

Value-based and relational support at Scottish Autism

Re-thinking autism services

Joe Long
Scottish Autism

Values-based practice model

- **Social Care services are community-based, individualised - requires alternative to clinical paradigms**
- **Values-based rather than process-based practice**
- **Framework for individual decision making, no single answer**
- **Suitable for social care workforce**
- **Departure from deficit model allows us to re-think training**
- **Point of reference, reflection challenge**
- **Means to advocate positive outcomes to commissioners, decision-makers, allied professionals**

Context and Process

- **Organisational Learning Approach**
Autism Practice Improvement Framework, working groups:
communities of practice across the organisation
- **ATLASS Programme**
Wellbeing focus, stress reduction, low arousal
- **Service Initiatives**
Service forums, use of autistic voice in training
- **Practice Research**
Voice and participation, friendship and social opportunities
- **Wider context: Autistic Community, Critical Autism Studies**
Critiques of medical models & deficit models, engagement of
National Autistic Taskforce



Values into Practice model

Ethical Practice Framework: rationale

- Autism specific
- Recognises autistic needs as practice imperatives, not 'deficits'
- Articulates ends, doesn't prescribe means
- Focus on wellbeing, not on behaviour
- Not normative

Ethical Practice Framework

- A focus on wellbeing enables happy, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Low stress environments provide safe space for personal growth
- By understanding thinking styles we can support individuals to plan their life and achieve their aspirations
- Understanding communication enables us to listen to a person's individual voice and choice
- Positive interactions nurture meaningful relationships and supportive communities
- Continuous learning empowers us to share and apply knowledge
- Collaboration with families and agencies encourages holistic support for individuals

Staff perspectives on friendship in services

Theme	Indicative comments
There are difficulties navigating relationships and boundaries between staff and the adults they support	<p><i>Some of them may see staff as friends, and you have to explain that it is different, that you are there to support them.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the staff working with him in the team I had at the time, he was wanting to class us as friends and he wanted to get in touch and have a chat at the weekend and things like that. I felt really cruel sometimes. You had to be really blunt.</i></p> <p><i>It is a difficult one because you are spending masses and masses of time with them. You are gaining their trust, you're caring for them; you are having fun with them. You build relationships and everything.</i></p> <p><i>I keep in contact ... I think that it is important if somebody has known you for 8 or 9 years.</i></p>

Long J., Brown J., Daly, S., Gibson, K. and McNeillis, C. (2018) Friendships and sociality in autism services, *Good Autism Practice* (19.1) 22-31

Making relations visible

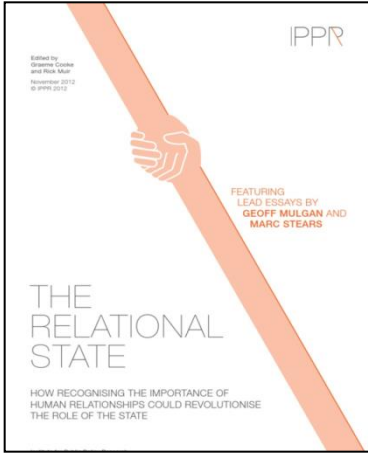
It's like a big brother looking after you. Like looking after his wee brother, or his wee sister. They support me like a big sister or a big brother. They're not our parents or brother or sister, they're our support workers, but you can think of them as being like a big brother or sister ... It's like someone who's always going to be there"

David

Discursive regimes in social care contexts

	Psychological and clinical discourse	Policy and professional discourse	Anthropological / critical discourse
Point of departure	Impairments in social interaction	Support needs	Diverse sociality
Social focus	Social functioning and behaviour	Support practice	Social relationships and lived experience
Terms of engagement	Interventions and outcomes	Service delivery	Relational support

Re-thinking policy and practice



The focus on delivering measurable outcomes has neglected the importance of human relationships. It risks reducing the complexity and texture of human experience to a simple number ... it underplays the role of relationships in improving people's lives

Cooke and Muir 2012



Many governments are beginning a transition that can be understood as a shift from a provider, production or delivery state to a relational state, from a state that does things to or for people to one that more often does things *with* them

Mulgan 2012

Practical steps

- **‘Values into Practice’ model of practitioner learning and support provision**
- **Voice and participation initiatives to inform support provision**
- **Value-based recruitment, with involvement of supported people**
- **Matching of staff and supported people**

Thanks to the supported autistic people,
practitioners and colleagues that have driven the
work described.

For more information contact:
joseph.long@scottishautism.org