



People First New Zealand Inc. – Nga Tangata Tuatahi



'LET'S TALK'

SELF ADVOCACY FORUM

What we did today

- Everyone was welcomed.
- We found out a bit about who was at the forum.
- We talked about what was going to happen at the forum.
- We talked a bit about People First NZ.

What we did today

- Then Robert Martin talked about the UN Convention and his role in developing it.



- Then we went into groups and talked about the topic areas.

What we did at the forum

- While the leaders of the forum were making this presentation from what everyone said, the others watched the People First film 'Who wants a passport to life'.



What we did at the forum

- In the groups we talked about 6 topics that People First members think are all part of having a GOOD LIFE.
- They are also rights in the UN Convention



- The topics were:
 - Friends and relationships
 - Making my own decisions
 - Real work, real pay
 - Being in the community
 - My money
 - Having the right support

What we did at the forum

- Here is some of the things that were said in the groups:



Friends and Relationships

Here is some of the things that were said about friends and relationships



- It is important to have friends – to talk to and do things together.
- Its good to have a balance, friends who are both disabled and non-disabled.
- Living in the community means more chances to make friends.

Friends and Relationships

- Self advocacy groups like People First are a good way to meet friends.
- “I have met friends through Special Olympics”
- It is hard to keep friendships if you don't have a lot of money- doing things with friends can cost money, even having a coffee.

Friends and Relationships

- Sometimes its hard to trust people and let them into my life.
- Some people pretend to be a friend.
- Some people take advantage of us and abuse us or want to take our money.

Friends and Relationships

- Family relationships are really important.
- Not everyone has family.

Friends and Relationships

- I want a relationship when I am ready.
- We should be able to get married or live together if we want to - its our right
- It is hard when relationships break up.

Friends and Relationships

Here are the challenges for you
about friends and relationships



We need you to:

- give the right support to make friends and keep friends and relationships going.
- support us to learn skills so we are not taken advantage of.
- support and fund social clubs or help us set them up and run them

- Some people in supported living end up being lonely. Make sure this doesn't happen.
- support people with learning disability to work as friendship coordinators.
- help us lobby local councils and government so they understand what we need to be part of our communities , like transport – this leads to friendships.
- Work together to make change!

Making My Own Decisions

Here are some of the things that were said about making my own decisions:



- We want to make decisions in all parts of our lives – its is our right
- We don't have choices about jobs or further education.
- Before I went flatting I was living at home. I said to Mum and Dad I want to be more independent. Now I have my own TV, couch and computer – I made my choices and Mum and Dad listened.

Making my own decisions

- I wanted to buy a café. I had \$500. I told Mum and Dad. They said I didn't have enough money to buy a café so I didn't. I trusted them so I talked about it with them.
- We can talk about big decisions with people we trust

Making my own decisions

- We can learn from our mistakes.
- It is our right to choose where we live and who we live with - this is in the UN Convention.
- We need easy read information to be able to make our own choices.



Here are some challenges
for you about making my
own decisions

- Don't make decisions for us.
- Listen to us and support our decisions.
- We want support and knowledge and to learn from our own mistakes.
- Guide us, not control us.

- Support us to make our own wills and have them in easy read.
- Make sure people with learning disability who are prisoners can come out , and have a second chance.
- The UN convention says that we have the right to choose – get to know the UN Convention and use it in your work.

Real Work, Real pay

Here are some of the things that were said about Real Work, Real Pay:



- Give us a chance to work.
- Sometime I get paid in petrol vouchers - I don't have a car.
- I was discriminated against in my job – I left it - it made me unhappy.
- I do voluntary work, like this job I have been doing it for 22 years, selling my art, it would be nice if it was paid.

Real Work, Real Pay

- Its hard to find a job, I think its who you know.
- I would like a full time job.
- I would like to go off the benefit.
- I have been doing my job for 8 years and I would like to do this full time.
- Many of us cannot read and write.
- I need to know about my rights at work.
- I want to work with disabled people.

Here are some challenges for you
about real work real pay



- Help people to sell their art.
- We need work close to shops and bus stops - somewhere central.
- More training to read and write.
- Include us in staff training.
- Support people to go to the People First work and Your Rights at Work course.
- Use the People First easy read employment agreement.

- More support about career options and how get to a career.
- After formal training we want real work with real pay.
- There should be no minimum wage exemption, people should all be paid the minimum wage

All service providers need to be helpful.

