



**LA TROBE**  
UNIVERSITY

LIVING WITH DISABILITY  
RESEARCH CENTRE



**Frontline Practice Leadership Training Resource**

**[www.practiceleadershipresource.com.au](http://www.practiceleadershipresource.com.au)**

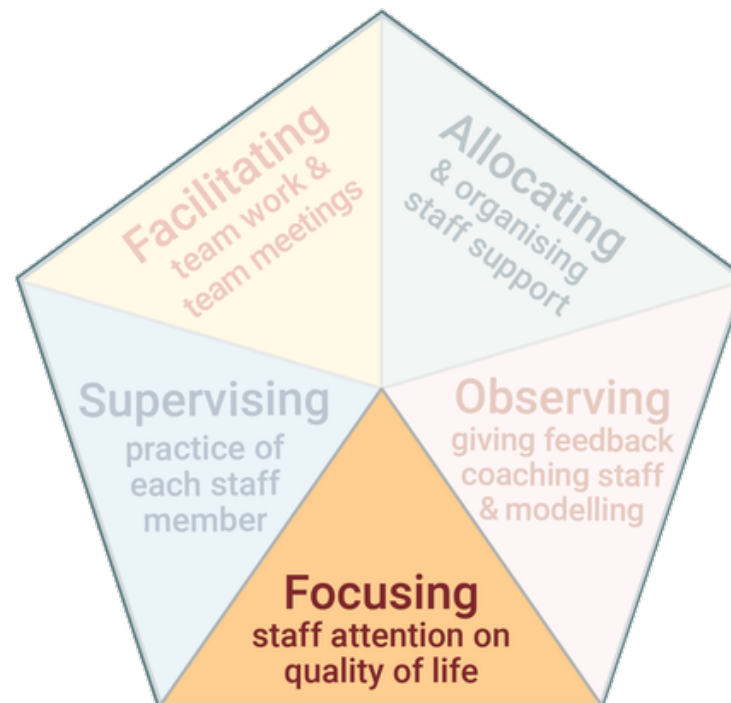
**Dr Lincoln Humphreys &  
Professor Christine Bigby**

# About the Training Resource

- It is for frontline supervisors, service managers and experienced support workers.
- Six modules that teach how to do the five tasks of Practice Leadership.
- Learning material:
  - Videos introduce each of the five tasks, acted scenarios, interviews with Frontline Practice Leaders, clips of real support
  - Written text and diagrams that explain key ideas
  - Activities and workbook
- Learning methods: self directed working through the modules, with colleagues, trainer delivered

# Focusing Staff Attention on Quality of Life

- Ensuring the primary focus of the service and staff is on the **quality of life** of the people you support.



# What is Quality of Life?

- It is about what it means to **live a good life**.
- The following video introduces quality of life and explains why it is important:



# Using the Quality of Life Domains

- The 8 domains and their indicators can be used to guide thinking about each person supported.
- You can ask:

" How good is their quality of life?

How well is the service supporting their quality of life? "

# Staff Support and Quality of Life

- Staff support is a key influence on the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Frontline Practice Leaders must help staff to understand that the support they provide makes a real difference to a person's quality of life.
- *How can Frontline Practice Leaders do this?*





# Focusing Staff Attention on Quality of Life

- The support worker believed she was performing her role well: completing house chores and administration tasks, and keeping Maree occupied.
- It is not easy having a conversation with staff to shift their thinking and beliefs.
- How did the Frontline Practice Leader navigate this conversation?
  - Asked “how meaningful is that for her?”, “what is her quality of life?” and “how can we support her better?”
  - Helped the support worker to think about what engagement and QOL looks like for Maree
  - Helped the support worker to recognise opportunities for engagement – applied some of the 4 essentials of Active Support to stimulate thinking
  - Provided suggestions for other activities
- The other four tasks of Practice Leadership can be used to help focus staff on quality of life and support that enhances it.

# Allocating and Organising Staff Support

Frontline Practice Leaders organise and support staff to work individually and as a team.

