



Active Support

network news

Winter 2008



Cooking up a storm



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Iris Barlow, Prospects Day Service Co-ordinator

Sophie and Liz baking a birthday cake

A Recipe for Success

Interview: Michelle Williams. Photos: Darren Whitby

It is a misconception that Active Support only works within particular service settings, such as residential care, as the staff at a Prospects day service will tell you.

Iris Barlow has been the Co-ordinator for day opportunities within Prospects in Llandudno for 5 years and has seen the positive effects of Active Support on both service users and staff.

“I believe in Active Support very strongly,” she said. “I think it’s true to say that the people who find life most difficult are the people you do less with. The more able a person, the more you’ll do with them. Active Support has helped us to see that, with a little bit of help, those less able people can become more independent and do a little bit more for themselves”.

The day service has been using Active Support for 12 months and Iris is clear that it has helped the staff better understand their supporting role.

“I think there are many ways we can look after people – we can care for them or we can support them. I don’t think we’re care workers. I really do believe that we’re support workers” she said.

“A person who isn’t engaged is actually just sitting there... sitting there doing nothing is boring.”

Active Support helped day service staff to see that service users were sometimes disengaged for longer than they realised. One young man was always happy to take part in the day centre’s weekly shopping trip which encouraged staff to think of him as busy and participating. When they looked closer at what was actually happening, they realised that, on his return from the shops, he was

actually largely disengaged, “He used to just sit down and that was it – it was just sitting down for the rest of the day. Now, although he does need a bit of a sit down after doing all the shopping, he helps to put all of the shopping away,” said Iris.

She recognizes that while it may always be easier for staff to put the shopping away, it gives little opportunity for raising a service user’s confidence and self esteem.

“A person who isn’t engaged is actually just sitting there doing nothing,” she said. “Sitting there doing nothing is boring. We might like the idea of doing nothing but, after a while it *is* boring. Engaging somebody and helping them to do something that they couldn’t do otherwise – I just think it’s fantastic, and to be honest, I don’t think there’s any other way we could support someone”.





Christine Harcombe,
Active Support Co-ordinator

A Message from Christine:

Remember, having a plan does not necessarily guarantee action!

There has been huge investment in Person Centred Planning as the way forward for services for people with learning disabilities, and rightly so. No one would want a return to the days when the needs of the Institution set the quality and pattern of service delivery, and the individual was lost amid the demands of running large-scale services. But how can Person Centred Planning be translated into Person Centred Action?

As Active Support practitioners from the Tizard Centre have said, Active Support supports the process of Person Centred Planning:

“Person Centred Active Support helps inform plans about individual strengths, possible directions and aspirations, grounded in the reality of working with the individual. Only when the people in the ‘circle of support’ supporting to organise a PCP know the person well enough can they help to make realistic goals and achieve progress.

“Knowing the person is much easier if it is based on a real relationship that involves practical support to

engage in meaningful activity and relationships. You will learn so much more by supporting people to do things than by sitting with them while they do nothing. Person Centred Active Support and PCP are not alternatives. They are complementary parts of the same process”.

(see www.kent.ac.uk/tizard/active/index.html)

“Person Centred Planning is an ongoing process so we need to have an ongoing individual approach to support.”

PCP is an ongoing process so we need to have an ongoing individual approach to support. Remember that the primary focus of Active Support is the generalised enabling style and systematic pursuit of opportunities for engagement in everyday activities for people we are supporting, ie Person Centred led rather than

Service led. Remember, having a plan does not necessarily guarantee action. Common sense really!

There is still time for organisations in Wales to access Active Support staff training or get our support to implement the model.

If you have any resources you would like to be included on the ARC Cymru Active Support website please forward them onto me or if you would like to know more about the project or would like to arrange for a presentation, you can contact me at christine.harcombe@arcuk.org.uk or telephone 07701099861.

If you missed the Autumn issue of Active Support News, it can be downloaded from www.arcuk.org.uk/silo/files/830.pdf

Active Support links and resources: www.arcuk.org.uk/wales/1000274/en/active+support+links.html

Happy reading!
Christine

Person Centred Action

Building skills and opportunities with Active Support

Interview: Phil Gyn Williams. Photos: Robbie Morris/Reach Supported Living

We've met a number of staff teams who've been bitten by the Active Support 'bug', and a fine example is a team working for Reach Supported Living in Newport. Natalie Hayes, the team manager is an enthusiastic advocate:

"I thought the [ARC] training was absolutely fantastic", she said. "To be honest, we couldn't wait for the training to finish so we could come back to the house and put it all into practice!"

