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# Family Charter



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**

**What good looks and feels like when support providers and families  
work together**

*Created by Families & Providers*

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# Introduction

A group of families, working with Bringing Us Together, and Support Providers, who are part of the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG), have spent time together getting to know each other and understanding what good looks like in terms of working together to ensure people get the best possible support.

Everyone can recognise when a person is supported well and what good looks like

We understand each other's perspectives, we talk to each other and listen to each other

Me and my family are understood

Relationships are a key part to living a good life for anyone and everyone. Roles and relationships between families and support providers can at times be blurred, not understood, at times in conflict. Relationships can also be strong, mutually supportive and based on shared vision and equality.

Strong positive leadership from the provider helps to create an "us" culture between support staff, family and the person being cared for.

Families tell us about their experiences:



Families have been sharing their experiences with us, talking about what didn't work and what is working, how that made them feel and what they need from Providers.

You can watch them here:

<http://bit.ly/Stronger2getherplaylist>

Read through the Charter and then look at how you can help make this Charter more than just another piece of paper sitting on a shelf.

# The Charter

What does it **feel** like for families to trust & be able to work alongside support providers?

What good <b>FEELS</b> like?	What good <b>LOOKS</b> like?
Families feel <b>confident</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual/family involved in recruiting new staff team</li><li>• Staff get to know the person during transition at individual's pace</li><li>• New staff should shadow old staff team</li><li>• Take time to get to know and understand the person and their interests</li><li>• Support is based around the whole of the person</li><li>• People's health needs (physical, mental and emotional) are understood and met,</li><li>• Support teams know and like the person</li><li>• Staff / an organisation do(es) what they say they will</li></ul>
Families feel <b>safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families can talk about how they feel and what they think about support without worrying that they will be judged, found lacking, be blamed.</li><li>• Families don't feel like they are being talked about behind their backs.</li><li>• There is honesty from the outset about expectations from both sides</li><li>• Be authentic, be real and be open</li></ul>

What good FEELS like?	What good LOOKS like?
Families feel <b>involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families are an integral part of the team working together to ensure individual's needs are met and understood</li> <li>• They are part of any decisions that are made in the care of their loved one</li> <li>• They are involved in delivering and receiving training as well as suggesting any relevant courses</li> <li>• Development and planning happen together not separately</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Families feel <b>respected</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families are asked for their views and contributions as part of the support process, there is evidence that these are heard and acted on.</li> <li>• Families views are considered as equal to those of professionals or even more so as they are the experts of their loved one</li> </ul>
Families feel their own needs and wants are <b>considered, respected and supported.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families are asked about their own support needs separate to those of their relative. These might include benefits, housing, emotional support.</li> <li>• These are heard and met.</li> <li>• Communication with families is agreed together and acted on. This could be weekly e-mail/telephone call / catch ups</li> <li>• The trauma people and their families have been through is acknowledged, responded to and supported.</li> </ul>

## What good FEELS like?

## What good LOOKS like?

A feeling of **freedom** to be a family

- Becoming a family again after someone has spent many years in a hospital setting can take time. Re-establishing roles, relationships, routines as a family and not in terms of a service being provided needs provider organisations to understand and continually work alongside the family to review, challenge and change the "service" model.
- There is a clear understanding of who the family is and what is important to them in how they live their life. Their "story" and what makes them who they are is understood and supported.
- Understanding of each families' needs to be taken into consideration – ie culture, language, any disabilities, ex-partners
- Family roles – mums, dads, siblings etc are understood as being something we all share and have. They are not used to label, divide and blame eg: "mum is the problem"  
Respecting every member of the family and to ensure that thoughts and comments are not part of provider culture.

## How can support providers work differently and better?

There are already some great examples of things people use across the country that make a difference in how families and Support Providers can work together.

- Memorandum of Understanding - Appendix i
- Family Charter - Appendix ii

## Ways in which Support Providers can check and demonstrate how they are getting it right:

**Staff are valued** – they are given the development and support to be skilled and confident in what they do. This might mean training and ongoing development re: trauma informed support, person centred active support etc. Their salary reflects the skilled work they do, staff are praised and acknowledged for the work they do and feel invested in by the organisation.

There is a **personalised**, proactive approach to **recruitment**. From job adverts through to induction, the process is tailored to the individual being supported – their needs and wants are understood and their team is built around them on this basis. They and their family are directly involved in the recruitment process and providing and receiving training during induction.

