

Unit 10: Principles of communication in adult social care settings

Unit code: R/602/2906
QCF Level 3: BTEC Specialist
Credit value: 2
Guided learning hours: 17

Unit aim

The unit develops knowledge of the importance of communication in adult social care settings and introduces 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

Effective communication is an essential element of positive social care. This unit will provide learners with an understanding of the need to communicate appropriately with users of the adult care services, fellow professionals and others, in order to promote the wellbeing of individuals and to prevent errors from occurring. The unit examines the different reasons why people communicate and provides learners with explanations about how communication affects relationships within the social care context. Learners will compare ways to establish the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of individuals and the factors to consider when promoting effective communication within settings. Methods of communication are discussed, together with the barriers which some individuals may experience when seeking to communicate in social care settings. Learners will examine these barriers and investigate ways of reducing these in order to promote effective communication. Issues of confidentiality are examined and the tension between this and the need to disclose information to agreed others.

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 effective communication is important in adult social care settings	1.1 Identify the different reasons why people communicate 1.2 Explain how communication affects relationships in an adult social care setting
2 Understand how to meet the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual	2.1 Compare ways to establish the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual 2.2 Describe the factors to consider when promoting effective communication 2.3 Describe a range of communication methods and styles to meet individual needs 2.4 Explain why it is important to respond to an individual's reactions when communicating
3 Understand how to overcome barriers to communication	3.1 Explain how individuals from different backgrounds may use communication methods in different ways 3.2 Identify barriers to effective communication 3.3 Explain how to overcome barriers to communication 3.4 Describe strategies that can be used to clarify misunderstandings 3.5 Explain how to access extra support or services to enable individuals to communicate effectively
4 Understand principles and practices relating to confidentiality	4.1 Explain the meaning of the term 'confidentiality' 4.2 Describe ways to maintain confidentiality in day-to-day communication 4.3 Describe the potential tension between maintaining an individual's confidentiality and disclosing concerns to agreed others 4.4 Explain how and when to seek advice about confidentiality

Unit content

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

Reasons for communication: express needs; share ideas and information; reassure; express feelings; build relationships; socialise; ask questions, share experiences

How communication affects relationships at work: communication with colleagues, people using services, children and their families; helps to build trust; aids understanding of individuals' needs; ways communication is used to negotiate; communication to prevent or resolve conflict; preventing misunderstanding; Tuckman's stages of group interaction (forming, storming, norming, performing)

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

Needs, wishes and preferences of individuals: home language; preferred method; additional learning needs; physical disabilities; alternative methods of communication eg language; British Sign Language, Makaton, Braille, the use of signs, symbols, pictures and writing; objects of reference, finger spelling, communication passports, human and technological aids to communication

Factors to consider: Argyle's stages of the communication cycle (ideas occur, message coded, message sent, message received, message decoded, message understood); type of communication eg complex, sensitive formal, non-formal; context of communication eg one-to-one group, with people using services, children, with professionals/colleagues; purpose of communication; need to adapt communication; environment; time available

Communication methods and styles: non-verbal communication (eye contact, touch, gestures, body language, behaviour) verbal communication (vocabulary, linguistic tone, pitch, pace); signing, symbols, touch, music and drama, objects of reference; technological aids

Responding to reactions: verbal responses eg tone, pitch, silence; non-verbal responses eg body language, facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, touch; emotional state; signs that information has been understood; when and how to adjust communication method

3 Understand how to overcome barriers to communication

Recognising differences in use and interpretation of communication methods: ways that an individual's background can influence communication eg age, gender, culture, socio-economic status; differences in verbal communication eg language, vocabulary, dialect, intonations; non-verbal eg facial expressions, use of body language, eye contact, gestures

Barriers to effective communication: language; dialect; use of jargon; sector-specific vocabulary; environmental eg noise, poor lighting; attitudes; sensory impairment; effects of alcohol or drugs; aggression; attitudes, anxiety; health problems; learning disabilities; health conditions; lack of confidence

Overcoming barriers: use of technological aids eg hearing aids, induction loop, telephone relay services; human aids eg interpreters, signers, translators,

advocates; use of age-appropriate vocabulary; staff training; improving environment; reducing distractions

Clarifying misunderstandings: checking understanding; misinterpretation of body language; use of active listening; repeating; rephrasing; use of visual cues

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

4 **Understand principles and practices relating to confidentiality**

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

Maintaining confidentiality: policies and procedures in own workplace setting; written and electronic; confidentiality relating to the collection, recording and storage of information; following procedures for sharing information

Tensions caused by confidentiality: the need for consent to share information; understanding when information may be shared without consent; concept of 'need to know'; need for transparent policy and protocols for information sharing

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit should be delivered by a tutor who is well qualified and experienced in the delivery of effective communication. Learners will require some taught input, particularly with regard to Argyle's stages of communication, Tuckman's stages of group formation and the various methods of communication which learners may not be familiar with. However, input from guest speakers and opportunities to practise communication skills within the classroom will provide learners with valuable understanding and enable them to reflect upon the effectiveness of their own skills.

