

## **Positive Behaviour Management and Quality of Life Enhancement by Lifestyle in Supported Accommodation (LISA) Inc**

All those with an intellectual or multiple disability, especially those with autism, need to be given every opportunity to enhance their quality of life wherever possible.

Many have multiple behaviours of concern, especially when they are young. Consistent and effective behaviour management can often reduce these behaviours significantly and move this energy to more constructive and beneficial activities.

The parents to whom this story is dedicated had no idea what they should do when they discovered their son had an intellectual disability and autism. There was little information in Australia in the 70s. And their son missed out on the few practical intervention programs which were available at that time, as the medical profession would not diagnose him as autistic until it was too late.

Europe and the US became their source of information which allowed them to build their own intervention programs (there was internet at this time). These consisted of giving their son intensive attention, engagement and interaction with activities to help him understand the real world and be more accepting of it.

In practical terms, these programs consisted of, for example: Rolling their son in a blanket, and a barrel. Spinning him in a 'dizzy giddy'. Encourage him to walk up and down steps, on uneven surfaces, through bush land. Encourage him to feel different surfaces with both hands and bare feet. Have him run freely with primary school kids in their recess. Exposing him to a wide variety of foods. Etc, etc.

Although the parents achieved most of their targets, they came to later realise some things had got past them. Dental care was one of these, as their son was still needing to go under a general anaesthetic to have a periodic dental clean and polish. They said, we must look at removing this undesirable requirement – But how?

After some consideration, the parents saw the possible answer as simulating the dentist's chair and tools to reduce the fear most with autism have to that which they don't understand - especially invasive procedures like hair and nail cutting.

Two banana lounges and some dental tools were purchased. One set for home, and one for their son's day centre. At every opportunity, their son was encouraged to lay on the lounge and have his teeth checked.

After two years, their son was gradually introduced to the dental chair and procedures. After a further two years the dentist was able to do a full check, scale and polish every six months. Naturally, with mum present for reassurance and support.

Their story does not end here, as their intensive behaviour management really paid off when their son had a fall, with injuries to his mouth needing urgent dental treatment.

The parents rushed their son to his dentist, where the dentist was able to brace the area of teeth immediately, subsequently saying that if their son still needed a general anaesthetic, he would have lost three front teeth as a result of the delay.