This helps ensure:

- Staff support is provided when and how each person you support wants and needs it.
- Consistency across staff in the way they work and provide support.



# Key Elements of Allocating and Organising Staff Support

Frontline Practice Leaders ensure:

- **Shift plans are written and used** – capture information about the regular patterns of activities and behaviour in a service
  - Shift plans help staff know what to do on shift and how to do it
  - On the website: examples of shift plans, guidance on what to include and how to develop them
- **Staff plan before and during shifts** – staff need to work out the key activities that will happen and who will be responsible for them
- **Staff plan with the people they support** – find out what they want to do and plan their day with them

# Poor Shift Planning

- What happens when the key elements of Allocating and Organising Staff are not in place?



# Poor Shift Planning

- **Ineffective allocation of staff** – Both support workers were working in the kitchen providing support to three people for one activity → Staff working on the same activities, rather than separate
- **No planning between staff** – Staff providing uncoordinated support, one doing more work than the other
- **Extended moments of disengagement** – Residents often watching the female worker, the person near the sink disengaged and did not want to cook, not enough opportunities in this activity for all three people to be engaged
- **Missed opportunities** – To provide effective assistance to cut carrot, acknowledge the person who came into the kitchen, for people supported to be more involved and engaged

# Good Shift Planning

- What happens when the key elements of Allocating and Organising are in place?





# Good Shift Planning

- **Staff planned before the shift** – worked out the key activities that will happen and who will be responsible for them. The female worker is more experienced in this service and led the conversation.
- **Read the shift plan** – the male worker read information about what is likely to happen and the support the people need and want
- **Allocated to areas/activities** – male worker in the kitchen for cooking, female worker supporting a resident to complete a form at the dining table. This allocation allowed for more individualised support.
- **People supported how they want and need it** – support provided to two residents who wanted to cook, staff provided assistance to perform activities (cut carrot, where to sign form), female resident supported to complete a form, male resident acknowledged when enters the area
- **Staff updated each other during the shift** – aware of what was happening, and no one was missed

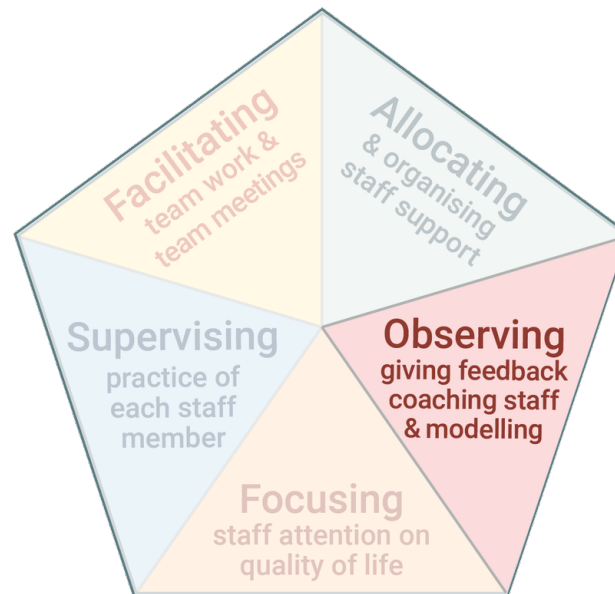
# How to Ensure there is Good Shift Planning

- **Shift plans are written and up to date:** write them yourself, have staff write them, review them regularly, have staff update the information regularly → Ensure they are communicating the right information. *What message does the language convey about the people supported and how staff should work?* They should focus on the people you support first and then staff tasks.
- **Set the expectation that staff plan before and during shifts:** observe staff during handover and at the beginning of shifts, you may need to facilitate this conversation until staff become comfortable.
- **Make sure the people you support have information about their day:** determine the best way for each individual to receive information (e.g., pictured plans, timetable, conversations), observe staff planning with the people you support, ensure information is current, people have choice and control about what happens, when and how.

