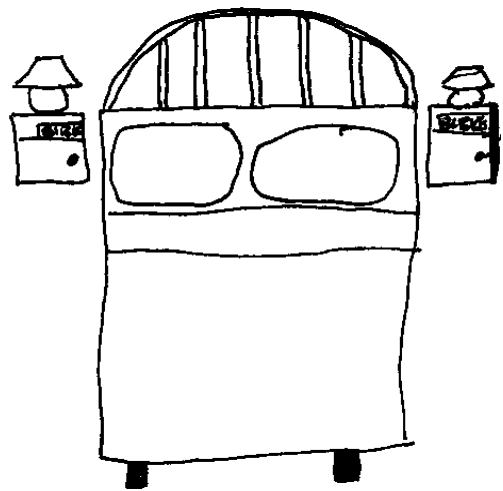
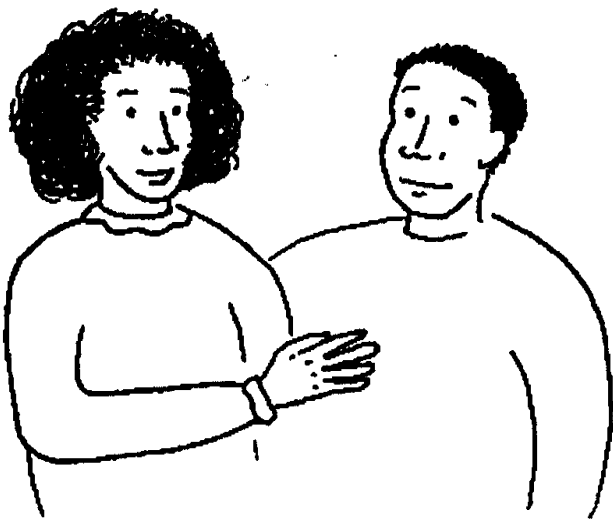


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After the holiday we talked with Mary about how it had gone; the practical things and the fun things that we've written about - the *whole* experience.

We felt our 'very best bit' was being together and feeling like *other* couples. We loved being together every day and especially enjoyed having our own bedroom - knowing we would wake-up together every morning.



We then discussed writing this article, to share with others how we had made our holiday happen – *our* way. We agreed with Mary that it had been worth the hard work, talking and careful planning beforehand. Even though Mary was with us, this was our first holiday as a couple – but it won't be our last!

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We (David and Lesley) went on holiday to Hayling Island last October and Mary (Lesley's Keyworker) came with us.



David & Lesley

We wanted to tell others about our experience and how it was possible to have the holiday we wanted!

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To write this article, Mary helped us think about what we did *before* we went away (talking and planning), what we did *on* our holiday, how we felt and what were our 'best bits'.



Before going there was lots of talking and planning through 'holiday' ideas. We did this with Mary and had meetings that included David's Advocate. This helped us listen to each other, explain what we wanted and work out how we could make it happen.

We thought about suitable locations and the right accommodation, travel, safety, costs and budget. We both used our own money for the trip which meant saving up over a couple of months.

By doing this, we realised the things we had to *compromise* on - as well as the things we *agreed* on.

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We then met at the bottom of the Tower in the café and talked about how much we had enjoyed our days out and taking photos. (We have now put them all on disc to show and share with everyone.) We went back on the coach and had another cream tea! Then we walked to the beach at Hayling Island and saw a dredger and took more photos.

Each evening, after our meal, Mary and Lesley played bingo and Lesley won some money – which she said was “brilliant!”



Each evening were different cabaret shows; we had the comedian Stu Francis, but Lesley especially liked the ‘Moulin Rouge’ night.

Lesley and David always joined in the dancing, really enjoying slow-dancing to the band. They said “it was one of the ‘best bits’ of their holiday”.



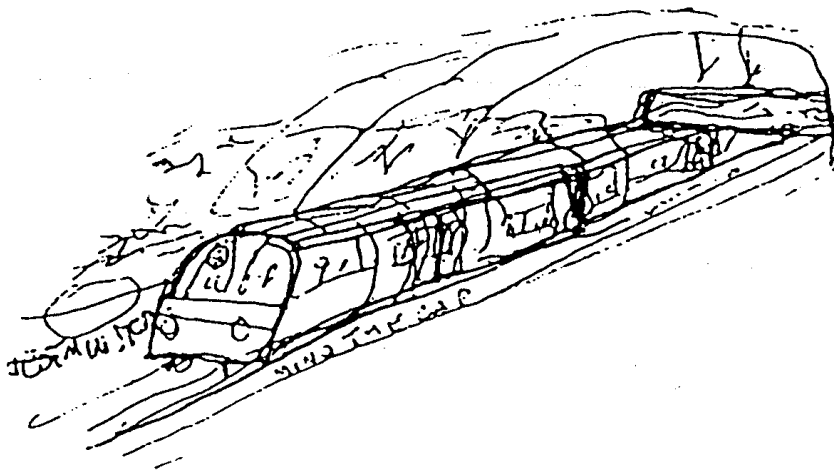
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Also, by placing the person at the centre, the whole process is *less* likely to be controlled by professionals and *more* focused on the individual's needs, wishes and rights.



