

## Real Lives Real Places Demonstration Project: A Review.

O'Brien, P., Riches, V., Knox, M. & Gadow, F. (2012)

Minda Incorporated, a disability service provider in Adelaide, South Australia, has recently undertaken an organisational change through the Real Lives Real Places initiative to incorporate a contemporary approach of person centred thinking and Active Support within a human rights framework as it supports people with disabilities to move from congregate care facilities to community-based settings. Centre for Disability Studies (CDS) evaluated this project in a longitudinal study over the course of 12 months.

The study examined the impact of person-centred and active support approaches to increased Quality of Life (QoL) experiences of service users to inclusive networking and development of inclusive relationships using a mixed methods approach. Qualitative data was collected through Household PATHs (a person-centred planning tool), participant observation, staff diaries and questionnaires, research support team meetings, as well as Photovoice. Quantitative data was collected by administering the Quality of Life Questionnaire (Shalock & Keith, 1994) and the Community Participation and Social Contacts Interview (CDS, 2001). Additionally, the QoL and levels of community participation of a comparison group living on the Minda campus were assessed through use of the same quantitative measures as the community group. Findings were assessed against Shalock's QoL framework (Social Inclusion, Physical Well-Being, Interpersonal Relations, Emotional Well-Being, Self-Determination, Personal Development, and Rights).

The final report concluded that the Real Lives Real Places Project has been a successful first step towards increased QoL for service users as they are being supported to have more control and choice in their lives, while experiencing opportunities to develop and expand their social networks. The role of the community facilitator was of particular importance in sourcing maintaining these networks within the local community. Another key factor for the success of the project was the implementation of an organisation wide training program in person centred and active support approaches to direct support staff. A range of recommendations regarding the future implications of the project was provided, including the roll out of person centred approaches across the organisation, as well as making the findings accessible to people with disabilities to assist them in making decisions about where they want to live.

### References:

Centre for Disability Studies. (2001). *Community Participation and Social Contacts Interview*. Centre for Disability Studies Sydney.

Keith, K. D. & Schalock, R. L. (1994). *The measurement of quality of life in adolescence: The Quality of Student Life Questionnaire*. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 22(1), 83-87.