# Observing Staff, Giving Feedback, Coaching and Modelling

By doing this task well, Practice Leaders help support workers to:

- Develop new skills.
- Refine existing skills.
- Reflect on their practice.
- Receive new ideas and suggestions.



# Observing Staff

- Means directly watching staff support and interact with a person.
- It is the best way to identify good practice and areas for improvement.
- **What should Practice Leaders observe?**
  - What is happening in the moment
  - The experience of the person or people being supported
  - The quality of staff support
- **The website provides:**
  - A framework and questions to guide observations
  - Questions to think about and plan feedback
  - A video to practice conducting an observation and planning feedback

# Value of Feedback for Support Workers

- Support workers rely on feedback to know how well they are performing.
- Feedback helps support workers to reflect on their practice and how it can be improved.
- It also motivates them by recognising and encouraging good support.

## Poor Feedback



# Poor Feedback

The Frontline Practice Leader:

- Began by focusing on negatives and areas to improve.
- Mostly used close-ended and “why” questions, which didn’t encourage a conversation or the support worker to reflect on her practice. Instead the support worker felt she had to justify what she did.
- Did not offer the support worker an opportunity to speak about her perspective.
- Was critical rather than developed the support worker’s practice.

## Good Feedback





# Good Feedback

The Frontline Practice Leader:

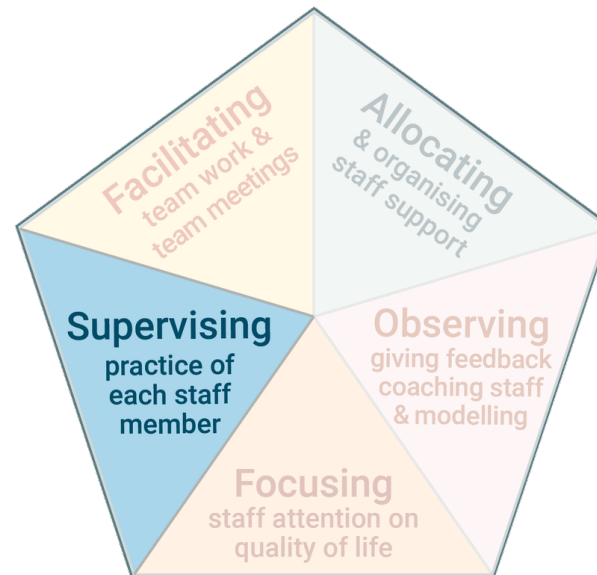
- **Found out the support worker's point of view:** started with an open-ended question, "How do you think that went?" and "What did you think of the support you provided?"
- **Identified the positives:** identified support worker's effective communication – reinforces what the person did well.
- **Was specific:** used specific examples about what happened and the support provided.
- **Encouraged reflection:** invited the support worker to speak about the issue she raised and asked open-ended questions to encourage reflection. "What could be a more effective way of supporting Hayley?" Gave the support worker an opportunity to problem solve.
- **Used the language of Active Support:** graded assistance, little and often. Using this language reinforces expectations about the support they provide.
- **Was constructive:** gave the support worker ideas and concrete examples about how to do things differently. To give Jo a rest from painting and chat with her and the others (i.e., it's not just about the activity of painting)
- Gave feedback as close to the event as possible.