During the training she had realised the potential within Active Support to turn her commitment to Person Centred Planning into Person Centred Action:

"Sometimes when people say to me, 'Have you got a Person Centred Plan?' they expect me to give them a book, DVD or some paperwork, but I think

you can have all of those things and it still mean nothing. For me Person Centred Planning also means working with someone in a Person Centred way and involving them as much as possible in the process as well as having something solid to look at or listen to. Here we do work in a Person Centred way, and we incorporate it as much as possible into everyday life with Active Support".

"It's OK to involve families – they know the people we support here best."

"We really focus on the Person Centredness of Active Support – in the way we choose activities for the opportunity plans and the

participation summaries. We involve all the gents here, particularly one person we support who is verbal and can tell us what he wants on his opportunity plan. It's OK to involve families in the opportunity planning – they know the people we support here best. Only things that the gents are interested in go on the opportunity plans.

"We review the opportunity plans about every 12-16 weeks. A lot of the time, the gents choose to keep an activity in place and we just alter the amount of support we're giving during an activity. So with some of the opportunities on the plans they go from being fully supported at the introduction of an activity, to being almost totally independent".

"I really like working with Active Support. I like seeing the results that it's brought for the people we support



here. I love coming into work and the gents grabbing my arm to show me something that they've done or been involved with, and they are really, really proud of it," she told us.

Natalie is impressed by the developing skills she has seen in the people they support:

It's not only the physical skills that have developed... communication and social skills are also growing.

"One gentleman here has improved in all areas of his skill base through staff using Active Support, in all areas around the house and in the kitchen. He was a person who we couldn't really see what his skills were until we used Active Support and began to vary the levels of support we were giving him. By flitting in and out of the different levels of support in the method we were able to see that he had just about all of the skills needed to do the job himself".

"We used to support him three times a week to make his sandwiches to go to the day centre and, looking back we could see that the staff were doing most of the work. Now he's able to do it himself and the staff just hold back. He will perhaps get one of the members of staff to put the sandwiches into the sandwich bag or to do one of the tricky bits".

Natalie is aware that it is always a possibility within support environments that the people being supported become de-skilled and dependent upon staff:

"In some places, you can have a situation where the people being supported might be capable and able, but perhaps everything is done for them and they lose the skills that they previously had. It can be like a hotel, but even if the staff take on the new ideas the people being supported can become 'support resistant' because they've been given their food or given a cup of tea for so long, it becomes alien to be asked to come to the kitchen and for staff to support them. The main thing is to make sure that the staff team is up to speed with Person Centred working, and to make sure that is spot on, and then to get the Active Support training in. It's just knowing how to incorporate it into everything you do".

Lynsey Mead is a relief support worker, working for Reach across Newport and Cwmbran. While enjoying the flexibility of working across different houses, she is also able to compare different styles of working and can see how Active Support is making a difference:

"If we use Active Support we help all of the people we support to develop in themselves. Instead



of doing everything for them we're encouraging them to find skills they might not have even known they were able to do. And the more you do that, the more they learn and you can step back a bit more and a bit more until they're doing it for themselves", she told us.

"You would look at M and think that he needed a lot of help doing things but with Active Support, we've managed to see a lot of skills in him. He has really benefited from it. Now he's able to get his own breakfast whereas previously we would have just got it all for him. He can put his cereal into his own bowl, put milk into a jug, pour the tea into the cup... so I feel I've been able to develop in myself and help the people we support to live more independently.



Top: Phil Glyn Williams interviewing Reach manager Natalie Hayes
Bottom: The garden pond built with the help of Active Support

"J helps more with preparing the food. With hand-over-hand support he's really good at chopping vegetables. He will put the knife where you need it and you just need to apply a bit more pressure so that it goes through the food".

DW, a keen Liverpool supporter, came to the house in January. Lynsey had worked with DW at his previous address and remembers him being quite isolated, spending large amounts of time in his bedroom, watching TV. The situation is now very different.

"Since he's come here, yes he goes in his bedroom and watches TV, but you'll quite often find him in the kitchen wanting to help or in the lounge with the other gents. He's very rarely in his bedroom on his own. And that's just because we've been encouraging him to bring out skills that he may have forgotten he had".

