

CO-PRODUCTION CASE STUDY

Involving people with lived experience in training for BRC staff or volunteers

Introduction

Our Service User Engagement meetings are held twice yearly and as part of this ongoing development during the meetings it was identified that some service users were very interested in the induction and training processes of new staff.

On completion of the meeting, minutes and action plans were devised to further inform those who could not attend to see if there was a further interest in this area.

There was significant interest so we decided to take the project forward.

Why we involved people - expected benefits

By involving people with lived experience we are able to ensure that at the very beginning of a staff or volunteers pathway with BRC it is clear that the people we support are at the heart of what we do. Involving people ensures that induction and learning and development are powerful and thought provoking introduction to BRC and the role.

This also ensures that we are engaging people with lived experience in meaningful and relevant projects and activities. Induction and learning and development are a vital part of a new staff or volunteer role so it's a project where service users can have significant and tangible impact and influence over BRC activities.

How were people recruited? Support and preparation provided?

One of our service users expressed his interest in supporting the training needs for new staff so that he could tell them about his journey from having a well-established career to be reliant on others for a lot of his daily living tasks. This self-selecting form of recruiting can be challenging if there is a deadline but ensures that people are involved in a way that is right for them.

There was a lot of preparation and support we gave in order to facilitate the project where we worked alongside one another to understand what the induction and learning and development might involve and what and how he would like to engage. He wanted to check *what he had to offer would be of use*, so it was important that the preparation was done sensitively and appropriately which highlighted the experience and expertise he would be adding to the project and the added insight this would bring.

The training was on 'Supporting Individuals with Daily Needs' so we discussed the content and he asked if he would be able to give a 15 minute talk about the following areas:

- My Story and how I got here
- What is it like to have support
- What is important to me when my support staff come into my home
- Why it is import to live a full life

The training also covered the National Care standards which was important to discuss beforehand. We explicitly explored ground rules and mapped out boundaries which set clear expectations for the day for both sides. We agreed the following:

- He would prefer not to talk about anything personal or that he feels uncomfortable or upsetting
- To talk for no more than 10 minutes at a time so as not to feel too overwhelmed
- To be seated in a spacious area that he would be able to easily access due to his mobility
- Not to mention his family names or where he lived that could be identifiable
- He agreed that he would answer questions from staff for their learning

The day of the training

We made sure that on the day there was time and space for our service user to arrive before the trainees so that he could choose where he would like to be seated and debrief on where in the training he would like to give his talk.

When the trainees arrived, as agreed, I introduced everyone but gave space for him to introduce himself and explain what he would be covering in his own words. This was important so that the power dynamics of the group were clear – this was an expert consultant offering valuable insight into an induction and learning and development day.

We took regular breaks and when we spoke about the foundations of the training, I then sent the trainees for a short interval to which I double checked he was ok to continue. By continually giving space and confirming how he wanted to be involved, we were able to manage risk and ensure it was a positive experience.

On the day he discussed the following with the trainees:

- His working life and career
- What happened when he had a stroke and how it felt
- Depression and dealing with a large change
- How having help hanged his life
- His Goals for the future

He spent 15 minutes talking about these in great detail with several of the trainees asking what his goals were and how he felt receiving support for the first time. He was able to answer all questions confidently throughout the session.

Key insights and next steps

- By engaging someone with lived experience we were able to bring everything back to why we are here and what the service is all about.
- Our service user was able to attend several meetings and identify areas that would be suitable for the needs of the attendees. This ensures his ongoing influence over induction and learning and development and that it wasn't just a one of event.
- We asked him to complete a survey after the events to ensure that we were continuously improving

Challenges and recommendations

There are lots of things we learnt and would recommend to others if they would like to involve people with lived experience in inductions and learning and development:

- Prepare and meet with the service user before the day of training to look at guidance and support for the day
- ‘Supporting Individuals with their Daily Needs’ was identified as a good topic as it is part of the National Care standards and gave a strong opportunity for the service user to reflect on how they would like staff to treat them with dignity and respect. This was an area that has a good scope of influence for the service user to influence.
- ‘Daily needs’ also allowed the service user to talk about their circumstances in a sensitive and appropriate way. Try to compile an agenda that is structured so that the service user has a meaningful agenda to follow and that is agreed beforehand.
- Feedback is also a great way to establish the worth of the exercise
- Keep it simple and enjoy watching the new staff listen to our service users – it’s very empowering.