



Presentation

FAMILIES WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Master class 5

Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

January 19th 2011

Leading - *Showing and leading the way*

Educating - *Families, Professionals, Service Providers
& Policymakers*

Advocating - *For Personalisation, an alternative
resource allocation system and
system and policy change*

Planning - *for better futures for people with
Intellectual Disabilities and
for people with Autism
Spectrum Disorder
and their families*



Who We Are

- **Founded in 2008 by Three Parent Graduates from the Partners in Policymaking Programme and two professional allies to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.**
- **Joined by other parent advocates and one professional ally in 2010 who were also interested in developing and delivering information and training workshops for parents - we are all highly qualified volunteers and at the moment we have no paid staff – we have received a grant funding from the St Stephen's Green Trust and from GENIO.**
- **Our main activity has been networking with families of people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities , with professionals, other disability groups/organisations, service providers, Taking Control and policymakers to find a way to bring about positive change in our society for people with disabilities.**



Our Vision (what we want to achieve)

- To support people with Autism and people with Intellectual Disabilities to become active citizens by strengthening their knowledge, role and influence in partnership with their families.
- To empower families and people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities to lead lives of self determination and to be actively involved in their communities
- To support people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities to develop meaningful and sustainable relationships within their own community



OUR MISSION (*what we want to achieve*)

- To provide independent facilitation for people with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities to enable them to engage in person centred planning
- To support families and people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities to develop the skills and knowledge that are necessary to engage with service providers, funders, policymakers and other external influences in a positive and productive manner.
- To facilitate the creation of personal networks that will enable the person with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities to live the life of their choice which is safe and secure



Our Membership

- Our membership is open to all
- Family members and carers of people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities
- Individuals with Autism
- Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities
- Professional Allies
Who subscribe to LEAP's aims and objectives



What we plan to do

- Provide practical information and training through information sessions and workshops – the roll out of series of workshops funded by GENIO from December 2010 to September 2011
- Networking and Developing strategic alliances with professionals, policymakers, service providers, families and other disability groups/organisations
- Advocating for personalisation, an alternative resource allocation system, independent facilitation and proofing of social policies to prevent or eliminate social inclusion of people with Autism & Intellectual Disabilities

Outline of our Personal Network Project and Workshops

Our Personal Network project is to help families of people with autism to set up Personal Networks and also to engage in planning for the future for their son or daughter with autism.

The purpose of the project is to inspire families to develop a Personal Future Plan with their loved one, to guide them through the process, To offer practical tips and technical advice, to connect them with other families and to improve the present and make the future secure and safe for our sons and daughters.

The timeframe for setting this up is three years but it is a life long project that will have to become self sufficient.



Workshop 1: Communications & Supports

- Self care in order to prevent burnout
- Stress management
- Networking and learning from other parents
- Listening skills as a means of enhancing relationships (both within the family and with service providers),
- Assertiveness skills as a way of claiming rights and having needs met

7 x 3 hour sessions



Workshop 2: Introduction to Person Centred Planning

- **Two types of planning focusing on the gifts, capacities and strengths of people with disabilities...**
 - **Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) Developing a vision for a positive future**
 - **Essential Lifestyle Planning (ELP) - Planning is a way to support a person on a day to day basis and to support their vision**

3 x 3 hour session



Workshop 3

How to develop a circle of Supports for a person with a disabilities

- What is a circle of support
- how to plan a circle of support for someone with a disability
- how a circle can help someone build their self-esteem, their communication and social skills
- choosing circle members
- planning the first meeting.
3 x 3 hour session

Workshop 4

Advocacy for Inclusion

- Theoretical and practical foundation to support strong and effective advocacy
- Collaborative team- building skills
- Strategies for successful inclusion
- 3 x 3 hour session



Workshop 5

Pathways to Possibilities

- *Pathways to possibilities is a guided journey to planning for the future. Small groups work together encouraging each other, exploring future options and building networks and supports over 5-6 sessions.*

Workshop 6

Building Positive Futures

What would a good life look like for your son or daughter with Autism and or Intellectual Disabilities

- *Planning for the future impacts the present for the person with a disability- we will look at relationships, opportunities to contribute, a home of their own, supportive decision-making and financial security*



The perceived capacities and outcomes

- Parents will gain a greater knowledge and understanding of how the system works and an understanding of self knowledge (what happens to parents in the process of caring for a child with a disability), finding your voice, becoming a strong advocate, how to advocate and work in collaborate way with professionals, service providers and legislators.
- Parents are enabled to move from emotions to advocacy (from inaction to action) and learn that they are not alone. When families have knowledge, information and practical skills to articulate the needs of their son or daughter they are empowered to make more informed choices and decisions to meet the challenges that arise.
- These challenges include the fear of losing services and the fear of what will happen to their son or daughter when they are longer around.



- Our workshops and programmes also compliment succession planning, giving families the opportunity to reflect on how to negotiate with service providers more effectively.
- Our workshops and programmes give parents opportunities to up skill in the areas of communication and problem solving, developing networks, developing circles of support and influence, planning and negotiating with services for the best possible outcomes.

- The workshops and the programmes focus on outcomes that promote community presence based on choice and preferences; valued social roles; the contribution of people with a disability and promoting community capacity to support people with disabilities.
- The families support other families and people with disabilities to plan a desirable future and design actions to move toward that future. By having family facilitators assisting other families in the process of person centred planning, people feel supported, they feel secure in sharing their dreams and have confidence in the skills of the facilitator.
- Parents also feel empowered by the process and have more hope and certainty for the future.

- Parents are best supported by others who have had similar life experiences. When parents stand beside each other it enables them to increase their confidence and problem solving abilities and support each other to meet their children's needs.
- Modelling personal values and skills is a very powerful way for parents to increase their own and other parents personal strengths and resilience.
- Families become their own agents and are enabled to work in partnership with service providers, create awareness in their community of the needs of people with disabilities, and work in collaboration with other disability organisations, service providers, state agencies and policymakers.



Research tells us that when families are part of the planning for the future it increases personal strengths and resilience, prevents isolation and enables social inclusion.

When people are valued for who they are and what they can contribute they are less likely to suffer from depression or other mental illness.

Family members can become contributors as they are enabled to stay in employment or return to employment, therefore needing less financial subsistence from the state.



"To accomplish great things, we must
not only act, but also dream, not
only plan, but also believe."

Anatole France



Our workshops are coming to a town near you...

Dublin

Cork

Longford

Presenters

Rachel Cassen and Geraldine Graydon

Contact us at

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for more details