Natalie commented that it is not only the physical skills of the people they support that have developed. Their communication and social skills are also growing.

"Some of the activities now, such as laying the table for dinner, L and DW will do it together. L's there laying out the table cloth and DW's helping him, and you see them in the kitchen together, so it's more of a team effort now. One of the things that we say here, and it's something that Christine told us on the training, is 'If you're doing something and you look either side of you and you haven't got someone [a person being

supported] there with you, then go and get someone there, because you shouldn't be doing it by yourself!"

The team acknowledged that using Active Support does take longer, but while it may be easier and quicker for a staff member to do the task themselves, that is missing the point.

Natalie told us, "It's up to us to educate people that, yes, everything takes longer but we're actually not in the job to make our lives easier. You're in the job to make the lives of the people you're supporting better and to help them develop different skills, and with consistency, with all staff doing it, the time involved will reduce".

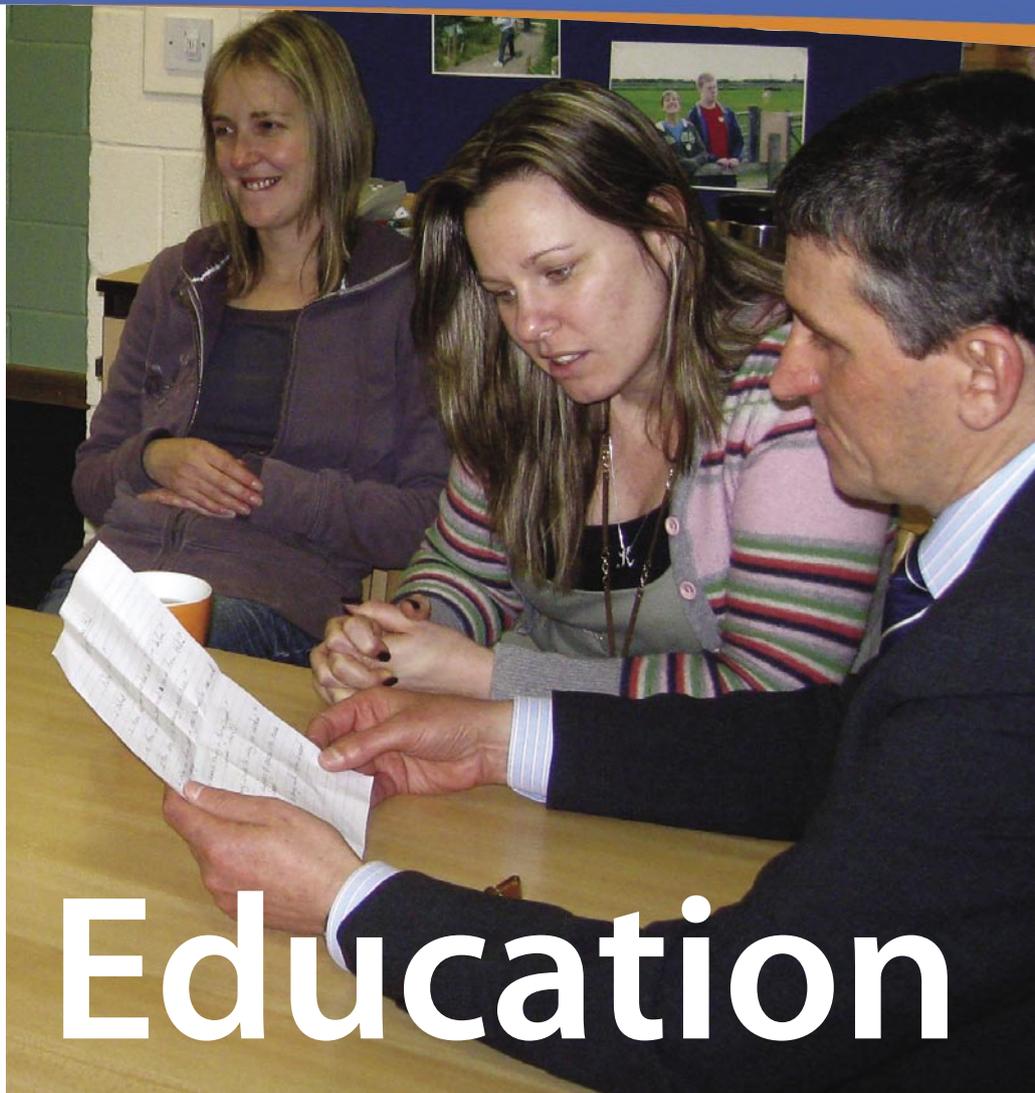
"Anybody who is new on the team and hasn't been trained will get Active Support training during induction. The ARC Interactive training [giving managers supervision and feedback skills] was really, really helpful, and now Active Support is an agenda item in all our supervisions. We talk about it, I ask them if there's any problems and commend them on the work that they're doing, and again, it motivates them further. We put it on the house agenda every 3 weeks, and on individual staff supervisions and annual appraisals, so it's not something that's forgotten about – it's there and living all the time".

