

**CURATORS  
OF CHANGE**



**Over a Brew**

**26<sup>th</sup> May 2023,**

**Right people in the right place,  
with the right skills and at the  
right time**



directors of  
**adass**  
adult social services  
eastern region  

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connecting innovating improving

# Introduction

The session was focused on recruitment and retention and covered behaviours, cultures, human connections, values. It included aspects on International Recruitment, Personal Assistants and Direct Payments.

The approach used includes :

**Intentional space creation** - Brave space to challenge and disagree, inclusion-diverse voices , self care , Camerados principles and 'Over a brew' break outs.

**Real life stories** - Shared with generosity and love

**Time to listen**, process and respond together.

Focus on **actionable learning and creating momentum for change**

## Invitation to Brave Space

By Micky ScottBey Jones

Together we will create brave space

Because there is no such thing as a "safe space"

We exist in the real world

We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,

We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,

We call each other to more truth and love

We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.

We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.

We will not be perfect.

This space will not be perfect.

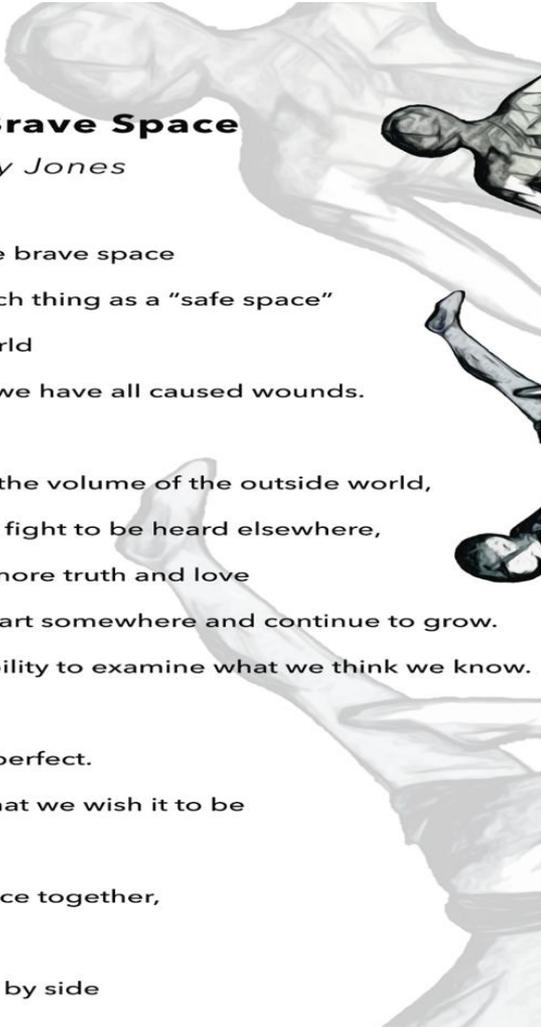
It will not always be what we wish it to be

But

It will be our brave space together,

and

We will work on it side by side



## CAMERADOS "6 Principles"

Be More  
Human

- 1) No fixing, Just be alongside (and lots of tea)
- 2) Have Fun, makes things less scary
- 3) It's OK to disagree, respectfully
- 4) Mix with those who don't look like you
- 5) It's OK to Fail. We're all a bit rubbish sometimes.
- 6) If someone's struggling, ask them to help you.



# 'Over A Brew' guide



## Grab a brew

Once you have your brew, ask someone to be the timer



## Reflect

Each person has time to think about the questions



Have your say  
Each take it in turns to say  
your response  
(3mins each)



Use the rest of the time to  
reflect on what's been said  
(no fixing)

Try the Camerados principles



PRINCIPLE #1 If we see someone struggling...we ask them to help us.\*

PRINCIPLE #2 No fixing each other's lives...we are just alongside each other.

PRINCIPLE #3 It's ok to be a bit rubbish...we share our failures without worrying.

PRINCIPLE #4 We mix with people...who don't look and think like us.

PRINCIPLE #5 Remember to have fun...it keeps things human.

PRINCIPLE #6 When we disagree...level with each other respectfully.

\* Creates purpose, self-worth and gets people out of their own worries.

Still got some time?  
Think about:

What's not been said?  
What are your lasting  
thoughts?



## Learning from the Stories

### Navigating the system

- *Feeling frustrated with the system, barriers and challenges is quite overwhelming and confrontation and assertiveness is really hard.*
- *The importance of 'hand-holding' when navigating the system is tough*

### Learning together from experiences

- *When Direct Payments and PA recruitment works well, it makes such a difference.*
- *We need LAs to encourage DP users to come together as a network to share the good stuff and the challenges - we probably have the solutions between us*

### Focus on relationships

- *"You have to deal with HR stuff one moment, and be showered by someone the next"*
- *Mostly it feels like a professional enemy not friend*
- *Treat people as humans*
- *99% of a good PA is down to personality*
- *It's values that makes a great PA not training!*
- *Matching eg PAs with the people they will work with*
- *Read people - understand how people feel and their surroundings*
- *'he can read me and know' PAs personality dependent*

