

Issues around service users' sexuality:

All on board for a better service?

Presentation to the
ASID Disability Support Worker Conference
November 3rd 2011

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Who I am, what I'm talking about and why

- My research
- My country – my terms!
- Confidentiality/Communication
- Duty of Care

The problem with sex . . .

- Taboo . . . and its consequences
- ... for service users
- . . . and even until recently – support organisations
- Care workers' experiences

"not to give them a bad name just to draw our attention to things"

- Q Do you know why the person didn't note anything in his records?
- A I don't know, I really don't know, because it was only through discussion with the other manager that – he feels really bad that he didn't highlight it. And I feel bad as well because perhaps we could have prevented the incident – we could have been more aware

Human Rights and Service Users

- Relationships
- Risks
- Confidentiality
- Limits

Duty of Care

- "Certain situations may arise where the need to protect confidentiality may be outweighed by the need to protect others. The balance requires careful consideration" (Weaver, 2011: 217)
- Service user involvement.
- Consequences of doing nothing

Best practice (Brown & Barrett: 1994)

- Entitlement to protection
 - Protective measures
 - recording
 - management plan
- *Any individual treatment must include strategies for crisis management. Staff need to be confident that when incidents do occur they can respond to them in a way which retains the individual's dignity and protects him or her from harm" (73)
- monitoring

All on board for a better service? Who do you share this information with?

- Information withheld from on – coming service
- Information held at head office only
- Part-time, casual, probationary and agency staff
- Other services used by the service user

“Basically you could write it on the back of your hand” (Charles: Scotland)

- Written notes from previous service

“He’s had an accident”

- Written notes in current service

Implications for DSW role re: professionalism?

- Duty of Care Vs Neglect? (Carson in McKenzie *et al*, 2001)
- Range of behaviours same as Health Workers deal with (Mackenzie *et al*, 2001)
- “not to give them a bad name just to draw our attention to things”

Consequences for service user.

- Perpetuates behaviour and victimise others
- Could come up against the law
- Could lose their freedom

“ He was set up to fail he really was”

Outcomes for DSWs

- Feelings of failure
- Feelings of guilt
- Stress and related health problems
- “it was only through discussion with the other manager that – he feels really bad that he didn’t highlight it. And I feel bad as well because perhaps we could have prevented the incident – we could have been more aware”

Take away menu

- Read
- Discuss
- Review
- Inform
- Learn
- Speak up!

References

- Brown, H. & Barrett, S. (1994). Understanding and responding to difficult sexual behaviour. In *Practice Issues in Sexuality and Learning Disabilities*. Routledge: London, 50- 8.
- McKenzie, K. et al (2001). Health and Social Care staff responses to working with people with a learning disability who display sexual offending type behaviours. In *The Journal of Sexual Aggression*, Vol.7, No 1, 55–66.
- Scottish Executive (2006) National Care Standards: care homes for people with learning disabilities. Scottish Executive: Edinburgh.
- Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2006). Personal relationships, sexuality, and sexual health policy and guidelines; Disability Services. Victorian Government Department of Human Services: Melbourne, Victoria.
- Weaver, D. (2011) Introduction to duty of care in health and social care. In *Nursing and Residential Care*, Vol.13, No 5: 214 – 218.

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