

# Who's The Boss? by Hazel Sealeaf

## About this research



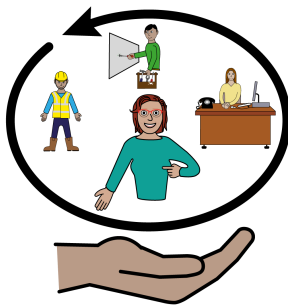
**Hazel** Sealeaf wrote this report.

Hazel is an autistic and disabled writer and researcher from Birmingham.

**manager**

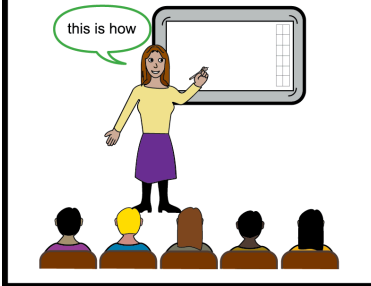


**Last year**, Hazel learned about the best ways to **employ** people with learning disabilities and neurodivergent people in **leadership jobs in the arts**.



She learned that many people do internships, traineeships or training courses before they start these jobs.

## training



**This year**, she learned about how people with learning disabilities can be **trained** for leadership jobs in the arts.



**Spectra** asked Hazel to do this research.

Spectra is an arts organisation in Sandwell.

Spectra works with neurodivergent and learning disabled creatives.



Spectra gets some funding from the **Arts Council England**.

This helps Spectra employ more people to support and manage the work.


## manager



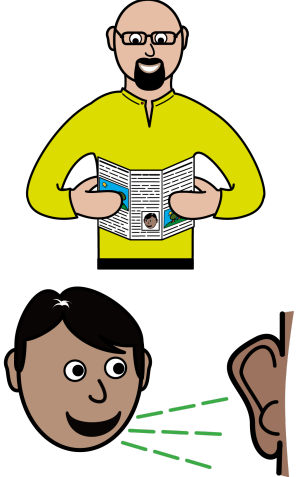
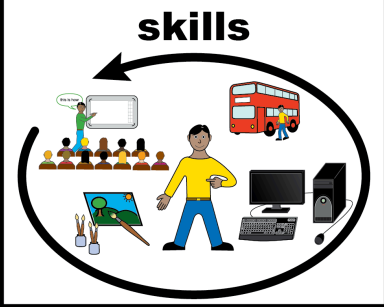

Spectra wants more learning disabled people to **lead the organisation**.

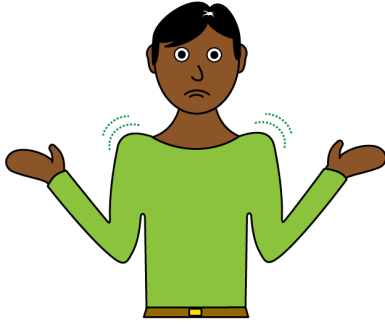
This includes:

- Writing policies
- Understanding budgets and money
- Planning for the future

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Making important decisions</li></ul> <p>In the future, Spectra would like to have a learning disabled Artistic Director.</p>
 <p><b>training</b></p> <p>this is how</p>	<p>To achieve this, Spectra wants to create a <b>Management Training Programme</b>.</p> <p>The programme will help learning disabled people <b>learn skills</b> for leadership jobs.</p> <p>These jobs could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Producer</li><li>● Manager</li><li>● Co-Artistic Director</li></ul>

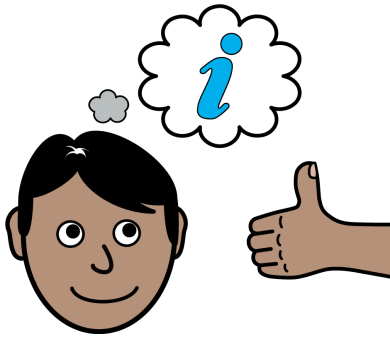
## What Hazel learned about

 <p>The illustration shows a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a yellow shirt, holding and reading a newspaper. Below him is a woman's head with green dashed lines representing sound waves emanating from her mouth towards a large ear icon on the right.</p>	<p>Hazel learned about 12 different leadership training courses for learning disabled people.</p> <p>This is what she learned about how to make sure training is enjoyable and valuable.</p>
 <p>The illustration is titled 'skills' and shows a man in a yellow shirt standing in a classroom. There are icons for a whiteboard, a red double-decker bus, a computer monitor, a laptop, and a paint palette. A large black arrow curves around the scene, pointing from the right back to the left.</p>	<p>Trainees find it easier to <b>grow new skills</b> in tasks they are already confident in.</p>
 <p>The illustration is titled 'set goals' and shows two people sitting at a wooden table. The person on the right is holding a document and looking at it, while the person on the left looks on.</p>	<p>It helps to <b>set clear goals</b> that are connected to personal passions.</p> <p>This helps people to be motivated during harder tasks.</p>



