



Exploring new ways of thinking about and developing staff practice: the role of modes of thinking

Journal:	<i>Tizard Learning Disability Review</i>
Manuscript ID	TLDR-11-2020-0036.R2
Manuscript Type:	Service Feature
Keywords:	Staff practice, Intellectual and developmental disability, staff development, training, intuitive and rational thinking, Daniel Kahneman

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Staff practice and modes of thinking

Exploring new ways of thinking about and developing staff practice: the role of modes of thinking

Abstract

Purpose

Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman's work on modes of 'thinking' provides a comprehensive text which is little explored in respect of work with people who have an intellectual or developmental disability. This paper explores the potential of this work to change staff development and practice.

Design/Methodology

Key themes from *Thinking Fast, and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011) are described and applied to current staff practice.

Findings

Modes of thinking are relevant and important to understanding and improving manager and staff practice.

Originality

To our knowledge this is the first attempt to describe and understand staff thinking and practice using Kahneman's ideas.

Key words: staff practice, intellectual and developmental disability, staff development, training, intuitive and rational thinking, Daniel Kahneman.

Staff practice and modes of thinking

Introduction

Kahneman's work as a psychologist, for which he was awarded a Nobel Prize for contributions to (behavioural) economics, is described in his publication *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (Kahneman, 2011). Kahneman's work is focused upon how individuals perceive and respond to, i.e. think about, their environments. In common with the rest of humanity, the behaviour of frontline staff (i.e. workers directly interacting and providing day-to-day support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)) is substantially influenced by their context. Establishing sustained, good practice by frontline staff has proved complex and problematic (Bigby and Beadle-Brown, 2018; Mansell *et al.*, 2008; Ager and O'May, 2001). The research of Kahneman and his many collaborators on modes of thinking reinforces the importance of recently emerging factors in that field e.g. the nature of frontline management (practice leadership).

Practice leadership was first defined in IDD settings by Mansell *et al.* (2005) and emerged from research on the implementation of active support. It focusses on the quality of life experienced by the individual with IDD and the range of ways that frontline managers can influence the support they receive (e.g. through coaching of staff, collective discussion, individual guidance, helpful allocation of staff resources etc.). A series of studies (Beadle-Brown *et al.*, 2014; Bould *et al.*, 2016; 2018) have shown that practice leadership has a significant beneficial effect on the nature of support provided for people with IDD. In their review of the literature providing evidence of factors associated with improvement in quality of life, Bigby and Beadle-Brown (2018, e188) conclude that, for managerial practice, the "strongest emerging finding is the importance of practice leadership by front-line

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 managers in the development and maintenance of staff working practices that reflect Active
4
5 Support". Practice leadership has also been shown to improve the experiences of staff
6
7 working with people who show behaviour described as challenging (Deveau and McGill,
8
9 2016).

10
11
12
13
14
15 As Mansell and Beadle-Brown (2012) indicate, practice leadership is not the exercise of
16
17 management control. Rather, it is an interactive and developmental process, and to be
18
19 effective practice leaders require an understanding of the external and internal factors
20
21 determining staff behaviour. Thus Kahneman's work on the relationships between
22
23 behaviour and context might help practice-focused practitioners/managers understand why
24
25 they struggle to get staff to provide effective and appropriate support. This impasse is
26
27 particularly evident, and potentially dangerous, when supporting people with IDD who
28
29 exhibit behaviour described as challenging and reflects the current authors' interest in
30
31 getting the best from staff in such situations using a practice leadership style of frontline
32
33 management (Deveau and McGill, 2016).
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 The paper starts with a summary of Kahneman's work and goes on to describe some
44
45 illustrative practice examples. Ideas are presented for how organisations and practice
46
47 leaders may develop interventions that utilise the power that comes from understanding
48
49 the modes and biases of thinking described by Kahneman, while avoiding their associated
50
51 pitfalls. We present interventions in the context of frontline practice leadership and selected
52
53 literature in IDD. The discussion focuses upon further analysis applying Kahneman's work to
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 practice leadership and relating his work to other approaches in IDD e.g. positive
4
5 behavioural support (PBS) and 'narrative' practices.
6
7
8
9

