



TRANSCRIPT

Working with people with autism: the professionals

Words on screen:

00:00:17 Working with people with autism: the professionals

Narrator:

00:00:26 Many people with Autism are dependent upon the social care workforce for the support to live a fulfilling life, but they have a wide range of needs. So what are the key issues to consider when working with people with Autism? This film follows two professionals; Dominic Cole is a care worker at St. Mark's Day Services in North London, and Oxfordshire social worker Emma Boswell works with teenagers in transition to adult services. Emma is on a statutory visit to see 17 year old Dan who has severe learning disabilities.

Conversation between Scott, Emma and Care worker:

00:01:04 Do you feel better now?

Narrator:

00:01:05 Dan is living at The Squirrels Residential Home, and Emma has come to monitor his progress.

Conversation between Scott, Emma and Care worker:

00:01:10 Are you going to show me what you do? I think you like the activity ball don't you?

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:01:13 We want to be seeing that he is well stimulated, we want to see that he's happy; we want to make sure that he is healthy; we want to make sure he is being better challenged and prepared for adulthood.

Conversation between Scott, Emma and Care worker:

00:01:23 It will be a while since I have seen you, isn't it?

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:01:25 It's about being aware of when they get anxious, I do keep eye contact with him, but if I think he's finding it a little stressful then I will leave.

Narrator:

00:01:33 Dan has been here for almost a year and in that time his communication skills have improved.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:01:39 Usually you would have to guess if he was in pain, you would have to guess if he was unwell; and the way you would guess what was going on with Daniel was through his behaviours.

Conversation between Scott, Emma and Care worker:

00:01:49 How are you feeling today, can you show me?

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:01:52 So what this placement has been able to do is to use be able to use pictures and ways that he understands, so now he has actually managed to communicate through symbols what he has wanted.

Conversation between Scott, Emma and Care worker:

00:02:03 Show me please, I understand a good ... you are happy.

00:02:05 You are happy, well done.

00:02:07 Oh you are happy that's good.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:02:09 Today is a good day, now I can have exactly the same approach, or slightly adapt it, and he won't want anything to do with me; you know it's totally on his terms. So I am guided by the staff, I am guided by how Dan is on the day.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

- 00:02:24 Can I come up as well?
- 00:02:25 Yes please.
- 00:02:26 Okay, let's go and have a cup of tea then.

Narrator:

- 00:02:27 At St. Mark's Dominic works one-to-one with Autistic adults who have challenging behaviours and complex learning needs. Today he is working with Michael developing his communication skills.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

- 00:02:40 First of all shall we get a cup of tea first?
- 00:02:42 Oh yeah, yeah.
- 00:02:43 So do you want to help me make it?
- 00:02:45 Oh yeah.
- 00:02:45 Okay then, let's make a cup of tea.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

- 00:02:48 We don't normally go straight into a session; we normally give five minutes just for them to become accustomed to the new environment, to settle in and to feel at ease, just to have like five minutes relaxation in between each new environment can really help reduce anxiety.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

- 00:03:05 Excellent, well done.
- 00:03:06 You alright?
- 00:03:07 Yeah I am very good.
- 00:03:08 Play football with me later?
- 00:03:09 Oh what do you have to be? You have be very...
- 00:03:11 Calm.

00:03:12 Very calm. But when we have our cup of tea, after our tea we are going to go and do plan of the day, yeah, look in your folder? Okay? But we are going to have tea first.

Narrator:

00:03:22 Dominic's first priority is giving Michael a structure to his day.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:03:27 So today is Tuesday, and where are you? We are at the...?

00:03:33 Quality time.

00:03:34 We are having quality time now, but where are we? We are at the...?

00:03:27 Day centre.

00:03:38 And what do you do in quality time?

00:03:40 Make the tea.

00:03:41 Tea. And who did you make tea for?

00:03:42 Me.

00:03:44 And?

00:03:44 Dominic.

00:03:45 And me. Thank you very much for doing that. After our tea do you know what we are going to do?

00:03:52 Free dance again?

00:03:53 Free dance, and we call it dance and...?

00:03:55 Movement.

00:03:56 Movement, excellent. Do you want to find the...

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:03:58 I think structure is very important for people with autism because predictability can actually make someone feel safer and secure, and if they are not

sure what the future holds sometimes anxieties can arise.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:04:10 No not this one, this is for Friday, so we will put it on Tuesday.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:04:14 Straight from the beginning of the day students will come in and they will be aware of exactly what activities they will do that particular day.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:04:24 So if it's not raining we can play football. But if it rains what shall we do?

00:04:29 Watch a film.

00:04:30 Watch a film, okay.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:04:32 Some individuals might take a lot longer for them to process what I have said, so when you use language it's to be kept quite short; simple words, short sentences, or use visual prompts to actually get your message across.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:04:49 And what's he got on his hands? What has he got on his hands?

00:04:53 Scarf.

00:04:54 On his hands?

00:04:56 Gloves.

00:04:57 Gloves, so Michael, the gloves keep his hands?

00:05:03 Warm.

