can talk to?
- Who do you enjoy spending time with?
- Who is good at helping you get what you need or want?
- Are there people you have lost touch who are important to you?
- Who would you like to help you with 'Me and My Life'?
- Who makes you laugh?
- Who is in your life that you find difficult?
- Who is paid to help you? – What do they do?
- Who is in your life that you would like to get to know better?
- What different ways would you like to spend with people you enjoy being with?
- How do you keep in touch with people who are important to you? – do you need any help to keep in touch? – are you any good at remembering birthdays and sending cards?!

## My Time



### Summary

This area is a place where the focus person can think about what they do with their time - thinking about how we spend our time is important in feeling happy and balanced. Making decisions about time is part of being in control of your life and supporters should support the focus person to explore what their days are like, what they do during the week and changes they may want to make.

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

What would happen on your best day?  
What would happen on your worst day?  
How would you like to change what you do with your time?  
What would you like to do more of?  
What would you like to do less of?  
What do you do at the moment? – What is a typical week like?  
What do you do to relax?  
What things make you feel worried or stressed?

(Most people have certain 'pressure points' which are more likely to make them feel stressed - perhaps rushing to get ready for work, cooking a meal in a rush could cause stress. It's useful to identify what causes stress as often changes can be made to reduce the causes of stress. It is also important to understand what makes the focus person feel more relaxed - these situations can sometimes be built on so that overall the focus person can enjoy a better balance, feel more in control and develop a sense of well being.)

## Friends and Fun



### Summary

Spending time with friends having fun is an important part of feeling happy. The social opportunities for some people with learning disabilities are limited to segregated activities

and clubs which are aimed only at people with learning disabilities - this can mean that for some people the only socialising they get to do is with the people they live with and spend time with at day centres!

This area is about supporting the focus person to think about what kind of social activities they enjoy and who they like to spend time with. A self advocacy group in Brighton talked about socialising and friendships - of the twelve people in the group, only two had ever invited a friend round to their house! Supporters need to be pro-active in enabling users to build a social life and to develop more intimate friendships with people they get on well with.

Its good to be creative in thinking about ways that people can socialise with each other - a group of men with learning disabilities in Brighton who share an interest in film, take turns to host a monthly film night. The host chooses the film and provides the beer, everyone else just turns up!

Questions supporters could ask or think about:-

- Who do you most like spending time with?
- Who are your closest friends?
- What do you like to do when you meet up with friends or family?
- What would you like to do with friends at home?
- Would you like to host an evening for friends – what would you like to do to keep everyone entertained?
- Where are your favourite places to go out?
- What new things would you like to try out and about?
- Have you got pictures of friends and family? – would you like photos of them all?
- What plans have you got for socializing?
- Do you keep an eye on what is happening locally? – what help do you need to look out for fun things you might like to do with your friends?
- What help and support do you need to go out and socialize?
- Is there any other help you need to make new friends?

## Work



### Summary

One of the objectives from the Valuing People White Paper is:-

'To enable more people with learning disabilities to participate in all forms of employment, wherever possible in paid work, and to make a valued contribution to the world of work'

The research into the access people with learning disabilities have to paid work tells us that only around one in ten people have a paid job. There are several reasons that people find it difficult to get paid (or voluntary) work:-

- People lack the confidence to enter the job market as they lack experience in the world of work.
- Other people have low expectations of people with learning disabilities, so they don't get the necessary help and training to find jobs.
- Helping people to find jobs is not seen as important.
- The rules about benefits can mean that people may lose money if they get a job.
- Some people get stuck in supported employment schemes and cannot move onto paid work.
- Some businesses are not accessible to people with disabilities.

This area of 'Me and My Life' is a place where the focus person can think about work (paid or voluntary) with a view to getting the help they need to work.

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

- Have you got a job? – What work do you do?
- Have you had a job in the past?
- What are you interested in or good at that may help you to find a job?
- Are you interested in getting a job?
- What sort of job are you interested in?
- What help and support do you need to get a job or work towards getting a job?

