Self-Organising Teams

# Amicus

My name’s Ann-Maree Davis and I’m the CEO of Amicus. So Amicus is based in Central Victoria. We are supporting close to 300 people with a disability and people who face disadvantage.

The operational needs of the organisation were getting in the way of people having, or participants having consistent staffing, and therefore the quality of their service was compromised. We unintentionally had staff working across the organisation, which meant that they knew a little about a lot of people, when of course we really wanted them to know a lot about a few people.

When we were thinking about preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, we took advice from National Disability Services along with many other providers that there was the potential for our organisation to double in size, and I guess we had some real concerns around what impact that may have on the quality of services that we were providing and how connected we could continue to remain with our community.

What we have found since we’ve implemented the trial is that participants are actually getting their good life. They’re getting a much better life. So even though that was always our intention, I think that self-directed teams have provided the tools and the opportunity for our staff to do their best work.

With the evolution of our service model to a community-based model, really we were supporting our staff to utilise skills that they have that were not being purposefully used, so with the move to community-based support we really found that people had a greater sense of satisfaction in the work that they were doing.

Participants and their families have reported that they feel they have greater choice and control over the support that occurs in their lives. They are able to make decisions. They’re not waiting for a manager to make a decision and get back to them, so communication has been improved. And they’re also achieving their goals, which is what it’s all about. They’re getting their good lives.

Staff have fed back to us that they feel much more engaged, that they have a greater level of information, and they really value the support that they get from their peers, and also the opportunity, I guess, to have decisions made in real time. You know, they’re part of that decision-making. They’re facilitating that decision-making with the people who choose our support.

We found that we had great engagement from our staff group. They’ve had the opportunity to be involved in our research, and I think that that’s something that is really important for other organisations that are considering trying something similar. You know, give your staff the opportunity to help you develop the solution that you’re looking for.

As an organisation I’m really proud that our team were able to, you know, nut this through and work out the solution that we felt would be best for us.

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