

Introduction

Title

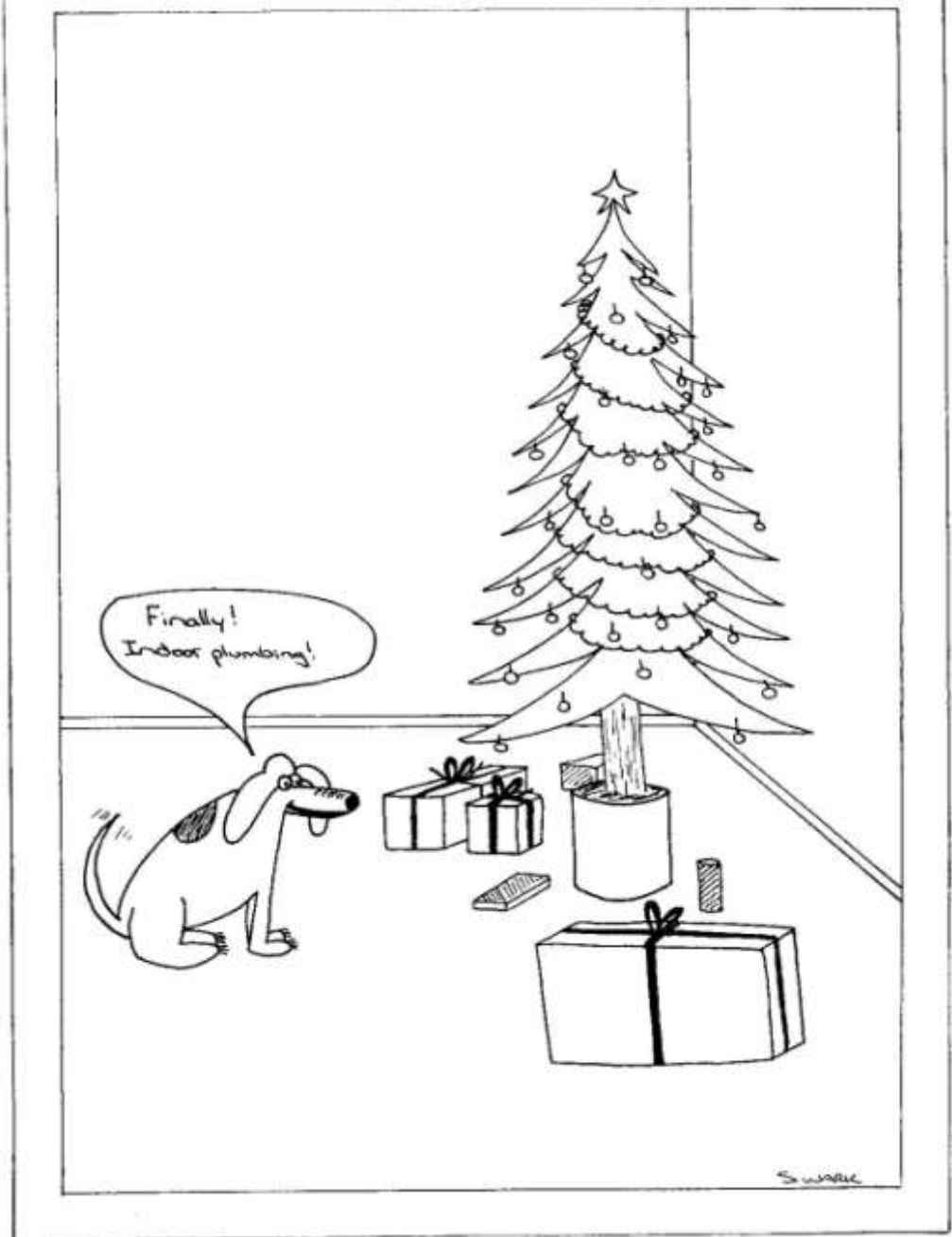
Ageing and Intellectual Disability –
Issues for Disability Service Provision

Presenter

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Underpinning philosophy to the research





The Issue



A person born with an intellectual disability eighty years ago would not be expected to live past their second decade (Carter & Jancar, 1983). People with intellectual disabilities are, however, now living far longer (Buys et al, 2008). A combination of factors including improved care and health technology has seen the life expectancy of a person with an intellectual disability increase dramatically (WHO, 2000).