## Important Places



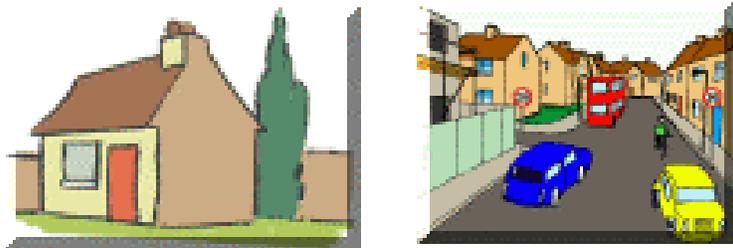
## Summary

People may have important connections with places they have lived or spent time in the past – some people may want to re visit these places or to meet with people they may have lost contact with. Its also useful to spend time thinking about places the person goes during the day or at evenings or weekends – their may be issues for the focus person about what they do and how they feel about places they spend their time. Talking about college, workplaces or day centers can be important in enabling the focus person to highlight what is good about the places they spend their time and what they may want to change. The focus person may also identify other places they are interested in locally or further a field.

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

Where do you spend your time?  
What is good about the places you go?  
What would you change about the places you go?  
What do you do during the day? – What changes would you make to what you do during the day?  
What do you do at the weekends – what changes would you make to what you do during the weekends?  
Are there places you have spent time in the past you would like to go back to?  
What is your favourite place?

Supporters and the focus person may want to work together to 'map' what is in the local community in terms of places and opportunities:-



Supporters and the focus person could draw a map showing the persons house and their local community.....

You could put some of these things on the map:-

- Favourite places
- Shops
- Post Office
- Library
- Cinema
- Theatre
- Transport links
- Places you have never been
- Pubs
- Places you are not keen on
- Parks
- People you know - where they live
- Where you work
- Where you go during the day
- College

Photos of places in the community could be put on the map.

Supporters and the focus person could talk about the 'community map' and generate ideas for how the focus person may want to change or develop the way they use and contribute to their local community.

## **Ideas, Changes and Plans**



### Summary

This section is where all the changes the focus person has thought about can be recorded. Me and My Life is intended to empower the focus person by being used as a way of recognizing and acknowledging their hopes, fears and dreams and turning their thoughts and ideas into actions! There has been a tendency in some services for people with learning disabilities to rely on formal frameworks such as annual reviews for changing things or supporting people to do things differently – these systems tend to be

bureaucratic and 'owned' by services - 'Me and My Life' should be used to reflect and act on what the focus person is saying - in some cases this may involve bringing important people together to share ideas and commit to supporting the user to make changes. In other situations however the user may just want to get on and meet up with a friend or start a new job - meetings can then be a place to both plan and reflect on how things are going.

It is important to ensure that people keep listening to users and that the outcomes of their plans are followed up, acted on and reviewed. My Life Plan should be used to track what is happening in the person's life and to support them to do the things they want to do - the future plans section enables the user and supporter to check how things are going.

Questions for supporters to ask or think about:-

- What would you like to change?
- What do you want to keep doing?
- What do you want to stop doing?
- What are your hopes and dreams for the future?
- What would you like to learn?
- What help do you need to make changes?

Supporters should also record ideas the focus person has throughout the process of building up a picture of what is important to them.

## **Step 2 – Bringing It All Together and Making Plans**

Having worked with the focus person to build up a picture of what is life in different areas, finding out what is good, what is not so good and what needs to change, you can start to work together to make plans and share what has been learnt.

The focus person may decide to meet up with people who are important to them individually to talk about their life and to think about that persons experience and perspective on their life (pages 15-19 could help the focus person to meet with people who are important to them individually).

It is likely that to bring the information together and to establish a strong network or circle of support, it will be important that the group of people in the life of the focus person come together to hear about what is important from the focus persons point of view, to share their own perspectives and to plan support and changes where necessary.

