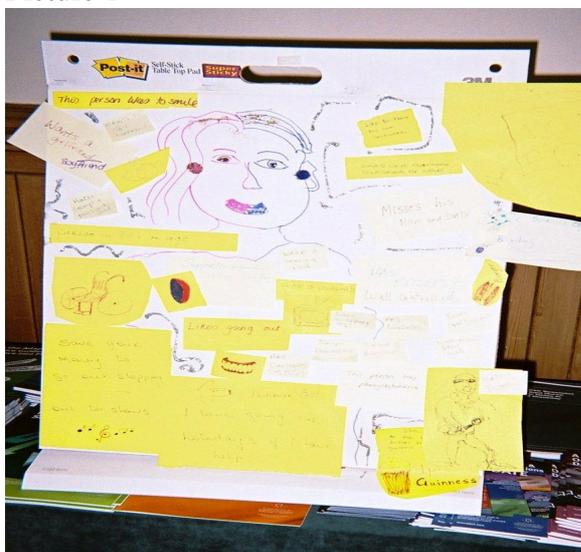


Developing support for intellectual disability practice – Nursing Network in Intellectual Disabilities Ireland (NNIDI)

In the 1980s nurse tutors working in what were formerly known at the time as schools of nursing attached to eight services, formed the ‘Nurse Teachers Group’. However given the development in nurse education and training and the move to third level education in 2002 the group needed to consider its future. In 2007 it was decided that the group should continue but with a new shape and focus. This new focus opened the door for representation from not only the education institutes but also from practice areas and intellectual disability services. The result is the formation of the Nursing Network in Intellectual Disability Ireland (NNIDI). The network was developed by a steering group, comprising of representatives from the third-level sector, service providers, practice development teams and professional development units. The overall aim and objectives of NNIDI include promoting an intellectual disability network in Ireland and facilitating events that would support networking in intellectual disability nursing in Ireland. As 2009 saw the 50th anniversary of the establishment of intellectual disability nursing in Ireland, the group decided to mark the occasion, by running a unique celebratory event, *Intellectual Disability Nursing – Towards the Future*. This was a half-day workshop for people with an intellectual disability (service users), nurses, nursing students and carers, facilitated by Helen Laverty a nurse teacher/health lecturer working in the University of Nottingham. The event was supported by the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery from whom the steering group received funding after a successfully application was made to the National Council.

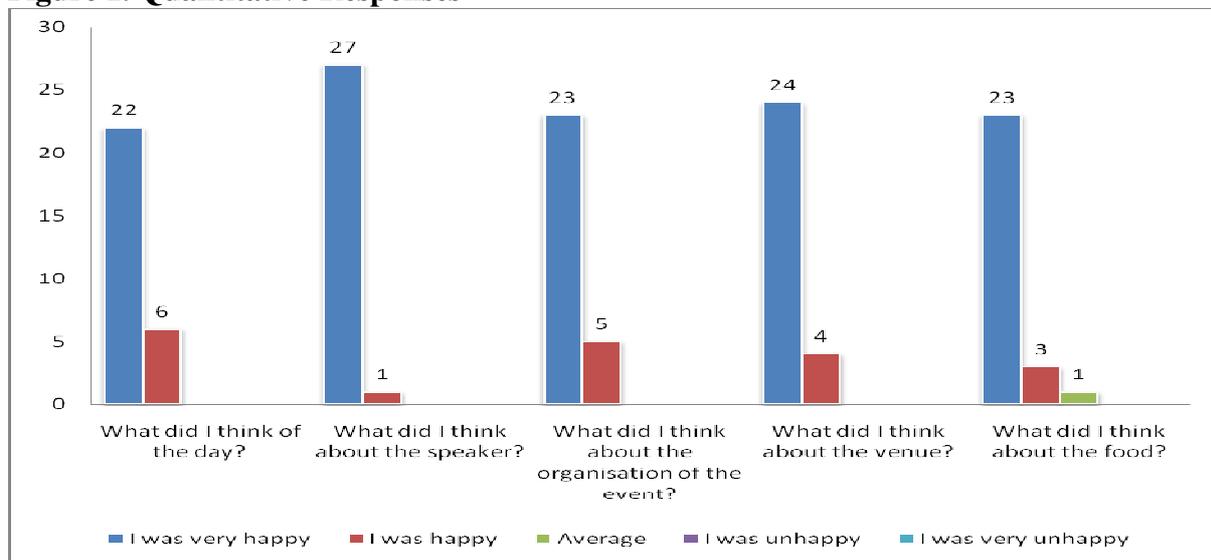
The workshop took place at All Hallows’ College, Dublin on 8th December 2009, with activities entitled (1) Design a Person and (2) Describe your Person. The first activity involved small groups thinking about human beings, their hopes, dreams, fears and fantasies and the reality of living with a disability. Arts and crafts materials were used to illustrate their vision. The activity enabled the participants to “design” an intellectual disability nurse who would be fit for purpose for the next fifty years. The second activity required participants to concentrate on building “the best nurse to get the best results for [the] person”. The aspects identified as important for this future nurse were; person-centredness, rights-based approach, quality standards, multi- and inter-disciplinary collaboration and social inclusion. One of the products of the day can be seen in picture 1, where the group designed and described the person.

