

POSITIVE SUPPORT PROPOSALS

EASTERN METRO REGION of DHS VICTORIA

Most of the following proposals have for years been totally foreign to most DHS management and staff. Indeed, most direct care staff would consider the following as a load of rubbish.

A Community Visitor Report, obtained under FOI states, "Community visitors concerned with staff not following instructions regarding active support, because of staff conflict, with staff sticking by a "basic care" attitude. There was a letter produced by an unknown person stating that 'active support' was not in the basic care that DDSO workers provide"

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Ideas from the Inner East House Supervisors

Ideas to Improve Communication with Families

- Use the positive connections questions from VALID to get baseline
 - o Electronic version to be emailed out.
- Newsletter – 1 monthly to 3 monthly.
- Send a card – and recent pictures.
- Regular phone call / emails – diarise
 - o Updates of what is new, where we've been lately, health.
- Afternoon teas.
- Invite families out for meals.
- Go and visit – especially if older and/or far away.
- Christmas BBQ, grand final day, Easter, etc
 - o Invitations bring a plate.
- Little gifts people have made / chosen themselves
 - o Father's day / mother's day / birthdays
 - o For brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces.
- Challenge history.
- Regular agenda on house meeting
 - o "in your shoes" exercise
 - o Keyworker role
 - o Our house quality plan, teach expectorations.
- Invite to birthday parties & Christmas parties.
- Monthly news-letter.
- Three monthly family meetings.
- Encourage people we support to ring their families.
- Weekly phone calls to siblings.

- Encourage family to attend important medical appointments.
- Assist person to visit family in the country.
- Invite families to PCP meetings.
- Update by phone call re problems, issues and good stuff too.
- Send photos via mobile phone to sister in Sydney with a message.
- Set a day and time to call each week to prevent ‘overkill’

Connecting Families and Friends in Group Homes

- Encouraging family member to use the ‘carers pass’ (Companion Card)
 - o Attend movies
 - o Attend productions / concerts
 - o Train rides outings.
- Families who live interstate / long way away
 - o Arrange day trips / picnics with family and friends.
- Families over for dinner / afternoon tea
- Creating culture where families come regularly into the group home for a “meeting – afternoon tea, hang out”.
- Monthly newsletter prepared by residents for families.
- Involving families when moving / change in house setting up ‘homely’ environment.
- Phone numbers – easy read for people.
- Cards – mother’s day, father’s day, Christmas and birthdays.
- Invitations to special events / meetings.
- Newsletter – at the house – every three months.
- Technological communications – e.g. SKYPE or emails.
- Regular contact by phone re updates
- o Health / recreation.
- Support with visits to families, at the house or nursing home.
- Letters.
- Drawings and photos.
- Local links to friends that live in the local area.
- Connections with people at hobbies / community venues
 - o Messed
 - o Hockey games
 - o Local shops
 - o Art classes
 - o Church
 - o Local band
 - o Discos.
- Friends through holidays – making new friends.
- Maintaining the connection through day placements.
- Putting into practice.
- PCP goals
- Quality plan

- Communicating to others (staff, family day program).
- Phone calls
- o Birthdays
- o Individual
- o Current health concerns.
- Home visits
- o Updated program information
- o Informing parents – maybe talking between parents / Drs
- Via emails to parents to give information.
- New equipment at residence family have to access connections.
- Photos / cards new keyworker to inform parents of the change of key worker.
- SKYPE
- o Open communications between families, via emails weekly about what happened through the week in the group home.
- o Individual talks to families weekly relating to the group home.
- o Partnership between homes / staff.
- Key worker to send monthly photos / cards.
- Three monthly newsletter, family meetings,
- Companion Card
- Nation Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

