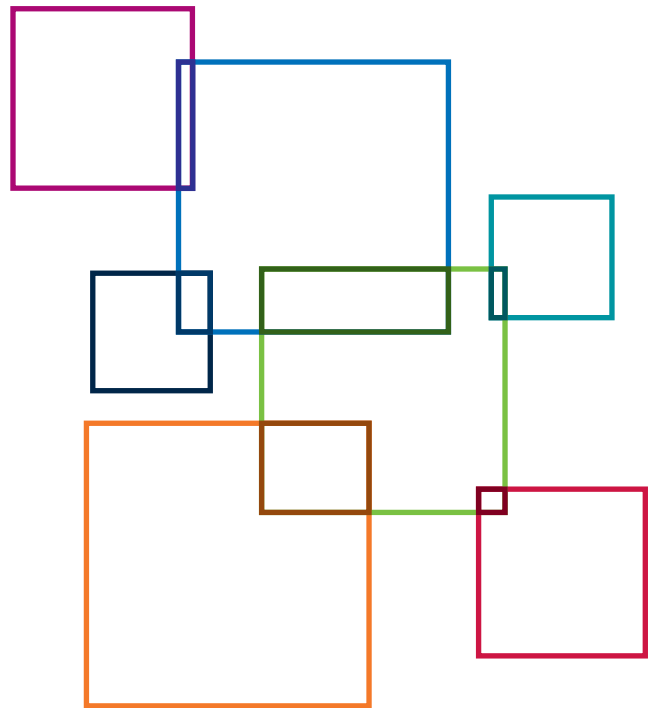


# Principles to practice

The worker's guide to implementing  
the common core principles to  
support good mental health and  
wellbeing in adult social care

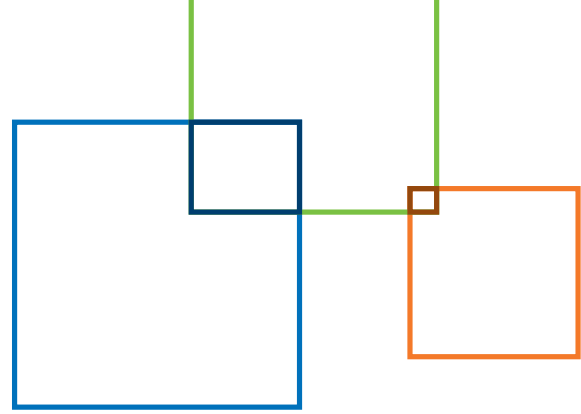


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# Introduction



The care and support needs of people who use social care services can often indicate a heightened risk of poor mental health and wellbeing. Skills for Care estimate that 4–500,000 social care workers have regular contact with people who have a mental health problem. It is important that staff working in social care services know how to support and promote good mental health and overall wellbeing for everyone who uses those services.

With this in mind, Skills for Care has published the *Common core principles to support good mental health and wellbeing in adult social care*, based on work by the Mental Health Foundation. The common core principles and two key areas outlined in this Practice Guide offer a comprehensive framework for the social care workforce to provide consistent high quality social care and support which promotes the mental health and wellbeing of people who need care and support. This guide to good practice is based upon real life examples from a range of social care settings, which demonstrate how each of the ten principles and two key areas can be applied in practice.

## Who this guide is for

The ten principles and two key areas described in this document were developed with people who use social care services, as well as by practitioners in a range of social care settings. This ‘principles to practice’ guide can facilitate learning and development for all levels of social care staff within any social care setting to support staff in promoting good mental health and wellbeing for everyone who needs care and support.

All names and other identifying features used in the examples have been changed or anonymised.

## Acknowledgements

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Key contributors:

