



8 Signals

How do we know when a
care system is working well?

By Vinesh Kumar

About people



Most people want and need very ordinary things.

For example: family, friends, a home, money, ways to travel and things to do.



Disabled people sometimes need extra help to be able to have an ordinary life.

About systems



A **system** is a group of organisations.

Hospitals, councils and support workers are all part of a system.



Systems can be complicated and slow. They sometimes make life more difficult and unstable.

Measuring success



People collect information to tell them how well a system is working.

But most information is about things that have already happened.

It does not help people whose lives are affected by the systems **now**.

The 8 signals



Our 8 Signals help us to look at a person's life as it is now.

Then we can ask good questions and make the right decisions.

When we do this, we can stop people's lives becoming unpredictable and difficult, before it happens.

1. Slow change



People and relationships are familiar and reliable.

- People stay involved
- Change is well planned
- Life is calm

We can stop chaos and crisis before it starts.

2. Good decisions



Everyone understands the decisions that are made.

- Decisions happen at the right time
- Values matter more than rules

Staff must feel trusted and valued, for this to work well.

3. Everyday leaders



Leaders know people well.

- They are around in good times as well as bad
- They are consistent
- They help people to learn

Leaders of organisations should spend time with staff and the people they support.

4. Safety and confidence



A quiet system could be something to worry about!

- People must feel safe enough to speak up
- Disagreements are ok
- Concerns should be raised

Silence does not mean that everything is ok.

5. Keep on learning



People stay in their jobs long enough to learn and grow. So:

- Relationships last
- Knowledge is shared
- Experience is built up

When people leave their jobs, relationships end and knowledge is lost.

6. Respect for everyone



Support is better when support workers are respected and cared for.

- Give staff good training
- Respect their opinions
- Trust their decisions

Support workers should feel truly proud of their work.

7. Families are partners



People's families have known the person for longer than anyone else!

- Listen to them
- If there is a problem, get together and talk about it
- Paid support should help with family relationships, not replace them

8. We work together



People in organisations need to work well together.

- Solve problems as a team
- Don't hand problems over to other organisations, then disappear

The biggest problems often happen when organisations do not work well together.

Good systems:

- Protect relationships
- Make good decisions
- Respond quickly
- **Make freedom possible!**

Complex
People
Don't Exist.

Unstable Systems Do.

About the author: Vinesh Kumar

Vinesh Kumar started iDirect.
iDirect is an organisation that
supports people to live independently.

The 8 Signals come from the things
Vinesh learned as he built the
organisation.

iDirect website: www.idil.co.uk



Read the original essay. Use your
phone to scan this QR code.