There is a **no blame culture** within the organisation, staff can talk about and learn from when things go wrong. In turn, they do not seek to blame or judge and instead listen well and understand different perspectives. Reflective practice is embedded in how the team works; clinical supervision is available as needed. Day to day support makes use of learning logs etc to continually evolve what they are doing as they learn.

The organisation and the people within it are **emotionally intelligent**. There is empathy for people they support, families and for each other.

**Family support** is an explicit and formal part of the provider offer. There are separate roles within the organisation separate to the day to day support team who can provide ongoing support to the family as a whole not just focused on the support to the individual. There is recognition that the need for trauma informed support extends to families as well.

There is evidence of people and families **influencing the organisation** from an individual to a strategic level. This goes beyond just satisfaction surveys, but is embedded in how the organisation operates from board level to day to day support.

# How to Build Trust

Trust is the underpinning element of any relationship and we really like the trust behaviours that Stephen Covey describes.

We welcome Support Providers who consciously seek to build relationships through actively committing to and demonstrating these behaviours:

## 1. Talk Straight

Be honest, tell the truth, don't spin the truth, demonstrate integrity, don't manipulate people or distort the facts

## 2. Demonstrate Respect

Show you care – genuinely, don't fake it, show kindness in the little things, respect the dignity of every person and every role, treat everyone with respect, especially those who can't do anything for you

## 3. Create Transparency

Be real and genuine, don't hide information, be open and authentic, don't have hidden agendas, tell the truth in a way people can verify

## 4. Right Wrongs

Apologise quickly and mean it, demonstrate personal humility, don't cover things up, make things right when you are wrong, don't let personal pride get in the way of doing the right thing

## 5. Show Loyalty

Give credit to others, don't disclose others private information, don't badmouth others behind their backs, speak about people as if they were present, represent others who aren't there to speak for themselves

## 6. Deliver Results

Make things happen, get the right things done, don't overpromise and underdeliver, don't make excuses for not delivering

## 7. Get Better

Be a constant learner, continuously improve, thank people for feedback, act upon the feedback you receive, don't consider yourself above feedback, don't assume your knowledge and skills will be sufficient for tomorrow's challenges.



## 8. Confront Reality

Acknowledge the unsaid, don't skirt the real issues, address the tough stuff directly, lead out courageously in conversation.

## 9. Clarify Expectations

Disclose and reveal expectations, discuss them, validate them, renegotiate them when needed, **don't assume that expectations are clear or shared**

## 10. Practice Accountability

Hold yourself accountable, hold others accountable, take responsibility for results, don't blame others or point fingers when things go wrong, be clear on how you will communicate how you are doing – and how others are doing

## 11. Listen First

Listen before you speak, **listen with your ears...your eyes and your heart**, don't assume you know what matters most to others, don't presume you have all the answers – or all the questions, find out what the most important behaviours are to the people you're working with

## 12. Keep Commitments

Don't break confidences, say what you're going to do – then do it, make commitments carefully and keep them at all costs.

## 13. Extend Trust

Extend trust conditionally to those who are earning your trust, expend trust abundantly to those who have earned your trust, learn how to appropriately extend trust to others based on the situation, risk and credibility of the people involved.

# What can you do?

We don't want this to be a document you scan through and forget; we want you to help us to get organisations to sign up to say they agree and will work differently, and better, to build trust.

## Spread the word

Here are a few suggestions on what you can do, it will depend on your role within an organisation or if you are a family member but there should hopefully be one thing you can do.

- Take it to your next family/provider meeting and agree ways to talk about the charter to support better relationships
- Have a conversation with the CEO and/or the Chair of the Board about the charter - how can we implement it together?
- Create a forum where families and support staff/managers can look at different parts of the charter and agree actions
- Talk to the Quality Checkers or people with lived experience about ways they can use the charter when gathering the voice/s of the people supported.
- Share it with other professionals, social workers, care co-ordinators, local Partnership Boards, parent forums and anyone who may find it useful.

## Sign Up

- Ask people to sign up publicly to say they will be doing their bit to implement the values of the Charter, either as CEO of an organisation, a support workers, a support manager, a commissioner, etc.
- Go to .....