10 11 12 **The two systems of thinking**

13
14
15 The core of Kahneman's work is the distinction between two modes of thinking: system 1,
16 fast thinking, and system 2, slow thinking. System 1 thinking is automatic, rapid and involves
17 little sense of effort or of voluntary control. System 2 thinking is slow, effortful and logical.
18
19 System 2 allocates attention to effortful mental tasks and only system 2 can construct
20 thoughts in a logical, orderly series of steps. The interactions between these two systems
21 are central to this paper and central to what we all do when we are behaving. The two
22 systems of thinking described by Kahneman (and echoed in work by other psychologists)
23 provide a description of human thinking, not an explanation of how the brain functions to
24 produce it.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 System 1 perceives its surroundings exceptionally quickly, with little perceived effort and
42 suggests thoughts, and consequent actions, which are not consciously 'worked out' and
43 often ascribed to intuition or instinct. The effortful system 2 thinks of itself as being in
44 control despite largely accepting and relying on the effortless, automatic operations of
45 system 1. When we are awake both systems are working, system 1 automatically and
46 system 2 in 'lazy' low effort mode:
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55
56 *"System 1 continuously generates suggestions for system 2: impressions, intuitions,*
57
58 *intentions and feelings. If endorsed by system 2, impressions and intuitions turn into*
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

1
2
3 *beliefs, and impulses turn into voluntary actions In summary, most of what you*
4 *(your system 2) think and do originates in your system 1, but system 2 takes over*
5 *when things get difficult, and it normally has the last word” (Kahneman, 2011, pp.*
6 *24-25).*
7
8
9
10
11
12

13 For much of our everyday life this division of mental labour works efficiently and well.

14 System 1 gets us through life with little perceived effort and system 2 monitors (within its
15 limited capabilities) and tries to stop inappropriate system 1 suggestions e.g. losing one’s
16 temper or ‘jumping to conclusions’. However, this arrangement also has its limitations.

17 Much of Kahneman’s work is focused upon the problems of system 1 thinking: its biases and
18 heuristics (mental shortcuts) which we rely on to navigate life but which can produce
19 problems for our decisions and understanding. He illustrates this with common phenomena
20 such as the Müller-Lyer illusion (see https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Müller-Lyer_illusion) in
21 which our system 1 perception is fooled into thinking arrow A is longer than B. This
22 illustrates the power of system 1’s conclusion that the lines are different, even when system
23 2 ‘knows’ that they are the same.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 There are parallels here with IDD where staff intuitive (system 1) thinking gets stuck in a
45 particular belief or perception even when professionals and practice leaders try to change
46 this. For example, if staff believe a particular behaviour is ‘naughty’ or ‘manipulative’ it may
47 take a great deal of repetition to enhance system 2 control over this and accept a different
48 label and perception – perhaps one associated with understanding ‘challenging’ behaviour
49 rather than punishing ‘naughty’ behaviour. According to Kahneman, system 1 has an endless
50 capacity for answering a difficult question (by substituting a simpler one) which would be
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 better addressed by rational, but effortful (system 2) thinking. Whilst making much of the
4
5 problems system 1 thinking can lead to, Kahneman also noted the largely effortless,
6
7 appropriate and virtually instant actions that it allows. Intuitive cognitive processes then
8
9 have, in Kahneman's phrase, both 'marvels and flaws' .
10
11
12
13
14
15

16 System 2 also has its problems. Rational thinking, whilst necessary in activities such as
17
18 constructing a logical argument and computing statistics, has limited effortful capacity and
19
20 generally, and by preference, runs in lazy watchful mode over System 1. Kahneman
21
22 illustrates this limited capacity: try walking at an easy pace and multiplying 17 times 24.
23
24 Many people stop walking when undertaking this effortful task, the brain's capacity is fully
25
26 employed with the computation and finds it difficult to simultaneously manage the largely
27
28 automatic function of walking. Perception can also be badly affected if System 2 is
29
30 undertaking an effortful task. The 'Invisible Gorilla' task (Simons and Chabris, 1999)
31
32 demonstrates this well (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGQmdoK_Zfy). Around
33
34 50% of people fail to see the person in a gorilla suit pass between two teams when they are
35
36 asked to focus upon counting the number of times the ball passes between the players.
37
38 Expecting staff to use system 2 routinely will, then, be a problem when they are called upon
39
40 to provide rapid and useful responses to challenging situations because it is just not quick
41
42 enough. Logical, rational, thought-out responses are effortful to develop and enact, unless
43
44 sufficiently practiced to become intuitive. It has been proposed that effort (as demands
45
46 upon cognitive resources) can be experienced as stress once the individual's limited
47
48 capacity to meet demands requiring rational cognitive effort is overwhelmed (Devereux *et*
49
50 *al.*, 2009), potentially increasing reliance upon largely effortless system 1 thinking. For
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

