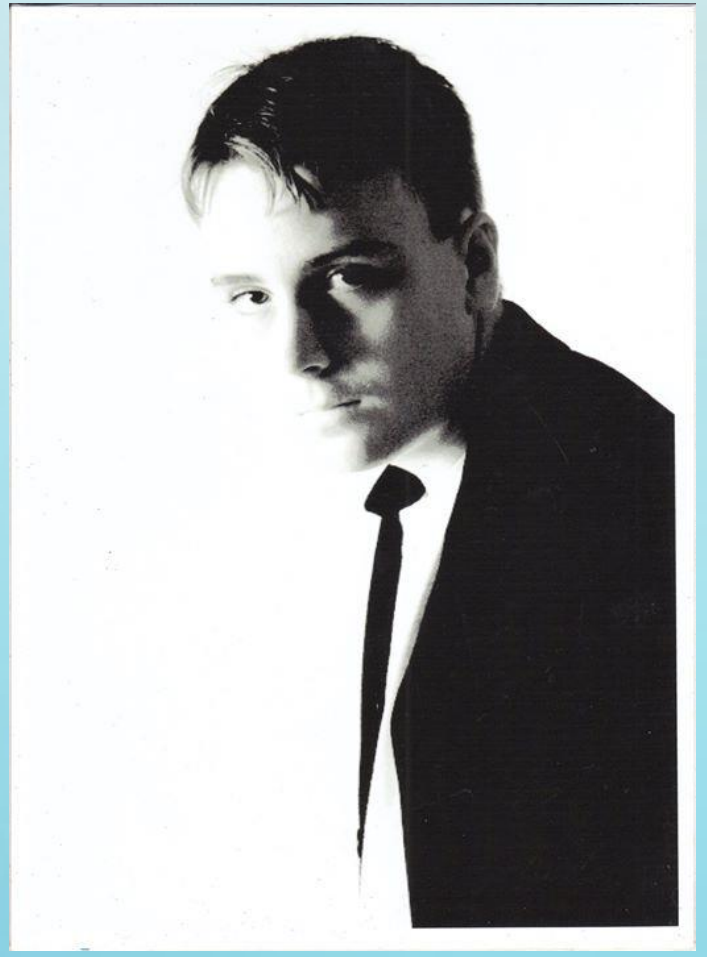
Self Directed Support

Our Six Year Journey

Introducing Sam & his friend, Skeeta

Our journey began in April 2004



Sam at Six Weeks Post Injury – Diagnosis unclear, unable to follow commands, assumed PVS. Intense pressure for immediate placement in aged care.

White Crane Collective: A Family Directed Support Program

Self Directed Support became a necessity for us for three main reasons:

1. To ensure Sam's identified health risks were safely managed by his support workers
2. To ensure Sam's therapy programs were delivered in accordance with recommendations by Sam's physiotherapist
3. To enable more support hours to be purchased with Sam's state funded support package...a necessary action to ensure the sustainability of Sam's support at home.

Our Host Organisation

- Staffing Options for Community Services Pty Ltd provide a host service for individuals and families who wish to direct their own disability supports
- Support is managed in partnership by the host service and the individual/family
- Staffing Options are committed to empowering people with disabilities and their families to make decisions that create support arrangements that are uniquely individual and result in ownership of one's life.

The Host Agreement: Who Does What?

Person Directing Supports

- Recruit Support Workers
- Induct & Train New Staff
- Manage Support Workers
- Make Decisions about Budget & Expenditure
- Engage Relevant Professionals
- Produce Staff Roster
- Verify Support Worker Hours
- Plan In-Service Training & Facilitate Team Meetings
- Document & Update Support Plan
- Ensure the Support Plan best facilitates the goals of the person being supported
- Delegate any of the above appropriately eg. To self selected Key Support Worker or Team Leader

