



Photo caption: Gavin, Dom and Harry

## Practice Champion Gavin

Many of you may have already met Gavin who has been with Identitywa for more than 20 years. Gavin has consistently been recognised as an outstanding practice champion who is dedicated to quality of life for people and leading shared living teams to focus attention on active support.

Gavin recently attended active support and practice leadership training and participated in observations and coaching with La Trobe Trainer Cathy Gauci and Practice Lead Mentor Ash Pitcher. Gavin is a motivational and strengths-based leader and the relationships he has built with participants and the shared living teams are evident in all of his interactions. Gavin is truly committed to seeking opportunities for people to thrive, feel great, achieve their goals and have fun doing it!

To learn a little bit more about Gavin and what practice excellence means to him, Ash recently caught up with Gavin for a chat at one of our shared living homes.

## **Role: House Senior**

**How long have you worked at Identitywa: 22 years all up - 4 years, then a brief break and now another 18 years.**

A bit about me: I have an awesome family with my siblings, mum, dad, nieces, and nephews. I'm quite proud of the fact, although it doesn't define me, that I gave up drinking about 20 – 25 years ago. I'm a very keen Muay Thai boxer and have been to Thailand a number of times for training and competitions. I'm committed to working on me.

## **If you had a superpower, what would it be?**

Like superman, I want to fly. I had tickets to the grand final this year and couldn't go because of flights, so if I had that superpower, I could have made my own way over there!

## **What does Quality of Life mean to you?**

Its all about from day to day, feeling good and each day being a better day. It's feeling valued, trying to be a good person and just enjoying and appreciating life. Quality of life to me is having people around that love you. It's not necessarily the big things – it's taking it back to basics and having some fun. We all have different goals and our goals are there to help us live a happy and meaningful life. Quality of life is different for everyone – it's what is meaningful to each of us, person centred, as individuals.

## **In what ways do you see Active Support being championed at Identitywa?**

We have a lot of quiet achievers at Identitywa. We work together as a team.

I see a lot of great active support. You know its working because you see participants being proud of themselves. It's great to see participants laugh and talk with family and their faces glow.

The active support and practice leadership training has been excellent. The more we talk about it and the more we celebrate it, we'll ingrain it with our staff. The observation and coaching is great too – being able to jump in and learn it together.

Identitywa does active support really well – it is at the forefront and needs to become something that we all do.

Its important we remember that this is people's homes and lives and everyone wants to be included. At this home we celebrate little and often (one of the four essentials of active support) – cooking, doing all house tasks together and getting out and about. We plan a lot of special outings too like attending concerts and watching bands and getting into the community. We never miss an Identitywa function! Being organised is important, keeping it fun and getting to know people well by spending time together and taking the time to plan. We ensure everyone has a lot of choice and control and we always plan together.

Active Support is championed by just doing it!

## **What's one thing you'll be doing to drive best practice at Identitywa?**

Leading by example, role modelling and speaking up at team meetings, handover, training and as a team, celebrate what you're proud of.

Encouraging staff to have fun – don't be too structured, give it a go and find your flow!

We have been talking about active support more which is great – and the more you talk, coach and train, it will just become the norm.

I would love all of Identitywa to get on board with active support – to see the individuality in everyone and to work with all of the four essentials.

If you're struggling just keep at it and start small. Every moment truly does have potential. Try not to miss out on every opportunity and just keep trying. You grow through what you go through.