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Disclose Key Information

Do

Give information about the person to people in the host community.

Story

Rachel has Prada Willi syndrome, where she is constantly tempted to eat. At her placement in a nursery, we talked with her beforehand about how she would explain to the nursery staff how they could support her. So she was supported to ask the staff to prevent her going into the kitchen and not to give her food, while respecting her wishes.

They considered the actual information that was needed e.g. 'a health problem that increased appetite' rather than naming the syndrome). They considered the potential for abuse of the information that was shared. They asked who else in the host community would be told and what would be written down.

Hints & Hazards

Enable the person to take responsibility for sharing their personal information. Ask the host organisation what information they require and why – understand the two confidentiality cultures (the care system and the host community). Tell the person what the host organisation needs to know and why (e.g. emergency contacts). They may decide to share nothing. Talk about how difficulties may affect the placement. Agree a ‘coping strategy’ and how they can be supported to share this information. Find out what support the host can offer. See *Mather & Atkinson 2003, pp29, 74*.

Ensure each organisation understands the confidentiality culture of the other and what might be disclosed or withheld and why. See *Mungovan & Quigley (2003)* for an Australian perspective or *Skill (2004)* for a shorter British viewpoint.

Some services get caught up in their policies and procedures about sharing information. We suggest that, when you begin thinking about community building, you take some time to check policies and procedures and make any necessary amendments.

Watch out, as too much unnecessary information, given before the people have met, can influence the whole course of the future relationship, especially if it is about low-probability/high-visibility events, such as incidents that happened years ago.

Protect the person’s right to live a private life in the community (*Article 8 of the Human Rights Act*) and stay safe – especially if the law considers the person to be vulnerable and you have formal safeguarding responsibilities.