Natalie is firmly committed to Active Support: "I want it to continue. I don't want it to become something that's 'been there, done that' and then just forgotten about. We're going to continue our Person Centred working with Active Support".

Active Support brings a whole new learning to a Welsh residential school.

Interview: Michelle Williams.

Photos: Darren Whitby



It's an Education

While many exponents of Active Support have acknowledged its theoretical suitability for application to other client groups and age ranges, we had not come across any actual examples of this in Wales until we linked up with staff from Aran Hall School, part of the Senad Group, which provides 52-week residential care with education to children and young people with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

Principal Duncan Pritchard decided to pilot Active Support within one of the school's houses to support the 24-hour curriculum's aims of reducing challenging behaviour and increasing levels of communication, independent living skills and

opportunities for community participation and social integration.

"It gives the young people a good idea of what they are going to be doing... they know what to expect – the anxiety of the unexpected is gone."

Following Active Support training with Dr Sandy Toogood, the staff put their new knowledge into practice and the results have been impressive,

so much so that the intention is to extend the system throughout the school over the next 12 months. Classroom assistant Heather Penney is full of praise for Active Support.

"It gives the young people here a good idea of what they are going to be doing. It involves them in the planning and decision making. They can see from the paper-based side of it just what is going to happen in the day rather than being unaware of what is going to happen after lunch. They know what to expect – the anxiety of the unexpected is gone".

Increasingly, Duncan Pritchard has pushed for a shift away from service led working as the young people become progressively involved in



At Aran Hall, staff have recognised that the Active Support system prevents anybody from being overlooked.

day-to-day planning.

“Before, things were done on the staff’s terms. There have been definite improvements in self direction and autonomy, with the youngsters doing their own thing as opposed to what the most dominant youngster wanted to do or what the staff wanted to do, which is worse”.

“What we had before was a very rigid timetable, mainly to manage the staff. It’s only by devolving responsibility for activities down to the children

themselves that we’ve got such high rates of engagement now”.

Active Support is an evidence-based method that can give practitioners the ability to see where a person is participating and where they are not. At Aran Hall, staff have recognised that the Active Support system prevents anybody from being overlooked.

“The ‘overlooked’ bit is a key point,” said Duncan. “I’d always thought about what people were doing, but

I’d never thought about what people were not doing”.

Karen Thomas has worked at Aran Hall as a teacher and associate behaviour analyst for 12 years. Karen saw the potential of Active Support for pupils and staff at the school whilst doing her MSc in Applied Behaviour Analysis at Bangor University and pushed for its introduction. She welcomes the individualised information that comes with working with Active Support.



Left to right: Heather Penny,
Darren Whitby,
Karen Thomas, Philip Ware,
Lorraine Hellowell,
Michelle Williams,
Duncan Pritchard

"We use Active Support to help organise each pupil's integration into the community and their activities during the day. It gives us data on inclusion in activities so when we have case reviews we can actually show how much activity the pupil is actually involved in. It helps with Person Centred Planning and focuses the staff on exactly what they are going to teach.

"It breaks big tasks down into smaller tasks and gives us a structured teaching plan so that everyone is

consistent in teaching because you find that everyone does things in different ways. So if everyone knows when and how to do something in just one way, then the pupils are learning how to do things in just one way rather than in 15 different ways".

Heather Penney uses Active Support with support staff to identify and implement opportunities for individual pupils and, again, has seen the benefits of a consistent approach.

"It's easier having the framework so

all three shifts are doing the same thing rather than three different shifts doing something three different ways".