It's important that any meetings are well planned so they can be a positive experience for everyone involved – pages 21 – 26 will help supporters and the focus person to think about how to make the meeting work best for the focus person.

The meeting itself will probably work best if there is a chair person who could be the focus person if they want to take the lead or some one they choose. It's also a good idea if someone else writes down what is agreed at the meeting so the chair doesn't have to do everything!

After some introductions about who everyone is and what the meeting is for it usually works well if the focus person is supported to share their way of saying THIS IS ME that they have been working on. This is a chance for the people at the meeting to listen and find out what is important to the person and to ask questions or express their views.

The ideas, changes and plans section should be the basis for discussion about how the group can support the person to make any changes they want to. The chair should try to be very clear about who is going to do what and when and how things will be reviewed.

It's important that records of the meeting are very clear so that the focus person and supporters can refer back to them to remember what is agreed and follow things up if they

need to. Pages 29-32 are a place to record things that will stay the same, things that will change, things to keep healthy and a place for writing down if there are areas that people disagree about (don't get stuck on these – its usually better to agree to disagree and come back to talk again at another time).

The action planning pages from page 33-36 should be completed in as much detail as possible so they can be used and sent to people who came to the meeting (and any important people who couldn't make it).

Pages 35 – 36 are a place where supporters and the focus person can reflect on how the meeting went, can write down their thoughts and feelings about the meeting and can plan when the next meeting will be. Its important to think carefully about when the next meeting should be – it may be that lots of changes are planned and it would be good to meet again fairly soon to check how things are going – or the focus person might need regular meetings to get a sense of the support for the group and the way in which the process is centred around them.

Finally page 37 is just there to make sure that everyone the focus person wants to be involved in their support gets the information about the meeting, even if they did not attend.

### **Step 3 – Doing what it Says in the Plan!!**

There can be a tendency for person centred planning to get to this stage of the process and for energy to be lost and agreed actions to fizzle out. The challenge in PCP is to continually listen and learn so that the on-going development and support needs of the focus person are acknowledged and the outcomes the focus person wants are achieved.

It is at this stage that a concerned group, network or circle of support is particularly important – if all the actions are left to the focus person and one supporter, it is unlikely that the changes the person wants will be made or sustained. Page 39 is a place where the focus person can be supported to talk about how things go with the plans – it should be kept up to date as actions from the plan are taken to reflect how things go.

Another potential pitfall in person centred planning processes is that people have to wait for meetings to do new things! The focus person and supporters can use page 40 and 41 to record other ideas the focus person may have for changing things, and can record what happens about the idea – this can then be feedback at the next meeting.

## **Step 4 – Checking how it's all Going**

Supporters should think with the focus person about the best way to make sure things stay on track with the plans – the last step is concerned with checking, learning and evaluating. Supporter(s) should aim to meet regularly (perhaps once a fortnight or once a month) to chat about what is working well and what is not happening.

Sometimes it may be necessary to contact some one who came to the meeting who hasn't followed up what they agreed (use pages 45 and 46 to write down what happens if you decide to contact them).

Pages 48 and 49 are a space to identify with the focus person what they are happy with, what's not going well, things to think about and things they would like to change. All these stages and pages are not fixed – they are tools for listening to the focus person and reflecting on their experience.

As it says on page 50 that is all four steps! – An on going process of listening, planning, acting and reviewing should now be established. The process belongs to the focus person and all those connected to supporting them should be concerned with the sustainability of the process.

**It's very important that the process is embedded and is not a one off event!!!!**

## Section 3

### Appendix

#### Values and principles behind Person Centred Planning (PCP)

### Person Centred Planning

The purpose of this section is to set 'Me and My Life' within the context of Person Centred Planning, to give individuals and staff teams an opportunity to reflect on what it means to think and act in a person centred way and to describe the thinking behind the development of 'Me and My Life'.

