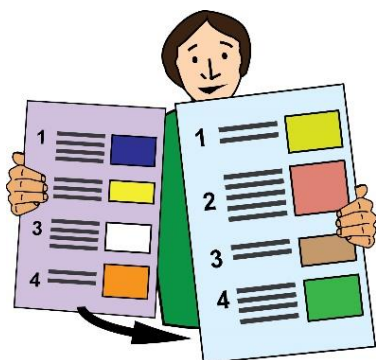


# Supporting Each Other Equals Power!

## Ten Top Tips – Tips 6 to 10

**Supporting Each Other Equals Power!:** this was a project that ran for four years. The aim of the project was to make sure people with learning difficulties have the power to support each other. Three organisations worked in **partnership** on the project.

**Partnership:** this means when two or more groups work together to push for the same aims.



This is Part Two of our Ten Top Tips. In this document, we talk about Tip 6 to Tip 10. Please read about the first 5 tips first.

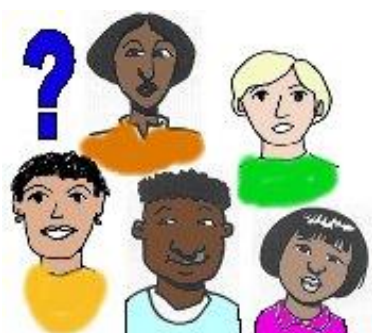


Keep reading for more tips about how to run a project like Supporting Each Other Equals Power!

## 6. Be ready to make changes if they are needed

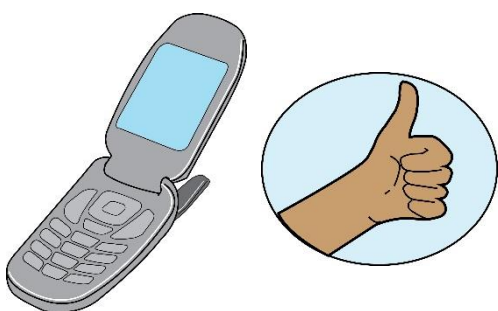


Be ready to learn on the job. Be ready to work on the skills you need. Be ready to get better at helping people. Learn from your experiences.



For example, we found out that we needed to keep getting in touch with **clients** to get them to take part in the project.

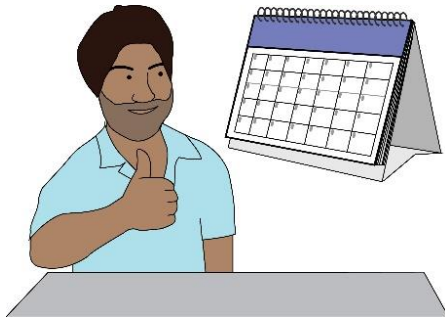
**Clients:** in this document, this means the people with learning difficulties that the project supported.



Sometimes you can call people on the phone and they say they will come along and meet you but then they don't turn up. It's important not to be disappointed. Give them another call and ask them to come next time.



There are some people we have worked with that other organisations could or would not work with.



Sometimes, supporting these people was really hard work. Get ready for it to be tough. But also, be positive. It's possible to help people with very complicated problems. It just takes time and lots of work.

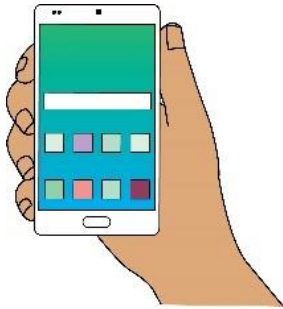


When **Covid-19** started, lots of businesses and organisations moved some or all of their services online. Some businesses moved their services to phone and video calling apps such as Zoom.

**Covid-19:** this is the virus that has spread all over the world since 2020. It has changed the way that people live and work. It has affected Disabled people in particular because often, they are in danger of getting very ill if they catch the virus.



Lots of organisations and charities also stopped working face to face with clients. They moved to telephone or online services. Most of our clients were left out.



This was because they did not have smart phones or tablets and they did not have access to the internet.

