

Abstract No. 1.8 Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: When a party makes sense

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Co-presenters: Martin Hedegaard

Main focus: Mainly practice, Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: A workshop where we as social workers, at Danalien, a home for fourteen adults with congenital deafblindness, would like to tell about the experience of hosting a party. A party that in so many ways enlightened and taught us about what really matters. Who is to say the party itself should be center of attention and not the prior or post-experiences? It all started, when we at Danalien, decided to host a summer party. What first started as an ordinary party on a Saturday evening, eventually became a party where the preparation was the focus. Additionally communicative and social development was made visible and conscious at much higher level than first expected.

At a preparation meeting where the motivated adults with deafblindness articulated along with their respective partners in order to find out what each person wanted and expected of this party? For those who weren't able to communicate their wishes, we all sat down, and through different ways of communicating, together we tried to figure out what their wishes would be. This gave us a huge variety of wishes and requirements, both small and big, in order to have a great party. It now became everyone's responsibility that all wishes and requirements were reached, and that this had to be done together. However, it was not only practical things around the planning, which gave reason for connectedness. We became aware of how much pleasure of anticipation meant to our deafblind partners. This pleasure was expressed in many different ways and allowed for much communication. This topic within the communication created motivation for both immersion and development. In this progress, communication has not been the only focus. In the planning where everyone had to agree, stay open-minded and consider other people's wishes, we saw how this strengthened their social relations and made them more visible. We saw that many of our deafblind partners assisted to carry this task, as we all shared the same goal, which we all looked forward to.

The evening of the party was wonderful, as a result of longer duration of planning and preparation. An evening where everyone enjoyed the fellow feeling and content. It also became a night with focus on social intercourse, intimacy and stimuli of the senses.

After the party, people reacted in various ways. Some already had new wishes and were eager to plan a new party, while it was important for others to wonder upon the experience and relive it by rendering of the senses or communication. Telling a third part about it also brought much joy to some.

Danalien's summer party was such a huge success that we followed it up with yet another successful autumn party. We are now certain to say that we have created a new tradition here at Danalien. A tradition, which drives self-determination, and to some a great number sensuous, social and development opportunities, but most of all the joy all being together.