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People with a learning disability as trainers: evaluation of a values based pilot training programme

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Easy Read Summary
We wanted to find out about a training programme for staff working in learning disability services. This training was carried out by people with a learning disability and was about their needs for choice, rights and respect. We also wanted to find out about the training they had to become trainers.
• Seven people with a learning disability were asked to become trainers to staff.
• This article will tell you how the trainers were trained and what they thought about it.
• One hundred and nineteen staff who attended the training were asked what they thought about it. Staff said they found it very useful because the trainers themselves had a learning disability.
• We also asked the trainers what they thought about being a trainer and they told us they have all learnt new skills.
• We want to tell people about the importance of training like this so that more people with a learning disability are helped to become trainers, and because staff and the public can learn a lot from them.

Abstract
This article presents the findings of an independent evaluation of a pilot project in Northern Ireland called ‘Telling it like it is!’ (TILII) conducted over a 2 year timeframe (2005–2007). Seven people with a learning disability were recruited and trained as TILII trainers. With the help of a project facilitator, they designed and presented a values based training programme for staff working in learning disability services. For the purposes of this evaluation, 12 training sessions were evaluated by 119 course recipients who completed feedback forms at the end of the training session they attended. Comments were documented qualitatively and responses were thematically categorised. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the TILII trainers. Eight course participants also participated in semi-structured interviews. Findings clearly demonstrate that the trainer role has had a positive impact on the trainers; empowering them to become self-advocates and increasing their confidence and interpersonal skills. Course recipients reported that the training was an effective tool for gaining a better understanding of people with learning disability’s perspective of their own needs and wishes, and highlighted the values that staff should demonstrate in their work. Additional follow-up evaluation to assess the long-term impact of this training in practice is needed, however it is hoped that more projects of this nature will be adopted in the future.

Keywords Advocacy, education, evaluation, learning disability, rights, user-led training