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 effective communication is important in adult social care settings
Class plenary; reasons for communication. Taught session; how communication affects relationships at work. Class discussion.
Taught session; Tuckman's stages of group interaction; simulation activity and group debriefing.
Assignment 1: Why communicate? Produce a leaflet which identifies the different reasons people communicate and explains how communication affects relationships in adult social care settings, referring to Tuckman's stages of group interaction where appropriate.
Learning outcome 2: Understand how to meet the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of an individual
Taught session; preferred method of communication; use of training DVD on communication in social care settings. Learners to complete accompanying handout.
Guest speaker from either a local branch of the British Deaf Society, the Makaton Charity or an individual who works with people who have English as an additional language; question-and-answer session
Taught session; use of communication passports, human and technological aids to communication. Use of video clip of Stephen Hawkins using technology to speak.
Taught session; Argyle's stages of communication and contexts of communication. Groups working in pairs and groups practicing effective communication.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Taught session; communication styles. Learners taking notes.
Assignment 2: Communication needs Produce an information pack which contains all of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A comparison of different ways of establishing the communication and language needs, wishes and preferences of individuals A description of the factors which must be considered when promoting effective communication A description of a range of communication methods and styles to meet the needs of individuals An explanation of why it is important to respond to an individual's reactions when communicating.
Learning outcome 3: Understand how to overcome barriers to communication
Taught session; the influences of an individual's background on communication. Class discussion.
Taught session; barriers to effective communication. Groups working with case studies to identify barriers and feedback.
Guest speaker; reducing barriers to communication. Question and answer session.
Taught session; clarifying misunderstandings; learners practicing listening skills and techniques; plenary.
Internet research session on accessing support. Groups discuss findings with tutor.
Assignment 3: Influences and barriers that could help Write an essay which explains, identifies and describes influences and barriers which have an effect on communication and deals with how to access support.
Learning outcome 4: Understand principles and practices relating to confidentiality
Taught session; personal and sensitive information. Principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.
Taught session; maintaining confidentiality, policies and procedures for storing and sharing of information. Class discussion.
Taught session; tensions concerning confidentiality. Class discussion.
Assignment 4: Confidentiality Write an essay explaining and describing issues concerning confidentiality in social care.
Review of unit and programme of assignments.

Assessment

Assessment for this unit may be in a variety of formats, and the suggested programme may be adapted to meet local needs or the needs of particular groups of learners. Assessors should ensure that learners have demonstrated a full understanding of all issues included in the unit. Learners should apply the theoretical models of Tuckman and Argyle to practical examples in order to demonstrate their understanding of the relevance of these in social care. It is suggested that learners cover a range of communication methods in their assignments and show an understanding of the effects of barriers on self-esteem and wellbeing. A discussion of issues of confidentiality should include an understanding, at level 3, of the reasons why information may need to be given to agreed persons within a social care setting. Tutors should ensure the inclusion of the correct operative verbs in all assessments, for example identify, describe and explain.

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, 1.2	Why communicate?	Your manager at the residential setting for young adults with complex needs, has asked you to produce a leaflet to inform learners on work experience of the reasons why people communicate, and the effects of communication on relationships in social care.	Leaflet
2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4	Communication needs	The tutor from the local college has asked your manager to provide an information pack about various aspects of communication in order to prepare learners for work experience; you have volunteered for this task.	Information pack
3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5	Influences and barriers that could help?	You are applying for promotion and as part of the application process you are required to write an essay on influences and barriers in communication, and how to access help.	Essay
4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4	Confidentiality	The second part of your application process for promotion calls on you to write an essay on the issues concerning confidentiality in social care.	Essay

Essential resources

Learners will require full access to library resources including relevant text, professional journals and magazines, ICT and CDROM. Tutors will find the range of training DVDs provided by Mulberry House to be valuable aids to teaching.

Indicative resource materials

Textbooks

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

Journals

Community Care

Care and Health magazine

Disability Now

The Nursing Times

Websites

www.britishsignlanguage.com British Sign Language

www.makaton.org The Makaton Charity