### Person Centred Planning - Definitions and Key Quotes

*“Person Centred Planning in its many and varied forms, if approached in a thoughtful, sincere, and indeed moral manner, can help us. It can help us to listen, to understand **and most importantly to act**”*

(Nancy R Thaler 1993)

*HOW DO PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE THEIR LIVES?*

*(Otherwise known as Person Centred Planning!!!!)*

(Andy Bradley 2005)

*“Person Centred Planning is about being in charge of what happens in my life and getting people I want and trust to help me make things happen”*

(The voice of a person with a learning disability who has a person centred plan from the Valuing People Guide – Planning with People)

*“A person centred approach to planning means that planning should start with the individual (not with services), and take account of their wishes and aspirations. Person Centred Planning is a mechanism for reflecting the needs and preferences of a person with a learning disability.”*

(Valuing People White Paper – Choice and Control 2001)

*“Person Centred Planning is not simply a collection of new techniques for individual planning to replace previous approaches. It is based on new ways of seeing and working with people with disabilities, fundamentally about sharing power and community inclusion.”*

*“These approaches work to use resources flexibly, designed around what is important to a person from their own perspective and work to remove any cultural or organisational barriers to this. People are not simply places in pre-existing services and expected to adjust; rather the service adjusts to the person. Person centred approaches look to mainstream services and community resources for assistance and do not limit themselves to what is available in specialist learning disability services. They strive to build a person centred organisational culture”*

Planning with people – towards person centred approaches (2002, DOH)

*“One of the most common misunderstandings of person centred planning is that it is a short series of meetings whose purpose is to produce a static plan. This misunderstanding leads people to underestimate the time, effort, uncertainty, anxiety and surprise necessary to accurately support people's lives over time.”*

John O'Brien and Herb Lovett

## Key Features of Person Centred Planning

Helen Sanderson who is a leading thinker and champion of person centred approaches has identified the five key features of effective person centred plans. These features should be evident in the way in which is used.

### 1. The Person is at the Centre



If someone is at the centre of something, they are the most important person. This means that other people cannot be more powerful or make decisions about the person's life that they do not agree with.

### 2. Family members and friends are partners in planning



Person Centred planning is about supporting people to be part of their communities. Friends, family members and other people in our community are important people in our lives. Their views and ideas can help people to develop their plans.

### 3. The plan shows what is important to the person now and in the future. It shows their talents and gifts and what support they need....

Person Centred planning is a way of understanding more about a person and their life. As people plan together, important things can happen:



- Supporters may change what they think about a person and what they can do.
- People make friends and build relationships with each other
- People involved are able to work better together to make things happen.

### 4. The plan helps the person to be part of their community and helps the community to welcome them. It is not just about services. It shows what is possible, not just what is on offer....



'life' and these guidelines were written by Frameworks 4 Change in 2006. This work was funded by the Brighton and Hove board and was based on an original idea from Brighton and Hove Speak Out.

Services will only be a part of what people want and need. Most important is for people to plan the type of life they want.



5. Things do not just stop when the first plan is written. Everyone involved keeps on listening, learning and making things happen. Putting the plan into action helps the person to achieve what they want out of life....

People change as their experience changes. The support and help they need may also change. Person centred planning is a promise to people that problems can be solved and differences can be worked out. It means that everyone needs to work together to make these changes happen.

(Valuing people support Team – Helen Sanderson)



## Practicing 'Person Centred Thinking'

Having defined person centred planning and key features, it is useful to consider why, in many areas it still seems to be a struggle to implement these approaches. To understand why person centred planning is not yet the main approach in practice to supporting people with learning disabilities it is interesting to consider what it means to think in a person centred way.

What follows is an exercise aimed at giving individuals or groups of people the opportunity to reflect on person centred thinking.

### **Exercise:** (15 minutes) – ‘what makes life worthwhile?’

(Could be part of team meeting, person centred planning meeting or training session on person centred approaches.)