# Appendix

## i) Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding is regarding the wellbeing and quality of life of \_\_\_\_\_ and is between \_\_\_\_\_, registered manager for \_\_\_\_\_ as care and support provider and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (joint and several Health and Welfare Deputies for \_\_\_\_\_).

### Background

\_\_\_\_\_ is a young person with profound disabilities who needs a substantial package of care. Since being discharged from an Assessment and Treatment Unit in September 2018 they have been living in their own tenancy with 3:1 support 24 hours a day.

They receive S117 Aftercare funding and a Notional Personal Health Budget to pay \_\_\_\_\_ to support their care needs. They pay for their accommodation and living expenses via Universal Credit and PIP, making this closer to the Independent Living model than Supported Living.

\_\_\_\_\_, as Finance Deputy, manages \_\_\_\_\_ tenancy and personal property and is responsible for rent, repairs and maintenance of the tenancy as well as all benefits, living expenses and budget allocations.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as set out in the Court Order, and as Joint Welfare Deputies are singly or jointly responsible for

- i. Where they should live
- ii. With whom they should live
- iii. Arrangement for contact with others
- iv. Decisions on day to day care, including diet and dress
- v. Consenting to routine dental or medical examination and treatment on his behalf
- vi. Making arrangements for the provision of care services
- vii. Whether they should take part in particular leisure or social activities and
- viii. Complaints about their care and treatment

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, as Welfare Deputies, do not have authority

- i. To prohibit any person from having contact with \_\_\_\_\_\*
- ii. To direct a person responsible for their healthcare to allow a different person to take over that responsibility
- iii) To do an act that is intended to restrain \_\_\_\_\_ otherwise than in accordance with the conditions set out in the Act

\_\_\_\_\_ lives in their own home with support and the aim is to make their home as comfortable and welcoming for them as possible. This is in direct contrast to some of the institutional settings they have endured, and the emphasis is on helping them develop life skills, make choices and have some control over their environment. This should help reduce any distressed behaviours and encourage them to become part of the local community.

There has been some excellent close working between all parties to make sure that this arrangement is successfully established, and we now need to make sure that what we have learned in the settling in period is maintained for the future.

## **Purpose**

This MoU will help to clarify the roles of everyone supporting \_\_\_\_\_ to live his/her best life and to make clear the underlying principles which form the basis of all decisions, large and small.

## **The Mental Capacity Act Principles**

**Principle 1:** Assume a person has capacity unless proved otherwise.

**Principle 2:** Do not treat people as incapable of making a decision unless all practicable steps have been tried to help them.

**Principle 3:** A person should not be treated as incapable of making a decision because their decision may seem unwise.

**Principle 4:** Always do things or take decisions for people without capacity in their best interests.

**Principle 5:** Before doing something to someone or making a decision on their behalf, consider whether the outcome could be achieved in a less restrictive way.

## **Scope**

This MoU will be effective upon signing by all parties until such time as agreed by mutual consent. Changes may also be made by mutual consent at any time.

## **The Deputies agree to:**

- Work closely with and support all staff to help them understand and engage with \_\_\_\_\_
- Make sure that all rent, utility and food bills are paid in full and on time
- Make sure that repairs and replacement items are arranged promptly upon notification, either directly or via \_\_\_\_\_ Housing Association
- Provide the agreed weekly cash allowance for fuel, activities and incidental expenses
- Raise any concerns or issues with the registered house manager promptly
- Attend medical appointments where possible and provide guidance and historical background where not.
-

**Provider agrees to:**

- Provide care and support in accordance with the contract with Commissioners.
- Make sure that all staff supporting \_\_\_\_\_ recognise that they are visiting him/her in his/her own home and that they respect his/her rights under the Mental Health and Human Rights Acts.
- Review the package of care with Deputies and team seniors as necessary, but at least 3 monthly and provide minutes/documentation to record all views
- Ensure that staff liaise with \_\_\_\_\_'s Deputies re routine health appointments and any treatment
- Ensure staff provide regular updates on activity and meal plans, ensuring time to make any necessary adjustments
- Inform Deputies of any staff changes and include them in any further recruitment
- Manage \_\_\_\_\_'s contact with his/her family to ensure the existing relationships are maintained
- 

**Signed:**

Family: ..... Date: .....

Provider: ..... Date: .....