1
2
3 example, Kahneman's work suggests that heightened emotions like fear and anxiety for staff
4
5 when managing challenging behaviours (in the absence of sufficiently practiced responses)
6
7 increase the likelihood of intuitive responses because of the cognitive ease with which these
8
9 are 'thought'.
10
11
12
13
14
15
16

17 Herein lies the powerful optimism of Kahneman's description: we try to run on system 1 as
18
19 much as possible, and it is marvellous but flawed, but its failings are not immutable. With
20
21 guidance and support, system 2 can interpose alternative thinking and behaviours, and with
22
23 practice these can be adopted as routine experiences by system 1. In summary, system 2
24
25 thinks it is in deliberate control and it sometimes is, when system 1's automatic, effortless
26
27 impressions and intuitive suggestions do not achieve smooth interactions and results.
28
29

30 System 1 does not judge the results of thoughts and actions, only suggests them. System 2
31
32 tries to monitor and plan responses, within its limited capacity, while system 1 suggests
33
34 actions and thoughts that may be unhelpful where counter-intuitive ways of behaving are
35
36 required.
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 **Implications for providing support for people with IDD**

46
47
48 The potential for applying the two modes of thinking to the support of people with IDD is
49
50 considerable. Those providing support will rely primarily on System 1's array of heuristics to
51
52 navigate their way through their job role. The resultant biases are likely to lead most staff
53
54 and managers, at least some of the time, into unhelpful ways of thinking and behaving.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 We focus here on five illustrative areas. In each case we draw recommendations from
4
5 Kahneman's summary of the existing evidence in the form of 'things to try' and 'things to
6
7 avoid'. These will help practice leaders:
8
9

- 10
11 1. Consolidate and justify the retention and persistence of existing practice already in
12
13 use (without necessarily realising it is supported by extensive research evidence);
14
15
- 16 2. Identify new ways to lead and manage the implementation of good support;
17
18
- 19 3. Generate a broader sense of how an understanding of systems 1 and 2 can assist
20
21 anyone interested in better practice.
22
23
24
25

26 *Selecting new staff – overconfidence bias*

27
28
29 Traditional methods of staff selection and recruitment involve a process of prediction
30
31 conducted by managers using their personal judgement about the suitability of candidates
32
33 for the particular work in hand. Despite efforts made to render recruitment more objective
34
35 (standard questions, scoring sheets, etc.), Kahneman's research shows that staff
36
37 recruitment is likely to be biased by the overconfidence of experienced managers who
38
39 consider themselves appropriately skilled, and who fail to notice their errors. Kahneman
40
41 provides extensive evidence that we are all prone to this 'overconfidence' bias of system 1
42
43 and he shows, for example, that experts paid to predict political and economic trends
44
45 "performed worse than they would have if they had simply assigned equal possibilities to
46
47 each of the (...) potential outcomes" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 219). Application forms,
48
49 shortlisting and interviewing are likely to have poor reliability for predicting future staff
50
51 performance and more useful evidence of potential performance will come from the
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 observation of extensive contact in real-life situations i.e. observing potential staff operating
4
5 in ways that allow identification of their system 1 thinking.
6
7
8
9

10
11
12 In particular, Kahneman's ideas would suggest the following things to try:
13