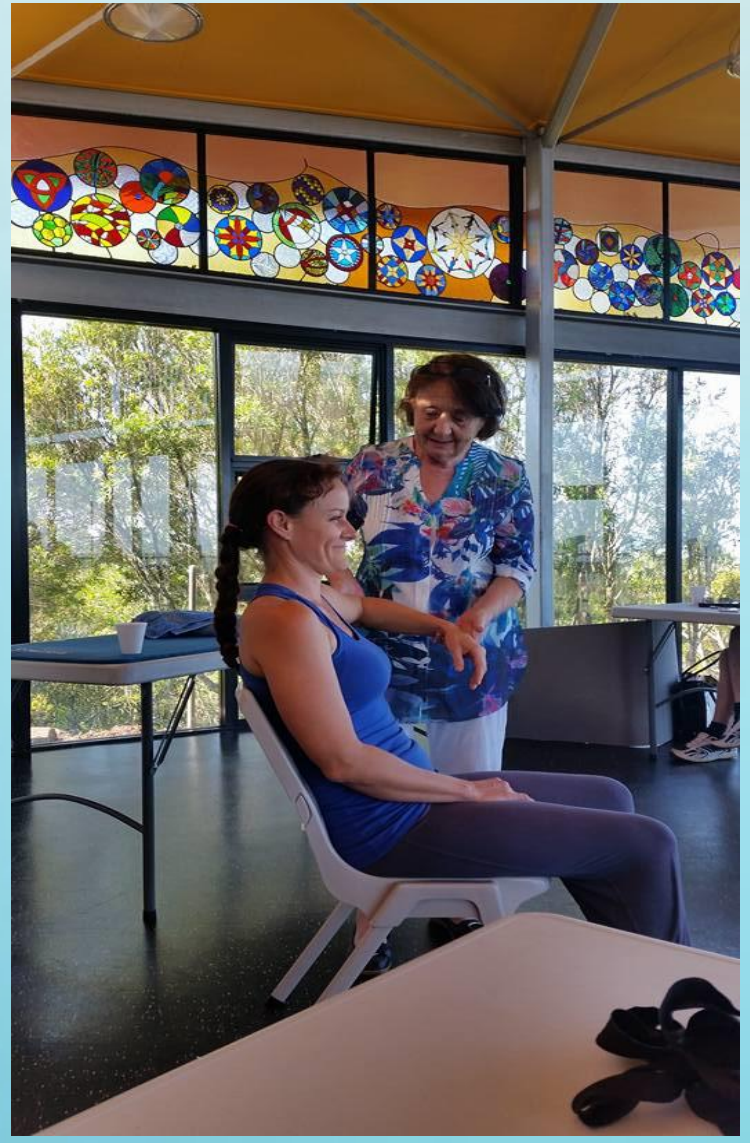
Staffing Options for Community Services

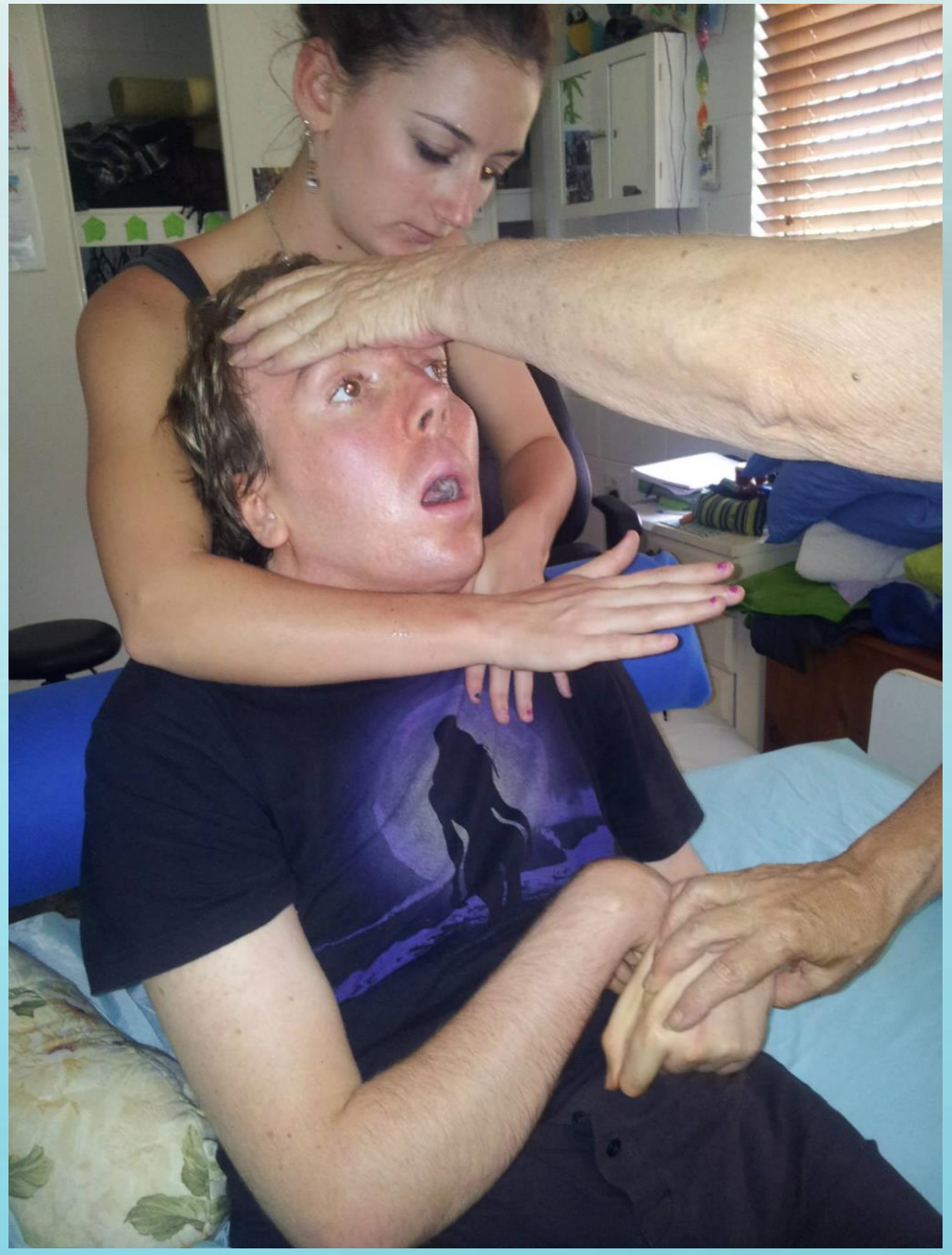
- Document Host Agreement
- Provide Employment Documents for New Workers
- Provide information about employment conditions & legislation
- Provide payroll service
- Provide invoice payment service
- Provide Advocacy
- Provide Telephone Support to Person Directing Supports as required
- Provide 24 Hour On-Call Telephone Support Service for Support Workers

Timor Sea
Darwin
Sea
B
Northern Territory
Coral Sea
Queensland
Australia
Western Australia
A
Brisbane
South Australia
Perth
New South Wales
Sydney
Great Australian Bight
Adelaide
Canberra
Australian Capital Territory
Victoria
Melbourne
Tasman Sea
Tasmania
Hobart

Support Team Training Day with Margaret Darcy, Physiotherapist.

Therapy Training with Support Workers





Key Challenges

- Supporting a person with high-care needs and daily therapeutic programs is very different to generalist disability work. Workers rarely understand this when they take on the role.
- TAFE certificates in disability do not prepare workers for high-care support work. Nor does experience in low-intensity roles.
- Person-centred support means that most training must be done on-the-job. This requires a significant investment of funding, time and energy that is lost each time a worker moves on.

Challenges continued…

- Recruiting in rural locations means recruiting from a small population pool. We train workers from a huge variety of backgrounds eg. farmhands, barmaids, carpenters. (We also like to have nurses on our team)
- High-care support work requires a high level of knowledge, skill and responsibility and is paid at the same rate as low intensity support work. This can make competition for suitable staff in a small community fierce.

Challenges continued…

- Staff who are new to high-care roles require intensive training, support and mentoring for the first 6 - 12 months in the role.
- Self management requires the person directing support to be a supportive employer to staff in times of personal or family crisis. This is particularly challenging for family carers who juggle a high number of direct care hours with a co-ordination role.
- Carer fatigue, illness and burn out are serious concerns. How will the NDIS support the 30% of participants who undertake self management?