House Supervisors Meeting
Central & Outer Areas

What's Working Well

- Newsletters from group homes to families and friends
- Resident meetings
- o Themes for people / home / staff
- Supporting home visits for people and their families
- Honest open approach
- o Walking alongside families
- o Involving extended family members and friends. Eg. Brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces etc.
- Invite family to appointments
- Keyworkers system going well
- Involve family re-choice of medical professionals
- Transport residents to aging residences
- Meetings/party 3 monthly with significant others.
- Sharing good news/achievements
- E-mail once a month with family members.
- Phone calls (on loud speaker for people who don't use speech to communicate)
- Emails

- Afternoon teas
- Working bee and BBQs
- Families over for dinner
- Resident meetings involving families
- Parties – Christmas, birthdays etc
- Invite to special outings
- Provide individualised communication to families (newsletter)
- Family involvement in PCP etc.
- Family brunches
- Most importantly meeting individuals needs
- Work with them.

What Can We Do Better

- Communication
- o Minutes / information / resident meeting to families
- Getting Toni's message across to all staff
- Smaller more intimate family get-together's, rather than big functions.
- Provide “confidential” and “private” space.
- Display empathy – walking in their shoes
- What do they want to know about medical issues
- Involving family members who are not actively involved – 3 monthly
- Inform about small issues.

Good Ideas

- How do we connect with our residents ‘important people’
- News
- Emails/photos re outings
- Easter }
- Christmas } celebrate – invites to house/out to dinner
- Birthdays }
- Key worker – letters/report with photos
- Slide show on a DVD to music
- Take digital camera everywhere
- Phone calls
- Facilitated; outings, visits.
- Oban road ☐ took parents on a holiday
- Major purchases \$ inform/talk
- Health : invites and updates
- Conversation about what they want
- Guilt free (imposed – be careful).

What we took out of today and what we can do...

- Valid – great proforma
- Let families know when you are on leave
- Empathy – staff to have a deep understanding
- Invite parents in an informal way to tell their stories
- Change management/communication
- Initial CRU visit
- Consistent team.
- Open and honest communication
- Emails are a fantastic tool
- Parents need to be a legitimate part of the process
- Desperation of families
- Everyone unique – not a stereo type
- Services – where are they
- Sister started pen pal with niece (interstate)
- Allowing compliance i.e. accepting you do???
- Technology – Face book
- Beyond mum and dad
- Staff forums i.e. Lunch time
- Casual orientation
- Certificate V – subject.
- An understanding of life's journey
- Families anxieties
- Empathy for child's mile stones
- Importance of family involvement
- Families are aware of staff issues/conflicts.
- We work with human beings fine links objectivity/subjective
- More empathy
- Far too??? with constant staff/structure change
- It's not a generic response – every situation is different
- Staff play an important role in how family feel about the care their child is receiving
- Visible look of a child looking neat and care for
- Mutual respect
- Constructive criticism.
- Understanding families' pain.
- The system has dehumanised families
- Staff and families are often on different wave links about what residents want
- How do we educate families about current trends, when staff are struggling
- Need to make proactive contact
- Reactive contact only
- Sending photos, letters
- Father takes his daughter to an evening program.
- Fear

- Parent's love different
- Grief/loss ongoing
- Milestones in life different.

Challenge for Action/Change

- Daily reality
- Conflict of support
- Mixed values
- Guilt
- Understanding.
- Don't judge families
- Listen and learn
- Recognise the contribution families have in the lives of their children/siblings
- Family as equal partners
- Recognition of future needs. E.g. new families entering group home
- Different expectations e.g. Treated as they were at home
- Appropriate transition for new house members.
- Appropriate placement of new residents, more input from families of existing residents
- Everybody, families' residents, staff all understand the goals and aspirations for that person.

Positive Connections

DAS (Disability Accommodation Services) is committed to maintaining and building meaningful connections for residents living in their accommodation. This is not only aimed at supporting residents to have a good quality of life, but also acknowledges residents' right to family contact, friends, community and relationships.

AIMS

1. To support residents to maintain connections and relationships with significant others, such as friends and family.
2. To promote family and friends involvement in the life of residents.
3. To support residents to develop positive connections with others in their support network (eg. work/day setting) and community.