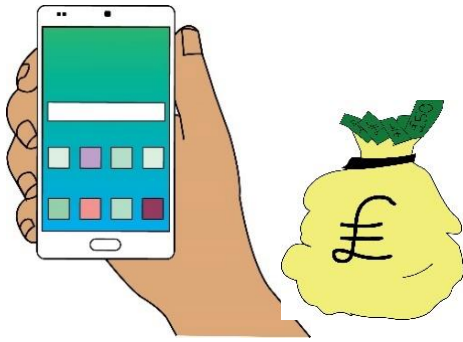
We did have a few clients who did have access to smart phones and the internet. However, they were struggling as they did not know how to use them properly.

We wanted to do something to change this. We wanted to make sure that people with learning difficulties do not get left behind.

We got in touch with lots of businesses. We managed to get things to help our clients.

For example, we got:

- Laptops
- Tablets
- A desktop computer



- Phones
- 1 year of minutes, texts, and data.
- Internet for some clients to use at home.



We have also been teaching clients how to use these things. We did this to support them to take part in online and digital services.



Conference calling is a great way for a small group of people to chat together on the phone at the same time. We found out that this was a very important way of keeping in touch with clients.



It was a great way for **peer supporters** to take part in supporting small groups of clients.

**Peer support:** in this document, this means when people with learning difficulties use their own experiences to help each other.





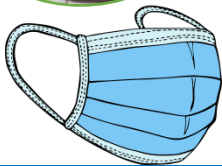
People with learning difficulties often found video conferencing too hard.

However, they could use conference calling. All they had to do was answer a phone call.

**Ray, one of our peer supporters said:**



“So, we had to sort of say to people you know, why it is important to put masks on and so on. Some of the people didn't like the idea of putting masks on.”



**Sam, one of our peer supporters said:**



“When we had to change the way we worked it was a bit difficult at first. But once I got into it, I was more relaxed.”

## 7. Get to know your community



Get to know lots of organisations and business. You might be surprised how they can help you. They can help you to find people who need the project. They can also help with people's problems.



People and businesses will help you if you ask them to. Get help from people in power.



Don't be afraid to ask people for help. Make sure that people with learning difficulties can take part in the community.



We used to meet up with the community police in our Art and Chat group. We would meet up with a man and a woman.



We met them first in the meetings for the Lambeth Learning Disability Forum.



Then, we invited them to come to our group. They used to pop in. They were very nice to us because we got to know them.



We asked their advice about what to do when people needed the police for different things.



We also met different police as part of the meetings about **Hate Crime** against people with learning difficulties.

**Hate crime:** this means when somebody commits a crime against a person because of a reason that makes them seem different such as their sex, gender, disability, or race.



We met with the police and we told them about the problems that people with learning difficulties can face.

We explained to them about how to work with us. We told them what we need to make this work.





One time a policewoman came to one of our events. The event was called Let's Dance. She danced with us. She let people wear her hat. In our project, we got more comfortable with the police.

### **Wenda, one of our peer supporters said:**



"Once you get used to the police, you get more comfortable with them."



Disability Advice Service Lambeth had a radio show. They invited us to talk on it about our work.

Then we asked if we could run our own radio show once a week.



They agreed and pretty soon let us get on with it.

We ran the show with the support of workers at Resonance Radio.



**Gina, one of our peer supporters talked about the workers at the radio. She said:**

was.



“They were great. Lovely men. They used to come to 336 to talk about how to make our show better than it

“They never used to take over. We used to do our own show. That’s what I liked about them. They listened to us and they took on what we said.”

## **8. Make sure you have a good meeting place**



It is important for the project to have a good place for people with learning difficulties to come to. It should be somewhere that they know already, if this is possible.

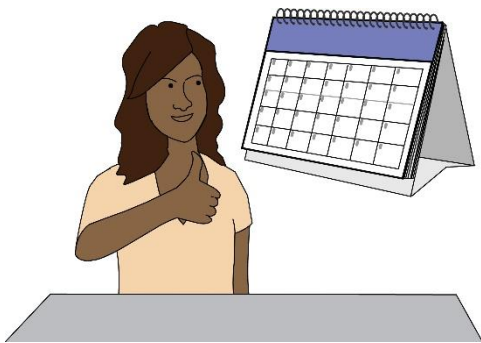


The space should be private and comfortable. Clients will get to a stage where they feel ready to open up and trust you with their emotions and issues.



It's really important to have a safe private space where they can go to do this.