# Feedback

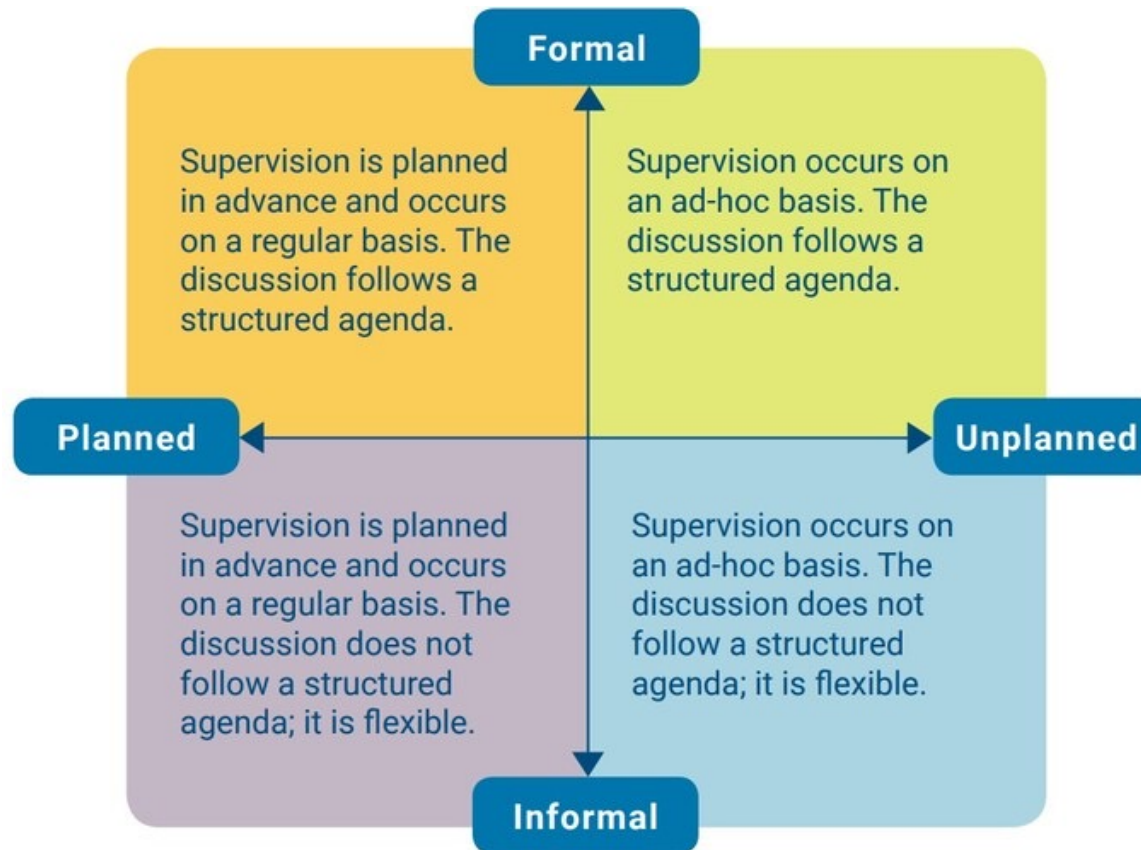
- By observing staff and giving feedback, Frontline Practice Leaders can help staff to further develop their practice.
- Feedback delivered in a positive and respectful way will ensure staff are receptive to it, even if it is critical of their practice.
- Providing feedback is a skill that is learned and refined through practice.

# Supervising Practice of Each Staff Member

- Supervision means the Frontline Practice Leader and a support worker have a deep and focused discussion about the support worker's practice.
- Supervision guides and develops the support worker's practice.



# Types of Supervision



# Planned Formal Supervision

Frontline Practice Leaders:

- review staff performance
- acknowledge good Active Support practice
- encourage staff to think critically and reflect on their practice
- help staff to identify areas of their practice for improvement
- discuss issues and problem-solve
- discuss key workers responsibilities, expectations and strategies for implementing person centred plans
- build rapport with individual staff

# Skills for Effective Supervision

- The success of supervision depends on communication skills. The way you **ask questions** and **listen** are important for conducting effective supervision.
- Let's see how a supervisor uses these skills in informal unplanned supervision.