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Brent MIND

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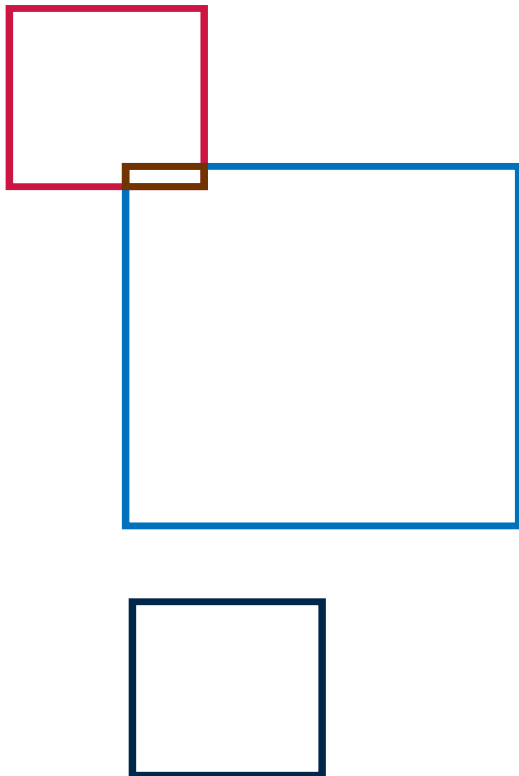
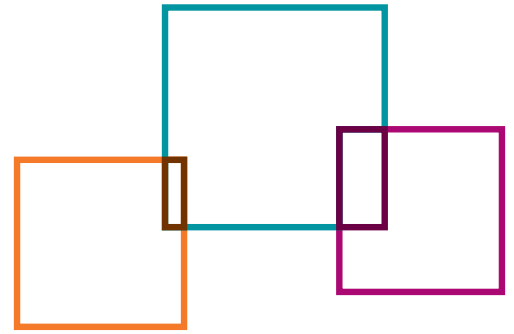
Rethink

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Satash Community Care

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Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust



*Principles to practice. The worker's guide to implementing the common core principles to support good mental health and wellbeing in adult social care*

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Skills for Care would like to acknowledge the assistance of the Mental Health Foundation in the development of this work.

## Principle 1

Know the key signs of *mental illnesses* and *distress* and be able to respond appropriately.



*When someone is behaving out of character, you need to be well-trained to take your time with it and not rush to any sort of conclusion and get any help that may be available.*



**(Brent MIND)**



*You signpost them on to other places where they can try and get help with those things.*



**(Rethink)**

### Summary

People who use social care services may experience periods of crisis or distress caused by a mental illness or mental health problems. It is important that you are able to identify if people need adjustments to the care and support they receive. Being able to communicate clearly with people who need care and support is also very important to help understand how someone is feeling and to avoid misunderstandings.

### Situation

*Waiting for a bus, you meet someone who is using your service and start up friendly conversation.*

While talking together, you notice that this man's behaviour and speech seem excitable and erratic. You are aware that this particular man is usually quite calm and that this behaviour is not usual for him. You are concerned about this man going home alone, considering his current mental state. You follow several steps to ensure he feels supported in managing his mental health and wellbeing. This includes:

- promptly taking some time to listen to why is feeling differently
- inviting the young man back to the office with you so that you have a quiet space to talk together in more detail about how he's been feeling
- discussing activities, goals and lifestyle habits that can promote his wellbeing
- talking to colleagues or your manager about your concerns and the possible need for the person to see his GP or mental health service (if he is in contact with them).

