

How BeyondAutism makes an impact that improves the quality of life of our pupils for years to come

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Executive summary

The question that will be posed in this case study is, 'how does BeyondAutism make an impact that improves the quality of life (QoL) of our pupils for years to come, when they are not using our services anymore?' In this case study, the definition by the World Health Organisation (WHO) will be used to define QoL. This definition regards QoL as being, 'a complex way the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to the salient features of their environment' interact to promote wellbeing (WHOQOL, 1997).

Introduction

This case study is about a 15-year-old pupil at BeyondAutism in a class of similar aged children, and defined as an intermediate learner. This means that they can mand for items effectively and are beginning to mand for information. They are also independent in many ways: they can change their clothes when we take the class swimming; they can independently use the toilet; they also have diabetes and are able to inject their insulin independently. Many of their targets have to do with self-care, such as learning when they need to have a snack to help their blood sugar go up, cut their fingernails, use the gym equipment, or fold clothes.

Methodology and results

Studies show that children with autism have diminished QoL compared with children with ADHD/ADD or unaffected children (Lee et al., 2007). This research also demonstrates that those with autism are less likely to participate in activities, the community, and had a higher level of family stress. Furthermore, the diminished QoL of those with ASD carries on into adulthood. Research (Marsack & Samuel, 2017) has indicated that the heavy dependence or use of a caregiver in adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has a negative impact on the QoL of the individual with ASD. This research suggests that informal

social support gave the opportunity for the adult with ASD to have a higher QoL. This indicates that independence is a major factor in improving the QoL of those who have autism and that a diminished QoL is something that affects those with ASD throughout their lives.

The QoL of the pupil in this case study has improved in ways that have significant implications for well into adulthood. They have a sensor in their arm which wirelessly communicates with a blood glucose scanner. When the scanner is hovered over the sensor in their arm, the numbers on the scanner indicate their blood glucose levels. They currently have a book that gives them instructions on what to do when their readings are low or high, which they have learned to call their 'scanner book.' They put the scanner book in a bum bag, which they wear all day. They have recently learned how to follow the instructions in their scanner book which means they no longer need their tutor to tell them when they need food to bring their blood sugar up or water to bring their blood sugar down. The student is able to do all of this on their own. As mentioned previously, research suggests that independence from a caregiver or family can improve the individuals overall QoL (Marsack & Samuel, 2017). This target that they are now able to do augments their QoL because they now have greater independence, meaning that their future carer will not need to tell them what they need to do after they have scanned themselves. In the near future, we hope to develop a target that will help the student know when to do their scan so that they can one day manage their diabetes independently.

Conclusions and discussion

In conclusion, in order to improve the QoL of our pupils, the targets that we set for our pupils need to be appropriately prioritised. We need to start with introducing targets that we believe will have the most significant impact on the pupil's future. The implications of this for our pupils is incredibly valuable. It means that they will get the opportunity to enjoy the independence of adulthood to the best of their ability. After all, the name 'BeyondAutism' implies that we go beyond to help provide the children the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life.

References

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