1. Ask group (or individual) to complete blank page, which asks them to list 10 things which make their life worthwhile. Emphasise it's not a test, don't have to write 10 things, there will be no pressure to share their lists but there will be an opportunity to and that this exercise is an opportunity for them to think about what is important to them.
2. Allow 3 / 4 minutes for completion.
3. Invite participants to feedback examples from their lists and record on a flipchart page headed 'what makes life worthwhile'.
4. Highlight the themes recorded show that the important things in life are about relationships, freedom, choice, opportunity and individuality NOT tying shoelaces, laying the table for tea or going to a centre on a minibus.
5. Emphasise this exercise is a powerful way to start to think in a PERSON CENTRED way and is an excellent starting point for developing a person centred approach.

# What makes life worthwhile?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

## Learning Points about what makes life worthwhile

Do we really think in this way about people we support? This is an excellent starting point for checking are we doing the right things in supporting people.

- Relationships are always at or near the top of all people's lists. **Do we support people to develop intimate friendships?**
- **Do we do all we can to support people to be present in their families?**
- People who use services can often end up passive and powerless, just receiving care and support from others. All of us need to make a contribution....**we must all work hard to ensure people who use services are equal citizens contributing to the life of their community.**
- People are unique – most of have certain things in common that make our lives worthwhile but each of us also has very individual things that are important to us that make us who we are. **We need to listen well enough and suspend our judgments to learn about the people we support.**
- Person Centred Planning is about finding out what makes life worthwhile and basing the support that is given around **what is important from the person's perspective.**

There are many other exercises, which are used, in a training context to enable people to learn about the values which underpin person centred approaches. It is important that when people are beginning to implement or develop person centred approaches, that they understand the fundamental shift that takes place when people with learning disabilities are supported to take control of their lives.

This shift or journey will be characterized by a letting go of power from people who are paid to organise and work in services and a sense of increasing control being taken by people with learning disabilities. The shift can also be seen as a journey away from oppressive care to empowering support to live life to the full in the way that is right for each individual.

These changes which are central to the real development of person centred approaches can be seen on the following pages which are copies of handouts used to explore issues around power and control on person centred planning training.

# Postures - a common experience for people with disabilities or differences

Many people change their behaviour around people with learning disabilities (the 'does he take sugar' effect). People respond in a variety of ways, which often render the person with learning disabilities powerless.

**Advocacy should be role modeling a posture of solidarity.**



## Overprotective

- Non developmental
- Smothering
- Victimising
- Patronising



## Solidarity

- Focus on respect
- Attentive and focused
- Give space to express
- Acceptance, tolerance and warmth
- Supportive but not smothering



## Authoritarian

- Repressive
- Punitive
- Functional
- Task focused
- Impersonal



## Cold

- Mechanical
- Focus on compliance
- Disregarding
- Disinterested
- Focus on orderliness

This framework was developed by practitioners using Gentle Teaching which is rooted in a respectful way of supporting people with 'challenging behaviour'. The thinking behind this framework has been used and developed by Andy Bradley in his work with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. He has applied this thinking as an advocacy coordinator and when managing services in peoples homes when developing person centred ways of working.

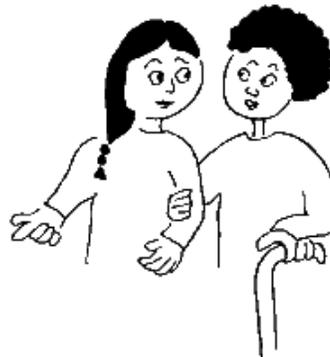
# Person Centred Approaches – moving from care to support

Person Centred approaches are about moving away from the powerlessness that goes with being **cared for** to the opportunities that go with being **supported**.



