



Voice for Choice: Listening to the needs of young people with mental health and severe learning disabilities

Victoria Hobday (Research Assistant)

The Voice for Choice project aimed to explore the ways in which young people with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems can be supported and facilitated to make informed choices about their types of treatment and therapeutic interventions.

A range of materials were designed and trialled with students to enable them to participate and have choice over decisions which affect the support they receive in relation to mental health problems and their daily care. The resources produced were trialled with a number of Sunfield students, and were revised and refined in order to provide the best possible mechanisms of support.

- **Information Booklets-** Compiled for each therapy offered at Sunfield with the aim of increasing the students understanding of the therapists' role.
- **Communication Card-** Containing brief information on how the student chooses to communicate, and any other key pieces of information which could benefit consultations, to increase dialogue and interaction in health consultations, directly between the student and the health professional.
- **Student Copies of Behaviour Development Plans (BDP)** - With the aim of increasing the students' involvement in their BDP, thus enhancing awareness of their goals and strategies staff will take to support them and increasing their sense of control.
- **Physical Intervention Booklet-** To increase the students understanding of why there is sometimes a need for physical interventions and offers students a means of communicating to staff how they feel following incidents.
- **Choice Boards-** To provide a consistent set of resources to increase the frequency of choice making and develop choice making skills.

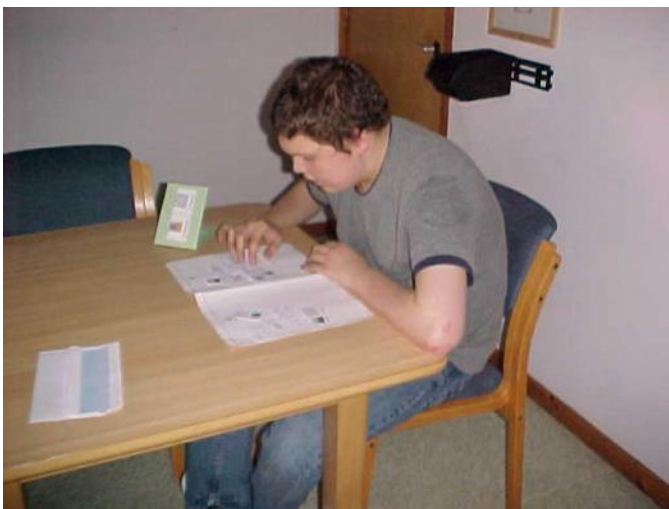
To summarise, the Voice for Choice project has generated a toolkit of resources to support student choice making, understanding, and interaction associated with the therapeutic interventions which they receive. The resources produced have, where possible, been student led and designed for staff to personalise for each individual student.

As an organisation, Sunfield strives to continually improve the lives of young people with learning disabilities. The findings and resources from this project have the potential to offer our students a means of being involved in more choices, and for their voices to be heard.

Information booklets:



Student arranging likes and dislikes of their Behaviour Development Plan:



Student's talking mat:

