

CORE COMPETENCY NEWSLETTER

August 2014

Creative Problem Solving & Decision Making



Creative Problem Solving and Decision Making is the demonstration of behaviours that enable one to identify and solve problems by understanding the situation at hand, seeking additional information, developing and weighing alternatives, and choosing the most appropriate course of action given the circumstances. Problems can be solved by breaking the issue into smaller pieces, or by identifying patterns and connections between situations that are not obviously related. It involves a willingness to, and demonstration of, behaviours associated with taking a creative approach to problems or issues.

Our profession is constantly changing. It is important for us to go beyond conventional thinking, find new approaches to ideas, and explore more creative and innovative uses of resources.

"Anyone can look for fashion in a boutique or history in a museum. The creative explorer looks for history in a hardware store and fashion in an airport."

~ Robert Wieder

INSTEAD OF THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX, GET RID OF THE BOX

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you've been given a task to complete, only to have no idea what you're doing? You stare blankly at the task at hand, hoping by some miracle a solution will all of a sudden fall out of the sky and appear to you.

I face this situation at the beginning of every month when trying to put these newsletters together. Sometimes I get lucky and the flood gates lift, and ideas come rushing out. Other times thoughts are barely a trickle, and I am two hours in and a blank Word document on my computer screen. It's in these frustrating instances I find myself having to pass on conventional brainstorming, and give way to more inventive ways to get the gray matter flowing.

Let me preface by saying, it should never be viewed as a problem, and instead always be considered a privilege to get to offer support to people with disabilities. That being said, in our line of work, there will, without doubt, always be someone that makes an eight hour shift seemingly feel like sixteen. They don't do it on purpose, it's just their nature to constantly challenge your patience. While getting annoyed and angry might be the easiest course of action, we unfortunately don't get the luxury of showing our frustration towards the people we support. As Direct Support Professionals, we have to come up with more creative and innovative ways of channeling that extra energy our special friends have into something more meaningful and productive.

A willingness to try new and different approaches requires an inner readiness for failure. Shortcomings are a great way to view things from a different perspective. Recognizing a mistake as an opportunity you can learn from is in and of itself thinking outside the box. The next time you find yourself at a professional stalemate, consider taking your normal approach, turn it on its head, and tackle the task in a way that seems completely unconventional to what you're use to. You may find this new way of doing things much more efficient than the old way.

~Jonah.

CORE COMPETENCY ROLEPLAY

For this month's activity, you are given a real world scenario. With August's competency dealing with **Creative Problem Solving & Decision Making**, it's up to you to explain how you will handle yourself and come up with a solution for the below example.

Scenario:

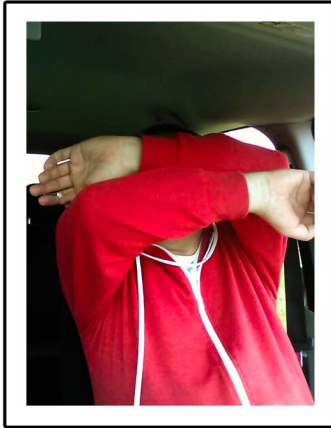
It's the end of the day, and a person we support is being driven home from their day program. The driver has recently started in this new position, so they are not yet familiar with the daily routine of pick up and drop offs.

They pull into the driveway. Our driver helps our special friend into the empty home, but unbeknownst to them, it's the wrong house. Our special friend helps themselves to some cookies in the cupboard, gets a drink from the fridge, then kicks their feet up on the couch, and turns the television on. The homeowner, in their housecoat, comes down the stairs, and alarmed by the situation begins to scream.

As Direct Support Professionals and Direct Support Supervisors, explain how you will react and creatively handle the situation. (While the activity should be taken seriously, I encourage you all to be as creative, and zany, and wacky, and fun as you'd like to be!)

*Come up with a creative solution to the above scenario and hand in your activity to Debb Young at Admin by August 19th, 2014. All Submissions will be entered into a draw for a really fun prize.

YOUR JULY ACTIVITY WINNER



Glenn Brown

Congratulation Glenn Brown on being chosen as July's activity winner. Glenn gave some really great examples for each level of his Competency Assessment Questionnaire on Collaboration.

On a personal note, I have the good fortune to work with Glenn every so often. I can say from first hand experience, Glenn always makes it a point to collaborate with his teammates whenever he works.

Thanks Glenn for being a super co-worker, and for all your effort and hard work!

YOUR CORE COMPETENCY TEAM

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Jonah Lunod

He has a friend who's a melon. Said melon really wants to get married, the only problem...He cantaloupe.