The progress in health and allied care meant that people with a mild intellectual disability now have a similar life expectancy to that of the mainstream population (AIHW, 2000). Assisting people with disabilities to age successfully is now a major priority within the community services sector.



Background to the Problem

While this improvement in life expectancy is naturally a very desirable outcome, it has resulted in a new problem for disability support organisations and the wider community that remains unresolved; how are a substantial number of people with an intellectual disability going to be supported as they start experiencing age-related health problems?



Staff and Ageing Carers

A person with an intellectual disability who is experiencing ageing related issues often has needs that fall outside the expertise of the disability sector staff, while the staff within aged care services often have limited or no experience in dealing with people with intellectual disabilities. This has resulted in a situation in which neither the disability or aged care sectors are appropriately placed to provide the necessary support. At the same time, many ageing carers are finding they can no longer support their family member.



But what is needed?

- ◆ How do we know what is needed?
- ◆ There is almost no research around the world that has directly asked the support workers, the actual people doing the work, what training would benefit them.

The Current Study

- ◆ The purpose of the current study was to ask the individuals at the coal face (i.e. the Direct Support Workers) what they thought were the most important issues they were facing in their day to day work with respect to the ageing needs of people with an intellectual disability.
- ◆ The participants in the study were drawn from 12 different services providers (a variety of small, medium and large) across regional, rural and remote New South Wales.

Delphi Methodology

- ◆ The current study used a Delphi Survey tool that was delivered via either email or through Australia Post.
- ◆ In simple terms, a Delphi research model proposes a series of very open ended questions and requests that each participant write down as many answers as they think are relevant.
- ◆ The survey is done anonymously, and every person can indicate their agreement or disagreement with the proposed issues of the other participants.

Delphi Methodology Continued

- ◆ The answers from all participants are then collated together, and re-presented to each individual for further consideration. This process continues until agreement is reached within the group upon what issues are important.
- ◆ Once the issues are accepted by the group as being appropriate, each participant is asked to rate the issues on a Likert-scale (one being irrelevant and seven being critical)
- ◆ All of the participant's responses were again collated to determine which issues they considered the most important
- ◆ The rounds of the survey took 12 months to complete

The Survey

- ◆ The Participants were initially asked 6 questions;
- ◆ *What do you think are the main issues or problems that a person with an intellectual disability will face as they age?*
- ◆ *What are the main signs of ageing that you have seen in people with intellectual disabilities (i.e. physical health issues, social impacts, emotional issues, mental health issues)?*
- ◆ *From an individual staff perspective, what are the main issues you experience in providing support to someone with an intellectual disability who is ageing?*
- ◆ *What do you think are the main issues facing the families and friends (including co-residents) of someone with an intellectual disability who is ageing?*
- ◆ *What do you think are the main issues or problems facing a rural organisation that provides support to someone with an intellectual disability who is ageing?*
- ◆ *What do you think are the highest priorities in training for staff who assist individuals with an intellectual disability who are ageing?*

Recommendations

- ◆ There were a total of 163 different issues identified and rated as important by the panel. These issues were categorised into a series of themes.
- ◆ The main theme identified was, not surprisingly, a lack of funding. However, that theme doesn't actually tell us what additional funding is need for.
- ◆ The remaining themes were analysed, and a series of recommendations were made that are designed to achieve practical and cost effective solutions.

Recommendations

The Eleven recommendations were:

1. Introduction of a minimum qualification for all disability workers;
2. Need for disability organisations and Registered Training Organisations to pre-plan the content of accredited training;
3. Government (s) to fund the *Disability work skill set – people with a disability who are older* training;
4. Development of a joint training agenda between the ageing and disability sectors;
5. Establishment of networks between disability organisations and local specialists;
6. Shared attendance at relevant induction sessions for aged care and disability service providers located in close proximity;

Recommendations Continued

7. Participation in Mental Health First Aid training;
8. Examination of accredited training for ‘accidental counselling’;
9. Completion of mandatory annual updates in priority service areas;
10. Funding to conduct workshops in future planning; and
11. Access to Quality of Life training.



Any easy questions?

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