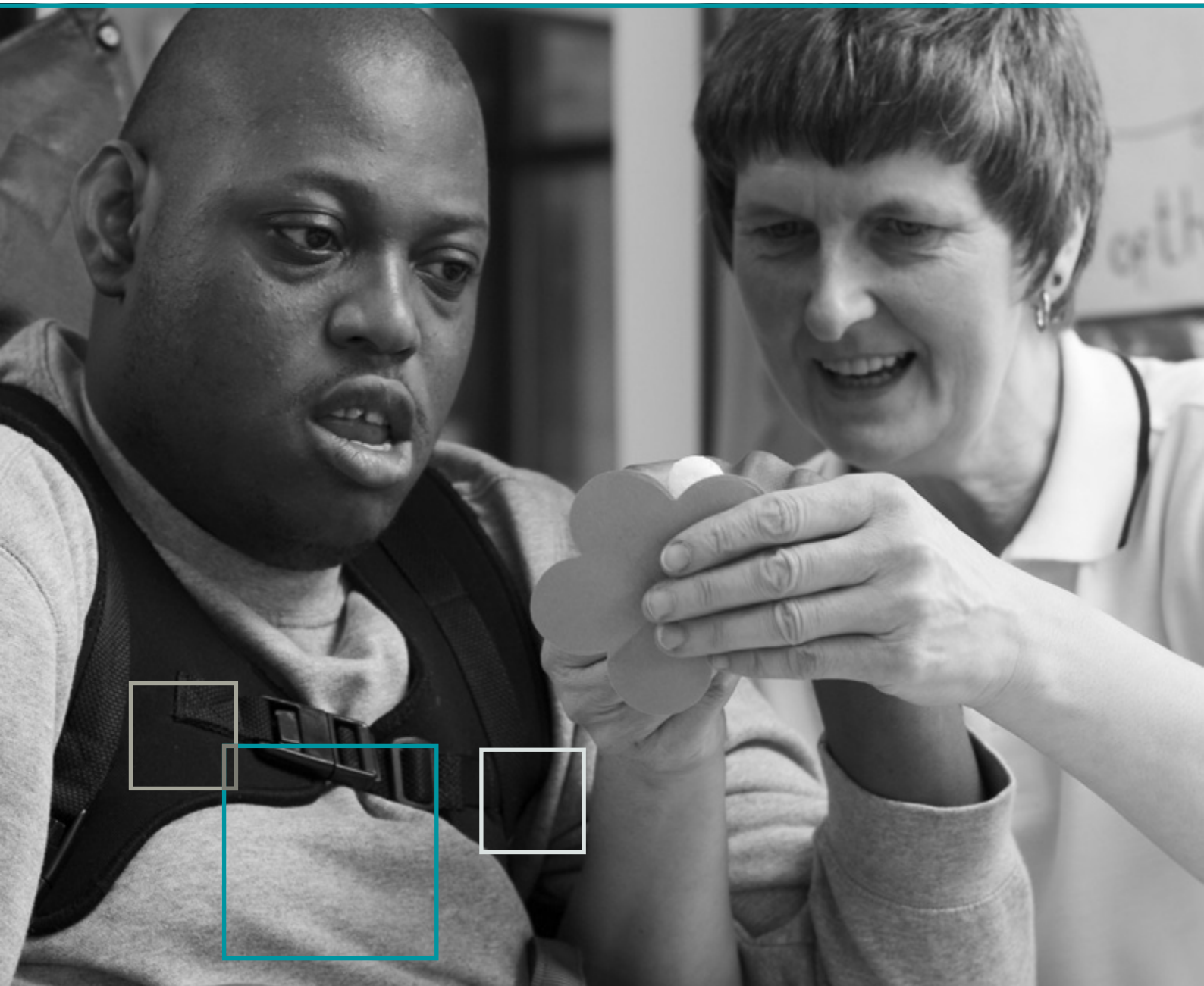
## Dilemma

You are supporting a woman in a residential care home who continually cries on some days without an apparent cause or explanation. Some of the other residents seem confused or upset by her emotional behaviour. You and the other care providers understand that this particular woman sometimes likes to express her emotions in this way.

- What would be the appropriate response in this situation?
- Would you try to prevent this woman from crying, such as by using means of distraction, or would you provide a private space for her to cry freely?
- Would you offer her the opportunity to be referred to see her GP for a mental health assessment or support?

“ They did a lot of work around interpersonal relationships and managing emotional distress, relaxation, and she’s now come back to live in the community. ”

**(Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council)**



## Principle 2

Understand the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and have good knowledge of how to promote these with people who need care and support

“ I think people are more likely to stop doing things that are detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing because they've been able to be open, they're not being judged. ”  
**(Rethink)**

“ It's about understanding people and understanding where the boundaries lie. You have to acknowledge those feelings but try to encourage that person to do other things as well. ”  
**(Rethink)**

### Summary

Mental health is about how all of us think and feel, our outlook on life and how we are able to cope with life's ups and downs. You are in good mental health if you can make the most of your potential, cope well with life and life changes, and play a full part in things like family, workplace and/or community. Some key factors include feeling a sense of autonomy and control, keeping a healthy lifestyle and feeling valued and respected by people around you. Social care workers play a key role in communicating the factors that promote good mental health to enable people to take actions which improve their wellbeing.



## Situation

You are supporting an older woman who has physical disabilities so that she needs support with day-to-day tasks. During your visit, she tells you that she has been feeling particularly low for quite some time. The woman talks about feeling lonely and that no one has visited her in the past month with the exception of your and other staff members' visits. You are aware that isolation and loneliness can have negative effects on mental health and wellbeing so you are keen to ensure that this woman has access to opportunities and lifestyles that promote her wellbeing.