## ii) Building a Family Charter

# Building a Family Charter

### How to Build an Emotional Intelligence Family Charter

We all want homes filled with love and laughter, kindness and generosity. As parents, we want our kids to both have the best and be their best – and, we want to help them get there! We also want to live in accordance with our values and be our “Best Selves” as parents.

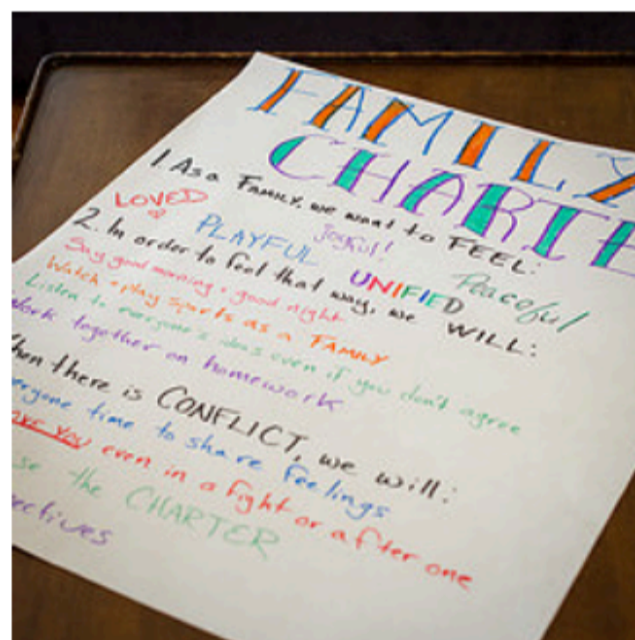
How can we make all of this happen? The answer likely can be found in a greater awareness of our own emotional lives as parents. With this awareness, we can model emotionally intelligent behaviors and guide our children through their own emotions.

#### What Is the Charter and why does it matter?

Emotions drive attention, memory, learning, and decision-making. Emotions influence relationships, health, well-being and success in life. This is well founded in scientific research.

The Charter establishes agreed-upon norms and guidelines, rather than rules, to help create an emotionally safe environment.

Your child (or children) may already be expert at building a Charter! The Charter serves as a foundation for a warm and productive learning environment and as a reminder for how everyone wants to feel and should behave so that these feelings exist in school. It sets the climate for the classroom.



Similarly, the first step to bringing RULER to families is to build an

Emotional Intelligence Family Charter. Your Family Charter will be a written pact that details how each member of your family wants to feel in your home. You will work as a family to list the commitments that each of you will make to each other so that you can all live together happily and peacefully. Developing your Family Charter together will be a creative and powerful experience that will likely enhance your family bond. Hopefully, each member of your family will enjoy the process of creating it too!

### **What you will need:**

- Given the collaborative nature of developing a Family Charter, it's important to find the right time—when everyone is feeling calm and warm—and the most comfortable place to begin working on it. The Family Charter can take a while so make sure everyone can commit at least an hour. If your child (ren) is (are) younger, you can break up the process and develop the Family Charter in two or three family meetings.
- You will need chart paper or a blank sheet of paper to work on as well as colored pens or markers. Or, if you prefer, you can create your Family Charter on the computer and then print it out!

### **Feelings, not Rules**

To begin, encourage your children to brainstorm with you about family rules. We all have them – everyday rules that somehow become part of the family culture. They are the rules that govern your household: “don’t do this” or “do this.” For example, no elbows on the dinner table; don’t chew with your mouth full; use your inside voice; no running down the stairs; everyone takes a turn; no television or videogames before homework is done; say “please” when you ask for something.

What are the rules in your house? With your son(s) or daughter(s), please list all the household rules you can. Importantly, give some thought to which of the rules your family actually follows.

*We know that rules alone don't make for a happy home! They may help define expectations and behavior, but rules don't address directly what everyone wants and needs to feel in their own home. Your child's school has embraced the science that shows that emotions matter. Students have been told and seen firsthand how emotions matter a great deal for their performance in school, their daily decisions, and their interactions with their friends and teachers. Let your child know that you support learning about emotions through the RULER program and that you would like to establish the same type of Charter for your home.*

## **Steps to creating the Family Charter:**

There are three steps to creating a Family Charter, each of which is associated with a specific question. The first question pertains to how each family member wants to feel at home. The second question focuses on what everyone needs to do in order to have these feelings consistently. The third question centers on ways each family member can both prevent and manage uncomfortable feelings and conflict. Active listening (e.g., maintaining direct eye contact, showing interest by smiling, nodding, leaning in closer, asking open-ended questions) is critical to the success of this activity. Indeed, if your family members are not skilled in this area, it may be added to the Family Charter as one of key behaviors in Step 2. Let's begin!

