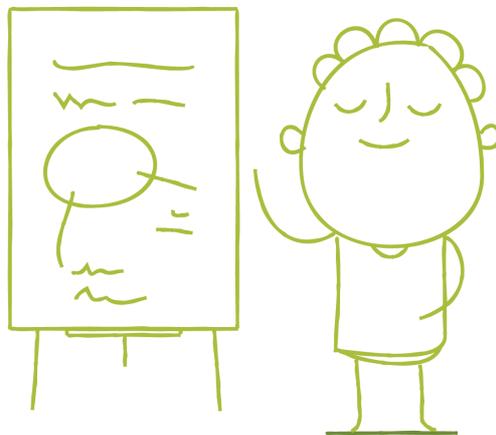


CARE CERTIFICATE

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

STANDARD 7 Privacy and dignity



Privacy

Privacy is a basic human right and is protected by the Human Rights Act 1998. The Act says that every human being has a right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Privacy is the ability for an individual or group to seclude themselves, or information about themselves selectively.

The Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England requires that you 'promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and well-being of people who use health and care services'.

It is important that privacy is respected in all situations so that the people you support can maintain their dignity. Privacy is very important during personal care, but also with regard to personal space. It includes things like:

- Knocking on a service user's bedroom door before entering
- Maintaining the confidentiality of service users' personal information
- Closing bedroom doors when assisting a service user to get dressed
- Ensuring personal or private conversations can't be overheard
- Closing bathroom doors when assisting with personal care

Maintaining privacy will ensure service users feel respected. It is fundamental to the support you provide.

Dignity

Dignity should be at the centre of everything you do in order to provide high quality, person-centred, care and support. Dignity focuses on the value of every person as an individual. It means respecting the views, choices and decisions of the people you support, and not making assumptions.

Treating service users in a dignified way means:

- Enabling them to make choices about their lives
- Speaking to them respectfully and listening to what they have to say
- Providing them with choice with regard to the food they eat
- Ensuring that if they are in pain, they receive the right help and medication
- Supporting them to maintain their personal hygiene
- Maintaining their independence and supporting them to do things for themselves

- Respecting their personal space, privacy and confidentiality
- Supporting them to maintain contact with their family and friends

By treating people in a dignified way, you will be promoting, not undermining, their self-respect, self-worth and self-esteem. You should ask yourself – am I treating people in the way I would want myself or my family to be treated?

Handling personal information

In your role as a support worker, you will be in receipt of a lot of personal and private information about service users. This could be information about their health and care needs, their personal history, their family and personal relationships.

Service users may well be vulnerable to harm and abuse. Disclosing information about them may place them at risk. It is therefore important that you handle personal information with care and do not disclose it to other people, unless you are sure they have a right to access this information. If you are unsure, ask your manager before passing on any information.

Maintaining confidentiality ensures the safety of service users and builds trust. If an individual wishes to keep personal information private, you should respect this.

Informed choice

In our daily lives, we make basic choices without much thought going into this e.g. what to eat, what to wear, which shops to visit. Service users may not have the same options and choices as you do. They may therefore feel they don't have much say about their day to day activities. People who are unable to exercise choice and control may suffer low self-esteem and lose confidence in their own abilities.

It is important to support service users to make choices about their life. Making choices will empower, build confidence and promote independence. But these choices need to be informed and not influenced by what you think the person should or shouldn't do. If you allow your personal views to influence their choice, you will be limiting their options and freedom of expression.

Offering informed choice means:

- Providing clear and accurate information about the options available
- Ensuring the information is unbiased and not affected by personal views
- Explaining any risks or consequences associated with choice

Support plans and risk assessments are used to record the choices and decisions that service users make about their lives. Ask your manager to explain how these are used in your workplace to ensure service users make informed choices.

Active participation

It is important that we value people for who they truly are. This involves not judging people negatively if they do not fit into our idea of how we think they should look, feel, behave, be.

A service user has the right to actively participate in activities and enjoy relationships with others. They should be an active partner in their own care and support.

Sometimes staff refer to service users as though they are objects to be cleaned, washed, dressed and toileted. This may come across in the way staff speak about service users. "Have you bathed Mrs Jones yet? Have you done Mr Smith?"

Your role is to **enable** people as far as is possible. It is not about **doing care** to someone.

An important aspect of providing care and support is to make sure that the person is able to make choices and take control over as much of their lives as possible. This is called empowerment.

Each person you provide care and support for has the right to expect more than simply being kept clean, comfortable and well fed. It is important that they are supported to use their skills, interests and abilities in order to lead a fulfilling life.

Part of your role may be to encourage and enable individuals to access leisure, recreation and educational facilities and to use their existing abilities and skills. Being elderly, unwell or disabled does not necessarily stop a person having a varied and interesting life. Boring routines, restricted opportunities, isolation and lack of support will hold back potential and reduce the quality of individual's lives.