

Emerging from lockdown, positive for some!

Whilst we prepare to embrace a lifting of lockdown restrictions, we all grow more and more excited and the news projects such positivity about our 'return to normal', life begins to look so much more natural going forward.....for some!

The People We Support (PWS) will also be excited about the things we have all missed; family, friends and the social gatherings. However, there will also be PWS who have found the COVID19 journey *less* challenging, because *their* world is 'safer', less complicated and certainly far less stressful, as staying at home, isolated to an extent, within their own environment, means the world around them presents far fewer challenges.

Therefore, as we all emerge and adapt to living in a changed world, we must ensure our support structures recognise that this changed world will present massive challenges for some people who may well prefer their 'safer' COVID-19 way of living. This is because:

- There may be confusion about restrictions easing and what this means to activities people used to do.
- News programs and media in general will show the positive and negative aspects of the world around us emerging into the unknown.
- The PWS and their home environment will become more active, as footfall increases due to visits from loved ones, contractors and service visits from regional teams, health and safety and the quality team.
- Day services, voluntary employment and employment will slowly and carefully start up again.

For may we support, the world will be different, busier, noisier, muddled and confused!

There will be so much to consider as we all struggle to understand what the next few month's looks like. For those we support who find the world a challenging place, they may not necessarily embrace this. We should prepare for and expect:

- Behaviour as communication that will respond to these changes in their lives.
- PWS with known challenges and anxieties will communicate this to us in their own unique way, which will no doubt present pressures on families, friends, people they live with and the staff teams who provide and support those 'safe' environments.
- There may be an increase in incidents and behaviours which will create challenging places to live and work.

So what can we do.....?

Recognise:

We know the PWS well and giving some careful consideration to their challenges ahead will help everyone prepare for change.

If we know it's going to happen, and it will, the more we can think ahead the better prepared we will be.

Prepare:

- Discuss with people, their families and staff about how they feel and what they may be anxious about.
Take the discussion to Team meetings, staff supervisions and Tenants/house meetings. This will create a forward planning dialog, preparing for change.
- Consider 'safe' discussion around dinner tables, communal areas or any activity that PWS share and could use as a platform to explore with their peers how they feel and what they may need from others.
- Review Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSP) and adapt them in response to potential new anxieties or what we know will happen.
Consider PBSP for PWS, we know, will face these challenges.
- Person centred 'stress busters' what do people do to relax and unwind?
- Some PWS may need enhanced support around them as these challenges may well present barriers for them returning to life as they once lived.
- Provide and display information in appropriate formats to support people to understand their feeling and concerns
- Review support and risk plans to ensure we have considered their activities and the environment changes that may impact on how they feel.
- The change from doing very little all day to a new normal may well be exhausting and in turn require more adaptations to their weekly planners and timetables.

Deliver and monitor:

- Talk to staff about recording and monitoring, daily records, ABC charts and incident recording. We know it's coming.....
- Create space, time out, discussion and offloading environments.
- Keep PBSP's alive and responsive
- Adapt 'well-being' planning.
- Pro-active; as opposed to re-active support and risk planning.

The Care sector recognises this as a challenge for people and the workforce going forward and there is an abundance of support and advice out there. Here are a few resources that may help:

- ✓ BILD; <https://www.bild.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Responding-to-coronavirus-PBS.pdf>
- ✓ The Challenging Behaviour Foundation; <https://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/information-sheets-and-dvds/positive-behaviour->
- ✓ Mencap; <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/displaying-challenging-behaviour>
- ✓ HM Government – Easy to Read – Our Plan for Health and Wellbeing https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975891/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-recovery-action-plan-easy-read.pdf

Remember:

If we know its coming, the more we can be prepared to provide the best support possible.

It's a challenging world we live in!

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