- 14
- 15 • Use traditional recruitment to screen for clear and unarguable reasons not to employ a
16 candidate, and use induction trial periods effectively to provide more objective,
17
18 observed grounds for awarding permanent contracts;
19
20
 - 21 • Enable people who are going to be supported to be involved in the recruitment process.
22 Use their direct feedback and your observations of their reactions to, and the behaviour
23
24 of, candidates in interactions with them to enhance your prediction of their likely
25
26 performance;
27
28
 - 29 • Group based interviews with 'cases' to discuss may demonstrate ability to flexibly
30
31 combine system 1 and system 2 thinking.
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 And some things to avoid:

- 42
- 43 • Assume that you can identify potentially good support workers from meeting them on
44
45 paper and in interview. If you cannot help being 'convinced' of your good intuition then
46
47 you should be doubly careful about the conclusion you come to;
48
49
 - 50 • Try to judge a candidate's character or predict how they will respond and relate to
51
52 potential colleagues and the people they will support. What they say is not necessarily
53
54 what they will do.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking
2
3
4

5 *Staff induction – confirmation bias*
6

7 ‘Confirmation’ bias – described by Kahneman as paying attention to phenomena that
8 confirm an existing understanding about the world (and ignoring any that do not) - is
9 commonplace and has been shown to influence perceptions and attitudes to others.
10
11
12

13 Kahneman shows how confirmation and overconfidence biases can be readily produced in
14 system 1 thinking when system 2 is ‘resting’.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 In service settings new staff acquire early information (often from the ‘stories’ told by other
24 staff or from written documentation) about people they will be supporting. Experience new
25 staff subsequently have risks being subject to confirmation bias – they will notice
26 characteristics of people that confirm what they have been told and discount those that do
27 not. This has considerable implications for the support of people whose behaviour may be
28 challenging, as well as those described in terms of their disability or condition.
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

42 To address these issues the following might be tried:
43
44

- 45 • Arrange for new starters to accompany and observe people in a variety of settings
46 including when they are engaging in preferred activities with preferred staff;
47
- 48 • Ensure that any early exposure to behaviour that challenges is explained rapidly to new
49 starters in functional and dignified, respectful terms;
50
51
- 52 • Discuss any limiting conditions, syndromes or characteristics associated with the person
53 only after new staff have spent time with them in a range of positive contexts.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

And the following avoided:

- Introduce new staff to people they will support through descriptions of behaviours that challenge, or associated risk assessments, medication protocols etc.;
- Put staff on physical intervention or breakaway training before they have spent at least some time with people they support in a range of activities.

Attribution errors –stories versus rational relationships

Kahneman (2011, p. 29) describes system 1 as having “a special aptitude for the construction and interpretation of stories about active agents, who have personalities, habits and abilities” Although Kahneman does not directly discuss attributions we include this as an example of the congruence between his ideas of thinking and current theory in IDD. Because it processes information with minimum effort, system 1 gravitates towards sentences like: “Peter spitefully swore at James” rather than those that encourage an appreciation of the role of others, and the environment, in behaviour: “When Peter was told that his mother is going to the seaside instead of coming to see him, he became upset. As James tried to tell him not to worry because there would be other days, Peter said “For xxxs’s sake”. It is easier and quicker for us to describe and grasp Peter’s ‘spiteful personality’, than a range of possibly relevant contextual conditions.

This tendency (also described as the fundamental attribution error (McClellan and Walsh, 1995)) has clear risks for people whose behaviour challenges. Any attempts to attribute the causes of behaviour to variable and multiple factors external to the person themselves,

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 using effortful system 2 thinking, will conflict with system 1's language and narrative style
4
5 when describing events and the behaviour of others. And Kahneman's description resonates
6
7 deeply. Anyone working in services for people whose behaviour can be challenging will have
8
9 heard descriptions of people and behaviour that coincide with the words he uses:
10
11

- 12
- 13
- 14 • "active agents" – "he does it on purpose you know"
- 15
- 16 • "personalities" – "she's the jealous type"
- 17
- 18 • "habits" – "it's just him, he always does that"
- 19
- 20
- 21 • "abilities" – "he's actually very clever".
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26

27 Our reliance on system 1, and its preference for stories that are simple to tell and follow,
28
29 means we can readily agree an inaccurate and unhelpful internal attribution for behaviours
30
31 that challenge. The following approaches to address these issues might be tried:
32
33