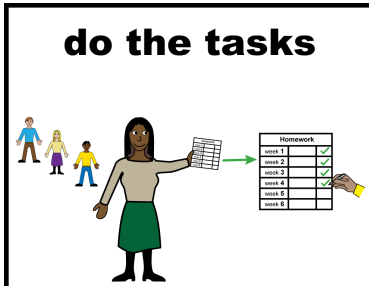


Leaders **don't have to know** everything.

Leaders **don't have to be good at** everything.



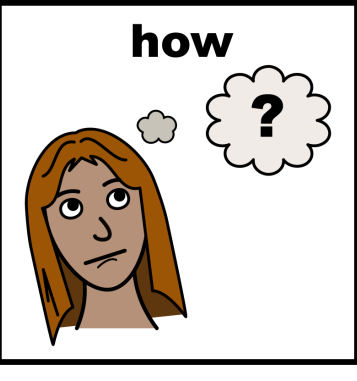


Teach people **the most relevant information** only.

## Key findings: learning by doing

<p><b>do the tasks</b></p>  <p>The illustration shows a woman in a white top and green skirt holding a checklist. To her left are three small figures of people. To her right is a table titled 'Homework' with six rows, each labeled 'task 1' through 'task 6'. Each row has a checkmark in the right column. A hand is shown pointing to the checkmarks.</p> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Homework</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>task 1</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>task 2</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>task 3</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>task 4</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>task 5</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>task 6</td><td>✓</td></tr></tbody></table>	Homework		task 1	✓	task 2	✓	task 3	✓	task 4	✓	task 5	✓	task 6	✓	<p>Trainees learn better by <b>doing a practical task</b> before learning the theory.</p>
Homework															
task 1	✓														
task 2	✓														
task 3	✓														
task 4	✓														
task 5	✓														
task 6	✓														
 <p>A photograph showing a man in a brown vest and hat performing on a stage. He has his arms raised. In the foreground, several audience members are visible, some with their hands raised, suggesting a lively performance or show.</p>	<p>It helps to <b>work towards</b> something trainees can see or do, like putting on a show.</p> <p>This way of learning makes it easier for staff to support trainees.</p>														
<p><b>what do I think</b></p>  <p>The illustration shows a man in a blue long-sleeved shirt with his hand to his chin in a thinking pose. A thought bubble is above his head.</p>	<p>It is better for trainees to work on real tasks.</p> <p>Real tasks have real problems.</p> <p>Completing these tasks helps trainees to become <b>better problem solvers</b>.</p>														

## Key findings: learning by reflecting

<p><b>set goals</b></p> 	<p>It is important to <b>set goals</b> at the start of a course.</p> <p>Goals show trainees what they want to achieve.</p> <p>Goals help trainees learn.</p>
<p><b>list</b></p> 	<p>Some courses <b>use tools</b> such as tick sheets to help trainees reflect on their progress.</p>
<p><b>how</b></p> 	<p>Trainees will need to <b>think deeply</b> about their work.</p> <p>Trainees will need to think about the <b>ways they learn best</b>.</p> <p>Staff will plan this thinking time before the course begins.</p>


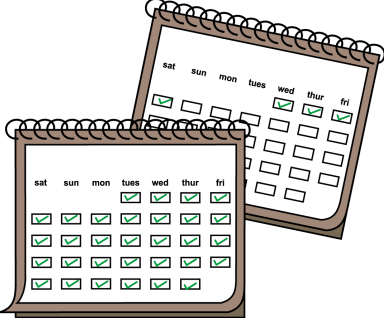
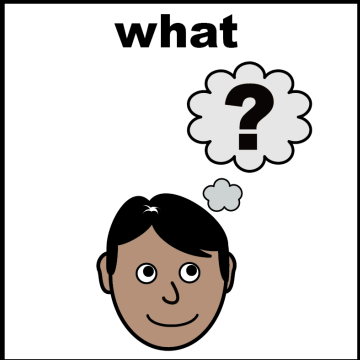
## what you think



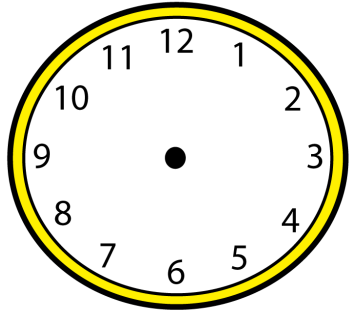
Trainees benefit from **feedback** straight away when things happen

Fast feedback helps trainees to **understand** their work clearly at that exact moment.