We were then able to book the holiday and start paying for it. We also planned transport and got our train tickets in advance. Going by train meant Lesley needed a ramp organizing as well.



When we got to the Lakeside Holiday Resort, we all had a walking tour and we were shown our chalet where we unpacked. After that we went to the restaurant to eat dinner and there was bingo, entertainment, then dancing.

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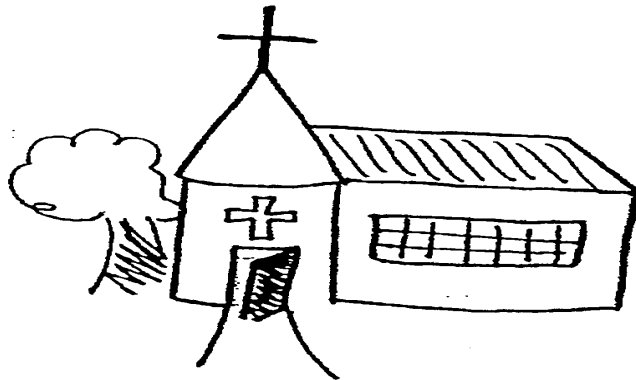
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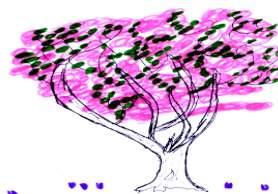
The next morning, Mary and Lesley learnt line-dancing whilst David watched. Lesley thought it was “really good and liked being taught the steps”.

There was a pool where Mary and David swam, whilst Lesley watched and commented on David’s swimming!

One day we all took a coach to Chichester where we walked around the shops; David bought a DVD and Lesley bought postcards and stamps. We looked at Chichester Cathedral and ate at the restaurant.



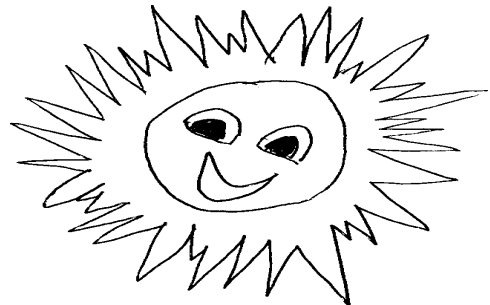
We went back on the coach and had a cream tea and then all went for a walk to the lake. We bought birdseed to feed the ducks and swans and they followed whoever carried the seeds - as the bag started leaking!



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The next day we all took a coach to Portsmouth Harbour. David went up the Spinnaker Tower. He told us he “took up the challenge and went up one floor to view the harbour”. David added “It was good inside – you can see anything up there. I went up on the last floor: Viewing Deck 3; it’s the largest in Europe and you can go twice around it and I could see the Isle of Wight from it”.



Meanwhile, Lesley and Mary went shopping in Gunwharf Quays where Lesley said she enjoyed buying perfume and clothes. Lesley said “I like taking lots of photos of the ferries and harbour to remind me of my holiday”.



Mary Lesley David

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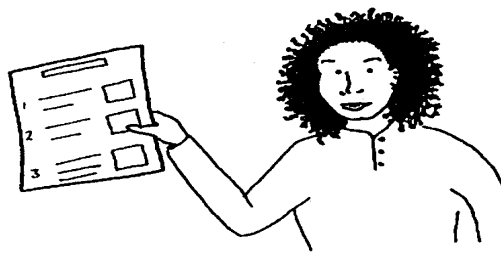
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Lesley's Mum was involved and other support staff, including the Managers of where Lesley lives.



Mary spoke with them to assess and, where possible, reduce any risks. Issues around security and personal safety were discussed and strategies to manage and cope with problems were devised and risk assessments completed. Mary explained this to Lesley and David so that we *all* understood how to stay safe and *still* have a good time!



Mary added how this was an essential part of the holiday planning. Though risk assessments can be considered *barriers* – it is more positive to view this process as finding ways to open *gates* to access ordinary activities and experience desired outcomes.

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