- 34
- 35 • In organisations that support people with significant challenging behaviours ensure a
36
37 practice leader with the right skills and knowledge is available to staff to support their
38
39 system 2 thinking and appreciate people's behaviour in the round;
40
41
- 42 • Publicly, within and outside staff teams and individually, support staff who provide an
43
44 alternative narrative that conveys positive perceptions of service users.
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 And the following avoided:

- 52
- 53
- 54 • Allow or enable staff stories to become unchangeable versions of a person which are
55
56 routinely accepted and damage the person's reputation;
57
58
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

- Allow or enable stories which present a person as unchanging or bound by their biology e.g. 'he'll never learn', 'Prader Willis are all the same'.

System 1 marvels (and flaws) – individual staff rapport and intuitive skills

We have focused above on some of the flaws, i.e., common biases and heuristics of system 1 thinking. Kahneman places equal emphasis upon the benefits that humans derive from being able, at great speed, to understand and act in usually useful ways in dynamic social environments. In the following we draw further attention to the congruence between Kahneman's work on thinking and action, and selected IDD literature. Instinct and intuition have usually been regarded as unreliable and not to be 'trusted' in respect of staff, carrying too much individual 'baggage'. But it's inevitable that staff will bring both their systems 1 and 2 to work. As Felce *et al.* (2002, p.15) suggest:

It is reasonable to expect that how staff carry out their jobs will be an accommodation between the expectations of the service and their own values, motivations, competencies and interests. (.....). The formal service culture, its working methods and training cannot be simply passed to staff, poured in as if filling an empty vessel. Staff bring their own agendas to the workplace and are susceptible to influences other than those stemming from the service organization.

The helpfulness of staff's system 1 thinking will likely vary from one context to another. For example, the ability to relate and interact positively with people who present challenges, is a skill that some staff appear to possess intuitively, while others do not. The ability to build such rapport with service users whose behaviour many staff experience as stressful and very

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 difficult is something that all frontline managers, especially those who act as practice
4
5 leaders, will be profoundly grateful for. Practice leaders should seek to replicate such a skill
6
7 across staff, as positive rapport has been shown to be associated with more engagement in
8
9 positive activities and less challenging behaviour, and can be developed in existing and
10
11 newly appointed staff (Magito McLaughlin and Carr, 2005; Parsons *et al.*, 2016). Try the
12
13 following:
14
15

- 16 • When staff experience a particular service user as difficult and stressful to support –
17
18 plan a programme of mutual engagement in preferred activities and monitor the results;
19
20
- 21 • Associate new staff with activities and experiences preferred by service users who may
22
23 challenge.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 And avoid:

- 33 • Expecting all staff to support all service users equally well after they have read the files
34
35 and had their induction.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

44 *Developing skilled practice*

45
46 Kahneman's work also sheds light on the vexing question of why theory-based classroom
47
48 (and increasingly online) training often does not lead to sustained desired changes in staff
49
50 practice (Ager and O'May, 2001; Mansell *et al.*, 2013; Bigby and Beadle-Brown, 2018), whilst
51
52 the addition of on-the-job coaching, with practice and feedback, is more successful in
53
54 bringing about behavioural change (van Oorsouw *et al.*, 2009).
55
56
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 The most common approaches to training employ logical (system 2) interventions, e.g.,
4
5 discussion, lecturing and guided reflection. In Kahneman's view, this is not effective in
6
7 changing the system 1 thinking and intuitive practice that staff 'naturally' return to as they
8
9 leave the classroom. Developing intuitive thinking and *skilled* practice requires a "regular
10
11 environment, adequate opportunities to practice and rapid and unequivocal feedback on
12
13 the accuracy of thoughts and actions" (Kahneman, 2011, p. 416).
14
15
16
17
18
19
20

