Voice, Participation and Involvement – development of an evidence informed guide for practice

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Rational
• To explore what we mean by ‘voice’ and ‘participation’ in Autism services
• To raise awareness of organisational and policy imperatives for user-participation and pupil voice
• To share case studies and lessons in promoting participation
• To discuss ways of promoting good practice in this area

Method
• 6 practitioner researchers from across Scottish Autism
• Case Studies, focus groups, parent and service-user interviews
• Individual and service-level strategies considered
• Workshops and practitioner workbook as outputs

Outcomes
• Development of Communication and Voice workshop for staff
• Good practice share via APIF
• Autism Europe
• Sharing good practice strategies to support individuals organisation wide
• Our Story

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Communication

• Core difficulty for people with autism
• Various resources and strategies available: PECS, visual aids
• Practitioners skilled at working with individual communication strategies
• Increasing availability of augmented communication through ICT

but communication for what?
Principles for Practice

Authenticity of voice: Promoting Voice means validating the means of communication that are meaningful to individuals and minimising the ways in which practitioners mediate these voices.

Harnessing media meaningful to the individual: In the individual case studies photography and computed were highlighted as a means of supporting individuals to make their own choices and to express their own preferences.

Ownership of the process: Inclusion in the whole process seemed pivotal to the success of all the communication strategies developed. Strategies were developed with the service user not for them.

Material outputs and documents: having something concrete to refer back to helped to reassure and give individuals a sense of control over the process.

Family Involvement and shared understanding: having the support of all helped validate and support the initiatives underway.
Communities of practice

- Bringing Practitioners together to share knowledge and experience
- Promoting the inclusion of lived experience
- Exploring links and common themes
- Documenting communication strategies currently in use
- Highlighting case studies
- Creating useful outputs (who is it for?)
Workbook development

Voice, Participation and Involvement in Autism Services

An evidence-informed guide

By Practitioners for Practitioners

By the Scottish Autism Practitioner Research Team

Conference sponsors:

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