

# Workplace Supervision When You're Also the Person Receiving Support



If vocational placements take place in the homes of people with disability, there could be boundary issues that arise from people being in dual roles. Because they are the receiver of support as well as acting as a workplace supervisor. When family members of people with disability act as workplace supervisors, similar boundary issues could arise.

The most common concern of people with lived experience of disability supervising their staff is considering how to provide feedback without impacting on the relationship. Anticipating that issues will arise means that you can get prepared and set up the arrangement well from the beginning.

## Setting up well from the Beginning

- Outline your expectations to the student. That way, if you need to speak to them about their performance, you can refer back to the agreements. Writing down the expectations can be helpful to be clear yourself before the student arrives.
- Explain that you are in dual roles and be clear about when you are in those different roles. For example, supervision meetings could happen outside of direct support times.
- Choose the 'buddy' support workers carefully – your existing workers will set the tone for the students on placement.
- Involving a key worker or a third party may be helpful for the supervision of staff and students.

## Review

- Take time to reflect on how your supervision of the student is going. Consider what worked well or what you will do differently next time.

## Communication and Providing Feedback

- Avoid staff communicating with the student separate to the person with disability.
- Make supervision meetings and times routine so that the conversation is ongoing rather than raising issues only.
- Maintain objectivity while in your workplace supervisor role. Use the mindset "I'm helping someone to learn."
- Provide handouts and information to read rather than all of the information or feedback coming from you.
- Use regular team meetings as an opportunity to work collaboratively and discuss important topics.
- Consider opening up the meeting to the team and ask what the support workers/student think is helpful or not working well. This way, it isn't always you raising issues.