21 For example, consider Paul (a composite of several individuals), a 22 year old autistic man
22
23 who has many sensory experiences which may lead to him feeling extreme anxiety and can
24
25 subsequently lead to shouting and hitting his support staff. Paul's challenges have led to him
26
27 being admitted to hospital. One of Paul's support workers 'discovered' that a certain
28
29 approach was helpful. This approach was observed by the manager (practice leader) and
30
31 entailed the support worker: avoiding direct eye contact (he focused on Paul's chin/neck
32
33 area), not talking much (except to say "it will feel better soon Paul"), holding his hands
34
35 palms outwards at chest height, and moving his feet slowly to keep around a 30- 45 degree
36
37 angle (so he was never standing square to or directly face to face with Paul). As soon as Paul
38
39 showed any signs of lessening anger he said "time for that tea Paul" and that was usually
40
41 the end to the 'incident'.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

51 This may appear to be an easy behavioural sequence to learn and perform with competence
52
53 and confidence. It is not, especially in a context of someone (Paul) who has a 'reputation' of
54
55 injuring staff and shouting loudly 'in your face' including threats to harm you. As Kahneman
56
57 says, modifying our intuitive responses in most situations is difficult and, although his work
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 does not address this, it is likely to be even harder in situations involving high arousal and
4
5 anxiety. Developing a range of responses to challenging behaviours, or to assist the
6
7 engagement of service users in activities, requires opportunities for practice with feedback
8
9 until responses are 'intuitive'. For example, communication strategies with people who are
10
11 aroused and anxious may helpfully involve (individualised) signs, gestures and objects
12
13 presented in a particular sequence. Kahneman's approach is very similar to reports of
14
15 behavioural interventions to developing staff competence in behavioural routines (Ricciardi,
16
17 2005). Both Kahneman's approach to developing skilled intuitive practice, and approaches
18
19 to developing behavioural competence from applied behavioural analysis, suggest
20
21 opportunities for practice, demonstration and immediate corrective and supportive
22
23 feedback. One framework for developing competent practice is *three tier training* (LaVigna
24
25 *et al.*, 1994). EDDY training (Deveau and Leitch, 2018) is a similar approach designed to be
26
27 accessible to frontline managers and staff. This discussion suggests a number of things to
28
29 try:

- 30 • Develop detailed descriptions of those staff interactions observed to be helpful to
31
32 service users when they are anxious or learning a new skill. Use a behavioural
33
34 framework for developing this skill in the staff team using three tier or EDDY training;
- 35 • Utilise staff team members with good rapport in developing interventions and in
36
37 'training' other members of the team, aiming to create a culture of expectations and
38
39 feedback for the desired change;
- 40 • Ask staff teams what the (challenging) person is doing when they are NOT challenging.

41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58 And to avoid:
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

- Sending individual staff on training in the hope they will be able to influence the whole team;
- Expecting staff to read and sign a positive behaviour support plan and then implement it accurately.

Discussion

In this section we draw further links between Kahneman's work on modes of thinking and selected literature in IDD and then focus upon practice leadership and staff practice, drawing links between theory and practice.

Implicit in much of the above discussion is that the practice leader (whoever plays that role in a particular context) should work with staff to develop their skills to identify and be able to move freely between thinking modes. Sometimes the largely effortless system 1 enables staff to engage in positive interactions with service users but sometimes it leads to unhelpful behavioural responses and system 2 would be better suited for planning logical but less intuitive interactions. Achieving a useful balance between the two modes of thinking takes time and opportunities to practice with feedback. The impact of staff thinking modes for implementation of, for example, PBS has not been explored and existing published research presents little relevant evidence.

PBS and other interventions are usually designed by 'experts' primarily drawing on system 2 and implemented by staff primarily using system 1 thinking. McClean *et al.* (2005)

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 demonstrated (in a rare, large scale, longitudinal study) that frontline staff could be trained
4
5 to conduct functional behavioural assessments, design and implement PBS interventions.
6
7

