

Occupational Therapy – Adult Learning Disability Service

Guidance for Engaging an Individual in Activity

Everyday activity is important for everyone's mental and physical health as well as their wellbeing. Adults with a Learning Disability may find it more difficult to initiate, engage and continue with activities and therefore require effective support to do this. This leaflet provides guidance as to what to consider when supporting an adult with a Learning Disability in activity.

Activity/ Occupation

Activity is only beneficial to individuals if this is **meaningful to them**. Meaningful activity is an activity which is of value and interest to the individual.

This could mean an individual completing small parts within an activity. For example, one person may be able to bake a cake from start to finish but others may only contribute to smaller steps such as stirring and icing the cake.

Motivation (values/interests/self belief)

Think about what the individual values within their life, what the individual wants to do, needs to do and self belief about their own ability to do an activity. This is quite a difficult balance to strike, however a starting point could be to complete an Interest Checklist which initiates conversation about past, present and potential future interests.

Relevance

Make sure all tasks are relevant to the individual; this includes consideration of needs, value and culture.

Roles and Routines

Structure each day to ensure it is balanced. Everyday should include various activities. For example, social activities, domestic tasks, work related activity and down time.

Environment

Make sure the environment is suitable for the activity, this includes equipment, space, environmental cues and that distraction is minimal. Remember the environment also includes the people supporting the individual during the activity.

Skills

Think about the individual's current skills within each activity and if they need to learn any new skills. Skills can be developed giving instruction, demonstration, participation, positive feedback and practice.

Active Support

Think how much support the individual will need. Support should be given in a way which promotes independence as much as possible. **It's about doing 'with' and not doing 'for'. Your role is to enable the individual to do the activity as independently as possible.**

Encouragement

Think about how you can encourage and praise throughout the activity. The more positive response an individual receives during a task, the more likely they are to want to engage again.

To view further information online you can visit You Tube and search "Active Support – Expand Someone's World".

To enable us to continually improve our service please contact our Occupational Therapy team if this guidance has been successful or if you are still experiencing difficulties, please contact our Occupational Therapy Adult Learning Disability Service on **01383 565223**.