

My Reflection: PREX 923

My professional experience placement involved working with adults with disabilities at a day centre program. I found the experience to be both educational and enjoyable. On my first day I felt very nervous, but the friendly staff were helpful in explaining routines and what I needed to do. The centre caters for 33 clients and this I found overwhelming at first because clients were going to undertake different activities and had different needs.

The centre ran very efficiently with routines clearly defined. A whiteboard listed the activity each client would be undertaking on that day, in the morning and afternoon sessions. The routine is familiar to clients and staff. Clients at the centre ranged from high functioning to low functioning and each client's program is designed specifically to suit their needs, taking into consideration each individual's likes and dislikes. A key worker is assigned to each client who must support, monitor and report on client goals and make changes to client individual plans.

The centre aims at giving clients as much opportunity as possible to undertake activities in the community away from base. The more high functioning clients participated in work placements at local businesses. Some of the other activities clients participated in included: swimming at the hydrotherapy pool, horse riding for the disabled, line dancing, cooking, music, literacy session, craft, personal care, table games/reading, town library visit, delivering meals on wheels, ten pin bowling, tennis, gym, sensory activities, mini golf and fishing.

I found it very rewarding getting to know and understand each client and their individual needs. Behaviour issues did arise, and these were handled according to behaviour management policies. A range of behaviour management strategies are implemented at the centre including: well established and defined routines, making sure attention is given equitably to all clients, staff model good manners and consideration for others, clients are praised for displaying appropriate behaviour and staff are clear about unacceptable behaviour, body language, and groupings of clients.

It was interesting to see how effective the 'ABC' of behaviour management is in a day program setting, having studied the unit HSHM218 Assessment and Management of Challenging Behaviours last year. Finally I had the opportunity to see how theory applies to real life situations.

It is amazing how much you can learn in a professional experience placement of only 10 days duration. My career aspirations lie in teaching primary school aged students with special needs, and the time spent at the centre has given me an insight into the lives of individuals with disabilities beyond that of school years.