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HOPES and FEARS

In order for people to experience personal growth and become the best that they can be, trying new things and taking risks is necessary. There are a number of things that can get in the way of this, particularly for people who receive support from services and may have lead sheltered lives.

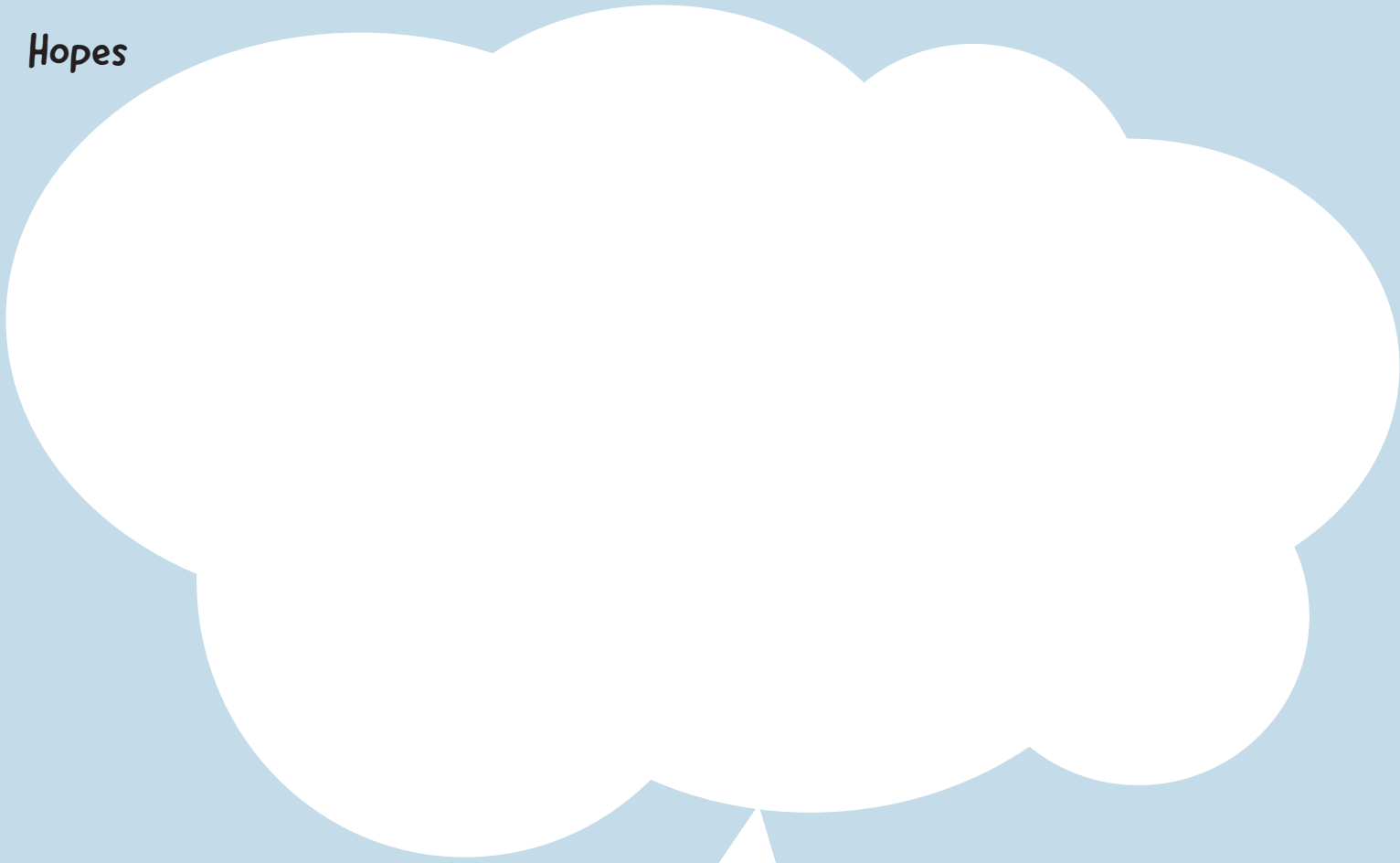
At times, the person themselves may be afraid of failing, and commonly, family members or staff may be fearful of the person trying something new, particularly if they think it may involve risks to the person.

Rather than deciding that the person is 'not ready' or dismissing worried family members or staff as 'overprotective,' we can explore people's hopes and fears.

By hearing the hopes, we get a better idea of what the person and others would like to see happen and therefore get a better understanding of what it really means to the person. By listening to people's fears, we can avoid or plan for potentially dangerous situations that others may not have thought of, and we can set actions to address the things that are worrying people.



Hopes



Fears



tips

- 1 Set aside plenty of time to listen to hopes and fears. Don't judge or dismiss them, if people feel them, they are real to them.
- 2 Understand that sometimes addressing fears may take time, and we need to go at the person's own pace. You can ask small steps they may be prepared to take.
- 3 Make sure you create a specific action plan to capture actions that are agreed.
- 4 If you know the person wants to plan for something that others are worried about, it could be helpful to use the hopes and fears tool with the person and those who are worried before the planning meeting.



What happened?

Jamie knew someone who worked at a childcare centre and they figured it was worth asking her about work experience because Martin had met her a couple of times, and thought that she seemed ok. Jamie also suggested that Martin talk to his Mum. He had never asked her why she thought he should stay at the workshop and Jamie thought that knowing why might help; Martin agreed. Martin still works at the supported employment place but only 3 days a week. He volunteers 1 day a week at a local childcare centre, the children adore him and the manager is interested in hiring him when he gets a bit more experience. Martin is spending part of the other day taking an adult literacy class to improve some of his reading. When Martin spoke to his mother he found out that her fears were the same as his – that he wouldn't be accepted. They were able to talk through that and she is slowly getting used to the idea, but still thinks he should stay at least part time at the workshop.

Martin is a kind man who goes out of his way to help others, takes pride in his work and is always keen to take on a new project. One of his support staff helped him to create a vegetable garden that he now tends with pride. He loves sharing the produce with his housemates and other people he knows.

Martin has been working in supported employment since he was 18 – the job differs depending on the contracts they get but he is often doing tasks that he doesn't enjoy. People had encouraged Martin to think about looking for a different job as they thought he'd be able to get a job in open employment – he picks up new things after being shown a couple of times, and he's a perfectionist who takes pride in everything he does.

Even though he was unhappy in his job, Martin worried that his literacy would be a problem and often joked that he had been where he is so long (he is now 45) that he couldn't work anywhere else.

Jamie, his key worker at home, sat down with Martin one afternoon and helped him to think through his hopes and fears about getting a new job.



Hopes

Doing something I enjoy, like working with children or with cars and mechanical stuff.

Getting paid properly.

Working with different people, making friends that I can go to the pub with on a Friday afternoon.

Having a job that I look forward to.

Doing something that I'm proud of.

Fears

That people won't accept me because I have a disability.

I can't read very well and I think I'm too old to learn.

What happens to my pension and if I get sick or can't work.

Mum would be upset because she thinks I should stay where I am.