

Poster

Title: Towards common ground: supporting social connectedness through self-regulation

Presenter: Gro-Anita Tunes, Statped, Norway
Co-presenters: Evabritt Andreassen

Main focus: Mainly practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: This poster gives a case description of how a consultant team helped support the social connectedness of a person with congenital deafblindness through a self-regulation based intervention. Self-regulation may be defined as the capacity to manage one's own thoughts, actions, feelings and physiological states in adaptive and flexible ways across a range of contexts.

Ole is a 50-year-old deafblind man who has been living in residential homes almost all his life. However, during the past few years the staff reported difficulties related to psychosocial and behavioural issues, such as self-injurious behaviour, episodes of angry outbursts and aggression towards staff. Signs of decreased mood and social isolation were also reported. The staff felt unsafe around him and they started to interact and communicate lesser with him, thus a negative loop developed.

Together with the staff, the consultant team initiated a self-regulation based intervention. This intervention focused on understanding the reported behavioral challenges as self-regulation difficulties, especially Ole's emotional self-regulation. Hence, the reported behavioral challenges could be associated with his emotion dysregulation. Furthermore, his emotion dysregulation in turn may lead to increased social isolation, escalation of aggressive-disruptive behaviors and high levels of negative affect such as decreased mood. In this line of understanding, we used a behavioral assessment scale of self-regulation (KSF-DB; Nicholas, Andreassen, Broddstedt, Møller-Hermansen, Rieber-Mohn, Simonsen & Sjødell, 2015) to capture the Ole's self-regulation problems and subsequently implemented a self-regulation intervention involving both Ole and his staff. The assessment helped us target the intervention in a specific manner. During the intervention, we supported the staff on how they could support Ole's communication development and how they could meet his emotion dysregulation. The main focus was to understand Ole's ability to respond to the ongoing demands during his daily life experience with the range of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable. The base of the intervention was to guide the staff to identify Ole's emotional expression and his communication pattern through video analysis. We supervised the staff on how to best confirm his emotional state or expressions, primarily in the bodily-tactile modality, but also with visual signs.

During the intervention process, the staff reported a decrease in Ole's behavioural challenges. He appeared to be more socially close to his staff and his anger outbursts had declined. In other words, Ole and his staff were now in a positive loop. He showed more initiatives to interact with the staff and his communication skills had improved. This poster will focus on the practical procedures, the applied assessment tool and on how the consultant team had supported the staff during the intervention. The poster will



illustrate how a self-regulation based intervention had helped a man with congenital deafblindness to form relationships with others, while giving him a feeling of being in a close, interpersonal, meaningful and positive social relationship with others.