

A new kind of support

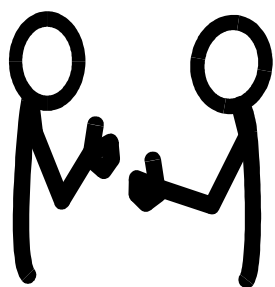


Summary



The Skills for Support Team

1. Respect



Who is the boss?

People with learning difficulties say they are 'the boss' of their PA. But what does this mean?



The person with learning difficulties can take control by asking the PA to do something. We watched someone making a cup of coffee, with his PA to help.

The PA stayed behind the person they were supporting. He only offered to do things when needed.



1. Right do you want me to pour the water in from the kettle yeah?

3. Alright

2. Yeah I'll just put the milk in first yes. I always have quite a lot of- quite a bit of milk.



A good PA watches carefully, to make sure she works *with* the person she is supporting. Sometimes they move around together to do things.

Adult talk



A good PA does not use baby-talk, like 'Oh dear, dear, dear, dear'.

A good PA does not make people feel they have made mistakes. A person with learning difficulties should be treated seriously, like any adult.





A good PA shows interest in the things the person with learning difficulties is doing. We watched someone use a computer in the library with her PA to help.



1. Wow! Let's have a look.

3. Down here

2. Which one?

A good PA takes his time, and is patient.



He watches his body language, and keeps at the same level as the person.



When working with someone with high support needs, the PA has to get to know exactly what works.

Taking turns A good PA will step back, and listen to the person with learning difficulties.



A good PA does not interrupt. He lets the person finish what he is saying.

We watched someone who does not use words. He used signs, and the PA answered.

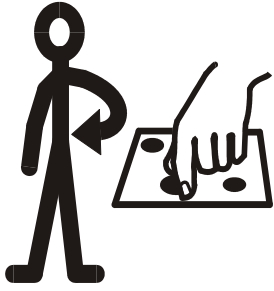


1. Sign for 'where?'

2. You're looking for Gary, are you?

3. eeh

4. I think he's probably having his tea now, mate



2. Choices

What shall we do next?



People with learning difficulties and their PAs mostly do things that they always do. They don't often stop to choose what to do next.

Well, you'd better go and find a clean shirt first.

Sometimes, the person decides what to do next, and the PA reminds them what needs to happen. If someone wants to have a shower, then they have to sort out their clothes first.



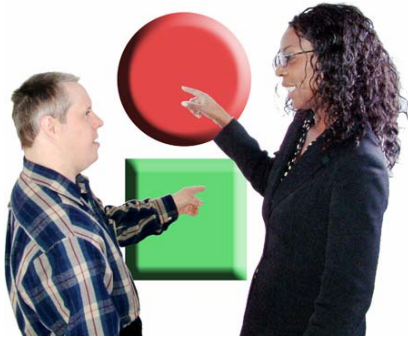
That's lovely



The PA often encourages the person with their choices.



It is very easy for people with learning difficulties to feel as if they're being judged. This is a problem.



A good PA will remind someone that they've got a choice.

We saw someone with his PA, on their way to go shopping.



But if you wanted to go with Billy, that's your choice, yeah?

A good PA will make sure that the person with learning difficulties is in charge of how to make choices.



For instance, we saw one person who had made his own checklist for shopping.

He went into the kitchen with his PA, and she helped him make his shopping list. But he was in charge of things.

1. Right, yoghourts?

2. Er yes

3. Well it's the mousses. Are they OK?

4. That'll do yes. Mousses. yep

Choosing when to talk



Everyone should have a choice of whether or not to take part in a conversation.

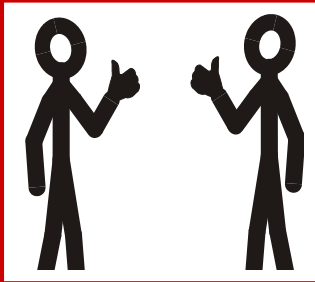
A good PA helps the person to get in on a conversation. But she doesn't force them to speak.



We saw a video of a PA who was very good at helping someone to speak. She did it partly by her body language, and partly by her tone of voice.



Sometimes it's a good idea not to ask a direct question. Just wait and see what someone wants to choose.



3. Friends



All the PAs and people with learning difficulties in our videos look as though they like each other. They are friendly.

They show this in the way they smile at each other, or the way they talk together.



Sharing interests



It is good when the PA shares interests with the person they are supporting.

We watched one person getting ready to go to rugby, and talking about the team with his PA.

1. I imagine we ARE going to win

2. You say definitely this time

3. Yeah

4. Well it happens in England

A good PA will look relaxed, and keep the conversation without taking over.

Getting to know the person very well



The PA and the person they are supporting get to know each other well. They do things together, and so they have lots of shared things to talk about.