## Key findings: clear, repeating responsibilities

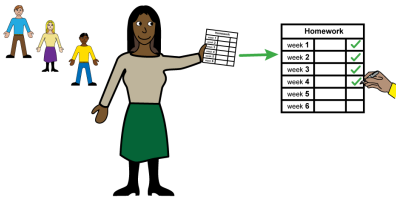
 <p>The illustration shows a document with the word 'plans' written twice at the top. Below the text are three horizontal lines, each with a small icon: a person walking, a person sitting at a desk, and a person standing. A pen is positioned at the bottom right of the document.</p>	<p>Trainees feel more confident at work if they have a <b>clear plan</b> for the week.</p> <p>It is helpful if trainees have a routine that they follow.</p>
 <p>The illustration shows two spiral-bound planners. The one in the foreground is open to a weekly calendar grid with days labeled 'sat' through 'fri'. Each day has a small green checkmark in the top-left corner. The second planner is partially visible behind it.</p>	<p>Trainees often work <b>shorter days</b> than the other staff members.</p> <p>Staff make time to plan each day around what works best for the trainee.</p>
 <p>The illustration shows a simple cartoon drawing of a person's head with dark hair. Above the head is a thought bubble containing a large black question mark.</p>	<p>It is better when trainees <b>know what they will do</b> in their work.</p> <p>Knowing what to expect helps when a job feels difficult.</p> <p>This can be done by planning weekly check-ins and team meetings.</p>

## time




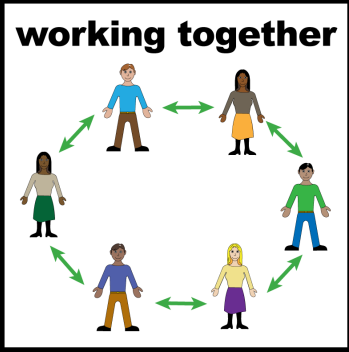
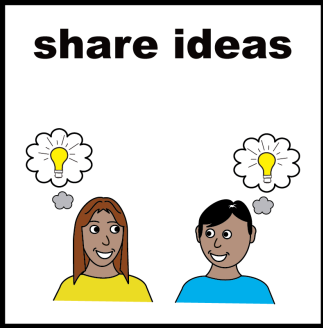

It is important that trainees have **lots of time** to learn.

Extra time helps trainees fully understand their tasks.



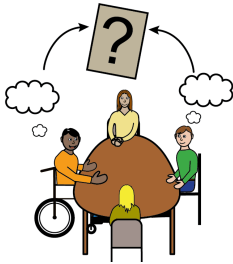
It is best for trainees to focus on **repeating** one task until they know it well, before adding new tasks.

## Key findings: co-leadership / working together

	<p>When trainees work with <b>staff mentors</b>, they slowly become <b>equal partners</b>.</p>
<p><b>working together</b></p> 	<p><b>Co-leadership</b> helps people use their different strengths to <b>work better together</b>.</p> <p>Co-leadership means people working together on the same task.</p>
<p><b>share ideas</b></p> 	<p>Good co-leadership means both partners <b>share ideas</b> and <b>feel valued</b>,</p> <p>Both people lead instead of one person assisting the other.</p>
<p><b>plans</b></p> 	<p>At first, co-leading takes <b>more time and planning</b> because it takes a while to get used to.</p>

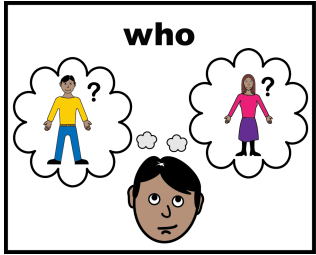

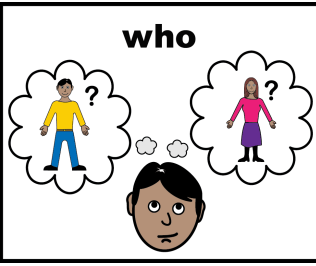




Some organisations **prefer independent work.**



Others **use a mix** of both individual and shared tasks.

