

**People are encouraged to get up earlier** – breakfast eaten by 7.30, ready to leave just after 8 and on some courses that's after an early morning exercise activity! **For many, their disability is an excuse to be a spectator in their own life rather than an active participant.** It's amazing just how much you can fit into a day if you get up early and how much better you sleep when you have had a full day being active and having fun.

For some people on a course it is a chance to see how their disability impacts not only themselves but on those around them. This may be a reflection on how they were brought up and therefore allowed to get away with this behaviour or, it may be in response to the grief at being in their situation.

Participant X was on a course earlier this year. He had significant spinal injuries and very limited function. He noted on his application form that some people thought he was abusive at times. We noticed that he used an electric chair even though his injury site should have allowed him the ability to self propel a manual chair.

One of our group leaders from previous programmes actually contacted us when he found out that this person was going to be on a course to warn us that we'd have our work cut out. The care agency was also in contact and concerned as this participant wouldn't allow Back-Up New Zealand to provide the cares and his usual staff were too scared to come.

Post course, the participant himself has reflected that he is a nicer person to be around. This was reinforced by an email we received last week from a representative from the care agency...

What a positive impact the course had on Participant X – he has been using his manual chair since and has also been getting his own shirt on and thanking the staff for their help. All of this was unheard of for Participant X before the course. The changes seem to have been lasting too, he remains more positive and is making an effort not just to talk about doing things, but to actually get out and do them. It is really impressive, so thank you very much for all your hard work and support.