

Supporting Young People to have a Good Life
An Impact Story



About DRC

Disability Resource Centre (H.B.) Trust is a Charitable Trust, which helps people overcome the barriers they face so that they can lead happy and rewarding lives. Their work includes supporting people to find and stay in work, as well as helping them to explore opportunities for social inclusion and to develop the skills that will enable them to fulfil their personal goals and aspirations.

Background

DRC works with young disabled people as they transition from school into adult life. It has become clear that young people and their families have different expectations of disability support organisations than previously experienced.

In order to understand how they can best support young people who want to use their service DRC has explored the impact of their Transition Service by:

- Outlining their theory of change
- Writing an impact story about the experience of a young person, Alisa, who is using their service.



DRC (HB) THEORY OF CHANGE FOR WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

A

Steps to get from A to B Our Theory of Change

B

STARTING POINT....

Many people we work with are:

- Isolated
- Have few friends
- No money
- Lacking confidence
- Lacking direction

Have been bullied
Have experienced failure in the system

Our Process for Helping People Overcome their Barriers....

1. Meeting with people and their families/networks
2. Setting achievable goals and breaking them down into doable steps.
3. Career planning/Path planning
4. One on one coaching and mentoring
5. Preparation and confidence building
 - liaise with Work and Income
 - budgeting
 - cooking
6. Finding a job or voluntary work
7. Continued support/ mentoring/or exit service.

FINISH POINT

People are:

- Prepared for employment
- Have transferable skills
- Independent
- Experiencing success in meeting their goals
- Financially secure and stable
- Involved in the community
- Have friends and networks
- Confident and happy
- Equals

OUR ASSUMPTIONS: WE WORK THIS WAY BECAUSE WE BELIEVE

1. Getting to Know People First

- The person and family know their own circumstances best
- We need to have an understanding of family dynamics
- We can't move forward without building trust and a positive relationship
- We need to know the person so that we can support their goals

2. Goal Setting and Planning

- The person has control over their own choices, destiny and life
- Find out as much about the person as we can so we have ideas and options to explore.
- Success is more likely when goals are broken down.
- Success builds confidence.
- Use a range of planning processes
- Whatever is right for the person

3. Coaching and Preparation

- The person has the opportunity to try something and see if it works.
- Preparation builds confidence
- If things don't work we can address issues, barriers
- We look for the best option, either in-house or in the community.

4. Contribution and Citizenship

- People feel valued when they are contributing
- Work improves a person's social and economic wellbeing
- Providing on-going support as long as people need it.
- People need to know they have a safety net if things don't work out.

Alisa's story

Alisa first came into contact with DRC while she was in her last year at high school through the Transition from School programme. This involved DRC working with Alisa, her family and the school to find out what she might want to do on leaving school and to develop a transition plan with her. Throughout this year a co-ordinator from DRC organised a range of opportunities for Alisa to try, including work experience and visits to the Polytech and to a range of support services she might want to use.

At the end of the year Alisa chose to enrol at the Polytech to undertake a two year programme in Work and Life Skills. As part of the programme she learned about budgeting and flatting and was linked to work experience opportunities. On the days when she wasn't attending Polytech she chose to be part of DRC's Turning Point service.

Alisa describes herself as being scared, quite nervous and a bit shy when she first left school. She was also going through some big changes in her family life at this time and this resulted in her moving out of her family home and into residential care.

Turning Point staff worked with Alisa to identify her likes and dislikes and helped her set some goals. As well as participating in a Community Awareness group to help her develop the skills and knowledge for safely moving about in the community, she also took part in activities to improve her health and fitness and develop her love of the arts.



Alisa has enjoyed the opportunity to try new things. She used to do swimming and other sports such as 10-pin bowling but now prefers going to the gym instead. She also volunteers at the Leg Up Trust, where she helps groom and walk horses. She has tried a range of creative activities, including photography, dancing, singing and art classes.

When Alisa graduated from Polytech she was keen to get a job and enrolled with DRC's supported employment service, Network Personnel. Her preferred jobs were either serving or packing food, working with animals or cleaning. Network Personnel organised a range of job trials for her, including working at an orchard, packing lollies at a supermarket and helping with morning teas at a rest home. Through this experience she realised that she preferred working with a smaller group of people and that the job at the Duart Rest home was the one for her. The employer was also enthusiastic and she began working three mornings each week.

Becoming employed has been a turning point for Alisa. Her job involves making hot drinks for residents at the rest home, collecting dishes and cleaning up after morning tea. She enjoys her job and likes meeting new people, although she says that it is hard when people are unwell or pass away.

To get to work Alisa takes the bus from her home in Taradale to Hastings and then to Havelock North. This is quite a journey and initially she says she felt uptight about it. Now that she is used to it she has realised that she has the confidence to be more independent and responsible for herself.

She is now confident to undertake many of the activities she is involved in on her own. She has developed a real love for the arts and is keen to develop her singing skills. She is going to singing lessons with the goal of auditioning for *X-Factor*. She has been encouraged in this by one of her colleagues at work who was on *X-Factor* this year, and by a performance from *X-Factor* contestant, Talifa Blake, at DRC.

Alisa has now worked at Duart House for two years. Her hours have increased from three mornings per week to five mornings. The job was initially subsidised through the Mainstream programme but when this ceased the employer was happy to continue employing Alisa without the subsidy.

While Alisa loves her job and gets on well with the people there, she says she has not really made friends with any of them. "My friends are at DRC. I love DRC. I get to meet other people, be friendly to others and help out other people."



Early this year she modelled in a fashion parade which was an event to raise funds for a friend at DRC who was working to publish her collection of poetry. (It's now available as an e-book on Amazon.)

She buses to DRC every day to have lunch after she finishes her shift at Duart House. In the afternoons she has organised a range of activities for herself, with the support of her community co-ordinator at Turning Point. On Mondays and Fridays she goes to the library. "I love books on the royal family," she says. "I like to read and write and I'm writing a book at the moment."



She attends an art class on Tuesday, goes to dancing on Wednesday and has her singing lesson on Thursday.

Despite some initial concerns about travelling away from home she recently took part in a trip to Wellington to visit Te Papa and the Galipoli exhibition with friends and staff from DRC.

She enjoys saving her wages and regularly takes herself off shopping. She is saving up for a new phone and a holiday in Thailand with her mum

"I like to have my own life," Alisa says. "I'm more focused now."

Learning from Alisa's Story

- The Transition from School year was important in helping Alisa learn about what was available for her and gave her a 'taster of the real world'.
- Involving Alisa's family has been important in getting to know Alisa and working through the various choices and decisions she has faced. Good channels of communication are essential.
- Alisa has been given the opportunity to try a range of jobs and activities and as a result has a clear sense of what she likes and what she wants to do with her life.
- The connection between Turning Point and Network Personnel has enabled DRC to provide integrated supports, enabling Alisa to have a job and the life in the community that she chooses.
- Alisa's job has been a major factor in increasing her confidence and independence. The realisation that she can manage the journey to work on her own has been significant for Alisa.
- Maintaining good relationships with Alisa's employer and others involved in her life has been important in ensuring that her job and choices are sustainable.
- Throughout Alisa's involvement with DRC she has been able to access one to one support. This requires more staff resource but outcomes are achieved faster and people gain momentum in their lives.

This Impact Story was written by One Fish Solutions.
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