

Accept Responsibility : Not Avoid It!

Families battle for quality of life care for their member with a disability! Not just because services are "hand-out", but because many service providers, especially government, avoid their responsibilities at every opportunity

We, like most caring parents/families throughout Australia with a member with an intellectual or multiple disability, have witnessed/experienced much of the questionable service provision outlined in the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry Report, the Victorian Auditor General's Report and the Community Visitor Reports. And, we have extensively experienced the core basis for many of the problems contained in these reports.

The core basis being the failure of service providers to accept responsibility for ensuring they provide quality of life care services, and that these are well within a meaningful and enacted customer service framework.

Although our experience of services in supported accommodation group homes for those with an intellectual or multiple disability is mostly that of, "Avoidance at Every Opportunity". It was a real breath-of-fresh-air when we witnessed/experienced, "Total Responsibility Accepted" service provision.

The expectations of most families is a service which provides consistent quality of life care within recognised care policies, standards and values, by direct care staff who treat the residents as their second family. And, where the service provider sees the resident and their family as valued.

Sadly, captive market service provision has little desire to understand or action the market place strategies of, "the customer is always right" and "the customer is valued". Captive market service provision breeds little customer service, issue avoidance, customers are a pest and that customers are always wrong.

Many times in early morning China, we witnessed department store managers lecturing their staff on good customer service - "If I hear one complaint from a customer, we are not achieving our policy of good customer service and relations!"

Equally, good market place business in Australia listens to, and acts on customer feedback - encouraging feedback as a tool to service improvement. It is cheaper to hear from customers, than purchase service evaluation and accreditation.

Yet government disability services throughout Australia do more than actively ignore consumers and their families. They frequently insult, intimidate and issue avoid to the extreme on those who dare to question their service provision in any way.

This is in total contrast to the "Total Responsibility Accepted (TRA)" service provision. TRA is where all management and staff actively seek customer satisfaction and feedback. Management and staff actively wanting to please the resident and their family to make a happy and working together relationship conducive to real quality of life care, meaningful family involvement with peace of mind satisfaction and job satisfaction for management and staff.

Summary: If we are unable to change service provider attitude, especially government service provider attitude from "Avoid" to "Accept Responsibility", then any new funding will do little more than provide more "Minder Care" rather than "Quality of Life Care".

Elderly parents want to depart this world in the sound knowledge their family member will not just have a roof over their head, but will have a real home with real and consistent quality of life care by direct care staff who treat the residents like they were their second family.

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