Once you are all together in your family meeting:

### **Step 1**

Ask everyone to think about how they would like to *feel* at home. What are the *feelings* and *emotions* everyone wants to have in your home? You can ask everyone to write the feelings down and then share or just go around and list all of the feelings that everyone mentions. Make sure you list all of the feelings. Then, as a family, discuss each word and work toward a top 5 list. For example, you might want to feel *respected, loved, connected, appreciated, and understood*. Write down your 'top 5' on a new piece of paper.

### **Step 2**

For each word, discuss the things each person can do – the observable behaviors that each family member would need to exhibit in order to have the feeling as often as possible. It is important for both the adults and kids to discuss the things they could do each day to ensure each feeling is experienced – they likely are different for adults versus children, although sometimes they are the same. For instance, a parent may feel respected if their child offers to help clean up after dinner without having to ask. However, a child may feel more respected if the child's parent respects his or her privacy.

Spend a few minutes on each feeling and agree on one to two behaviors in which everyone can engage on a daily basis so that feeling can be present. Make sure each of the behaviors listed are concrete and readily observable. For instance, being 'nice' is not a real behavior, but smiling or



saying “good morning” to each other are observable behaviors (a behavior that everyone can see). As an example, if you want to feel respected, you might want family members to ask your opinion before family decisions are made, to make eye contact with you during discussions, to be ready to leave at a certain time in the morning, to return the things they borrow from you in a timely way, etc.

### **Step 3**

No matter how much everyone tries to get along, conflicts and uncomfortable feelings are inevitable from time to time. Reflect on what can happen when someone doesn't behave in the ways you just listed in your Family Charter. It certainly will happen at some point that someone in the family will slip and not behave in a respectful way. For example, someone may scream and yell or do something to make you feel unloved. What will you do? How will you resolve that conflict or repair the hurt that was caused?

Brainstorm with your family: what specific behaviors would help your family regroup and re-align with the ideal feelings and behaviors mentioned in your Family Charter when uncomfortable feelings are experienced or unwanted behaviors are exhibited. List everything and then try to come up with five or so agreed-upon ways to both prevent and manage conflict. For example, you might agree as a family that a genuine apology in person or in a note is appropriate when someone hurts someone else, that talking things out in a timely fashion is necessary after a fight, that not holding grudges is important, and that allowing each person to have time to reflect is helpful before talking out a challenging situation.

### **Putting it all together:**

Now it's time to pull all aspects of the Family Charter together. This often is the most fun part of the project. Think art project! Be creative! Be original! Using your family's talent and ingenuity, have fun together as you assemble your Family Charter. There are no limits: it can be big or small, colorful, and embedded with pictures. You can use printed images from your computer, magazine cutouts, or draw or paint your own pictures. If you prefer a simpler, cleaner Family Charter, use just words and phrases—type it up and print it, or have each family member write out a certain part. It's up to you and your family! What's most important is that you have a final document that reveals the top 5 feelings, associated behaviors, and agreed-upon ways to prevent and manage conflict. Importantly, once the

Family Charter is complete, everyone must sign it and it should be displayed prominently in your home.

### **Keeping the Family Charter alive:**

Once your Family Charter is displayed prominently in your home, it's everyone's job to make sure it's followed and kept alive. When will you review the Family Charter? How often will you read it as a family? Visible changes and lasting results will only be celebrated when the Family Charter becomes central to how your family communicates. Here are some general ways to keep the Family Charter alive. Surely, you and your family will generate additional ways.

- Schedule weekly or monthly family meetings to review the Charter.  
What's working?  
What's not? What do we need to do to make the Charter a larger part of our family's daily lives?
- Have each family member set a daily or weekly goal related to a part of the Charter he or she finds the most challenging to honor.
- Be creative – post weekly quotes, send out family emails, perform random acts to demonstrate the feelings in the Charter and show your appreciation for your family members following it.
- Revise the Family Charter, as needed. It should be a living document.
- Share your pride and your achievement. Tell friends and other families about your creating the Charter and how good you feel about the changes in your home as a result.