Picture 1



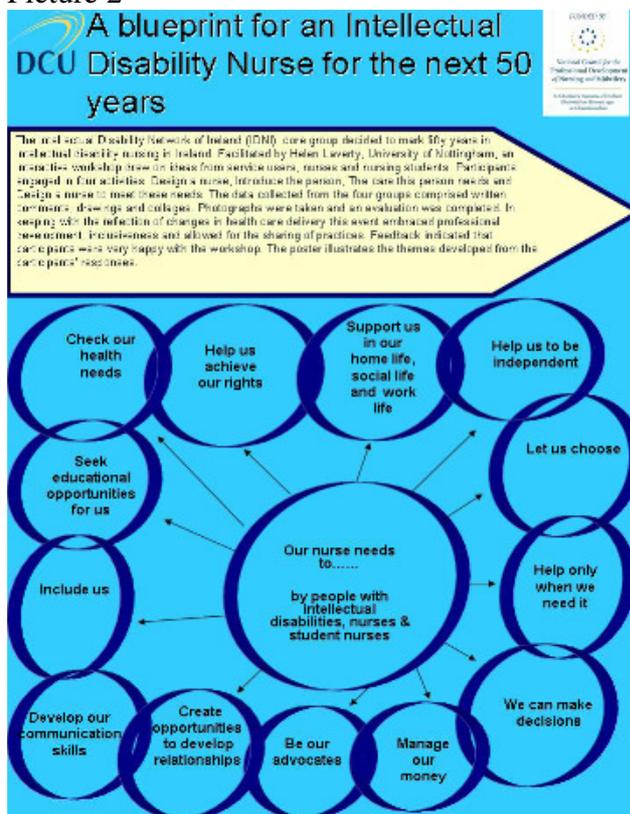
Evaluation forms were distributed to all participants and a total of 28 were returned on the day. The participants were asked in five questions to rate their level of happiness, and the very positive responses are shown below in figure 1.

Figure 1. Quantitative Responses



Overall the event went well and participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the event in the evaluation forms. As a spin off of the 2009 Intellectual Disability Nursing – Towards the Future workshop, information was gathered and the feedback forms were used to develop a poster (picture 2) which was presented at the National Network of Learning Disability Nurses’ National Network Conference, 2010 (*Reasonable Adjustment to Care: From Rhetoric to Reality*), held at the University of York.

Picture 2



Also in 2010 the steering group of NNIDI worked to expand its membership with key personnel in services and education across the country. This resulted in thirteen steering group members who meet in 2011 with a view to consolidating the aims and objectives of NNIDI and identifying ways of achieving them. The following was agreed as;

Aim: To promote and support networking in the field of intellectual disability in Ireland.

Objectives:

- To promote an intellectual disability nurses network in Ireland.
- To develop local/regional networks in order to build capacity for networking.
- To support the nursing network in intellectual disability, Ireland through organising or facilitating occasional events.
- To contribute to national forums and circulate webpage links to promote awareness of both national and strategic policy documents relevant to intellectual disability.
- To review this initiative in 2013.

Terms of references

- To actively promote engagement of persons with the NNIDI (online and through services and professional organizations).
- To develop a 'resource bank' of information pertinent to issues concerning intellectual disability people in Ireland (e.g. policy documents, web site list, care issues etc).
- To identify a link/lead person on specific subject areas (e.g. epilepsy, mental health, ageing, health needs etc).
- To organise or facilitate an event that promotes issues relevant to persons with intellectual disability or their carers.
- To produce an annual report of the NNIDI activities (available on web or distributed).

It is envisaged that networking will be a cornerstone of future activities and development for intellectual disability nurses and it is this belief that has been the motivation for this initiative. The members of the NNIDI welcome you to spread the word of our existence, recommend us to a colleague and link in with our service as often as possible. Through networking we can link with people of similar interest or make contact with those with whom we may learn or gain support from. For further information please contact info@nnidi.com or log onto the groups web site <http://www.nnidi.com>. We would also like to draw your attention to our NNIDI Conference on Wednesday 26th September 2012 in Dr. Steeven's Hospital Dublin. This event will bring people from professional, academic and political arenas together to discuss the vision for intellectual disability nursing in Ireland now and into the future.