

Active Support, a way of working

Organisation name: Association for Real Change

This project was funded through the Workforce Development Innovation Fund 2018-19.

Project priority: Embed personalisation in practice

Introduction

Association for Real Change (ARC) recognised there was a need to change the approach to personalisation in practice in support services for adults with a learning disability and/or autism and introduced Active Support as a working to embed personalisation.

Key learnings

- Active Support is a different way of working and focuses on empowerment and enablement of people who access support. When embedded successfully it increases the involvement of people in their own lives.
- It's important to communicate with families so they understand how Active Support works and the positive difference it makes; it can challenge their perception of what a support worker should be doing for their loved one.
- Staff need to be consistent in how they support people with their tasks. It's easier for 10 people to teach one way of working than for one person to learn 10 different ways of doing the same task.
- Implementing monitoring paperwork takes time and needs to be reviewed regularly to underpin Active Support and truly reflect progression of the person who is supported. It's critical that service leaders can support their staff teams with this.

Aims

The aim of this project was to support true personalisation and its implementation more effectively within support services for working age adults with a learning

disability and/or autism by challenging existing, traditional ways or attitudes of support.

The project

The project was a pilot and sought to change organisational culture and practice for a provider across 10 of their services, to help staff to work as 'enablers' rather than carers to promote greater independence, empowerment and personalisation for people who access support - and then measure the benefits of doing so.

20 service managers and leaders attended a two-day training session delivered by Association for Real Change (ARC). The training covered an introduction to active support and an interactive, practical implementation day. They then delivered training to 78 support workers, introducing them to the ethos and principles of active support.

Following the training four peer supervision sessions were held with the service leaders to share best practice and address challenges of implementation.

Information on progression of supported individuals was collected and collated using monitoring paperwork on a weekly basis for 8-12 weeks. This, as well as feedback from services, formed the evidence to demonstrate the impact the project had on personalisation.

An information pack and learning pack with workbook was created to support other organisations to understand more about Active Support and considerations to implementing it themselves.

All resources and outcomes will be shared with our sector partners, learning disability providers and be promoted on our website and featured in our e-newsletter.

The outcome

The aim of the project was met. Training was successfully delivered and changes in practice were seen very quickly. Staff fed back that working in this person-centred way made them feel like they were fulfilling the true purpose of their job.

For the people accessing support, the level of change was different for each person depending on their own motivation levels, health and setting they were supported in. For some, a dramatic change in behaviour was seen including reductions in behaviours of concern and increases in levels of engagement and skill development. People were more involved in daily tasks with some even taking up a new hobby.

“I think Active Support is very positive for the people we support. It encourages independence and we have seen massive improvements in some areas, which has furthermore improved confidence and mood. Everyday staff are managing to achieve something more (with the people they work with). This then means the people we

support implement these things in to their daily routines and do things without us as it becomes second nature, which is very rewarding to see.” – HG, Support Worker

Next steps

ARC will promote the outcomes from the project and resources, with sector partners and learning disability providers, to encourage providers to consider Active Support as a way of working.

More information

You can find the Active Support information pack and Active Support learning pack workbook by clicking on the links below:

<https://arcuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ARC-Active-Support-Information-Pack-2019.pdf>

<https://arcuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ARC-Active-Support-Learning-Pack-Workbook-2019.pdf>