## 9. Have a plan to deal with stress



Be ready to spend lots of time helping your clients. You might support a client for years or a short time. Clients you are working with for a long time might start to rely on the services you give.



This might be because they don't have any other support. This can be a lot for you to deal with. It can be stressful for you.



Some clients might be hard to work with. They might have some really complicated problems. They might find it hard to trust people. They might not be good at telling you about their needs.

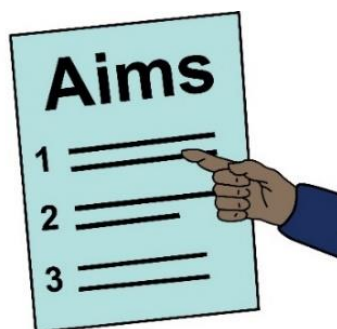


When your clients start to trust you, they might tell you about some of the really difficult problems they face. It's important to know that you can't solve everyone's problems.



**Samantha, one of the peer supporters, talked to us about how to deal with difficult problems. She said:**

“Some of them are very upsetting subjects, and we can't find a way to sort it out for them.”



It's important to work well with the people and organisations that you are in partnership with.

You must all share the same basic ideas for the project. Everyone should be working towards the same aims.

Everyone should put in lots of time and work.



The team should have the same beliefs about what is important to the project.



If members of your team don't agree on these basic things, then the project won't be a success. The clients won't get the best possible support. Lots of time will be wasted.



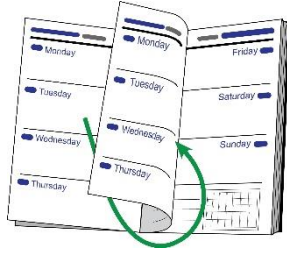
Make sure that you save time to talk about any issues that might come up in the project team. Save time to talk about these issues.



The Supporting Each Other Equals Power! project was a partnership between three organisations. The **steering group** was the main meeting for the whole project team.

**Steering group:** this was the group that looked at what was most important for our project, what we should be doing and what we should be pushing for.





The steering group meeting was held every six to eight weeks. At the meeting, we looked at the risk register.



This was a list of all the possible things that could go wrong with the project. We also shared any news about things that had happened over the past weeks.



We also shared plans. We looked at reports that we needed to write. These reports were needed to tell the groups that were funding us about how the work was going.



One part of the meeting was called open time. This was a chance to listen to anything anyone wanted to talk about.

At the end of the meeting everyone said how the meeting had been for them and anything we could do better.



There were times when the project team did not agree about things. The steering group was the place where we talked about this.

**Ray, one of our peer supporters, said:**



“We've been working with other organisations alongside us. I feel like we've done very well with them.”

**Samantha, one of our peer supporters, said:**

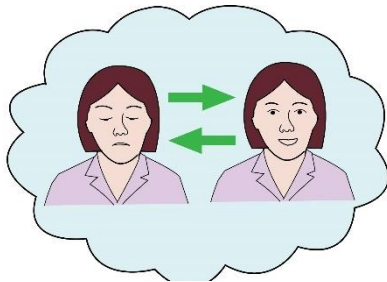


“I know in some ways it was difficult, but we did get through it all. And it's got much easier as times have gone through. I know sometimes it was a bit hard, but we are there.”



We found out some helpful ways to deal with stress. For example:

- Accept that you can't always solve everyone's problems all the time.

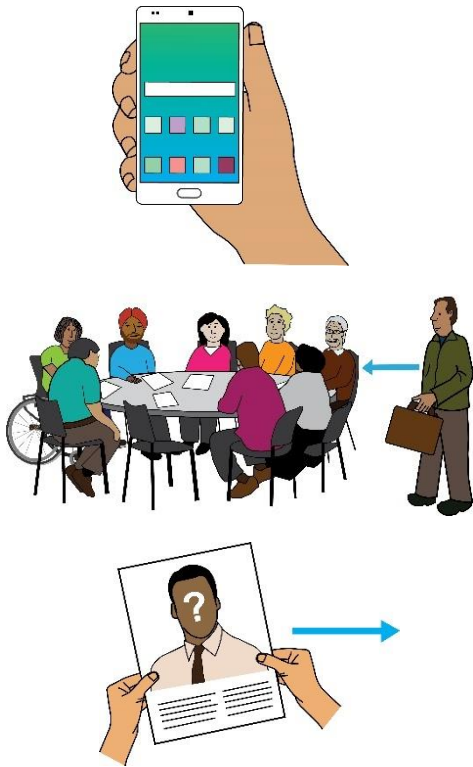


- Do yoga.
- Talk about stress with each other.
- Sometimes show some tough love. You have to know your own boundaries so people don't expect too much from you.

