

My Personal Budget and Me

Leah Booth

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About Me

My name is Leah Booth, I am 25 years old and from Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire.

I was born with a genetic condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type 2 and as a result I require round the clock care with all aspects of my daily living.

I have a Honours Degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice

I love watching crime dramas, superhero programs and I am a self confessed geek

I have volunteered for my local council, police force and university

I love to travel and have so far been to Lanzarote, Rome, Florida and New York

And I have a really bad singing voice!

MY DISABILITY IS A PART OF ME

IT DOES NOT DEFINE WHO I AM

How my Personal Budget came to be

Strength Courage Determination Perseverance

It all started in 2008 when I wanted to go away to University...

My social worker mentioned personal budgets and the rest is a blur of forms, meetings, personal assistants and choices

My Budget has changed so much over the past 8 years

WHAT DID I DO?

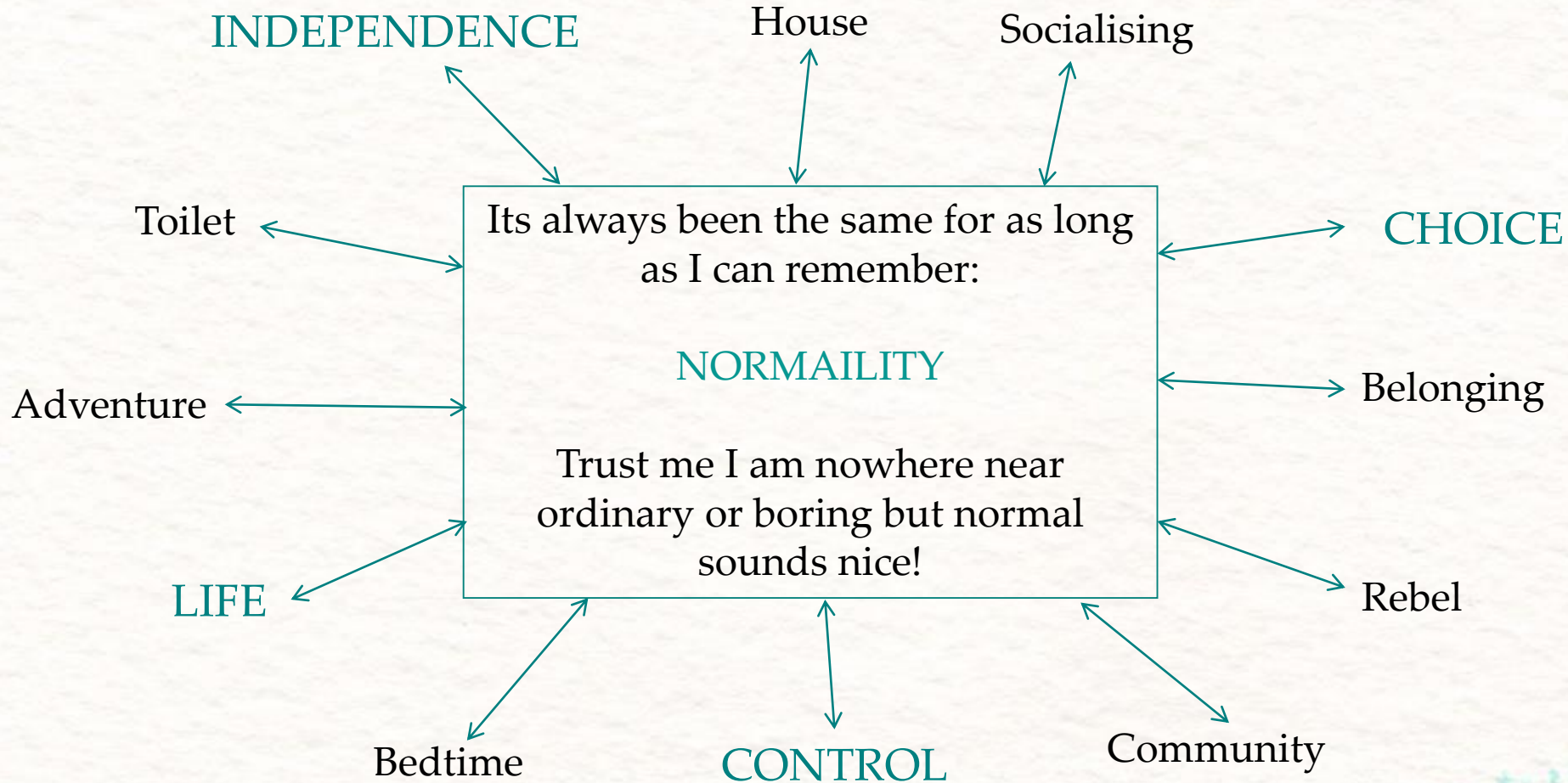
- PLAN,PLAN,PLAN
- Decide what's important
- Non – negotiables
- What support I needed
- Get counselling
- Pick my battles
- An entire tree
- Quiet time

