

Cindy Evitts

There Has to Be a Better Way

Seeing people frustrated from not being able to make choices in their own life. Rules & regulations for residential settings were followed & managers & direct care staff made all the choices & people had to follow whether they wanted to or not. Even simple things like what to eat or I don't want to go to day program because I don't feel well could not be communicated. What drives me? The belief that there has to be a better way to care for people – by listening to what people want & adapting rules & regs to better meet needs & fit the desires of the person & help them interact with others.

I have become more aware & compassionate since I have seen the positive outcomes that can occur when you listen & use the information to improve the situation instead of insisting on doing things the one same way.

I am most proud of finally getting it and learning that there is more than one way to do something. Listening & letting others have a choice & trying to see that their wants are met, not just their basic needs as required by the rules & regs. Finding alternative ways to do things is a better way to care for people.

My biggest challenge has been feeling competent to help make a difference. Learning & finding time for mentoring with all the competing priorities in life is difficult. I find that the knowledge I've gained has changed my attitude. I realize now that you can't make a mistake when you try to understand someone's needs & wants. The only mistake is not doing anything & allowing current systems to continue unchanged.

The experience I'd most like to share with a New Mentor is that you can't make a mistake by caring & trying to help someone but you can make a tremendous difference & contribute to improving someone's life when you help them to have a voice. My attitude has changed so much through/from becoming a Mentor & I need to figure out how to adapt my own life to incorporate this information into 2 other areas I am involved with – Autism Awareness & Family Mental Health Awareness.

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