**Being cared for**

to



**Being supported**

Routines  
Safety  
Basic needs  
Labels stick  
Limiting beliefs  
Low expectations  
Lack of participation  
Lack of options  
Powerless in relationships

New opportunities  
Person listened to  
Notice detail  
Equal relationships  
Actively supported  
Learns new skills  
Contribution valued  
Range of options  
Rights respected

**The way in which support workers develop relationships with people who have learning disabilities is essential in changing the way disabled people are viewed by those who know them. Workers must work hard to develop equal relationships where power is shared and people who use services are listened to.**

Andy Bradley

## The Origins of Person Centred Planning (PCP)

The notion of PCP is not new, but in recent years has become particularly prominent in thinking about the best way to support people with learning disabilities to be in control of their lives. The 'Valuing People' White Paper in 2001 (England and Wales) and the 'Same as You' report in 2003 (Scotland) both emphasised the importance of Person Centred Approaches (PCA) to supporting people to make choices, be independent and play a full role in their communities.

Much of the early development work around PCP took place in North America and dates back to the work of Wolfensburger who developed the model of Normalisation which was based on the belief that people with disabilities should enjoy a quality of life and position in society which is equal to and would be valued by non-disabled people. Wolfensburger saw the role of human services as being to create the conditions in which 'service providers' could enable disabled people to achieve this equality and inclusion.

The social model of disability and the disability movement has also been significant in informing the thinking which underpins a PCA

*"Disability is not a condition of the individual. The experiences of disabled people are of social restrictions in the world around them, not of being a person with a 'disabling condition'. This is not to say that individuals do not experience 'disability'; rather to assert that the individuals experience of disability is created in interaction with a physical and social world designed for non disabled people"*

Swain, Finkelstein, French and Oliver (1993)

In the same way the social model emphasises reducing restrictions and increasing options for disabled people, PCP places the emphasis on transforming the options available to the person rather than making the person 'fit in' with what is on offer. PCP aims to shift power away from services to the person who uses them. Changes in the way in which services are organised (Direct Payments, Individual budgets, In Control) reflect this move towards increased self-determination and control.

In 1987 John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien embarked on research into what makes a good quality of life. The framework they developed is known as the 5 accomplishments. This thinking has informed the developing ideas around PCP. The five accomplishments state that services should be judged on the extent to which people use them:-

- Share ordinary places

- Make choices
- Develop their abilities
- Are treated with respect and have a valued social role
- Develop a range of relationships

When people moved out of long stay institutions into the community Smull and Harrison realised that the records which existed about people told us very little about the person - who they really were and what was important to them. Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP) was developed to discover people's choices and preferences and to find ways to ensure those peoples choices were respected.

Jack Pearpoint, Marsha Foest and Judith Snow have built on the ideas behind normalisation to develop the theory and practice of inclusion. This has had a major influence on PCP as supporters and people with disabilities have been encouraged to aspire to a full and active role in communities - moving away from being the passive recipients of care, to contributing and being valued for their contribution and the diversity which brings richness to any community. This movement introduced the idea of circles of support in which intimacy and friendship are seen as key to being supported to live the life you choose. This emphasis on the value of relationships is central to PCP.

### **The Differing Approaches to Person Centred Planning.**

In response to the differing situations in which people live and the types of support people need, a range of approaches have developed to PCP.

Essential Lifestyle Planning developed from efforts to give people good support when they were moving from institutions to the 'community'. The process focuses on gathering information about the focus persons' core values, preferences and aspirations. Family, friends and paid workers who know the person well are invited to share their perspective on what is important to and for the person so that services and other supports are based on what is important from the persons own perspective. Essential Lifestyle planning tends to be focused on the quality of day to day support and is often used to support people with significant or complex disabilities who may find it difficult or impossible to communicate their hopes and wishes for the future.