00:05:04 Warm.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:05:05 Or vice versa, if they are actually trying to communicate something to you, you need lots of patience.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:05:10 Okay, do did you have fun?

00:05:11 What at?

00:05:12 Did you have fun today?

00:05:13 What's the man's name?

00:05:15 Did you have fun watching the...

00:05:16 No the man!

00:05:17 Which man?

00:05:18 In the film. On that...

00:05:20 Oh man on the video, oh okay.

00:05:22 No [unclear] all morning, and [unclear]

00:05:25 Yeah, well done Michael, that's excellent.

00:05:38 Not finished that yet.

00:05:29 Okay.

Narrator:

00:05:30 Emphasising the positives is another key technique.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:05:34 Encouraging Michael, giving him lots of praise, makes him feel very good about himself. It kind of gives him a lot of self-belief and he is willing to kind of try out different things. And also you know if something doesn't always go right, or you find something a bit difficult we will probably adapt it a little bit to make it a little bit easier, so he always feels good about himself. And then try and progress with that and try and get him to do

something which is a little bit more difficult which takes a bit more concentration.

Conversation between care worker Dominic and Michael:

00:06:05 Okay, now what other face? Shall I do it like this?
What am I now?

00:06:15 Sad.

00:06:16 Sad?

00:06:18 I did it.

00:06:18 Okay, you are excellent, well done Michael we are
doing really well. So if I am sad...

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:06:22 It's extremely important to kind of empathise with
our students, and to try and see how they view the
world from their perspective. A lot of common sort
of anxieties we have amongst our students is the
fact that they find it difficult to communicate their
needs, or to communicate what they actually want.
The actual challenge is not just the behaviour, its
understanding why they are doing the behaviour;
because a particular challenging behaviour is still a
way of them communicating something which they
are upset about. So the fact that they are
communicating is still kind of a positive thing.

Narrator:

00:06:58 Dominic is also very aware that many of his
students find noisy or distracting environments
distressing.

Dominic Cole, Care Worker at St. Mark's Day Services, North London:

00:07:06 It's quite good to kind of use low arousal methods
so they are able to gain more concentration or
more awareness of what's going on in that
particular environment. One person talking to a
particular individual at a time, not having too many
voices, can help the student to actually understand
what is expected of them, or to understand what is
being said. We have also adapted like session

rooms, so they don't have too much clutter or too much information, and they are kept very tidy at all times.

Conversation between a Female Care worker and Michael:

00:07:36 What colour starts with Y?

Conversation between Emma, Paul and Dan:

00:07:37 Where's your TV?

00:07:38 DVD player broke didn't it?

00:07:40 Did it? So when are you getting a new one.

Narrator:

00:07:42 Back at the Squirrels Emma's priority is to ensure that as an autistic person Dan is provided with the appropriate services as he makes the transition to adulthood, and that links are made with all the key people involved in his care including support worker Paul.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:08:01 Ultimately there is a settling down period, and there are challenges faced by residential staff, so it's about listening to what they have to say, and thinking about how you best know that child, to open up the conversation a little bit more.

Conversation between Emma and care worker Paul:

00:08:15 Well I am wondering what else is in Dan that we don't know that's there. Because the parents are always very clear to advocate that he was capable of doing so much than what was happening.

00:08:24 Yeah, his level of understanding is really high. He knows exactly what you are saying to him and what you are asking of him.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:08:32 It's about taking the knowledge that you know and then assessing what they've already done, and

then challenging the place on how they are going to further develop it.

Conversation between Dan's mother and Dan:

00:08:40 Hello my darling, I have come to visit.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:08:49 Well actually the most key people of course is the parents; so you are keeping them up to date, you are asking them what they felt about what comments people have made, is there other ways that you think things could have been done better, what are their hopes and future desires for their children.

Narrator:

00:09:05 Transition planning needs to start early and be led by both the young people and their families so that real choices and opportunities for their future are delivered whilst recognising that it is an anxious time and the decisions need to be very carefully considered to guarantee that the choices made are the right ones.

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:09:25 It's about keeping their spirits up; that actually this is the best thing as far as Dan is concerned into adulthood. It is progressive, it is moving him forward.

Conversation between Dan's mother and Dan:

00:09:35: Hello mum.

00:09:36 I know, mum that's nice. Did you say hello to me.

00:09:40 [Makes sound]

Emma Boswell, Social Worker:

00:09:41 You can try your best and have a good honest and open relationship with the parents, and you have to feel that you can challenge in an appropriate way because ultimately you are the advocate, as

the social worker, but you are looking at it from a different perspective.

Conversation between Dan's mother, Dan and care worker Paul:

00:09:55 I will see you soon, bye.

00:09:56 You will see mum another day.

00:09:57 Good boy, good boy.

00:09:58 Well done.

00:09:59 Well done.

Title: Key Learning Points

00:10:02

People with autism have a wide range of individual needs.

It is important to find the best way of communicating with the individual: this may change depending on how they feel.

Structure provides predictability and often helps people with autism to feel safe and secure.

Family members have an important role to play in supporting and developing the skills of people with autism and helping them plan their future.

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