Because of the success of the method, Heather is now able to work one-to-one with one of the young people who has recently begun to play rugby in the local village.

"He's a lot more independent and a lot better at asking for what he wants. He's certainly gained a lot of confidence, going out into

“The ‘overlooked’ bit is a key point. I’d always thought about what people were doing, but I’d never thought about what people were not doing”.



Duncan Pritchard,
Principal of Aran Hall School

the community and through his interaction with the general public. He can set out his own interests and we can follow it up whereas before he probably wouldn’t have had the means to set that up”.

Lorraine Hellawell is the house manager and has welcomed the focus on individual achievement and participation. Active Support training changed not only the way she worked, but the way she thought about her work, with its emphasis on Person Centred, individual development.

She feels that Active Support works very well with the young people at Aran Hall. “It gives them an understanding of what is going to happen next throughout their day and it gives them structure and enables families to have their input into the whole approach.

“It gives pupils more independence. Since we’ve introduced Active Support into the house, we’ve introduced one-to-one work, which we weren’t able to do before, and

that has given the young people more independence – doing more for themselves that they couldn’t do before.”

The whole team freely admitted that implementation has not been entirely pain free. Duncan commented, “It is expensive on staff, there’s no doubt about that – staff time and numbers. Sandy acknowledged in the last training that there isn’t an open cheque book for these things and you do have to work within the resources available, so it’s about monitoring those resources”.

The new system brought with it a change of organisational culture that was challenging not only for some of the staff.

Duncan told us, “When Karen first pushed us to adopt Active Support 18 months ago I thought ‘But we do this bit here and that bit there..’ All this stuff that you’ve invested your intellectual and emotional energy in over the years, to suddenly say ‘right, we’re not doing that any more, we’re going to do this’. It’s quite daunting!”

There have also been some issues with CSSIW. “They said initially that the paperwork and data we produced was not sufficient to meet the Children’s Homes regulations, but our local inspector was very supportive of Person Centred Planning and Active Support so she helped us develop the paper system”, said Duncan.

He went on to add that Active Support had significantly reduced the paperwork from a system that had built up piecemeal over the previous 25 years, which supports his view that staff should by rights be spending more time with the young people than on their laptops.

Duncan Pritchard is a happy man. “There’s no going back”, he said. “Other house managers are taking it on and getting baseline data together before implementation. Staff are investing in it. There’s contact with the staff here so the other houses know what’s coming. And it IS coming!”

Structure and Consistency

An ideal approach for people with autism.

Interview: Phil Glyn Williams. Photos: Robbie Morris

Keith Owen, training manager with the National Autistic Society for six years, has found that Active Support, with its inbuilt structure, is working very well in helping them to support people with autism.

“People with autism like structure. Without structure, people with autism can get angry or anxious or withdrawn – they need to know what is going on. Active Support is ideal for people with autism because it gives a timetable for when certain activities need to be done, or it reminds people that certain things have to be done and, when they have done it, it shows them what is coming next”.

“It provides consistency from one support worker to the next. We promote consistency although each staff member does things slightly differently which is healthy for a person with autism as we wouldn’t like the staff to be robotic but by the same token, it is good to have the structure in place”.

Keith has worked with ARC to tailor Active Support staff training

specifically for his organisation. “I think the training shows staff how to support people with autism to be more independent and to give them more choice. I think AS allows people with autism to become more independent because it gives people with autism more to do”.

“I like to think that we can use Active Support to have more meaningful activities, make more meaningful relationships, make new friends...”

Does he think Active Support can help people with autism to get more out of life?

“Absolutely! With Active Support and Person Centred Planning working together, the person and staff and families get together to decide what



Keith Owen, NAS trainer

new things the person with autism can do or what new places to go to, which is very beneficial for the person with autism”.

He has observed that, in the services that have adopted Active Support as a way of working, people with autism are taking more control over their own lives.

“They’re doing more cooking, more shopping, housework, changing their beds, drying their clothes, ironing – all the basic stuff that you need to do when you live in a service”. Keith has plans for the future, and would like to use Active Support to help NAS service users to develop their personal relationships and to continue to build ‘ordinary lives’.

“I would like to think that we can use Active Support to have more meaningful activities, make more meaningful relationships, make new friends – knowing the newsagent or the person working in the restaurant – just making more friends and broadening a person’s experiences”.