8 One possible conclusion is that positive outcomes can come from supporting frontline staff
9
10 to employ both rational and intuitive modes of thinking - although this was not how the
11
12 original authors described it. The approach they used was informed by a central concern for
13
14 'contextual fit' between the developers and implementers of the intervention by supporting
15
16 frontline staff to undertake both roles (McClellan *et al.*, 2005; Dench, 2005). An integral part
17
18 of this process is the requirement for staff to apply both modes of thinking. It seems
19
20 reasonable to suggest that the training process, the resulting development of a PBS plan (for
21
22 a familiar service user) and its faithful implementation present many opportunities for staff
23
24 to practice shifting between thinking modes and receiving feedback. An understanding of
25
26 Kahneman's work suggests that the intervention described here may have achieved this,
27
28 and that skilled practice can be developed through a positive balance of both systems of
29
30 thinking and opportunities to practice with feedback.
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 A very different approach to working with staff teams who support people with IDD who
42
43 exhibit challenging behaviours is 'narrative therapy' (Haydon-Laurulet, 2020), a
44
45 psychotherapeutic intervention which focuses upon the use of language to change staff
46
47 team interactions and beliefs. Haydon-Laurelet's description of narrative therapy shows,
48
49 however, marked similarities with some of the practice leadership initiatives suggested
50
51 above, with an emphasis on the power of (and changing) the stories told by staff to
52
53
54
55
56 determine the support people receive.
57
58
59
60

1 Staff practice and modes of thinking

2
3 Practice leaders will only be able to enact the agenda set out above if they have a regular
4
5 and frequent presence on the 'floor', observing staff practice (Deveau and McGill, 2016;
6
7 2019; Bould *et al.*, 2018), describing and demonstrating good practice and providing
8
9 opportunities to practice these skills with immediate feedback (Deveau and Leitch, 2018,
10
11 LaVigna *et al.*, 1994; Kahneman, 2011; Reid and Parsons, 2002). Unfortunately, the balance
12
13 between administrative demands and practice leadership too often appears to be
14
15 significantly tilted in favour of administration.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 We conclude that Kahneman and his description of the two modes of thinking are helpful in
24
25 understanding and intervening in how staff and managers conduct their working lives. We
26
27 have drawn attention to areas where Kahneman's work supports rather than replaces other
28
29 initiatives e.g. developing rapport and providing on-the-job coaching. One challenge
30
31 reinforced by this analysis is to define and analyse the expected results of much training
32
33 currently provided to staff. If this training rarely has intended impacts upon practice, what is
34
35 it for and how can it be made more effective? In essence this is a question of how to ensure
36
37 that training in theories or values becomes embedded in intuitive daily staff practice. It is a
38
39 question of integrating the two systems of thinking described by Kahneman. *Thinking, Fast*
40
41 *and Slow* offers a useful contribution to the ways we should develop the sort of skilled
42
43 workforce necessary for supporting people with IDD in the way they deserve.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 References

53
54 Ager, A. and O'May, F. (2001), "Issues in the definition and implementation of "best
55
56 practice" for staff delivery of interventions for challenging behaviour", *Journal of Intellectual*
57
58 *& Developmental Disability*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp.243-256.
59
60

Staff practice and modes of thinking

1
2
3 Beadle-Brown, J., Mansell, J., Ashman, B., Ockenden, J., Iles, R. and Whelton, B. (2014),
4 “Practice leadership and active support in residential services for people with intellectual
5 disabilities: an exploratory study”, *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, Vol. 58 No. 9,
6 pp. 838–850.

7
8
9 Bigby, C. and Beadle-Brown, J. (2018), “Improving quality of life outcomes in supported
10 accommodation for people with intellectual disability: what makes a difference?” *Journal of*
11 *Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 31 No. 2, e182-e200.

12
13
14 Bould, E., Beadle-Brown, J., Bigby, C. and Iacono, T. (2016), “Measuring practice leadership
15 in supported accommodation services for people with intellectual disability: comparing
16 staff-rated and observational measures”, *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*,
17 Vol. 43 No. 2, pp. 174-182.

18
19
20 Bould, E., Beadle-Brown, J., Bigby, C. and Iacono, T. (2018), “The role of practice leadership
21 in active support: impact of practice leaders’ presence in supported accommodation
22 services”, *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, Vol. 64 No. 2, pp.75-80.

23
24
25 Dench, C. (2005), “A model for training staff in positive behaviour support”, *Tizard Learning*
26 *Disability Review*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 24-30.

27
28
29 Deveau, R. and Leitch, S. (2018), *Person Centred Restraint Reduction: Planning and Action*,
30 BILD publications, Birmingham, UK.