We need support to understand how paid work and the benefit work together, or don't.

All of you work for organisations like support services, universities, government departments and hospitals. You must have jobs we can do. Think about giving us jobs.

Being In Community

Here are some of the things that were said about being in the community:



- It is about being free and independent
- Having volunteer work
- Being involved in community groups
- Going to mainstream schools and further education

Being in the community

- Using the banks and public transport
- Lots of paper work to fill out if we want to go out and do something. We are treated like a risk.
- We need more money than just the benefit to be in the community - the cost of living keeps going up but our money does not.
- Some people can be horrible and call us bad names. This makes me depressed.

Being In Community



Here are some
challenges for you about
being in the community

Challenges

- Make it easy to go to public places
- Have all signs around the cities and towns in easy read
- The whole community needs more disability awareness
- Support us to learn to use computers and the internet
- Speak up to change the language the government uses about us

- Support people with learning disability to talk with local councils.
- People who drive buses, taxis and work on trains need more training so that they know how to give us a good service and talk to us, not our support people.
- Have seatbelts in buses.
- Empower us to access the community independently

- Help us be able to go to further education. This is a great thing to do. We can learn skills for work and make friends there.
- Stop treating us like a risk
- If people have a medical condition don't let that stop them from living in their own flat - get a medic alert button.

My Money



Here are some of the things that were said about my money:

- Money is hard to understand and lots of us need support with it.
- I need support to budget my money so I have enough money for my bills and can save for special things.
- I need support to buy a house.
- what is tax and GST ?



- I need support to do my banking.
- I want my own bank statements - some staff members throw them in the rubbish.
- I want to choose what I spend my money on.
- Before I had a job I couldn't go out as I had to spend all my money on bills.
- Banks and their services are hard to understand.

My Money



Here are some challenges
for you about the topic my
money



- Give more support to learn about money.
- Trust me with my own money.
- People First is making a course to help us understand our money. Support us to go to this course when it is ready.
- Have an easy-read course on how to do internet banking.

- Help us change banks so they make clear information about their options and fees.
- Banks could have easy read statements.
- Have all EFTPOS and ATMS the same.
- Work and Income need to have easy read information about the benefit.
- Help us understand tax and GST.
- We look forward to the name of our benefit changing to Living payment.

Having The Right Support

Here are some of the things that were said about having the right support



- Don't talk down to us
- Let me live with people my own age and choose my own food and bedtime
- Staff should ring if they are not coming
- Too many staff changes

Here are some challenges
for you about having the
right support



- Let us do as much as possible for ourselves
- Teach us, don't take over
- Staff stay in background
- Respect us and treat us with dignity.

- Let us choose our own staff.
- We have the right to choose where we live and who we live with - make sure this happens.
- No more large group homes - no more than 3 people in a house.
- Respect our values and our culture.
- Don't try and take over our lives.

- All staff need to be honest and trustworthy.
- Staff should manage their time better and let people know ahead of time if they cant make it.
- Staff need better training.
- Staff and services should be trained in emergency preparedness. After the Christchurch earthquake some disabled people where left in their beds for 7 days.

- Staff should maintain professional relationships and not treat us like their children
- Protect us from staff who bully and abuse people or steal their property – these people need to lose their job, not able to work at other services and be reported to the Police.

Here are some overall challenges

- If you think you have a bright idea for research or a service check it out with People First NZ or a self advocacy group in your country before you start.
- We can tell you if it is any good or not.

- Make sure people with high support needs are thought of in everything you do – if we get it right for them, we get it right for everyone.

Respectful language

- When you talk about us, think out the words you are using. We are not children, we are not burdens, we are people just like you.
- if you use good words then others will too.

Respectful Language

- As Robert said at the start of the conference People First NZ members prefer the term learning disability rather than intellectual disability as we feel it is more respectful and its much easier to say.
- Language does change over time and we would like you to help us change the language and use this term too.

We have also challenged ourselves at the forum

- to talk to people to change their attitudes
- Not to wait until someone does things for us but to do things for ourselves as much as possible.

Overall challenges

- Thanks very much to ASID for asking People First NZ to host the Lets Talk Forum

- It was GREAT!



- And finally, please remember the People First saying:

**NOTHING ABOUT US,
WITHOUT US**