



# PARTY IN THE PARK

## Stephen and Adrian - Perrywood House

In November 2019, Consensus held 'Party in the Park' a company-wide event whereby colleagues and supported individuals from across the organisation were invited to attend a three-day event at Golden Sands Caravan Park in Lincolnshire in celebration of Consensus, our colleagues and the people we support. In total 81 of our 90 services, over 150 supported individuals and over 350 support staff were in attendance.

The aim of the event was to live our values of opportunity, choice and success for the people we support by providing them with an opportunity to go on a holiday, try new activities and experiences and meet and make new friends in a social environment where they were free to be themselves and have fun.

One of the services that attended was Perrywood House. Based in Kettering, Northamptonshire, the service provides residential accommodation and specialist support for individuals with a dual diagnosis of Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) and learning disabilities and/or autism.

PWS is a genetic disorder characterised by an insatiable desire for food and a lack of satiety cues, which can make a person eat excessively. This has the potential to result in life threatening obesity without specialist support to carefully manage their food intake.

At Perrywood, the support team are all trained in supporting individuals with dietary management and in Positive Behaviour Support techniques that promote healthier lifestyle choices and help individuals reduce their anxiety around food and minimise any associated behaviours, with the aim of enabling people to achieve good outcomes and to enjoy a good quality of life.

To decide which of the individuals would go on the trip, the team decided the fairest way was to pull names out of a hat and Stephen and Adrian were named as the lucky two.

### Planning for Party in the Park

For the support team at Perrywood, the food and drink aspect had to be a priority. While it was important

to ensure Stephen and Adrian's diets were carefully managed to prevent any negative health consequences, it was also important that this was applied within the context of a holiday; to support people to maintain boundaries but also to allow them to relax and have a few treats as part of the experience.

It was difficult for the team to plan too far ahead and to know what the set up was going to be, so they had to think on their feet and make decisions at the time. As lunch and dinner were a buffet, the team supported Adrian and Stephen by having conversations around what was ok to eat and what they could have more of so that they were empowered to make healthier food choices. As breakfast was 'Bring Your Own,' the team made sure Adrian and Stephen ate big portions of healthy low-calorie food to help them feel more satisfied.

Claire Miller, Manager at Perrywood House, explains, "Most of us would tend to eat a bit more or treat ourselves a little while on holiday, so it's important that we don't try to hold the individuals we support to a much higher standard than we would expect from ourselves in the same situation and to be overly regimented with what they can and cannot eat."

"At the buffet we would support individuals by helping them to understand what the healthier options are, what is ok for them to eat and what they can have more of but, within reason, they can enjoy a few extra treats as we know that when we return to the service, we can support them to balance this by doing a few more physical activities such as extra walks, swimming and returning to their usual calorie controlled diets," added Claire.

## Focusing on the positives

Aside from the individuals from our other specialist PWS services, the majority of individuals attending the event did not have the condition and therefore did not have the same specialist dietary requirements.

Stephen and Adrian coped really well during meal times and although they were aware of other people enjoying a pint of beer in the evenings (individuals with PWS have to limit the amount of fluid they have as too much fluid can impact on their health), with the support of the team who got everyone up on the dancefloor, to dance and enjoy the music, they soon forgot about this and had an amazing time.

## Activities

Adrian and Stephen, both fully embraced the experience and all the activities at Party in the Park; from the Spinner and laser tag to tie-dye t-shirt making, Brazilian percussion sessions, a petting farm and arts and crafts.

Stephen really enjoyed the laser tag which involved teams playing against each other in an arena using guns with infrared beams to shoot opponents and score points.

In the evenings, there was entertainment and a late-night disco on the first night and an awards gala and late-night disco on the second night which Adrian and Stephen both loved. They both frequently go along to a local disco held in Kettering to meet and socialise with friends so they really enjoyed the social aspect of each evening, and especially enjoyed hitting the dance floor during the live band and late night disco.

Claire said, "Party in the Park was a hugely positive experience for both Stephen and Adrian. They both coped amazingly well and I was proud of the way they were able to self-regulate and make healthy food choices in a new environment. I was also really proud of the support team who were able to think on their feet to ensure any situations that could have resulted in increased anxiety for Stephen and Adrian were turned around quickly resulting in positive outcomes."



It was wonderful to see Stephen and Adrian embracing lots of new experiences, taking the opportunity to meet and make new friends and most importantly, having a relaxed and fun holiday!



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