



# Personalisation through play

## **Nutshell Communications**

'Whose Shoes? - Putting People First' is a board game which promotes dialogue between a range of different people, encouraging them to see the world from others' points of view and work together effectively.





## Background

'Whose Shoes?' was developed in response to the Government's personalisation agenda and was initially used by local authority staff and university students. It has since become popular as a tool to work in partnership with people who use services, carers and care providers. It increases awareness and understanding of the opportunities and challenges of the personalisation agenda by encouraging participants to 'walk in the shoes' of others.

## Aims

The aims of the board game are to:

- raise awareness about the scale of the changes resulting from the personalisation agenda, and the importance of working together
- identify the skills, knowledge and values needed to support personalisation
- highlight the experiences of other people, particularly people who use services, and the challenges they face, to increase understanding and empathy
- create a safe environment for open discussion and sharing experiences
- acknowledge the importance of valuing everyone's contribution and create a common understanding that leads to collaborative working
- share practical examples of good practice and innovative solutions
- support new networks that cross traditional boundaries and work towards integration.

## How to use it

'Whose Shoes?' can be used in a variety of ways:

- as a learning and development tool in agencies
- to support the education and training of health and social care students, working with people who use services and others to gain a real understanding of how services are commissioned, delivered, and experienced
- at service user events, for example to run workshops informing service users and carers about the personalisation agenda
- to provide an informal and engaging way for individuals, or groups of service users to work collaboratively with staff
- as a catalyst in meetings, to facilitate a better understanding between key players such as providers, commissioners and people who use services.



## How to play

Four players, or four teams, work together to build the 'path to personalisation'. This is done by looking through the eyes of individuals with different viewpoints, grouped into four packs of cards: service users and carers, providers and commissioners, staff, and managers. To achieve this, players are reminded of the outcomes for service users:

- exercise choice and control
- improved health and emotional well being
- personal dignity and respect
- improved quality of life
- freedom from discrimination and harassment
- economic well being
- making a positive contribution.

Players throw a die to move, and if they land on a footprint they collect a card with a discussion point on it. Players discuss the particular topic, such as balancing choice and risk, bringing their own knowledge and local issues. Progress can only be made when a tile representing each of the four perspectives has been laid.

The focus of the game is the process of getting people together and triggering crucial conversations. There is no one winner at the end but rather recognition of the need for everyone to work in collaboration. The game may be played until it is finished or can be used to focus on specific key areas.

"We really liked the idea that you weren't playing in competition with each other, but as one team driving to co-deliver changes to adult social care." **Laura Walker Newcastle City Council.**

## Outcomes

The game has been used across the country by voluntary sector organisations, local authorities, PCTs, and universities. Feedback indicates a number of positive benefits:

- service users and carers feel empowered when playing the game, with everyone having equal status
- service users and carers have been able to share experiences with each other, seeing how different councils operate
- using the game can unlock rigid thinking and processes; it encourages managers, commissioners and care providers to see things from different perspectives and approach issues in innovative ways
- staff who participate in 'Whose Shoes?' workshops develop new insights into organisational barriers and increase their understanding of different perspectives.

Overall this creates a healthy environment for working with the personalisation agenda.

"I was blown away with how much any one person coming from whatever perspective can gain in knowledge by playing a game in the right context (training days, presentations and interactive workshops)." **Sharon Terry, service user, East Riding**



## Learning

Key learning points:

- communication is key; without finding ways to see the world from each other's point of view and work together, progress of the personalisation agenda will remain limited
- in times of financial constraint the temptation is to cut training, however, this is not a cost effective solution. Well trained and informed staff provide better quality services and better value for money
- by using a game as the format for discussion, people are able to express a range of feelings, ideas or experiences without feeling personally exposed
- it is only when service users, carers and staff feel that their contribution is valued, that they feel encouraged to produce innovative solutions
- involving experts by experience in any training is good practice; service users and carers leading their own 'Whose Shoes?' sessions can be a powerful approach
- for the game to give maximum benefit, it needs to be used flexibly, picking out the aspects that are most relevant to the identified learning outcomes.

## Next steps

'Whose Shoes?' is being adapted for use in different settings. For example, it has been used with cancer and other specialist health professionals; in services for older people, including people with dementia; in housing and Extra Care settings; with people with learning disabilities and with people with mental health issues. This will be further developed as part of a partnership with Think Local, Act Personal to finalise an electronic version of the tool aligned to the 'Making It Real' programme.

## Contacts

[www.whoseshoes.wordpress.com](http://www.whoseshoes.wordpress.com)

## Links

[http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforce\\_strategy/workforce\\_innovation\\_programme/personalisation/NToW147.aspx](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforce_strategy/workforce_innovation_programme/personalisation/NToW147.aspx)

### Further information

For further information about the health and social care integration work between Skills for Health and Skills for Care please contact:

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