Involving People with learning disabilities in Choosing Food and Cooking

With
Speak Out Advocacy Project
My name is Karen Howard

- I am Karen Howard and I go to Buckingham Rd Day Centre.
- I am member of Feast and I make really lovely healthy Soup.
- I have made lots of new Friends
- I go to Big Meeting
- I watch the Master Chief and it helps me a lot.
My name is Ingrid Ashberry

- I support the advocacy groups at Speak Out
- I also support the Big Meeting
- I work on Speak Out’s training
- I am a nutritionist and have been involved in training mental health workers in food and well being.
Choice and Control over Food and Cooking

• Speak Out and the Food Partnership talked to 30 people with learning disabilities in the Advocacy groups Network and the Big Meeting about food and cooking.

• Most people lived in residential care homes, a few people lived independently with some community support and a few people in shared lives placements.
Here are some of the things people said about using the kitchen:

Two people told us they were not ‘allowed’ to go in the kitchen

• ‘They think you might get scalded. Don’t do any cooking. They think it’s dangerous.’

• ‘I am not allowed in the kitchen. Only one person is allowed who is steady on their feet. The staff are worried about people with epilepsy being in the kitchen.’
• Two people said in their residential home staff go to the fridge, choose food, get it out and make tea and packed lunch.

• One person felt she can’t cook because of her physical disability. She said she had made her packed lunch once. During a cookery session at Speak Out she was chopping vegetables.

• One person said he has made cakes with staff but not meals ‘They do it for you. Using knives was difficult for me.’
• ‘We’ve got a cook in the house. He does the dinner; I get my cooked dinner from him.’

• Some people who make drinks outside the home are not allowed to touch the kettle at home.

• People are cooking in courses in day services but these skills are not being valued at home. ‘Do cooking at Walsingham Road. Don’t do it at home.’
Choosing what we eat

Only a few people in residential care homes said they got to choose what to eat each night.

• ‘When so and so is on you have to eat what’s given to you.’

• One person in a shared lives situation said she doesn’t get a choice of what’s for dinner. She helps with shopping but is not allowed to cook only make sandwiches.

• One person said, ‘don’t get to choose or make own dinner or lunch. Staff choose it. Give me food don’t like and I just leave it. I don’t like pasta. I have it four times a week.’
One person’s story at home:

• She cooked at her mum’s but did no cooking at residential care home
• ‘the inspectors came in and told the staff they need to stop doing things for people and help them to do things for themselves.’
• Some Residents started to be involved in cooking.
• Then the cooking stopped for long period now it has started again.
People with learning disabilities want to:

• Choose what they want to eat
• Prepare and cook their own food
• Develop cookery skills
• Have their experience and skills valued.
CQC Essential Standards of Quality and Safety

• You will be given opportunities, encouragement and support to promote your independence.
Feast
• Karen’s experience of peeling potatoes

• I am good at grating the carrots, using the knives, and mixing with blender. Hadn’t used blender before.
Support to help me cook at Feast

- Best bit is in the morning when I come in. We sit down and discuss what we are going to be doing. We choose our jobs. It’s quite easy.

- Les and Vince helps us plan what we are going to do in the kitchen
- They show us how to do it grate the carrot or peel the onion and then we do it on our own.

- They are more confident in me at Feast than at home. Just get on with it.

- I know not to go around pointing knives.

- Safety- I just knew it!!!

- I learn about food hygiene. Did a course when I first joined

- All special boards for chopping different things
We ran a forum for learning on food for small group of staff. Here are some of the difficulties they raised in involving people more in cooking.

- Time constraints
- Motivating residents
- Thinking around specific issues for individuals i.e hygiene, involuntary limb movements
- Finding different ways to involve people with complex needs.
Some Ideas to address difficulties

- Make cooking more fun
- Forward planning
- Person specific
- Break down tasks to smaller parts
- Accessible recipes and healthy eating information
- Be creative with ways involve people
- Use tools such as vegetable chopper you press down on.
Choice and Involvement Assessment form

• Look at Choice and involvement assessment form
Action Plan

Fill out action plan thinking about:

• What people with learning disabilities say they want to choose, buy and cook their food

• Involve everyone even those with higher support needs

• What tools will support development of skills? E.g Karen’s card on what she liked, accessible recipes

• What kitchen equipment might help people be more involved i.e safer peeler

• Making cooking and mealtimes fun healthy social

• Do staff need more training on facilitating cooking or healthy eating
Action Plan

Feedback what you are going to do to support all your residents to be more involved in food and cooking.
Handouts

• Photo recipes on www.worldfoodproject.org.uk

• Resources

• Useful websites e.g Food Standards Agency www.eatwell.gov.uk
• Thank you