

The Lifeways Group

Positive behavioural support

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

The Lifeways Group provide support services for people with diverse and complex needs, and has supported Keith, who has a learning disability, complex autism and related anxiety, in his own home for over ten years.

He sometimes displays behaviour that challenges and because of his anxieties and how it affects his thought patterns, it can be challenging to help him find solutions to the thoughts he has, that are building his anxieties.

These behaviours can often last for 4 to 5 days at a time which has previously led to Keith verbally and physically attacking staff, which has contributed to high staff turnover.

The Lifeways Group recognise that communication with Keith and getting it right has been difficult for them, and they wanted to work with staff to ensure they have the right skills and knowledge to provide high quality care and support.

Positive behavioural support isn't complicated but it does mean supporting Keith in a very different way.

Sue Parker, Support Worker

What we wanted to achieve

The Lifeways Group told us more about how they developed their staff to improve care and support for Keith.

They said:

“We wanted to support Keith to build a daily lifestyle that he could cope with. Each different situation and environment can cause him stress which means he needs certainty in his life, and we needed to help him cope with the unpredictability of certain situations that it was inevitable he would experience.

To do this we recognised that we needed to build structures and routines that he was comfortable with, and train and support the staff team to enable this to happen.

We also wanted to support him to take part in as many different activities as possible, and build confidence to take positive risk taking approaches to help him do this.”



What we did

“We worked with Keith’s multi-disciplinary and behaviour team to develop a positive behaviour support plan. We spent time with staff to make sure they fully understood the plan and how they could implement the key details of it in day to day care and support.

We also worked with Keith and his staff team to develop ways they can better understand each other and help them understand how doing this can improve everyday situations for both.

We also used different strategies to encourage Keith to engage more with his staff and to talk through his thoughts and problems.

One example of this was using ‘thought bubbles’ in which Keith would write down his thoughts and feelings. He’d then discuss these with staff and talk through what the thoughts meant to him. He would then decide himself if he wanted to keep them or discard them. He usually disposed of them once he was happy that the thought ‘had been dealt with’. Often he just needed an answer or solution and this would usually leave him feeling more relaxed and happy.”

What we achieved

“As a result of the training, Keith now leads a more fulfilled life, with reduced levels of anxiety. His behaviour patterns have changed and he now talks things through with staff much more, and hasn’t physically attacked a staff member for over two years.

Now that he’s coming to terms with his thoughts, he’s able to work through past experiences that have always troubled him. Because of these memories, he has often refused to return to places or meet people from the past. This is now changing and he is now ‘manning up’ (his own words) and confronting things bravely to enable him to move on.

Staff are also more confident in dealing with any issues, embracing positive risk taking and staff turnover has reduced.”

It’s good to see Keith being so much more in control of his life.

Jason Smith, Support Worker

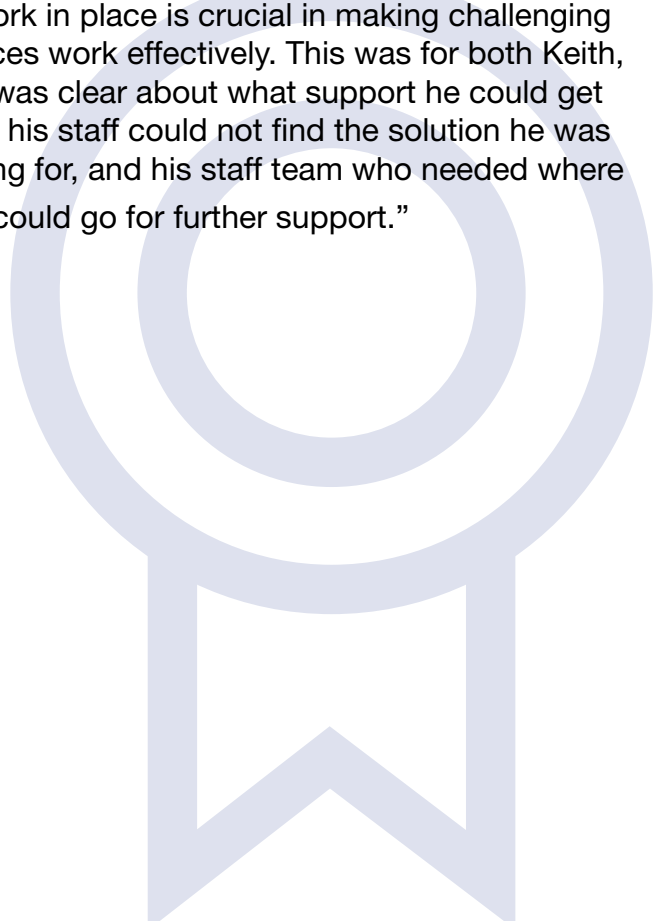
What we learnt

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

“We learnt that positive communication is often the key, even when behaviours are extremely challenging. The training enabled us to develop an understanding of how Keith was feeling, how his staff were feeling and how this impacted on everyone involved.

We helped Keith understand how his staff were feeling about working with him, and the staff gained a much better understanding of Keith in relation to his autism and how that affected even the simplest of things in his life in an often negative way.

We also learnt that getting the right support network in place is crucial in making challenging services work effectively. This was for both Keith, who was clear about what support he could get when his staff could not find the solution he was looking for, and his staff team who needed where they could go for further support.”



Skills for Care recommends

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

Supporting people with autism

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

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/autism

Supporting people with learning disabilities

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

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/learningdisability

Restrictive practices

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

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/restrictivepractices

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP
telephone 0113 245 1716
email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
web www.skillsforcare.org.uk

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