Personal Futures Planning developed from efforts to apply some lessons from the fields of planning and community development to the situation of people with disabilities. The process of personal futures planning engages its participants in:-

- Looking for the capacities of the focus person and the community in which they live
- Discovering a vision of a desirable future with the focus person and making an action plan
- Building stronger and more effective support for the person by joining people in a process of learning through making small positive changes
- Specifying and working for changes in the service system which would allow the system to offer more relevant assistance

Personal futures planning looks to work across organisational and status boundaries to enable all who participate to work creatively together as equals.

MAPS were developed through efforts to assist families to include their children with disabilities in ordinary school classrooms. The MAP process brings together students, school staff and family members to create a shared understanding of what is important to the focus person. The MAP process is closely linked to the ideas behind developing circles of support. MAPS build a picture of the best support and lifestyle for the person by asking these questions:-

- What is a MAP?
- What is the person's history?
- What is the dream?
- What is the nightmare?
- Who is the person?
- What are the person's gifts, strengths and talents?
- What does the person need now?
- What is our plan of action?

From O'Brien and Lovett (2000) - Finding a Way towards Everyday Lives

PATH is a systematic approach to building a picture of where the person is now and finding ways to increase the energy and resources available to make progress on what may be complex issues and problems which are stopping the person living the life they want to. PATH complements other approaches to PCP when a plan calls for the kind of change that requires creative planning and sustained collaborative action.

## **A Communication Bill of Rights**

All persons, regardless of the extent or severity of their disabilities, have a basic human right to affect through communication the conditions of their own existence. Beyond the general right, a number of specific communication rights should be insured in all daily interactions involving persons who have severe disabilities. These basic communication rights are as follows:-

1. The right to request desired objects, actions, events and persons and to express personal preferences or feelings.
2. The right to be offered choices and alternatives.
3. The right to reject or refuse undesired objects, events or actions, including the right to decline or reject all proffered choices.
4. The right to request and be given attention from and interaction with another person.
5. The right to request feedback or information about a state, an object, a person or an event of interest.
6. The right to active treatment and interaction efforts to enable people with severe disabilities to communicate messages in whatever modes and as effectively and efficiently as their specific abilities will allow.
7. The right to have communicative acts acknowledged and responded to, even when the intent of these acts cannot be fulfilled by the responder.
8. The right to have access at all times to any needed augmentative and alternative communication devices and other assistive devices and to have those devices in good working order.
9. The right to environmental contexts, interactions and opportunities that expect and encourage persons with disabilities to participate as full communicative partners with other people including peers.
10. The right to be informed about people, things and events in one's immediate environment.

11. The right to be communicated with in manner that recognises and acknowledges the inherent dignity of the person being addressed including the right to be part of communication exchanges about the individual that take place in his or her presence.
12. The right to be communicated with in ways that are meaningful, understandable and culturally and linguistically appropriate.

*Reference: Everyday lives, everyday choices.  
The Foundation for People with learning disabilities.*

## Section 4

### Help and Advice

[www.helensandersonassociates.com](http://www.helensandersonassociates.com)

[www.paradigm.co.uk](http://www.paradigm.co.uk)

[www.bild.org](http://www.bild.org)

[www.vpst.co.uk](http://www.vpst.co.uk)

#### Frameworks 4 Change

Developed the 'Me and My life' pack and these guidelines.

01273 204932

frameworks4change@ntlworld.com

#### Perfect People Video:

A group of people with learning disabilities learn about their past and the way they have been seen. They visit places they grew up and interview key people to understand their history.

MENCAP publications

020 7696 5589

#### Respond

An organisation that gives help, support and advice to victims of abuse and works with perpetrators of abuse (specific to learning disability).

