



NZCare Group Limited
Awahi te tangata

Impact of media attention on a disability
service

**LOOK BOTH WAYS
BEFORE CROSSING**

You have 22 NEW messages...



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- The media
- The media
- The media
- The media
- The hairdresser
- The media
- The media
- THE MEDIA!

Dancing with the Stars..



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- Media appearance at VERY short notice
 - careful wording
- Who is the real audience
- What are the key messages
- The bigger picture

What came next.....



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- Information gathering – from staff, managers, communication advisers, the contractor
- Community response and managing in house responses
- Communications plan and multiple audiences

The joint review becomes an
Investigation and begins.....

Robust? Us? Robust?



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- Intimacy Relationships Sexuality Training
- EAP
- Contracting consultants
- HR process
- Record keeping

Bits of paper Bits of paper and more Bits
of paper

The questions not asked
BUT we gave them anyway....



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Why we offer regular training in:

Intimacy

Relationships

Sexuality

Audit requirements/Sector
standards/Contract requirements

Timesheets, communication book records,
etc

The “P” Word



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Policies safeguard rights and clarify responsibilities. They are worded to impose duties and responsibilities on certain individuals to ensure that principles, rights and theories are put into practice.

Organisational policies transform ideals and principles into practical steps. Organisational policies tell how to do it as well as what to do. These policies reflect the views, goals and aims of the organization and provide a basis for decision making to guide people's actions.

Rights and Recognition – A guide to sexuality policy and education for people with learning disabilities (FPA, NSW 1996)

The Reality is.....



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Adults with learning disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else. They may however also need support with various parts of their lives including developing social and personal relationships and in an understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Staff and carers may find themselves supporting adults with learning disabilities with sensitive issues and dilemmas regarding their relationships where there are no easy answers.

Not tonight I've got a headache!



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To what extent can a person's personal and moral values be entirely divorced from their behaviour?

Do staff have the right to "opt out" of certain situations on grounds of their own personal values?

(Alan Leyln 1992)

6 months... the impact... the outcome...



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- Confidentiality agreement and a ‘white wash’
- You have no new messages
- A sense of justice? ... people with disabilities and staff
- Open office forum for families and staff
- The cost in financial terms

Investigation outcomes....



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- There was insufficient evidence to support the allegations
- None attendance at the training
- Requirements of all providers:-
 - Written evaluations
 - Objectives and learning outcomes
 - Material spells out role of support people including boundary/ethical issues
 - Debriefing available to participants
 - Clear policies in place

Cover your bits and pieces!!



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- Intimate Support
- Friendships
- Relationships
- Intimate Relationships
- Sexual Expression – identity, orientation, preference
- Accessing the Sex Industry
- Contraception and Safe Sex
- Pregnancy
- Sexual Behaviours – deviant, sexually challenging

Getting started....



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- Consultation and education with ALL groups – support people, disabled people and allies, management, family/whanau, community groups
- Establish purpose and outcomes
- Develop guidelines
- Pilot! Test them out....
- Provide training and education to managers and people using services

Keeping it going.....



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- Create environments that allow people to express their sexuality
- Using language that acknowledges people's identity, orientation etc
- Creating opportunities for people to connect on friendship, romantic and relationship levels
- Humanising practice at ALL times
- Take some risks!



Clockwise from above:

“United We Sit” 1999

“I am Nick” 2002

“Dancing on Broken Glass” 2002

“Lil Devil” 2000

Belinda Mason-Lovering, *Intimate Encounters*





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Thank God it is not us!!!

Time as a sector we moved
to support each other???

A sector response to issues???

CONTACTS



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