

New Models for Learning Disability Day Support Collaborative

Design Persona: Casper

Designed by ARC Scotland

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Improvement Hub

Enabling health and
social care improvement

Introduction

I'm Casper and I'm 18 years old. I live at home with my parents and my golden retriever, Oscar. My older brother is studying medicine and lives away from home. We get on well but I don't see him much.

I'm very close to my mum's parents and I stay over with them some weekends, maybe once a month. I love football and I go to matches with my grandad and we love doing that together. I go to the bowling club with my grandparents and I know some of their friends quite well. I also stay over with my godmother and her husband now and again.

Another significant person in my life is my art teacher in school, who is very supportive. I have two close school friends but because it's a special school they don't live nearby so I mostly only see them in school. I also have two friends locally and I hang around with them and play video games with them now and again.

I do 1.5 days a week at a special needs school, one afternoon a week in a mainstream school for art, and 3 days a week at college doing a Pathways course in art. I have a home tutor who comes to my house and teaches me to read and spell. She is very encouraging.

I have complex medical problems and learning difficulties, and was recently diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis which is getting worse all the time. They used to tell me it was growing pains but now they say by 21 I'll be in a wheelchair full time. I'm in constant pain and medication isn't helping.

My communication

I'm not very good at pronouncing some words, so sometimes people can't understand what I'm saying. I'm not very good at expressing things clearly so I find it difficult to talk about my feelings and experiences except with my mum – I talk to her a lot about my fears. I have very low self esteem and I find it difficult to meet peoples' eyes so I usually look at the ground. I can't always tell if people are being genuine when they are talking to me.

I'm severely dyslexic and it annoys me that no one picked this up, I had to book my own dyslexia test. My mum and dad have to help me understand written information or fill in forms, and I struggle to write. I find numbers difficult and I don't understand money.

My motivations

I love football and I like to go to the theatre. I love window shopping with my mum and going for coffee and cakes with her and her friends. I can't do anything on my own, I need my parents or grandparents for everything I do. I'd like to be more independent.

My frustrations

When there are meetings at school I'm always there with my mum and dad, but I don't always understand what they are saying or the language they use. Sometimes it feels like they are talking more than listening to what I'm saying.

I get a taxi from home to school or college and back every day, but I see all my friends catching public transport and I want to do the same. I feel my parents are over protective, although I know they want to keep me safe. A big barrier is that other people have limited ideas about what might be possible and that makes it hard for me to try things.

I don't enjoy art at college and I'm only doing it because my mum and dad persuaded me to try it.

I hate it when people treat me differently from other 18-year-olds and it can be really hurtful when people make comments about my voice or my looks, especially girls.

I think life can be very limited as a disabled person and I don't see people like me in the theatre or on TV. I don't want to be part of the special needs community, I just want to be like everyone else. Sometimes I feel I'd be better dead and I've thought about how I might do that.

My short-term ambitions

I want to be more independent. I want to travel to college on public transport on my own, and go into the city centre to meet my friends.

My long-term ambitions

I want to study drama and be an actor. I loved drama at school and I'd like to do drama but no one is listening to me. My dad thinks it would be unrealistic because of my voice.

I want to be accepted as a person, not for my disability.

I want to have a loving relationship.

I want to travel and socialise independently.

I want to help others and contribute to society.

I want my voice to be heard.

My experience of how I spend my day

On a weekday I get up, have breakfast, go to school or college, come home, watch TV and play board games with my mum. Some weekends I go and stay with my grandparents or my godmother, we try and do something, but never on my own. I always have to have someone with me.

I feel I'm stupid. My dream was to be a mainstream young person like everyone else, not part of the special needs community.