# Supervision Skills

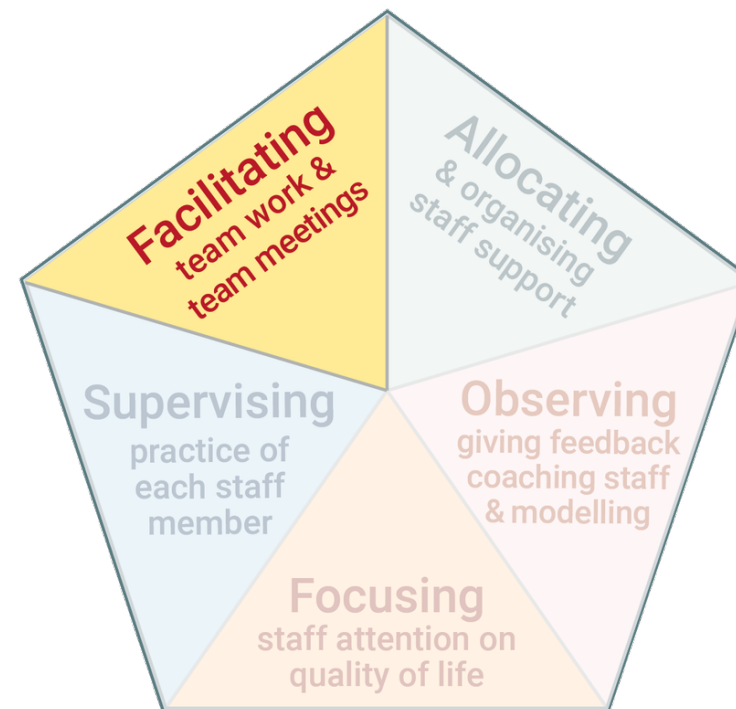
The Frontline Practice Leader:

- **Asked open-ended questions** – open-ended questions are useful for gathering information and generating discussion. The FLPL asked: “How are you going supporting Paul at lawn bowls?”, “How so?”
- **Listened Actively** – the FLPL gives the support worker her full attention, nods and says “uh huh” to indicate she is listening, and she summaries the topic to ensure she has understood correctly and to move the conversation forward – “So what you’re saying is...”.
- **Listened Openly** – the FLPL listens to the support worker describe the problem and then continues to ask questions to fully understand the problem. For example, “Can you tell me what happens when you get to lawn bowls?”
- **Reinforced good support** – identifies where the support worker performed well.
- **Problem solved with the support worker**
- **Provided a suggestion after fully understanding the problem** – The FLPL shares with the support worker her knowledge and expertise to help develop the support worker’s practice.



# Facilitating Team Work and Team Meetings

- Frontline staff in disability services work in teams.
- Team members must work together, communicate, interact and problem solve collectively to achieve common goals.
- Team meetings enable these things to happen.



# Team meetings are used to...

- **Review and discuss the quality of life of each person you support.** Ask: how is their quality of life, how could it be improved, what support is required?
- **Develop team members' skills in Active Support** by sharing ideas and examples of good practice.
- **Establish consistency across staff** by sharing information about the best way to provide support and agreeing how support will be delivered.
- **Share information and problem solve** by discussing what staff have tried, what has and hasn't worked, and learning from each other.
- Clarify key objectives and expectations in the service.
- Shape team culture.
- Enhance peer relationships.

## Chairing a team meeting



# Chairing a Team Meeting

The Frontline Practice Leader:

- **Focused the discussion on a person** they support (Sam) and his **quality of life**
- **Encouraged discussion by asking open-ended questions** – E.g., “What household tasks has he been doing this past month?”
- **Encouraged sharing of information** – Asked a support worker to share information about how to support a person to make breakfast.
- **Established consistency across staff** - asked all staff to start providing support to Sam in the morning to make breakfast using the same support.
- **Set expectations** – that all staff provide this support and if they don’t get all the tasks done in the morning it is okay, let other staff know.
- **Ensured everyone had a say by asking each staff member to have input** – got input from all team member’s about community activities that Sam might enjoy.
- **Respected everyone’s opinion by listening to what they have to say**
- **Delegated responsibility** – asked one support worker to update shift plans and another to follow up community activities
- **Ensured minutes of the meeting were being recorded**

# The Five Tasks are Interconnected



## Practice Leadership Advice



# Thank you

- NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission for funding the project
- Maitree – video production
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- Identifying Quality Team and colleagues – reviewed and provided feedback