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Supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health issues: service users' experiences

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Abstract

Aim

The aim of this research project was to enable the active involvement of adults with learning disabilities, who live in community settings, in producing knowledge about their perspectives of the care and support they had experienced in relation to their mental ill-health.

Background

The viewpoints of service users with learning disabilities and mental health issues about their care and support have been paid minimal attention in the research literature.

Methodology

Hollway and Jefferson's (2000, 2013) psychosocial research approach was employed to facilitate the involvement of seven service users, who reside in community settings, in data production relating to their mental health care. Data was also obtained from consultations with key carers and records kept by service providers.

Results

Information gained from participants highlighted the diverse painful experiences and events in their life histories, and the increase in awareness of the mental health and emotional issues experienced by individuals with learning disabilities.

Conclusions

Some findings resonate with those of other studies, and recommendations concerning service users are indicated, which have relevance for those engaged in policy making, service provision and practice.