WHO HELPED ME?

- Family
- Advocate
- Counsellor
- Doctors
- Payroll
- Self directed Support
- Social Workers
- Even my boss

What do I want my Personal Budget to achieve?

Having a disability can be challenging at the best of times...



What does my commissioner expect of me?

All work and no play...

Support plans

Day to day running

Personal files on each employee

Time sheets

Rotas

Holiday entitlement

Wage slips

Maternity

Sick

Contracts

Employer Training

Moving a handling

Paperwork

HMRC

- Never been told what is my responsibility
- I chose to take control to give me more freedom
- Make up my own rules to a certain point
- Left to my own devices
- Payroll support from The Rowan Organisation
- Legal advise from Peninsula
- Public Liability Insurance from Fish Insurance

Is my Personal Budget working?

Sometimes it's sunshine, sometimes it's rain...

90 %

- Got the right amount of money
- 24/7 care so I feel safe and supported
- Have 5 excellent personal assistants
- Allows me a lot of freedom
- Live independently in my own home
- The support I do get is excellent
- I can come to events like this
- I can give back to my community
- Its given me a relationship back with my mum

10%

- Not perfect flexibility
- In process of changing working patterns
- Can be a full time job
- Puts a lot of stress on me

What barriers have/am I facing?

Nothing good ever comes easy...

Budget cuts... Unknowns with financial difficulties

Individuality... The constant inability for people to see me an individual

Flexibility... With what I can do with the money

Legality... Actually being classed as a business without the benefits

Policy and Procedure... Constantly changing laws and practices

Personal Assistants... Getting decent, trust worthy staff is the stuff of nightmares

Support... Hard to contact for advice, don't know anything

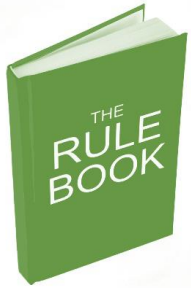
Social workers... Gone through 3 in past year

Continuity... Don't keep social workers, reviews every 6 months

What further support would be helpful?

Because I don't have a business degree...

How to Booklet...



- Clear guidelines of what is expected from me
- Do's and Don't
- Educate not interrogate

Personal Budget 999...



- Dedicated support and information
- Help accessing personal assistants
- HMRC Advice
- Specifically trained staff
- They are the “professionals”

Training..



- Social workers (see the bigger picture)
- Training for me
- Joint training so they can see our side

Working together...



- Face to face
- Not me against them
- Transparency

“There is no greater disability in Society, than the inability to see a person as more”
- Robert M, Hensel

Summary

I am extremely happy with the package I have now. It has taken me along time to get here and its has been a hard path but I finally feel like this is my life and my package has allowed me to be me.

And no matter what is around the corner regarding my Personal Budget if I stick to my **TOP 5** my budget will continue to work for me.

- Planning is the key to everything
- There is always room for improvement
- Stick firm to what I believe and the rest will work itself out
- Don't be afraid of asking for help or a rest
- The “professionals” do get things wrong – its my job to tell them so

Thankyou for listening

