Unit 1: Principles of communication in adult social care settings

Unit code: L/602/2905

QCF Level 2: BTEC Specialist

Credit value: 2

Guided learning hours: 17

Unit aim

The unit introduces the importance of communication in adult social care settings, and ways to overcome barriers to meet individual needs and preferences in communication.

This unit is aimed at those who are interested in, or new to, working in social care settings with adults.

Unit introduction

This unit will provide learners with an understanding of the effects of communication on all aspects of adult social care. The unit examines the importance of understanding an individual's preferred method of communication, when working with users of social care services and the need to observe reactions in order to support the communication cycle. The unit also investigates barriers to communication and ways in which these can be minimised or removed. Issues of confidentiality are considered with regard to maintenance and also the notion of agreed times when information must be shared. The unit will prepare individuals for working with users of services with a variety of communication and language needs.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Understand why communication is important in adult social care settings	1.1 Identify different reasons why people communicate
	1.2 Explain how effective communication affects all aspects of working in adult social care settings
	1.3 Explain why it is important to observe an individual's reactions when communicating with them
2 Understand how to meet the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual	2.1 Explain why it is important to find out an **individual's** communication and language needs, wishes and **preferences**
	2.2 Describe a range of **communication methods**
3 Understand how to reduce barriers to communication	3.1 Identify barriers to communication
	3.2 Describe ways to reduce barriers to communication
	3.3 Describe ways to check that communication has been understood
	3.4 Identify sources of information and support or **services** to enable more effective communication
4 Understand confidentiality in adult social care settings	4.1 Define the term 'confidentiality'
	4.2 Describe ways to maintain confidentiality in day-to-day communication
	4.3 Describe situations where information normally considered to be confidential might need to be shared with **agreed others**
	4.4 Explain how and when to seek advice about confidentiality

Unit content

1 **Understand why communication is important in adult social care settings**

Reasons why people communicate: express needs; share ideas and information; reassure; express feelings; build relationships; socialise; ask questions, share experiences

The effects of communication on own work: communication with eg colleagues, people who use services, children; supports the development of effective relationships, helps to build trust; aids understanding of individuals' needs; prevents misunderstandings; supports the development of own knowledge and skills

The importance of observing others' reactions: verbal communication eg tone, pitch, silence; non-verbal communication eg body language, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, touch; to understand emotional state; know if information has been understood; the role of the communication cycle; when and how to adjust communication method; recognising barriers to communication

2 **Understand how to meet the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual**

Communication and language needs of individuals: home language; preferred method; sensory difficulties; preferences based on eg beliefs, values, cultural variations, age, gender; additional learning needs; physical disabilities

Communication methods: verbal: non-verbal; written; British sign language; Makaton; Braille; finger spelling; pictures and symbols; technological aids eg minicom, telephone relay systems; human aids eg interpreters, translators

When and how to seek advice: awareness of barriers; understanding own strengths and weaknesses relating to communication skills; support from colleagues; manager; SENCO; specialists eg speech and language therapists, sign language specialists

3 **Understand how to reduce barriers to communication**

Barriers to communication: sensory impairment; dialect; use of jargon; environmental factors eg, noise, poor lighting; attitudes; effects of alcohol or drugs; aggression; mental health problems; learning disabilities; health conditions; lack of confidence

Ways to reduce barriers: use of technological aids; human aids eg interpreters, signers, translators; using clear speech and appropriate vocabulary; staff training; improving environment; reducing distractions; checking understanding

Sources of information: interpreting service; speech and language services; advocacy services; third sector organisations eg Stroke Association, Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

4   Understand confidentiality in adult social care settings

Confidentiality: personal information; sensitive information; principles of the Data Protection Act 1998

Confidentiality in day-to-day communication: types of information eg paper-based, electronic; policies and procedures in own workplace setting; confidentiality relating to the collection, recording and storage of information; following procedures for sharing information

When confidential information might need to be passed on: need to share information when individuals are at risk of harm or when abuse is suspected; concept of 'need to know'; role of the named person

How and when to seek advice regarding confidentiality: referring to line manager; seeking consent; importance of following procedures

