

## MENTORING TO CHANGE: A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY

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## ABOUT ME



## ABOUT US – ENRICH+



## ABOUT US – AUTISM SERVICES



- An area of need for those with Autism/Aspergers
- Set up to cater for those with little other supports in 2015
- Rely on fee-for-service/philanthropic funding

## ABOUT US – AUTISM SERVICES

- Weekly Services: Kids+, Teens+ Youth+ in Hamilton and Tauranga
- 1:1 Mentoring
- Autism Action (School Support)
- Education for parents/support staff/employers/teachers



## WHY AUTISM?

- Approximately 65,000 people with Autism, 1 in 88 people (Ministries of Health and Education, 2016)
- Gap analysis showed services for Autistic people were often tailored to families and parents rather than the individuals themselves
- Many in mainstream school, independent living situations, tertiary study, employment or employable
- Yet there may be areas of significant need – missed because they come across as capable and independent

## TYPICAL AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Disability often not visible, yet challenges can still have a huge impact
- Social Skills
- Communication Skills
- Inflexible thinking and behaviour
- Life Skills
- Managing anxiety
- Understanding and regulating emotions



## OUR APPROACH: A NEW SERVICE

- Despite challenges, it became apparent a little bit of support can go a long way
- Mentoring service was formally established in 2016
- Clients often found other services not right for them, either due to ineligibility or inaccessibility
- Individually tailored approach, evidence based techniques
- Starts with a goal planning session
- Frequency varies, but goals between sessions



## MENTORING

- Very successful: positive outcomes for individuals and families, but also cost-effective
- 9 clients in service, have supported over 20 people in the last year
- Clients aged between 6 and 30 but most 18-22
- Almost all clients ineligible for Transition or similar so leave school with no direction or unsure how to achieve what they want



## OUTCOMES & BENEFITS

How do we measure success?

- Achieved goals
- Feedback from individuals, families, employers/teachers and friends
- Empirical data collection currently being investigated

What are the benefits?

- Individual – case by case
- Societal cost – and benefit

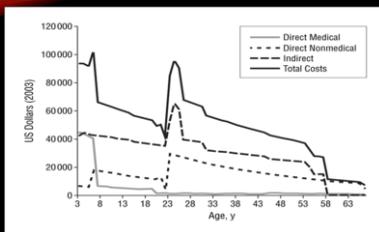


Figure 1. Age distribution of incremental societal costs of Autism (from Ganz, 2007).

## OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

- 3 young adults, never received disability supports or even accessed NASCs
- All wanted to work but had been unable to find jobs
- Mentored initially for anxiety, flexible thinking and social communication
- Referred into Supported Living Services for day-day support, through which they also accessed employment/WORX and/or study



## OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

- Approximate benefit cost:  
\$13,000/year or \$647,660 between ages of 18 and 65
- Approximate mentoring cost:  
\$4000 for one year's worth of mentoring (weekly)  
- not likely to be required except in times of high stress/anxiety between ages of 18 and 65

## SOCIAL ISOLATION – COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- Rural communities
- 1:1 support to then access natural supports
- Anxiety reduction – successful strategies to return to work or increase interaction, before mental health breaks down



## Case Studies



## CASE STUDY 1: BETHANY\*



## CASE STUDY 2: GABY\*



## MENTORING – A WAY FORWARD?

- A little support can go a long way
- Aim is not to keep people in our service, but see them move to other services that they are currently not able to access, or more preferably out into the community with natural supports and living a life like any other
- Future direction – some specific funding to allow for this type of service for Autistic people, who still don't meet a lot of the criteria despite significant need



## CONCLUSION

*Better to be the fence at the top of the cliff, rather than the ambulance down in the valley*  
 – Joseph Malins



Thanks for coming! Questions?



## REFERENCES

- Ganz, M.L. (2007). The lifetime distribution of the incremental societal costs of autism. *Archives of Adolescent and Paediatric Medicine*, 161(4), 343-349. Doi: 10.1001/archpedi.161.4.343
- Ministries of Health and Education. (2016). *New Zealand Autism Spectrum Disorder Guideline* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Wellington: Ministry of Health.