Angharad Humphries, registered manager

Angharad Humphries is a registered manager with NAS and has seen Active Support having an impact.

“Sometimes we can forget how much people can do and we tend to do too much for people. It has shown us that instead of rushing about to get the activity done we can spend more time on the activity itself – it doesn’t matter how much people participate as long as there is participation”.

The people she supports are very able and active, but there have been definite benefits for service users.

“When we came on the training we had difficulty building in the goal plans because people were very active. But it really helped us to spot

the little things – the gaps. If one of the service users is cleaning a room or changing the bed, we can use Active Support to help prompt him to look at the finer details – if the valance has been changed or to just Hoover in the corners in case the cobwebs are gathering, that sort of thing”.

Angharad found it difficult to pick out the main benefit of switching to Active Support because there have been so many, for staff and service users both.

“It doesn’t matter how much people participate as long as there is participation.”

“I think AS was something that we were doing, it’s just that now we have the framework in place to structure it and map it. It does highlight what we can improve but it also highlights how we can best utilise time and staffing – putting staff in places where they’re most effective. We work 1:3, so you really benefit from the clear structure if one is ironing, one bringing the washing in and the third doing something else”.

“I think I’m quite lucky in our house because the service users more or

less run their home, but this has shown us that there are parts where Active Support can help to build on a skill. I think we’ve sometimes been afraid to try new activities, and I think we didn’t appreciate just how much people can actually do for themselves”, she said.

Life has certainly been busy for Barbara, one of people using NAS services. Outside the home she has enjoyed theatre trips and holidays, but inside she is involved in all of the chores that make up an ordinary life.

She looks after her own room, changing the bed, Hoovering and dusting as needed. She does her own personal and food shopping and plans her cooking for the week, sitting down with staff to work out menus.

Angharad commented, “One thing that has been really good for us is the service users being able to choose what they want to eat. They write their own shopping lists the night before they want to go shopping. Before, we used to have a three week rolling rota of menus because Care Standards required it. We still record everything that the service user eats – well, John now records it himself actually”.

Quality Training at Cost Effective Rates: e-learning courses in Positive Behavioural Support

by Dr Edwin Jones

The revised edition of the Mansell Report (Department of Health, 2007) importantly restates the fact that investment in services for people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour is required to develop and expand the capacity of local services to meet the needs of this very vulnerable group.

The report recognises that training represents a key element of this investment but that, unfortunately, most existing training for staff is far too general, inaccessible or simply unavailable. Mansell recommends Person Centred approaches, such as Active Support, positive behavioural support, total communication, etc. Further, the report calls for training to be more readily available to support staff in direct service provision, with more advanced instruction for those with more senior roles.

In anticipation of the Mansell report the Special Projects Team (SPT) at Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University NHS Trust has been working on accessible and affordable training solutions for the last five years, particularly suitable for social care partners. The result is a suite of courses in Positive behavioural support (PBS), the most up-to-date, evidence based approach that provides an ethical technology to

translate contemporary service values into action when supporting people who challenge.

The courses cover the key components of high quality service delivery, including: contemporary service values; Person Centred Planning; understanding challenging behaviour; mental health issues; the three-stage intervention model; primary prevention involving Active Support, inclusive communication and skill teaching; secondary prevention and reactive strategies. They also address the design of positive behavioural support plans and how to manage implementation, monitoring and review. The training therefore, matches the aims and objectives of the most progressive contemporary services providers because it can enable them to skill-up their staff to improve the quality of life of people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

The courses are delivered on-line and have been designed for flexibility, so individuals can study and learn at their own pace, accessing the courses from a computer connected to the internet in any location within the UK (and, indeed beyond). Learning is through engaging interactive formats, downloadable documents and real-life simulations. Learners