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit should be delivered by a well-qualified and suitably experienced tutor. Learners will require some taught input, particularly with regard to methods of communication and the communication cycle. However, opportunities should be provided for the examination of issues of confidentiality through discussions in order for learners to gain an understanding of the factors which may have an effect on this. The use of case studies obtained from professional magazines and input from visiting speakers will enable learners to gain a fuller understanding of potential barriers to communication and the effects on the wellbeing of users of services. Ethical issues such as the enabling of individuals to use their preferred method of communication will need to be discussed in detail to provide learners with an understanding of the importance of this. Class time could also include simulations of interactions to provide learners with opportunities to observe the reactions of colleagues to their own communication. Videoing of these sessions will allow learners to understand where they may need to modify their paralanguage, verbal and non-verbal communication.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way of planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to unit and programme of assignments.
Learning outcome 1: Understand why communication is important in adult care settings
Buzz groups; reasons why we communicate, groups to feed back. Tutor-led class discussion with learners taking notes.
Tutor-led class discussion on effects of communication on working in social care; learners to work in groups with case studies. Groups feed back. Taught input on the communication cycle and recognising barriers to full communication.
Observation of training video on the use of verbal and non-verbal communication, learners to take notes. Role-play session, practising communication skills.
Assignment 1: Why communicate? Produce a poster identifying reasons why people communicate Produce a booklet for new staff at a residential setting for people learning difficulties explaining the positive effects that communication will have on their work as social care assistants and also the importance of observing the reactions of other staff and users of the service during communication.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Learning outcome 2: Understand how to meet the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual
Taught session, learners to take notes, communication and language needs of individuals; groups working with case studies to identify the communication and language needs of particular individuals.
Guest speaker on the use of communication methods. Question-and-answer session.
Guest speaker on the use of technological aids to communication.
Group internet research session on methods of communication. Groups feed back.
Taught session; when and how to seek advice, the role of other professionals. Class discussion on potential barriers to communication.
Assignment 2: Positive communication/holistic Support
Write a letter to a friend who is applying for a post at a day centre for individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds; the individuals all have hearing impairments and learning disabilities. Your letter should explain why it is important to find out about each individual's communication and language needs, wishes and preferences in order to provide holistic care and support. You should include a fact sheet with the letter describing a range of communication methods suitable for use at the day centre and when and how to seek advice, for example if barriers arise.
Learning Outcome 3: Understand how to reduce barriers to communication
Taught session, learners to take notes on barriers to communication; learners working in groups with case studies to identify barriers.
Taught session, learners to take notes/class discussion on ways of reducing barriers.
Guest speaker on sources of support. Question-and-answer session.
Assignment 3: Breaking down barriers
Produce a leaflet for learners from a local college who are going on work experience to an adult social care setting. The leaflet should identify barriers to communication in adult social care and describe ways of reducing those barriers. The leaflet should also contain information on sources of support available at local and national levels and a description of ways in which learners could check that users of the service had understood their communication.
Learning outcome 4: Understand confidentiality in adult social care settings
Taught session on the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.
Taught session followed by class discussion on confidentiality in day-to-day communication.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Guest speaker on 'When information may need to be passed on'. Question-and-answer session.
Taught session; seeking advice. Class discussion.
Assignment 4: Confidentiality - can we always keep this? Write an article for a leading care magazine on confidentiality when working in adult social care. Your article should contain all of the following information: a) A definition of the term 'confidentiality' b) A description of ways in which workers can maintain confidentiality in day-to-day communication c) A description of situations where confidential information might have to be shared with agreed others d) An explanation of how and when staff should seek advice about confidentiality.
Review of unit and programme of assignments.

Assessment

This unit may be assessed in a variety of ways and the methods below are suggestions. Assessors should ensure that learners provide evidence that meets each assessment criterion completely and that the operative verb, for example "describe", or "explain", is included in assignment tasks. Learners should be encouraged to use ICT to present work, in order to support the achievement of Functional Skills at level 2. The production of assignments in a variety of formats will also contribute towards the achievement of Functional Skills English at level 2.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the criteria in the assessment grid. This is for guidance only and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
1.1	Why communicate?	You are employed at a residential setting for adults who have learning disabilities and a variety of communication needs. Your manager has asked you to produce a poster for the staff room, identifying the reasons why we communicate in social care.	Poster
1.2, 1.3	Positive communication	The manager at the residence has asked you to produce a booklet for new staff to provide them with information on communication.	Booklet

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
2.1, 2.2	Holistic support	You have a friend who is applying for employment at a day centre for adults with communication difficulties. You have decided to write a letter to your friend, telling them of the importance of meeting each individual's communication needs, preferences and wishes.	Letter
3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4	Breaking down barriers	You have been appointed as a mentor to learners who will be coming on work experience to the setting. Your manager has asked you to produce a leaflet for the learners to inform them of barriers to communication which they may encounter, and ways to reduce those barriers.	Leaflet
4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4	Confidentiality - can we always keep this?	You have been asked by a leading care magazine to produce an article on issues affecting confidentiality in adult social care.	Magazine article

Essential resources

Learners will require access to relevant library facilities including relevant texts, professional magazines and journals and CDROMs.

Resources for communication in social care (including DVDs and booklets) can be obtained from Mulberry House at www.mulho.com.

Learners will benefit from visiting speakers who are experienced in working with adults who have communication difficulties or who have English as an additional language.

Indicative resource materials

Textbooks

Borg, James — *Body Language: 7 Easy Lessons to Master the Silent Language* (Prentice Hall Life, 2008) ISBN 9780273717348

Moss B — *Communication Skills for Health and Social Care* (Sage Publications Limited, 2007) ISBN 9781412922852

Journals

Community Care magazine

The Nursing Times

Websites

www.communicationmatters.org.uk	Communication Matters
www.direct.gov.uk	DirectGov
www.makaton.org	The Makaton Charity