31
32
33 Deveau, R. and McGill, P. (2016), “Practice leadership at the front line in supporting people
34 with intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviour: a qualitative study of registered
35 managers of community-based, staffed group homes”, *Journal of Applied Research in*
36 *Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp.266-277.

37
38
39 Deveau, R. and McGill, P. (2019), “Staff experiences working in community-based services
40 for people with learning disabilities who show behaviour described as challenging: the role
41 of management support”, *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 201-207.

42
43
44 Devereux, J., Hastings, R. and Noone, S. (2009), “Staff stress and burnout in intellectual
45 disability services: work stress theory and its application”, *Journal of Applied Research in*
46 *Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp. 561-573.

47
48
49 Felce, D., Lowe, K. and Jones, E. (2002), “Staff activity in supported housing services”,
50 *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 388-403.

51
52
53 Haydon-Laurelut, M.A. (2020), “Commentary on “Narrative therapy groups for people with
54 intellectual disability: a critical review of the literature””, *Tizard Learning Disability Review*,
55 Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 223 -227.

56
57
58 Kahneman, D. (2011), *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Macmillan.

59
60
61 LaVigna, G.W., Willis, T.J., Shaull, J.F., Abedi, M. & Sweitzer, M. (1994), *The Periodic Service*
62 *Review, A Total Quality Assurance System for Human Services and Education*, Paul H
63 Brookes, Baltimore.

Staff practice and modes of thinking

1
2
3 Magito McLaughlin, D. and Carr, E.G. (2005), "Quality of rapport as a setting event for
4 problem behavior: assessment and intervention", *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*,
5 Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 68-91.

6
7
8 Mansell, J and Beadle-Brown, J. (2012), *Active Support: Enabling and Empowering People*
9 *with Intellectual Disabilities*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London.

10
11 Mansell J., Beadle-Brown J. and Bigby C. (2013), "Implementation of active support in
12 Victoria, Australia: an exploratory study", *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*,
13 Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 48-58.

14
15
16 Mansell, J., Beadle-Brown, J., Ashman, B. and Ockenden, J. (2005), *Person-Centred Active*
17 *Support: A Multi-Media Training Resource for Staff to Enable Participation, Inclusion and*
18 *Choice for People with Learning Disabilities*, Pavilion, Brighton.

19
20
21 Mansell, J., Beadle-Brown, J., Whelton, B., Beckett, C. and Hutchinson, A. (2008), "Effect of
22 service structure and organization on staff care practices in small community homes for
23 people with intellectual disabilities", *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*,
24 Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 398-413.

25
26
27 McClean, B., Dench, C., Grey, I., Shanahan, S., Fitzsimons, E., Hendler, J. and Corrigan, M.
28 (2005), "Person focused training: a model for delivering positive behavioural supports to
29 people with challenging behaviours", *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, Vol. 49 No.
30 5, pp. 340-352.

31
32
33 McClean, B. and Walsh, P. (1995), "Positive programming - an organisational response to
34 challenging behaviour", *Positive Practices*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 3-8.

35
36
37 Parsons, M.B., Bentley, E., Solari, T. and Reid, D.H. (2016), "Familiarizing new staff for
38 working with adults with severe disabilities: a case for relationship building", *Behavior*
39 *Analysis in Practice*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp. 211-222.

40
41
42 Reid, D.H. and Parsons, M.B. (2002), *Working with Staff to Overcome Challenging Behavior*
43 *among People who have Severe Disabilities: A Guide for Getting Support Plans Carried Out*
44 (Vol. 1), Habilitative Management Consultants.

45
46
47 Ricciardi, J.N. (2005), "Achieving human service outcomes through competency-based
48 training: a guide for managers", *Behavior Modification*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 488-507.

49
50
51 Simons, D.J. and Chabris, C.F. (1999), "Gorillas in our midst: sustained inattentional
52 blindness for dynamic events", *Perception*, Vol. 28 No. 9, pp. 1059-1074.

53
54
55 van Oorsouw, W.M., Embregts, P.J., Bosman, A.M. and Jahoda, A. (2009), "Training staff
56 serving clients with intellectual disabilities: a meta-analysis of aspects determining
57 effectiveness", *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 503-511.