## Key findings: good support

 <p><b>who</b></p>  <p><b>support worker</b></p>	<p>Trainees feel more supported when their <b>support workers</b> are <b>different</b> people than their managers or co-leaders.</p> <p>Separating these jobs helps trainees to know what topics they are focussing on with each person.</p>
 <p><b>who</b></p> 	<p>Managers and co-leaders who are not disabled also find it easier when the support worker is a separate person.</p> <p>The managers and co-leaders think this makes their work with trainees better.</p>
 <p><b>Access to Work</b> Making work possible</p>	<p>Support worker costs were mostly <b>funded by Access to Work</b>.</p> <p>It is possible to fund them in other ways too.</p>

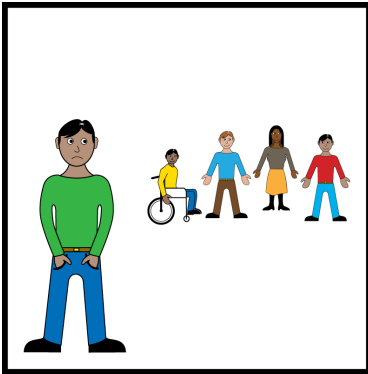
UC Universal Credit



## New style ESA

Taking on paid work can sometimes change a trainee's **benefits**.

The manager should make sure the trainee has **support** to understand any possible changes and to complete any paperwork.



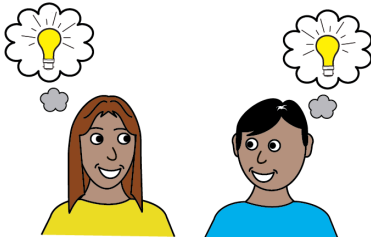
Trainees can find it hard to switch from being a participant to a trainee.

Sometimes this can change their relationships and how they are supported.

### support from family friends

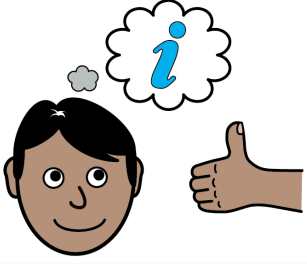

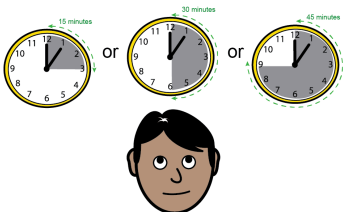
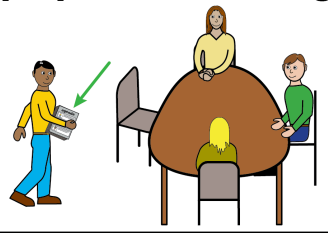


When trainees have strong support outside of work this helps them to have a good training experience.



When trainees on the same course share experiences, this helps them to feel supported.

## Key findings: accessible information

<p><b>good information</b></p> 	<p>Trainees need <b>clear information</b> in a way that works for them.</p> <p>Easy Read documents can help to make many kinds of information accessible.</p>
<p><b>easy read</b></p> 	<p>Courses should have extra time for understanding and thinking.</p> <p>Pre-meetings can help trainees to prepare for meetings or events.</p>
<p><b>time given</b></p> 	<p><b>prepare for meeting</b></p> 

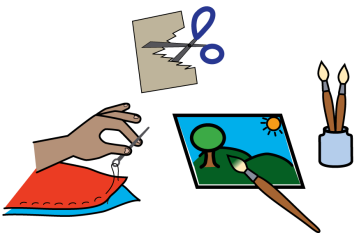


Non-disabled co-leaders need to spend more time planning.

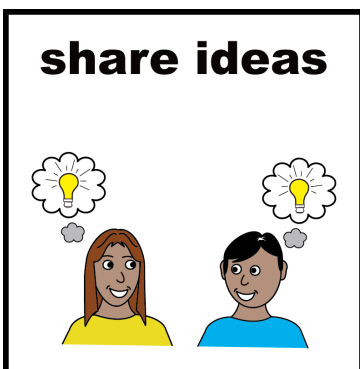
This can create challenges, but improves work with trainees.



Reminders and visual plans during sessions help trainees stay focused.