Dr Edwin Jones,
Bro Morgannwg University

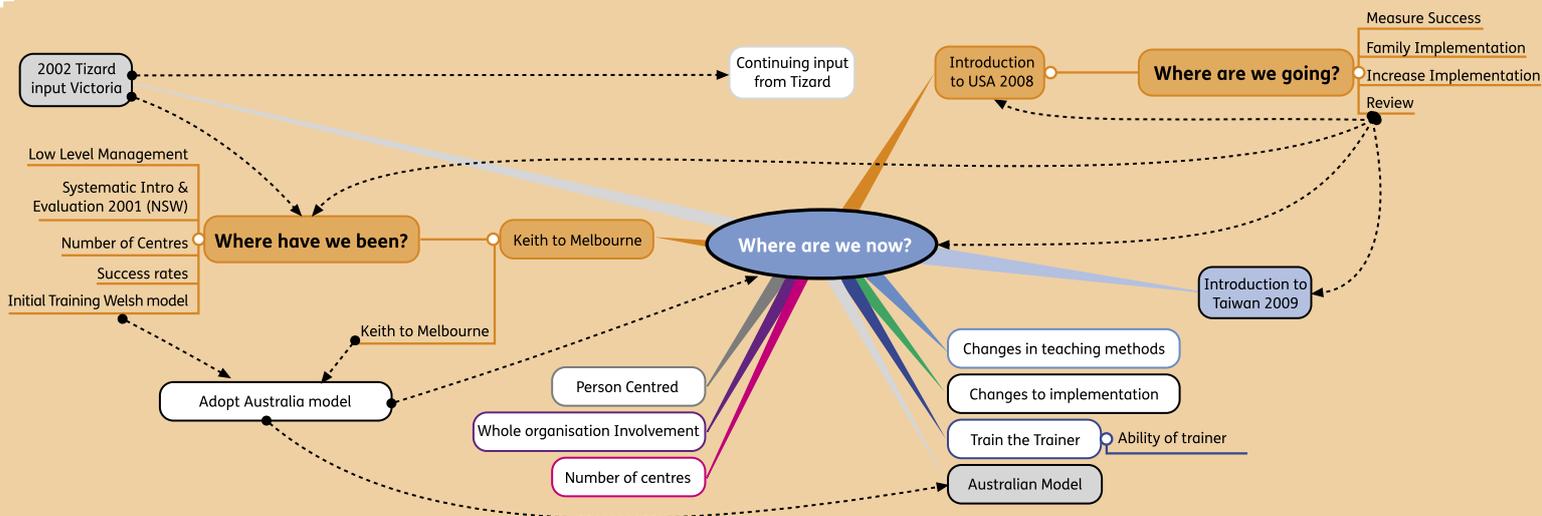
also get the chance to complete revision and practice assessments before submitting their work online. Successful completion leads to a nationally recognised BTEC qualification at Advanced Certificate (eg. for support workers) or Advanced Diploma level (eg. for managers), both provide underpinning knowledge for NVQ's in Health and Social Care and are mapped against National Occupational Standards and the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework.

Due to the financial support of the Welsh Assembly Government, the training can be offered at very cost effective rates of between £120-£190 per person for 150 to 200 hours of learning. Costs and hours vary depending on whether the advanced certificate or advanced diploma is undertaken and because modest discounts can be offered to organisations who register groups of staff.

For more information, contact **Jo Wheeler**, email: Joanne.Wheeler@bromor-tr.wales.nhs.uk or phone **01656 753849**.

An Overview from Down Under

By Tony Harman



I wonder if Jim Mansell had any idea when he visited Australia at the invitation of Golden City Support Services in 2002 that it would be the beginning of an era for Active Support in Australia.

During this same period Keith McVilly, who had spent some time at the Welsh Centre for Learning Disability, returned to Australia and subsequently the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) full of enthusiasm for Active Support. In early 2004 Roger Stancliffe from CDS invited Sandy Toogood to visit Australia to run a 'Train the Trainer' programme. So began the first systematic introduction and evaluation of Active

Support in Australia involving three NGO (Non Government Organisation) homes and two DADHC (Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care) NSW homes.

It is important to acknowledge those who, by providing so much valuable time and input, have enabled Active Support to develop and flourish in Australia over the intervening years:

- David Felce, Edwin Jones, Jon Perry, Sandy Toogood, and all at the Welsh Centre for generously sharing many Active Support teaching resources.
- Jim Mansell and the team at the Tizard Centre.

- Roger Stancliffe now at USYD (University of Sydney).
- Keith McVilly now at RMIT University (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology).
- Gary Radler, consultant clinical psychologist.

From the New South Wales perspective the teaching of the 'Train the Trainer' method has evolved by combining elements of approaches in the UK and continuing experience gained through implementation in Australia. Active Support 'Train the Trainer' training in Australia is modelled on an enhanced version of the Apprenticeship-Supervisor-Independence procedure that

represents a blend of the 'Cardiff approach' developed by Edwin Jones and his colleagues at the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities, and the 'Tizard approach' on Person Centred Active Support developed by Jim Mansell and his colleagues at the Tizard Centre, University of Kent, both of which have a consistent and underlying framework.