Key Improvements through Self Management

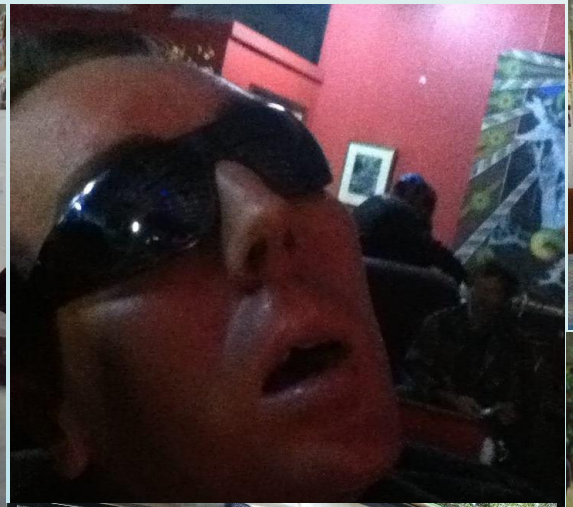
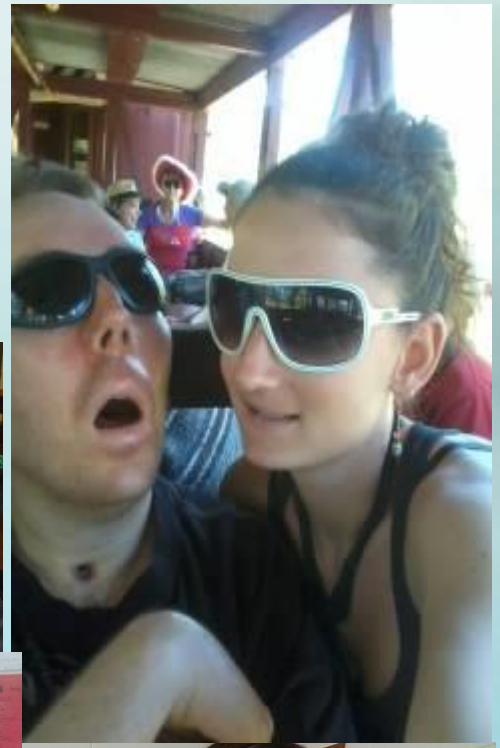
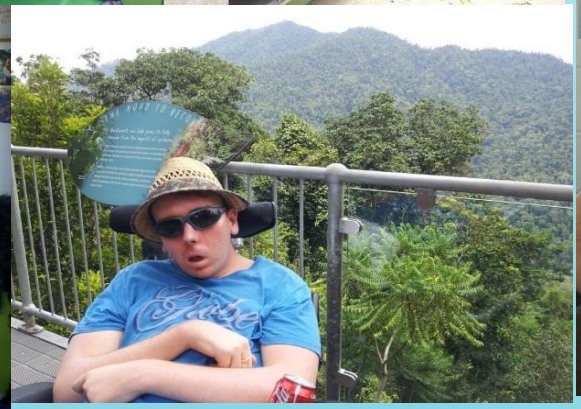
- Comprehensive training resources are now compulsory reading for all new staff
- The establishment of Key Worker roles means the family carer can delegate induction & training of new support workers
- TEAM culture with a capital “T”
- Focus on effective communication – good communication keeps people with high-care needs safe – especially those who are non-verbal or have communication difficulties

Improvements continued…

- Scope for ongoing development. It's not set in stone it's what you make it. Write your own policies and procedures. Be creative. It's a work in progress. Learn, implement, review. Seek feedback and support.
- Training to build the capacity of the person directing support, generates new skills. If you don't know, ask or do a course. Capacity building for self management can be funded in NDIS plans.
- Peer support enables information sharing and learning. Increasingly peer support is happening online. New friendships and connections and are being forged between people with disabilities and carers around Australia. This is great news for people who spend a lot of time at home.

Work in Progress

- Development of Team Leader role
- Development of website to assist with future recruiting - a picture tells a thousand words
- Production of additional training videos eg. PEG feeding, Safe Transport, Values and Ethics for Disability Work, The Vision for Sam
- Speech/OT training for all communication partners
- Professional supervision for all staff

Work in Progress continued…

- Key Work Areas to increase accountability of support workers including the following:
  - Provide care and therapy according to agreed methods and principles
  - Professional development and self care
  - Being a collaborative team member