

## Positive Life Stories: Scott

Scott is a gregarious, extroverted and ambitious artist who survived a serious motor vehicle accident at the age of thirty while he was living in Europe. The injury resulted in quadriplegia, which left him in a wheelchair and with speech challenges. The acquired brain injury impaired memory and cognitive processing. He received inpatient care and rehabilitation for almost three years. Scott and his very supportive family did not accept that he would live in a hospital bed for the rest of his life. They moved him into a co-op apartment with round-the-clock caregiver support. At the time of Parley's assessment, he was 40 and he received caregiver support during all waking hours.

Like many people in his situation, Scott was not making progress toward his goals of rehabilitation, increased social interactions outside of caregivers, and life skills/community independence. In fact he was losing capacity in all areas because staff were underestimating his intelligence and doing everything for him. He had become constantly vigilant in protecting his choice and control with so many caregivers in his home. Angry and aggravated behaviours were increasing and he had frequent power struggles with his staff.

When Parley first collaborated with Scott and his team ten years ago in 2004, he was not self-managing any activities of daily living, or even basic transfers and mobility. Personal hygiene, housekeeping, meal management, medication administration, time management, organization and finances were all managed by caregivers. Parley was able to establish routines that increased Scott's independence and thus he regained confidence. Caregivers were taught a Positive Behaviour Support plan that improved the quality of their interactions focusing on strengths-based solutions that allowed him more choices. Scott's support hours reduced from more than 70 hours per week to 42.

Scott was demonstrating success with the plans when the caregivers were implementing the targeting teaching. However with turn-over of new staff and concerns around deteriorating interactions with caregivers, including continuing over-dependence on external supports, Scott partnered a second time with Parley for positive life change. Parley's reassessment revealed Scott procrastinating on tasks and changing plans at the last minute as a way of asserting himself in the (still) caregiver controlled environment in his home. He had little opportunity in his own home to make his own choices, so when he did, they often weren't the best choices. Behaviours escalated quickly to making demands, being uncooperative with follow-through, and over-directing staff. When he was reinforced by the staff withdrawing all demands, he was swearing, insulting staff in a loud and threatening voice, and generally did not comply with daily tasks/activities.

Parley supported the team with a plan that drastically reduced the number of caregiver support hours to serve only targeted community integration needs and necessary accommodation for life skills support for household management and for organization and scheduling only. Scott was supported with independent transition to new activities, including cooperation with and participation in scheduling community activities, appointments, etc.

Finally with less than 20 hours a week of task focused support, Scott was able to focus on himself. He learned effective social regulation for independence; anger management; and functional communications appropriate to the situation. Supporters followed a Positive Behaviour Support plan for specific actions and strategies. Staff were taught rapport-building without making Scott's decisions, and support Scott in goal fulfillment and effective communication with others.

Now Scott independently follows-through on scheduled tasks, e.g. getting dressed on time, time management, etc. He cooperates and participates in budgeting and financial planning, e.g. monitoring grocery money, entertainment spending, etc. Scott successfully learned to accept support from staff, and redirection to manage his perseveration and anxiety about them. Scott has been working steadily since 2004 on his goal to walk again and he is able to take steps on a

treadmill. Most importantly he is strong enough to safely do independent transfers and manage his disabilities.

Scott has continued to enjoy painting and displaying his work at local art shows. He now attends a weekly Japanese language-learning course, computer education class, Tai Chi, summer sailing, and swimming. He is planning to travel abroad again with his family. Scott is an inspiration for all people living with disability.