

Extending access to services for disabled children from Black families:

A case study of
research into practice

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Workshop overview

- Practice sharing
- Summary of research and key messages
- Description of development project
- Brief questions or comments
- Small group work

Study overview

- JRF funded May 2001 to February 2002
- National overview / review of literature and practice of past 15 years
- Interviews with 9 children & young people in Scotland
- Parent and short break carer interviews
- Survey of short breaks schemes
- Visits to 6 schemes in England

Key findings

- Despite research –still unmet need
- Separation of disability and ethnicity in services
- Lack of information and communication about services
- Misconceptions and myths on both sides
- Disabled children & young people want to get 'out and about'
- Families clear about what they want
- Home based care popular
- Low Black staff and carer representation means slow progress

Barriers to access

- Insufficient engagement and development work
- Insufficient flexibility in services – one size fits all
- Poor coordination of services
- Information not getting to parents
- Poor communication strategies
- Anxieties about whether needs will be met
- Poor understanding of short breaks
- Children and young people faced particular barriers
- Misconceptions about the role of social services

What works?

- Explicit policy and practice commitment
- Competent leadership, management and shared commitment and responsibility
- Workforce diversity
- Using the RR (A) Act 2000 and other enabling legislation
- Detailed knowledge of the populations served
- Proactive community relations and consultation
- Scrutiny of processes for barriers
- Regular reviews, monitoring, evaluating
- Sufficient resources – build in or redistribute

A Process for Change

- Two development workers-Shared Care Network; based in NW and SW England
- Four short break schemes selected
- Intensive work over about 12 months implementing the research recommendations
- Writing up the process for a Practice Guide

How?

- Mentoring/supporting individuals
- Acting as a bridge between teams and local communities and community organisations
- Being a scheme's Black worker for a time
- Identifying groups to be worked with
- Encouraging cross departmental working
- Providing information, research, good practice, new ideas
- Modelling –i.e. running a campaign

Achievements (1)

- Focus on BME communities and needs
- Showing the difference Black staff can make
- Motivating teams and giving them confidence
- Encouraging debate and awareness of culture, ethnicity, 'race' and difference
- Challenging myths and stereotypes and encouraging integrated ways of thinking about need

Achievements (2)

- Practical changes to systems/processes
- Local information on ethnic groups and where they are
- Building good local community relations
- Increase in referrals of Black children
- Increase in Black short break carers
- Better working across and within services

Questions

- What are the drivers to change in settings?
- How can workers get support and guidance in promoting 'race' equality?
- How are agencies consulting with and mapping communities' needs?
- How are services for Black disabled children being integrated with other services?