

ACTIVE SUPPORT I



What is active support?

- The active support is the technique used for the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in daily life activities.
- Instead of doing something "for the person", staff should help the individuals to participate in daily activities and relationships in the home and community to the greatest extent possible.



Active support

- The focus is on participation with the necessary support so that person can participate now.
- There is no expectation that the person needs to acquire new skills or to become independent - this is a key difference in relation to the treatment!



ENGAGEMENT DEFINED

- Doing something constructive with materials (e.g. vacuum cleaning the floor, setting a table, cutting a hedge, loading a washing machine, listening to a radio)
- Interacting with people (e.g. talking or listening to them or paying attention to what they do – holding a conversation, watching someone show how to do something)
- Taking part in a group activity (e.g. playing a game, drumming, outings)



WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

Practical examples of engagement:

- Mowing the lawn
- Buying newspapers
- Ironing
- Having coffee with the neighbors
- Putting groceries in the bag
- Watering plants
- Shelving books in the library



WHAT IS LACK OF ENGAGEMENT

“Being inert suffocates the body and mind”

Practical examples of non-engagement

- The person just stands or sits
- Aimless walking
- Sitting in the car
- The person does not recognize or respond to contact
- Rocking
- Agitation, anxiety, waiting for staff



ENGAGEMENT CAN BE:

- Doing the whole activity/interaction
- Doing part of the activity/interaction
- Continuous
- Dipping in and out of the activity
- Taking the leading role
- Joining in



WHY IS ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

- “Inactivity withers the body, and the mind”
- People show adjustment and happiness when they are engaged
- Experience underpins development
- Lifestyle is the outcome



BEING ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES:

- Helps keep us fit and mentally alert
- Gives us a sense of worth
- Allows us to express who we are
- Establishes common interests with other people
- Develops our talents and allows us to show what we can do
- Demonstrates our independence and autonomy
- Is the means by which we look after ourselves and our daily needs.
- Provides the basis for friendships and for living together



Different ways of providing support

- ASK
- EXPLAIN
- ENCOURAGE
- SHOW
- LEAD



Ask or suggest

- Verbal encouragement which makes it clear to the person that it was time to do something.
- Example:
 - "Would you like to begin to peel the potatoes for dinner now?"
 - "Why don't you start to peel the potatoes for dinner? Let's start!"



Explain

- It refers to a series of verbal stimuli that lead person step-by-step through a particular activity or task.
- Example:
 - „Put the bread in the toaster” „Push the button” ... „Wait” ... „Look at the toaster” ... (toaster pops up) ... „Pull the toast out of the toaster.”



Encourage

- It refers to a clear gesture or a sign that tells the person what to do. It can be used when a person does not understand the words.
- It can be combined with the "Explain" way of providing support.
- Example:
 - We show the potato peeler and the movement of peeling with our hand.



Show

- It represents a higher level of support as it refers to the tasks demonstration. Useful when a person does not know what to do but is able to imitate.
- It can be combined with the "Explain" and "Encourage" way of providing support.
- Example:
 - Assistent puts one of six forks in the drawer, gives the following fork to the person and show the correct part in the drawer.



Lead

- Providing direct physical help to a person in performing a particular task. The form of physical assistance and its duration depends on the level of the support that person needs.
- Example:
 - Remove the milk from the refrigerator: → activities: come to the refrigerator → open the refrigerator door → take the milk → put the milk on the table → close the refrigerator door.



PERSON-CENTERED ACTIVE SUPPORT

Providing enough help to enable people to participate successfully in meaningful activities and relationships...

...so that people gain more control, become more included, and gain independence...

...irrespective of degree of disability or presence of extra problems.



“But she is too difficult...”

- Successful involvement can overcome a history of failure
- By including the person in “little but often” activities we help the person achieve success
- People often participate better in activities when they are given control over these activities



“Yes, but ... she’s too disabled...”

- Every activity has some easier components
- Everyone can make some contribution, even if not for long and not very much
- Support can bridge the gap between what people can do and what is needed
- Supporting participation is even more important for people with severe disabilities

Taken from: Person-centred active support

A multi-media training resource for staff to enable participation, inclusion and choice for people with learning disabilities

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“But it is his choice...”

- If doing nothing is the result of limited experiences, past failures and lack of support, than this is not a choice
- Real choice requires experiences of alternatives, a history of successful participation and control
- “little but often” activities help the person achieve success
- If people “choose” to do nothing – it means that the service let them down and did not provide adequate support



“But I like to do nothing...”

- Rest is a good thing in a busy life; endless hours without activities and in isolation is not such a good thing
- Most people spend over 90% of their time involved in some activity
- Watching TV, listening to music and reading are also types of engagement – even if they are unavailable to most people with intellectual disabilities



Thank you!
Any questions?