[www.respond.org.uk](http://www.respond.org.uk)

#### Abuse of People with Learning Disabilities: Policy, Practice and Educational Implications in Wales

Ruth Northway

01443 483177

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and British Institute of Learning Disabilities both have resources to support people with life history work

#### Get Moving! - Making a choice about where to live.

Foundation for People with learning Disabilities

Tel: 0207 535 7400  
E mail: [fpld@fpld.org.uk](mailto:fpld@fpld.org.uk)  
[www.learningdisabilites.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilites.org.uk)

Make your move - is a video that shows some of the choices people can make about where to live. You can get a copy from:-

Values into Action  
Oxford House  
Derbyshire Street  
London  
E2 6HG  
Tel: 020 7729 5436

Housing Options - is a housing and advice service for people with learning disabilities, families and supporters. Housing Options give free advice by telephone, or by letter. Sometimes they visit if the person needs a lot of help.

Housing Options  
78a High Street  
Witney  
Oxfordshire  
OX8 6HL  
01993 705012  
[www.hoptions.demon.co.uk](http://www.hoptions.demon.co.uk)

Circles Network  
[www.circlesnetwork.org.uk](http://www.circlesnetwork.org.uk)  
01788 816671

Resources and Information  
[www.checkthemap.org](http://www.checkthemap.org)

Community Connecting magazine - is a new magazine which aims to share good ideas for building community connections and a social life for people with learning disabilities.

[www.communityconnecting.co.uk](http://www.communityconnecting.co.uk)

Grapevine in Coventry is an organisation that is committed to enabling people with learning disabilities to make friends and develop their social networks.

E mail: [grapevine.the@talk21.com](mailto:grapevine.the@talk21.com)

Tel:- 024 7633 1041

National Development team is working to tell more people about micro enterprises - these are ways that people can start their own businesses to use the skills they have.

[www.ndt.org.uk/projectsN/ME.htm](http://www.ndt.org.uk/projectsN/ME.htm)

Guide for Employers to employ people with learning disabilities

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Tel:01904 629241

[www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

Working Lives: the role of day centres in supporting people with learning disabilities into employment

Department of work and pension report

National Bureau for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) - Making the Jump - resources for supporting people to make the transition from courses and training into work.

Change is doing work for employers on making work more accessible to people with learning disabilities

[www.changepeople.co.uk](http://www.changepeople.co.uk)

You can learn more about social firms from the Social firm's website

[www.socialfirms.co.uk](http://www.socialfirms.co.uk)

'Workright' is a MENCAP project about supporting people to get jobs

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

Closing the Gap

Disability Rights Commission

Tel:- 08457 62263

Valuing Health for All

Institute of Applied Health and Social Policy

Tel:- 020 7848 3770

Health Action Plans and Health Facilitation

Good Practice Guidance for Learning Disability Partnership Boards

DoH Publications

Tel:- 01623 724524

E-mail - [doh@prolog.uk.com](mailto:doh@prolog.uk.com)

See Ability

Organisation which supports people who are blind or visually impaired and have additional disabilities.

Hook Road

Epsom

Surrey

KT19 8SZ

Tel:- 01372 755000

Change Picture bank - resources for making communication more accessible

Change

Units 19/20

Unity Business Centre

26 Roundhay Road

Leeds

LS7 1AB

A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction - a resource book for communicating in a mutual way with people with profound and multiple or severe learning disabilities.

Nind and Hewitt

British Institute of Learning Disabilities

[www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)

01562 723010

Personal Communication Passports - Guidelines for Good Practice

Sally Millar

[www.callcentrescotland.org.uk](http://www.callcentrescotland.org.uk)

0131 651 6235

Talking Mats - a low tech way of supporting people to explore preferences and make choices

Joan Murphy and Lois Cameron

[aacscotland@stir.ac.uk](mailto:aacscotland@stir.ac.uk)

01786 467645

Communication Resource Pack - cd rom with ideas and good practice examples

United Response

[www.united-response.co.uk](http://www.united-response.co.uk)

Creative Conversations - a video showing examples of communication with people with profound learning disabilities.

Phoebe Caldwell with Pene Stevens

Pavillion Publishing

[www.pavpub.com](http://www.pavpub.com)

01273 623222

Everyday Lives, Everyday Choices - for people with learning disabilities with high support needs

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

[www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)