Some material has naturally evolved, particularly the emphasis on community involvement, based on four years of CDS experiences with Australian implementations. One of the major developments involves the use of video during interactive training on a regular basis to provide feedback to staff members and more often to the delight of residents seeing themselves on television.

Between 2004 and 2008 Active Support has been implemented by members of the original team from Sydney in fourteen government / non government organisations including one group in New Zealand. A second organisation in New Zealand has recently had input from Sam Murray at Yooralla. There has also been a joint Government / NGO collaboration in South Australia 2007, and some preliminary take up in Western Australia in 2008. I will be visiting Taiwan in March for a two week period to introduce Active Support in collaboration with the university in Taipei.

I also recently introduced a modified 'Train the Trainer' approach whereby classroom training for staff was done over one day concentrating on the major elements and requirements.

This was followed up by 'normal' interactive training of approximately two hours one-to-one per staff member but also employing the use of video. So far results are looking very promising for the future.

“The future for people with disabilities is more often than not about small steps and big leaps of faith.”

There have been important successes but a number of challenges remain, including effective large-scale implementation of Active Support together with long term sustainability. The question is also posed whether it is possible to evolve greater client control over activities on a more 'Person Centred' level and if continuing integration of Person Centred Planning and Active Support is both practical and possible.

Active Support and Person Centred Planning are considered to be mutually supportive processes. PCP is viewed as a means of generating client goals that are then implemented through Active Support, which in turn generates opportunities to inform future PCP developments for the individual client. Similarly, the values and skills acquired by staff through their Active Support training contribute to a service environment conducive to the effective implementation of PCP.



About... **Tony Harman**

Tony Harman has a background of over 30 years working in the disability field.

He graduated with Honours in the post-graduate programme Masters of Health Science (Developmental Disability) from the University of Sydney and commences his PhD in 2009.

He currently works at the Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) where he is involved in a number of research and teaching projects, which include the Diploma of Disability Studies in Singapore, Active Support, Individualised Funding and Resource Allocation. In addition, he is developing CDS E-Learning and lecturing on the Multidisciplinary Collaborative Practice module in the Masters program at the University of Sydney. Tony is also the System Administrator for the USA University of Minnesota's College of Direct Support in Australia.

The aspirations of some people with disabilities span wide horizons whilst for others barriers and limitations exist to such a degree that they have difficulty thinking about next week let alone next year. The future for people with disabilities is more often than not about small steps and big leaps of faith.

In general, staff in Australia have positively embraced the principles and practices of Active Support and provided feedback that Active Support training is practical, relevant and helpful. It has assisted many to

learn new strategies and approaches and is of lasting value for staff and residents alike. Staff have also expressed excitement about the new opportunities for engagement that residents are experiencing, and a number of staff have reported they felt more empowered and more satisfied with their jobs on a daily basis.

In conclusion, it is imperative that Active Support training is not compromised by changing practices or short cutting training. There is sufficient research at a national and

international level to prove that successful implementation depends on the use of both classroom training (with all staff from the home attending classroom training together) and Individual interactive training sessions on site.

As to the future, we can only hope that the significant building blocks put in place over the last six years will have laid the foundation for the continued growth, introduction, and implementation of Person Centred Active Support throughout Australia.



A few basic facts about Australia:

- Population of 21 million at June 2007.
- In 2006 there were 517,200 Indigenous Australians (2.5% of the total population).
- Median age of Australians in 2007 was 36.8 years.
- Most people living in Australia are born here, 76%.
- Of those born overseas, about 23% were born in the United Kingdom, 10% in New Zealand, 4% each in China and Vietnam.
- Most Australians live along the eastern seaboard and the south-eastern corner of the continent, in major cities.

- Figures from 2003 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008) indicate that over half a million Australians (3% of the population) have intellectual disability and a majority (61%) of those people have a severe or profound limitation in 'core' activities of daily living.
- Across a range of specific activities for which need for assistance was measured in 2003, the two areas with the lowest levels of fully met need for assistance were cognition/emotion (38%) and communication (36%).
- People with intellectual disability are a major group of users of disability support services in Australia and most are aged under 65 years (436,200).



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