

direction finding

Bringing people, families, friends and staff teams together to ask big questions about the future



diversitymatters



Direction Finding Events - bringing together the key people in your life.

Pat Black and Andy Smith have run a series of events with Inclusion Glasgow

Up to 70 people have gathered in four events. They worked together trying to find out what it means to live a good life and take active steps towards it.

That's a question any of us may ask and the answers vary hugely. We began asking this question a few years back with people who had been in the care system, in institutions or otherwise excluded from mainstream society. Many, though not all, people who have been in the 'system' for years suffer from isolation, loneliness and low self esteem. People who use services often have low expectations about what is possible in life and how they can live.

We also know that lots of people do not have interesting or fulfilling lives but they want to become more active citizens.

These large planning events are designed to help answer the questions in the yellow box below.

And what does it take? Well, it takes an awareness of who people really are. Very often it is the negatives in other people that draw our attention, the part that might need fixing, the part that is half full. So the first step is to rethink who the person is and identify their gifts and talents. Then it's about figuring out the kind of places, people and activities that suit that person. We are all wonderfully different and so what works for one person may not

perhaps work for another.

The next task is to figure out how to get from here to there. An essential guideline is not to do it alone - we all need help, we all need others and to be needed in return. By working collectively with other groups, other people who use services, families, friends, neighbours and staff in the room we can often figure out a route.

The inspiration to develop this approach came from the many people and families we have worked with over the years, who have taught us about what a meaningful and purposeful life is. We were also inspired by Connie Lyle O'Brien, Beth Mount and John O'Brien who developed the Pathways model and also from our friend Heather Simmons who with Steve Coulson developed an approach they call the Big Plan that is used with young people in transition.

THE BIG QUESTION.....



2010+

What would it take for this person to have a fulfilling and interesting life? A life in which their unique talents and gifts are discovered, so that they can become an active and contributing member of their community.

DISCOVERY DAYS & DIRECTION FINDING

WHEN IS IT USEFUL?

1. If things are much the same year on year
Life for many people who use services is highly predictable and often boring
2. Life is a lot better than it was, but something is still missing
Improvements in services mean that people often say things are OK, but it's relative compared to how things were and so much more is possible.
3. There is a nagging dream that won't go away
Is there something that always keeps coming back, a dream job or vocation perhaps?
4. There is something that needs to be done or said in the world but you don't know how to start.
This is the dissatisfaction question - is there something that drives you nuts or causes you to be angry? Do you want to change it, but need help to get things moving?
5. You wake up every day and don't know why you should get out of bed?
Many of us are sometimes depressed because we haven't yet found where we fit in the world or where we belong.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

We design and tailor Events and other large group processes to the individual needs of people and organisations.

There are many formats and styles that work - it's just about making sure we help you choose the one that is right for you.

Email us at planit@diversity-matters.co.uk for more information.



Each circle of support works independently and then comes together to offer help to others

What are the sessions like?

Most of this work has been with people who have been using services for a while and also with people who need high levels of support. Everyone enjoys themselves and likes being there. Even those who don't normally like events or large groups find it engaging. Sessions might last from 10 till 3 with a break for lunch, or take place in a series of evening sessions. Different formats are used for different groups. There are short stories or presentations and then each circle of support spends time developing ideas and figuring out how to change things. Later these ideas are shared and other groups are encouraged to help puzzle out solutions so they can help the others.

We believe that the wisdom, connections and resources that are needed in order for a person to have a good life are often with the community of people in the room on the day. It is about making the right connections so that the future the person needs is much more possible.

Each session focusses on different issues depending on the group and the individuals who have come. Topics might include, being an active community member, finding a job, setting up a business, doing more meaningful things, having a goal, organising your life differently and finding the 'right relationships'.



Celebrating small steps