## Learning from the Stories

### Honesty and willingness to engage and tackle barriers

- *This business about rates is a load of rubbish*
- *Not looking at the barriers - resulting in people being bounced round the system*
- *The importance of honesty from people in positions of power*
- *There are barriers to engagement*
- *The short term nature of engagement*
- *Barriers to engagement unsuitable and unhelpful to people in crisis feeling not listened to not heard and needs not met*
- *Spend longer on engagement & listening to people*
- *LAs need to give time to individuals - some people don't want to engage the first time - need to handhold/support people to engage.*

### Help, training and advice for people who employ PAs or have Direct payments

- *Employment is difficult and complex*
- *DPs - more than being an employer - you are a manager too. Responsible for everything, without backup*
- *Being an employer isn't easy no one prepares you for being an employer*
- *Need for wider training for individual employers, conflict management etc*
- *People recruiting PAs may need more practical advice*
- *Is there a standard contract for individual employers to set out requirements and expectations*

## Learning from the Stories

### Payments

- *Varying PA rates not helpful or supporting skills*
- *Differing pay rates*
- *We are still being told there is no DP rate, it is down to the employer!!!! - really!*
- *2 tiered systems again*
- *Peoples rates of pay should be personalised too - depends on needs and requirements - its up to the DP holder really.*
- *Council not always aware of the range paid to PAs*
- *Some SW do want to know what your paying as this would show on invoices*
- *Might need to be varying rates given rurality of area support being delivered within or complexity of needs being supported?*
- *Makes me want to ask questions about who really controls the finance vs who should? Why are people with lived experience not more involved in setting rates of pay?*
- *Strain on the DP systems of wage increases were available in line with Cost of Living; no flexibility between local governments; glass ceiling to maximum payments and national government recognising this*

## Learning from the Stories

### Flexibility and freedom for the workforce

- *Our roles working in services should allow for creativity and friendship*
- *Individual employers are not respected - creativity is not encouraged or welcomed*
- *People working in services, providing care should be able to do whatever is right for the individual*

### Equality /coproduction

- *Dont assume DP users are out to defraud the system - that is the last thing on their mind*
- *Staff high up are not engaged with the people accessing care and support but making decisions!*
- *SW on a fishing exercise*
- *Put yourself in other people's shoes - empathy matters*
- *The value of people with lived experience working with / supporting others in similar positions*
- *Treat people as people and individual - they are not profit/not a stat - their life matters*
- *We need to keep learning / relearning this because the message is repeated; we need to treat people as people as human beings*
- *Do we work enough with people to define what the role of social care is? Coproduced job roles for example?*

### Other

- *Being Flexible*
- *'A professional friend'*
- *Disillusionment*

## What kind of person would you want supporting you? Why?

- *Someone who truly **understands me**, because it creates trust which is integral for any relationship*
- *You can't train people to have **good values it's something that's in their heart***
- *Someone with **common sense***
- *If people don't think that as a **disabled person we add value to our community** they will be totally unsuitable to work as a PA*
- ***Friendly and chatty but not intrusive into my personal business***
- *Someone **I like***
- *A good PA is exactly what a person wants*
- ***Good values EVERYONE is worthy, everyone brings something to the table, everyone has a right, everyone is human***
- ***One size does not fit all - it has to be right for me***

## What skills and qualities does this person need to have?

- Someone who truly **understands me**, because it creates trust which is integral for any relationship
- You can't train people to have **good values it's something that's in their heart**
- Someone with **common sense**
- If people don't think that as a **disabled person we add value to our community** they will be totally unsuitable to work as a PA
- **Friendly and chatty but not intrusive into my personal business**
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- A good PA is exactly what a person wants
- **Good values EVERYONE is worthy, everyone brings something to the table, everyone has a right, everyone is human**
- **One size does not fit all - it has to be right for me**

- Someone who can help with organising, digesting, and understanding information.
- An advocate who listens, meets needs and helps me to speak up.
- Someone who has good values.
- Recognition that everyone is worthy and has a right to be here.
- Someone who brings something to the table.
- Makes no assumptions.
- Recognises that one size doesn't fit all.
- Gives the person being supported time to process information.
- Spends a lot of time helping to plan.
- Provides time for people to express themselves in whichever way they feel comfortable with
- Enables someone to live the life they want to

## Challenges and barriers people would like considered:

- . Cost of living and lack of increase in salaries causing people to leave the sector and work in retail.
- . Not being able to be flexible in what we pay our Personal Assistants (who may well be supporting someone with complex needs)
- . There is a balance between values and having the right skills to be able to do the job.
- . Concerns about funding mandatory training and backfill of PA posts – PA's need to access skills and training, need to be confident and invested in
- . Better clarity around what skills, development and training is available to support Pas – what can people who provide support access?
- . In relation to International Recruitment – there is a concern about making sure people who are recruited have the right skills to do the job. We should link up providers with groups of people in social care who understand the skills needed.
- . International recruitment frightens people who access care and support.
- . People understanding autism and what that means for new recruits coming into the country.
- . Ensuring people recruited have a good experience and individuals who receive support have a good experience too.
- . Consider what behaviours a good PA would have.
- . Consider language barriers – difficult but can be overcome.
- . Mental Health advocacy important but many are not aware of this even though it is part of legislation.
- . Consider values-based recruitment for PAs – is there a group PAs can go to? [Support for individual employers and PAs \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)
- . We need to set out clear expectations of values, behaviours and skills required for providers – what does a good PA look like?
- . Consider how we can benefit from someone living in a different country with a different culture.

