



ENDEAVOUR

FOUNDATION

Opportunities for people with a disability

SAFE EATING

Least Restrictive Alternative

or

Duty of Care



Endeavour's Safe Swallowing Project

- 1. What were the issues**
- 2. Endeavour's approach to the Issues**
- 3. The outcomes**
- 4. The challenges that remain moving forward**

About Endeavour

Endeavour is a National Organisation which provides services to adults and children with a disability.

Endeavour has a long history of supporting people with an intellectual disability in accommodation, non vocational day and employment services, respite and community access.



About Safe Eating

The subject of 'Safe Eating' is critically important to

- **Keeping people safe**
- **Overall health and wellbeing and**
- **Balancing standards of practice associated with least restrictive alternative, duty of care and meeting individual need**

About Safe Eating continued....

Related to the topic is service providers' responsibility to equip support staff with relevant information and skills to work appropriately with people who are at risk of:

- **Serious incidents and potential for injury or**
- **Death because of choking that results from eating or eating related behaviours.**

1. The Issues

- **Swallowing difficulties are prevalent among individuals with intellectual and physical disability.**
- **Research (1987) has reported that up to 97% of people with severe to profound intellectually disability had swallowing difficulties.**
- **Until recently Endeavour did not have any 'measure' of how many people presented with eating behaviours that posed a risk of choking.**

The Issues continued

- **Incidents of choking have been responsible for all accidental deaths which have occurred in Endeavour Foundation services for at least the last ten years.**
- **The deaths of two people from choking within a short period of time in the South West Area of Queensland prompted staff and management there to action.**

The Issues continued.....

- **The potential implementation of overly intrusive strategies of dietary control when more appropriate and dignified methods of intervention to minimise the risk of choking may have been possible**
- **The shortage of appropriate professional assessments and strategies to reduce risk of choking.**

2. Endeavour's approach to the issues

Philosophically

Endeavour wanted to ensure any future action:

- **Would be proactive and preventative**
- **Would minimise the risk of injury/death resulting from choking incidents and**
- **Would be respectful of peoples dignity and choice**

Endeavour's approach to the issues

Practically

- 1. In 2006 Endeavour Foundation was successful in obtaining a grant from the Queensland Gaming Community Benefit Fund to develop resources which could be used to train all staff in Dysphagia and choking.**

Endeavour's approach to the issues

- 2. Endeavour contracted the services of
Hadgraft Speech Pathology
Paula Hadgraft B.Sp.Thy
St Vincent's Hospital
Toowoomba
to work with staff to develop resources**

Endeavour's approach to the issues

3. The following resources were developed:

Safe Swallowing Manual

Information Booklet

Staff Training Workbook

Trainers Workbook

Picture Plates

The Resources

The manual is a risk management tool by which Endeavour aims to reduce the risk of choking episodes for people with a disability, maximising

- **safe eating / drinking**
- **appropriate nutrition**
- **hydration**
- **constipation management**
- **safe swallowing of medications**
- **staff performance.**

3. The Outcomes

Benefits have been identified for people with a disability, staff and Endeavour Foundation.



Outcomes for People with a Disability

People with a disability are:

- **Supported with their eating habits and behaviours on a more individualised basis**
- **Are safer with a reduced risk of choking**
- **Not subject to overly intrusive strategies to manage the risk of choking.**


Outcomes for Staff

Staff are now

- **appropriately trained, competent and confident when supporting people at risk of choking.**

Outcomes for Endeavour

The Organisation has:

- **Improved management of a high risk**
 - **Responded to a gap in its service delivery**
 - **Has a resource which may be shared with other service providers**
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Outcomes continued.....

Through this project it became apparent that Endeavour needed to have a process that would assist staff to identify and quantify which people might be at risk of choking as a result of their eating behaviour.

Outcomes continued.....

Endeavour developed an internal audit process to quantify the range and level of risk. Resources include:

- **Safe Eating Assessment Tool**
- **Safe Eating Assessment Checklist**
- **Safe Eating Data Spreadsheet**
- **Safe Eating Intervention Matrix**
- **Safe Eating Matrix of Responsibility**

Outcomes continued.....


Recognising the importance of environmental factors additional resources were developed

Safe Eating -

- **Environment Assessment Tool**
- **Environment Assessment Checklist**
- **Environment Data Spreadsheet**
- **Environment Intervention Matrix**
- **Environment Matrix of Responsibility**

Findings of the Internal Audit

All 5 Disability Services Areas (statewide) responded to the Safe Eating Audit by providing data for a total of 1484 individual people who currently access either an accommodation or non vocational day service.



Identifying & Quantifying the Risk

A review of the consolidated data revealed:

- **A total of 771 individuals were reported to have known difficulties in at least 1 of the 6 risk areas associated with eating and/or swallowing.**
- **This total number represents approximately 51.95 % of total service users currently supported in Endeavour Foundation Disability Services.**

Endeavour Safe Eating Audit Findings

- **Staff reported that there was a documented risk control (safe eating) plan in place for 156 people in response to the identified eating and/or swallowing risk.**
- **It was reported that in only 20 (less than 13%) of cases, the available control plans had been developed in consultation with an appropriately qualified health care practitioner.**

Some Additional Considerations

- **Family Responses to assessment findings and recommendations were varied**
- **Some service users expressed their concerns about changed diets in ways that left little doubt about individual choices and preferences**
- **The cost of assessments and the determination of who should pay for them required consideration**

4. Challenges Moving Forward

Decision Making Matters:

- **Capacity for Informed Decision Making**
- **The Role of Substitute Decision Makers**
- **Service Provider – is there a point at which the risk becomes too great?**

Challenges continued....

- **Balancing dignity of risk and duty of care**
- **Identification of individuals at risk – Dr Bronwyn Hemsley’s (Centre for Disability, University of Sydney) Dysphagia Certification Workshops**
- **We still have choking incidents**

Conclusion

- **All people are at risk of choking.**
- **The death of clients provided a wake up call for Endeavour**
- **All future of management of safe eating must balance consideration of Duty of Care with a person's right to interventions which are least intrusive/most supportive.**

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