

Dr Claire Bates 02:06

Thank you. Great to be here. Oh, are you? Okay, thank you. Yeah, yep,

Pia 02:11

I'm good. That's really good. Ya know, so we heard in the introduction, there a bit of a history of supportive loving, and I know, it was initially a response to your PhD on exploring relationships for people with learning difficulties, but it's really moved on from then hasn't it? Yeah. So

Dr Claire Bates 02:26

So as I said, it started off just as a small social media campaign. So my PhD looked at relationships, as it was predominantly at the time for people with a learning disability. But what what I found was that, you know, the, the real thing about it was, if we didn't have, the people didn't have good support around relationships, then they either ended up in really unsafe relationships, or they ended up with, you know, not having relationships. And that was, you know, that covered like a wide range of relationships from, you know, what we would traditionally think of a relationship with a fully sexual living together, maybe getting married relationships to the relationships that were much more platonic, but we're still incredibly meaningful to people. So yeah, good support was really like the, the fundamental thing that kept that supported that and, and there wasn't anywhere for staff to go, there was no, there was nowhere for people working in social care that we could see to get advice on. There might be things around sex, but there was very little around sort of support in relationships, and sort of sexuality more broadly. So yeah, we started off just have a blog with people that we felt were really important to write blogs for us. And then it just kind of blew up from there. To a national network of over 1500 passionate people about this topic. So yeah, it's been it's been a wild ride.

people living with mental health conditions, I've done work members do work with teams working with older adults. And so we you know, it has, it's definitely broadened that for my background, my background is Yeah, predominantly learning disabilities and more recently, sort of branching out into or working more than just, well, okay, yeah.

Pia

over for dinner, I give this example the other day, like a lot of people think was that with children, I'm not comparing people, adults or children. But like how some people learn how to develop friendships and relationships that you know, you'd invite them over from school, invite them over for dinner, then invite them out on somewhere, then take them on holiday, that relationship will build up more real. And I talk to staff and I sort of say like that, how we need to think sometimes about relationships with the people we work with, how can we help them to develop this into a more meaningful relationship? And sometimes, they might not know how to make that or they might not know, or they might not have the ability to make that into a more meaningful relationship without your help. So it's like, how can you help them go from just being someone that the other day service to being someone that's much more integrated, meaningful in their lives? So yeah, that can definitely be a way to help. Don't

Wendy Adams 32:04

things that one of the things that that I don't think we could we could have this conversation without mentioning is the issue around mental capacity? And I don't want to spend, you know, we could go down a rabbit hole with that, couldn't we?

Dr Claire Bates 32:22

Is it without the mental capacity as a thing, I would never get asked to deliver training, because that's all people want to know we up? Yeah, it will come up eventually.

Wendy Adams 32:31

I think that, you know, having this training pack, now that Skills for Care have made, we've made with Skills for Care, kind of, you know, give staff sort of saying that this is part of your role. CQC say as part of staff's role to support people's intimate relationship needs and sexuality needs. I think I think the more we talk about it, because it's happening, because people, you know, it's happening, and people are supporting people. So I think the more it just comes out into the open, the more we talk about it, the less embarrassed people

Pia 42:46

and going back to that culture has been absolutely fascinating. Absolutely. Fascinating, I just think it's so important for managers to, to have this on the agenda. And I think, at the beginning of our conversation you're talking about, you know, when we all kind of think about our own lives, and what's important relationships is is the top isn't it, so therefore, it will be the same for the people who are drawing on support. So therefore, if they're not able to do that themselves, and whatever, for whatever reason, then then that's what managers and the people who are employed to support them should be supporting them with so

Dr Claire Bates 43:28

a lot of time talking about the sex stuff, because it's the thing that's like, the right thing, that interests a lot of people are, it's the relationship stuff, you know, we will, you know, somebody's been married for 20 years. You know, that's, you know, that's important, but it's the relationship, it's the long term. You know, it's the it's the it's the, it's the it's the, it's the companionship, but all research that we've seen, it's the companionship, and the intimacy, that's, that's what really brings the value to people's lives. And it's like we spend, people get very caught up in the sex side of it, because it's the bit that, you know, capacity issues and all the relationship stuff that I think is not you know, the sex side is very important for us, but it's the relationship stuff that I think is most important for people to, to really start thinking about, and how we can help people to have more meaningful relationships.

Wendy Adams 44:23

So, so important, isn't it? We, we have a question th thinking

Yeah, that's a good answer. And I suppose the other thing is saying with that is, there's a free resource of Supported Loving, go to the website, have a look at the toolkit, have a look at some of the you know, webinars, you know, all the other other support that you have on there, to talk to kind of get you started within, there's the template, their policy procedure, that will be great. Really, really interesting conversation. So thank you so much for your time today. And I'm hoping that everybody who are listening are really taking something from this and feel that they Yeah, you know, I'm gonna do something about this, you know, I'm gonna make sure that whatever stage you are in the journey in terms of supporting people with personal issues that you're, you're gonna take, take something away from this and make some changes in your service. So thanks so much for today.

Dr Claire Bates 46:16

Thank you, and lots of people are quite don't feel like you know that you're behind everyone else. Lots of people. Everyone has to start somewhere. Yeah. And and it's it, whatever's however small, start making a difference, and you'll be getting there. Yeah. Thank you.

Pia 46:32

Thanks very much. Bye, bye.

Pia 46:43

Well, Wendy that was really interesting conversation with Claire.

Wendy Adams 46:48

available elsewhere. So just lots of information to help you to have this on the agenda in your service. Just a

Wendy Adams 48:59

huge amount of stuff that's available. Yeah, just managers, isn't it to start tackling this issue? Yeah, and all free? Yeah, absolutely. And it also links in to some of the Skills for Care resources, obviously, our caring cultures toolkit, yeah. Which is broader than thinking about personal relationships, and is thinking about cultures more generally. But it's about creating that open culture within your service, where it is okay for staff to ask those difficult questions or discuss those topics that they might feel a little bit awkward or uncomfortable about, about broaching. So, you know, I think there's a real set of materials and resources there for managers, who are now thinking, Oh, well, I think I need to do something about this. Where should I? Where should I start?

Pia 49:50