# Possible actions:

1. From the previous session - Assessment and Reviews – top tips (David)
2. Achieve better clarity about what support and training is available for Personal Assistants (refer to Skills for Care link - [Support for individual employers and PAs \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk) and encourage people to sign up. Shirley Way is the Eastern Skills for Care rep – we can always ask Shirley to come and provide a session in the East as part of the Regional Building Positive Futures Programme (Tash)
3. Consider what we think a good PA looks like and what behaviours we would expect, maybe in the form of a job profile (team to think about what this might look like) – (Curators of Change team)

Link to all notes <https://docs.google.c> [BArg/edit](#)

# Over A Brew - 26th May 2023

Barriers to engagement  
unsuitable and unhelpful to people  
in crisis feeling not listened to not heard  
and needs not met

strange of different rates of pay

When Direct Payments and PA recruitment works well, it makes such a difference

being an employer isn't easy no one prepares you for being an employer

'he can read me and know' PAs personality dependent

the importance of honesty from people in positions of power

2 tiered systems again

not looking at the barriers - resulting in people being bounced round the system

the short term nature of engagement -

its values that makes a great PA not training!

## Learning from the stories

99% of a good PA is down to personality

## How do they make you feel?

The importance of 'hand-holding' when navigating the system is tough

Feeling frustrated with the system, barriers and challenges is quite overwhelming and confrontation and assertiveness is really hard

DPs - more than being an employer - you are a manager too. Responsible for everything, without backup

This business about rates is a load of rubbish

Might need to be varying rates given rurality of area support being delivered within or complexity of needs being supported?

Makes me want to ask questions about who really controls the finance vs who should? Why are people with lived experience not more involved in setting rates of pay?

Some SW do want to know what your paying as this would show on invoices

Treat people as humans

Do we work enough with people to define what the role of social care is? Coproduced job roles for example?

## What resonates?

Peoples rates of pay should be personalised too - depends on needs and requirements - its up to the DP holder really.

IS there a standard contract for individual employers to set out requirements and expectations

Need for wider training for individual employers, conflict management etc

individual employers are not respected - creativity isn't encouraged or welcomed

'A professional friend'

disillusionment

sw on a fishing exercise

"You have to deal with HR stuff one moment, and be showered by someone the next"

## What learning is there?

matching eg PAs with the people they will work with

Being Flexible

Employment is difficult and complex

People recruiting PAs may need more practical advice

Council not always aware of the range paid to PAs

Our roles working in services should allow for creativity and friendship

People working in services, providing care should be able to do whatever is right for the individual

dont assume DP users are out to defraud the system - that is the last thing on their mind :(

we need LAs to encourage DP users to come together as a network to share the good stuff and the challenges - we probably have the solutions between us

the value of people with lived experience working with / supporting others in similar positions

we need to keep learning / relearning this because the message is repeated we need to treat people as people as human beings

Read people - understand how people feel and their surroundings

Mostly it feels like professional enemy not friend

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Strain on the DP systems of wage increases were available in line with Cost of Living no flexibility between local governments glass ceiling to maximum payments and national government recognising this

we are still being told there is no DP rate it is down to the employer!!!! - really!

There are barriers to engagement

LAs need to give time to individuals - some people don't want to engage the first time - need to handhold/support people to engage

spend longer on engagement & listening to people

Staff high up are not engaged with the people accessing care and support but making decisions!

Put yourself in other people's shoes - empathy matters

Treat people as people and individual - they are not profit/ not a stat - their life matters

Over A Brew - Person Spec - ADASS East 26th May 2023

good values  
EVERYONE is  
worthy, everyone  
brings something to  
the table, everyone  
has a right,  
everyone is human

Someone I  
like

\*\*\*What kind of person would  
you want supporting you?  
Why?

One size  
does not fit  
all - it has to  
be right for  
me

A good PA is  
exactly what  
a person  
wants

you cant train  
people to have  
good values it's  
something thats  
in their heart

if people dont think  
that as a disabled  
person we add value  
to our community  
they will be totally  
unsuitable to work  
as a PA

someone who  
truly understands  
me, because it  
creates trust  
which is integral  
for any  
relationship

Someone  
with  
common  
sense

Friendly and  
chatty but not  
intrusive into  
my personal  
business

Skills: empathy,  
laid back,  
cheerful,  
listening to and  
advocate for  
needs being met

\*\*What skills and qualities  
does this person need to have?

Organisational  
skills needed  
and valuing  
human beings

A good  
listener

someone to  
support and  
organise  
things

it's not about  
the training  
they have had  
its about the  
values they  
possess

thoughtful,  
caring,  
cheerful,  
can do  
attitude.

to help me  
process  
things

Skills -  
driving,  
cooking  
healthily