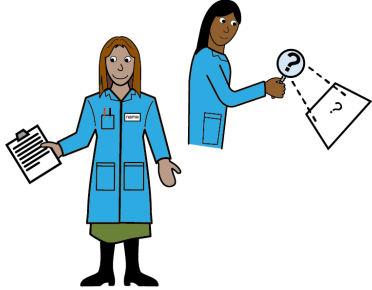
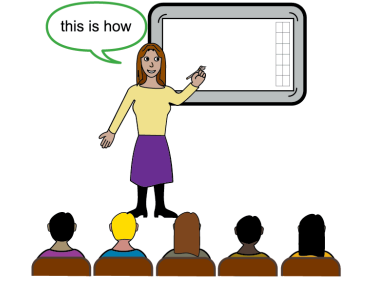
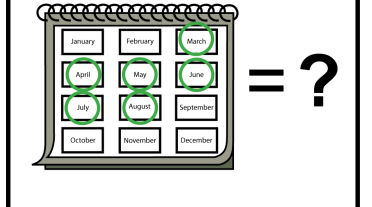
Using creative activities in meetings helps trainees to understand complicated ideas.



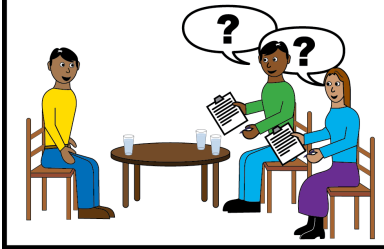
Trainees are great at explaining ideas to other people with learning disabilities.

Trainees are often better at this than their non-disabled colleagues.

## How Hazel did this research:

<p><b>research</b></p> 	<p><b>Hazel spoke to people and read information</b> about training programmes.</p> <p>Hazel spoke to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● People with learning disabilities</li><li>● People who run training courses</li><li>● Support workers</li></ul>
<p><b>training</b></p> 	<p>She <b>learned about 12 training courses</b> for learning disabled people.</p> <p>Most of the courses were about leadership in the arts.</p> <p>Some courses were about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Research skills</li><li>● Speaking up for yourself</li><li>● Advocacy</li><li>● Leading groups and meetings</li></ul>
<p><b>how long</b></p> 	<p>Some courses lasted <b>6 weeks</b>.</p> <p>Some lasted up to <b>2 years</b>.</p>

## interview



Hazel carried out **6 interviews**.

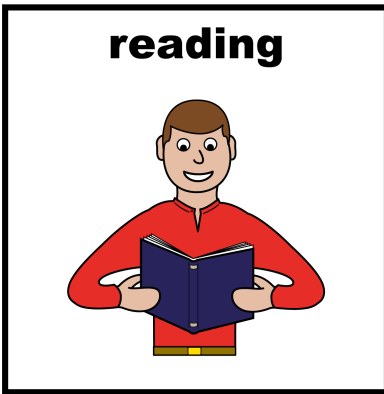
Some interviews were one-to-one.

Some interviews were group discussions.

Hazel spoke to:

- 6 learning disabled people
- 2 support workers
- 4 people who run training courses

## reading



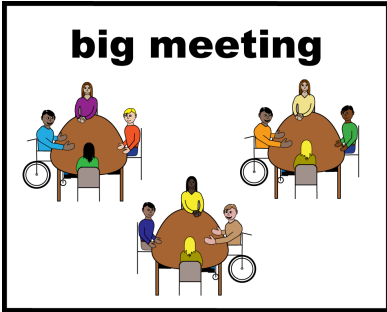
Hazel read **10 written versions of interviews** from earlier research about training programmes.

Hazel read:

- 4 academic research articles
- 2 evaluation reports
- 1 presentation with recommendations for organisations

Hazel looked at:

- Training materials
- Written resources
- Videos used in training programmes



Hazel **attended:**

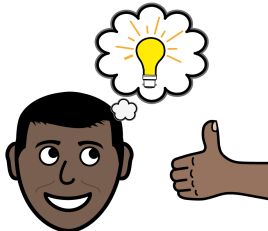
- 1 big meeting about learning disabled leadership
- 1 creative workshop
- 1 board meeting



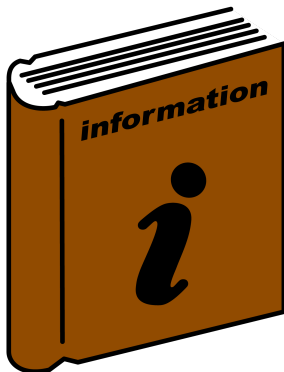
Hazel **watched Spectra activities for 18 hours.**

This included:

- 3 community sessions
- 1 planning meeting
- 1 policy co-production day
- 1 whole team day
- 2 meetings with staff



This all helped Hazel **give the Spectra team tips** for the new Management Trainee Programme.



This version of the research is **available to the public.**

Hazel did not share the names of people, organisations and training programmes.

She did share the names from public texts or research.