Having healthy boundaries with your clients is really important. Boundaries are a great way to make sure clients and project workers are healthy and happy.

Boundaries are all about being aware and using common sense. There aren't really any rules for setting boundaries.

It's more about getting the right balance for your organisation, partners and clients.



## Some examples of boundaries might be:

- Not sharing personal phone numbers with clients.
- Being on time for meetings.
- Not sharing too much personal information with clients.

## 10. Break down barriers

**Barriers:** here, this means anything that stops people with learning difficulties from living equal lives.



An important part of the model was to support **Breaking Out of the Bubble's** work supporting people with learning difficulties to take part in ordinary activities in the community.

**Breaking Out of the Bubble** is an organisation controlled by people with learning difficulties. One of the things they do is support clients with learning difficulties to mix with the rest of society.



We wanted to support people with learning difficulties to take part in ordinary activities in the community.



Supporting Each Other Equals Power! supported Breaking Out of the Bubble to develop and **evaluate** their work some more.

**Evaluate:** This means looking at what is working well and what is not and how to make things better.



Some of the best social activities are the ones where people with learning difficulties and people without learning difficulties join in together.



The pub meetups were a chance for people with learning difficulties to join in with the ordinary activities in a pub.



People with learning difficulties played pool and chatted to other people in





the pub who didn't have learning difficulties.

They also talked to the pub staff and ordered their own drinks. The pub staff were friendly.

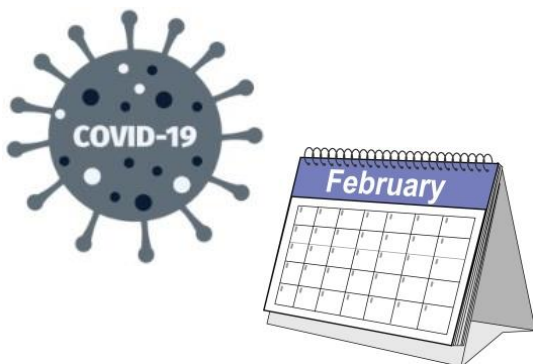


Peer supporters from Breaking out of the Bubble met with clients in places that were open to the public.



For example, they met in community cafés. They helped them to mix with others.

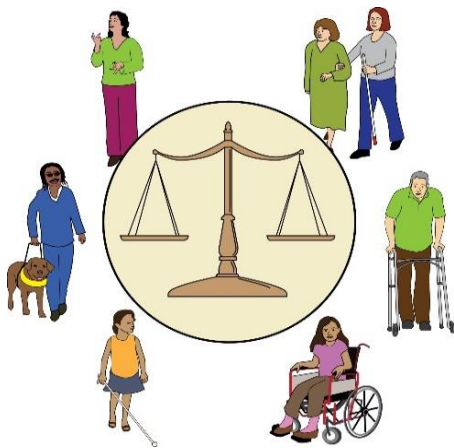
For example, they gave out some of the food they had brought along to everyone in the café. They also chatted to other people in the café.



Just before Covid-19 happened, Breaking out of the Bubble ran a community café lunch and cooked and served food there.



Before COVID-19 happened, they ran an event called Let's Dance. This event was held once per month. It happened in a popular public place.



Let's Dance was open to anyone. It was a positive place for people with and without learning difficulties to meet in a place where they were all equal.

They could meet while dancing and sometimes chatting.

**Gina, one of the peer supporters. She said:**



"We went to talk to Pop Brixton to ask them can we hold a dance there. They were good. They said yeah."



"They were all for it. They helped us with the music and setting up and stuff like that. They were quite good."

**Ian, one of the peer supporters. He said:**



“If the equipment went wrong, they took time to talk to us to make sure everyone was ok while they fixed it.”



“The staff was very friendly. They answered our emails and did what they could to be supportive.”



**This is the end of our  
Ten Top Tips.**

**Thanks for reading!**