

Open Learn: Learning Space audio transcript
K303_1: Managing to meet service users' needs
A Meeting of Minds: Video clip 2

Gwen

Everybody's enjoyed themselves, everybody's had a laugh and, more important, everybody's had their own little bit to do, so it's shared by everybody.

Man

Whilst we were painting it, a pigeon actually came over and must have thought it was real and just went smack straight into the wall.

Keith

It's been a really nice project. It's ... everyone's got involved, everyone's been really, really keen, and the nice thing to see is that everyone's taken possession of their own little part of it, the ownership of it. It's very much their mural.

Keith

Because this is what Mind's all about. It's about getting people involved and doing things for themselves.

Donna

I've learnt that ... through doing this project ... that no matter how small a piece that anyone's done on the wall, that it's, as a whole, made a difference to the whole thing. Everyone's definitely an artist

Lynette Clark

A hallmark of Redcar and Cleveland Mind is that service users are intimately involved in its planning and management.

John

Hiya Jane, it's nice to be meeting up with you again after the AGM.

Lynette Clark

Jane has regular meetings with trustees who are themselves ordinary members of the organisation.

Jane Reast

I was wondering whether we might do some training with trustees and volunteers. We've got a number of new volunteers now, particularly from East Cleveland.

John

Yeah right.

Jane Reast

Around boundaries ... boundaries for each and every one of us in our work.

John

Oh yeah absolutely, well they are real issues aren't they?

Jane Reast

They are. Where do we hold the training?

John

Ah, well I think we should sort of move away from being Redcar based, if we possibly can.

Jane Reast

Oh that's great to hear you saying that John, actually.

John

A venue out in East Cleveland in the rural bits, you know, Guisborough or Loftus.

Jane Reast

Yeah, that'd be good.

John

That's a good idea.

Jane Reast

And, if we do the hard work, then we can do the network.

Lynette Clark

Networking is a crucial element of Jane's role. With day services spread across a number of locations, Jane has had to learn the art of managing at a distance. But she makes regular visits for key events at any of the day service venues.

Gary

Every Wednesday we run a lunch club, and essentially what we try and do is get everybody involved in some ... some part of the preparation of the meal, whether that's preparing the shopping list, going and getting the shopping from the shops, or actually preparing the food itself.

I mean, that's the idea really of creating jobs for everybody, so everybody gets a little bit of something to do, and it feels ... feels like they're participating and got involved in it.

Mabel

We all muck in. And some wash up, and some wipe up, but that's what it's all about ... the Mind. Everybody, you know, helps one another.

Lynette Clark

Jane's visits are a chance to listen and respond to people's concerns ... but how best to strike the balance between delegating and remaining hands-on?

Jane Reast

The first point of service user to me is often paid colleagues. But I too still have a role, and it's a different role, leading from a different place, catalysing from a different place. Any other issues?

Gary

I think another issue is really being around putting, sort of, own people in residential homes, and us... it brings up funny boundaries for us. It's difficult for us to bring some things up. It's really about sharing information about service users particularly. But it can be very awkward. It's like treading on eggshells sometimes because things we would normally say, we're finding that we can't. You know, we have to be sort of ... I mean we can't say anything about, we fall back a bit.

Jane Reast

Ok, is this something we could explore in supervision next week?

Gary

That's fine, yeah.

Jane Reast

Really?

Gary

Really, honestly, yeah.

Jane Reast

And if it isn't soon enough, if its safety issues for individuals ... abuse concerns or anything ...

It is crucial that I let go. And, in letting go, I'm also there to support. There's a difference between letting go and abandoning, an absolutely crucial difference. People need to still feel that there is genuine commitment, support, understanding, when the chips are down, when the unexpected happens, when people are frightened, when things go wrong, when people as well can feel safe to say, "I don't know about that" ... and equally that I can be transparent and say, "I don't know that one, but we can find out together".