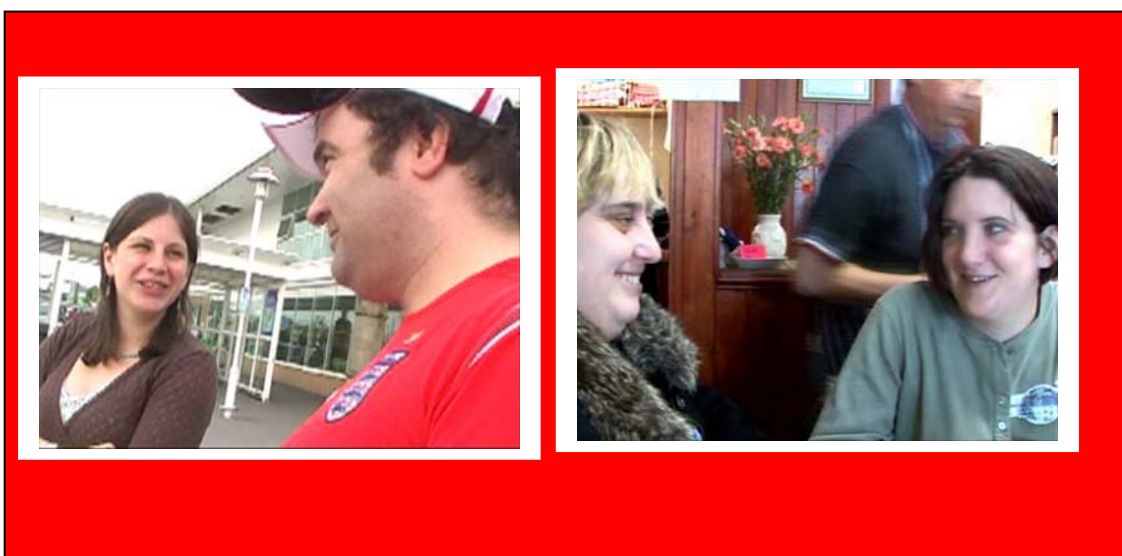
A PA of someone with high support needs has to get to know what every movement or expression means.



Right Karen.
Sorry, that's
in your face.
You'll need to
roll over now.

Body Language

A good PA has friendly body language. This means eye contact, smiling, and following the lead of the person you are talking to.

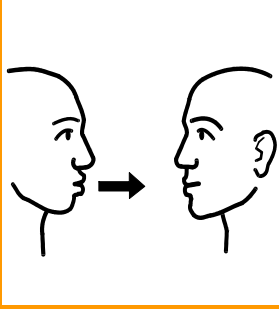


Making jokes



It is good to have a joke together. But a good PA will watch the person they are supporting. They may not want to joke, so it should be on their terms.

Sometimes the person with learning difficulties starts up a joke, and the PA follows. It shows how well they get on together.



4. Advice



How can PA's give advice to the people they are supporting, without being too 'bossy'?

People with learning difficulties often need advice about budgeting.

People with learning difficulties and their PA can work together on things like budgeting. It's team work.





People should only get advice when they ask for it.

It's no-one's fault, this is how we get there don't we? and it saves time in the shop

It's not my fault because I thought I'd write that



John's PA is very good at helping him focus on what he needs to do. They both watch each other, and smile at each other a lot.

Teresa was in a café with her PA. She wanted to talk about housework.

Yes

Housework?
We were going to clean
your bedroom out
weren't we?



Yeah I
might
do

Do you
want to
have a go at
doing that?

They had a good laugh together. And they both decided what they needed to do.



Advice goes down best
when the two people are
friendly.



John sometimes helps his PA, and tells her not to worry.



Giving advice is a two-way thing.



Support to speak up



People with learning difficulties may need support to speak up with people they meet.

Sometimes other people talk about them, even when they are there. That is not good.



Hello. I'm going to rugby.



It is good when people with learning difficulties meet people in the street, and can say 'hello' to them by themselves.

Hiya!



That's it - you've got to pay 50p to get in. Don't lose it, you have got to give that to Kath haven't you?

Colin's PA was very good at preparing things, so that Colin could meet other people.



Colin and his PA were going to the youth club. Colin does not speak, but the PA gave him his money. He told him that he could pay when he went into the club. This worked well.



Sometimes a PA can help a person with learning difficulties to speak up.

We saw someone called Jim. He was checking into a hotel with his PA. The PA stood back and Jim went in first.



Two rooms for Jim Barker and Rachel Oldfield.



The PA chatted and made jokes. This gave Jim time to fill in the hotel form.



When Jim couldn't decide on a newspaper, his PA helped him by getting the choice down to 2.



It is good if the PA can step back, and it is also good if the person with learning difficulties can handle things. For instance, if a person has his own money, then he can pay for himself.



Different people need different kinds of support. The most important thing is to get to know the person you are supporting, and what really works for them.



Thank you for reading this summary. You will find more in the big report!



You can also read our photo stories, or watch the DVD, and see some of these people in action.

**Skills for Support
2007**