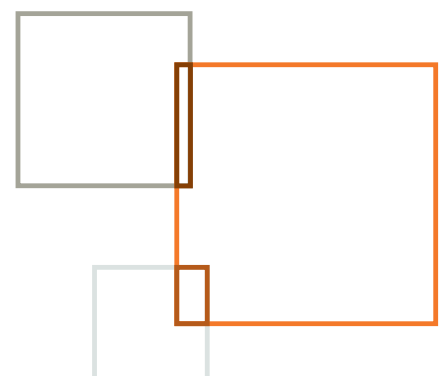
- taking time to listen empathically to his feelings of loss and offering reassurances for support
- discussing the possibility of helping him seek more specialist bereavement support
- looking together at possible outlets for this man's grief, such as bereavement groups, giving a set time of the day to grieve and finding distraction techniques
- providing information about telephone and face-to-face services the man can access if he experiences a crisis or needs immediate support.

## Dilemma

You are supporting an older woman who has physical disabilities so that she needs support with day-to-day tasks. During your visit, she tells you that she has been feeling particularly low for quite some time. The woman talks about feeling lonely and that no one has visited her in the past month with the exception of your and other staff members' visits. You are aware that isolation and loneliness can have negative effects on mental health and wellbeing so you are keen to ensure that this woman has access to opportunities and lifestyles that promote her wellbeing.

- How could you support this woman in finding activities and lifestyles that are suited to her and which promote her mental health and wellbeing?
- Would you support her in researching her options on the internet?
- Would you offer to return with more information on your next visit?
- What behaviours might help this woman feel less lonely and improve her wellbeing?

“ I would try to get some form of monitoring in place which meant a befriender, or a mentor to provide weekly visits. ”  
**(Brent MIND)**





## Principle 3

Promote dignity and respect by maintaining confidentiality and integrity and valuing the individual's knowledge and experience

“It's a sort of conversion principle, do as you would be done by and treat people as you would be treated yourself.”  
**(Brent MIND)**

“It's always about validation, whether you're talking about somebody with dementia or depression, it's always about validating his feelings and not making him feel he's abnormal or should be 'pulling himself together'.”  
**(ees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**

### Summary

Social care that is guided by dignity and respect will have a positive impact on people's self-esteem, feelings of self-worth and overall mental health and wellbeing. It is important that social care workers show the same level of respect and dignity for people using services that they would want for themselves or for their loved ones. Acknowledging the value of each individual's lived experiences, and accounting for personal needs and preferences, ensures that people being supported by social care services feel valued and respected.

### Situation

*Meeting an older woman for the first time during a visit to her home, soon after she has been referred to your service.*

Before beginning any forms or assessments, you ask the elderly woman how she would prefer to be called. She expresses a preference for being called by her title, “Dr Jools”. You have a number of forms to complete with this woman but you are aware that telling her story to you is very important to her. You take some time to listen to her career and life experiences which enables you to better understand her values and interests. She says she doesn't want her neighbours knowing what she has told you. Before getting started with the paperwork, you support Dr Jools to feel respected and valued by:

- spending time exploring the topics and goals that are important to Dr Jools, giving you better insight into her needs and aspiration
- talking about the services that are available to her, and your service's policy on respecting confidentiality
- making a plan together of how Dr Jools can achieve smaller or long-term goals to maintain active involvement in her interests and to identify her preferred social and creative activities.



## Dilemma

You are providing support at a drop-in community centre when a young woman requests one-to-one support. When you are in a private space, the young woman explains the pressure she has been feeling from working on her PhD which triggers thoughts of harming herself. You understand that she has regular meetings with a community psychiatric nurse (CPN) and manages her medication to reduce the symptoms but that she had taken her medication late that day. As a result, she was feeling overwhelmed by the pressure to harm herself and felt too embarrassed to tell the CPN about feeling unable to cope.

- What could you do to ensure this young woman feels supported and respected?
- Would you consider asking her how she can best be supported at this time, including assisting her to speak to the CPN?
- Would you emphasise her strengths in working towards high academic ambitions or would you avoid mentioning her work?

“ I always say, how do you want to address this? What I think is a good idea has nothing to do with it. ”

(Brent MIND)



## Principle 4

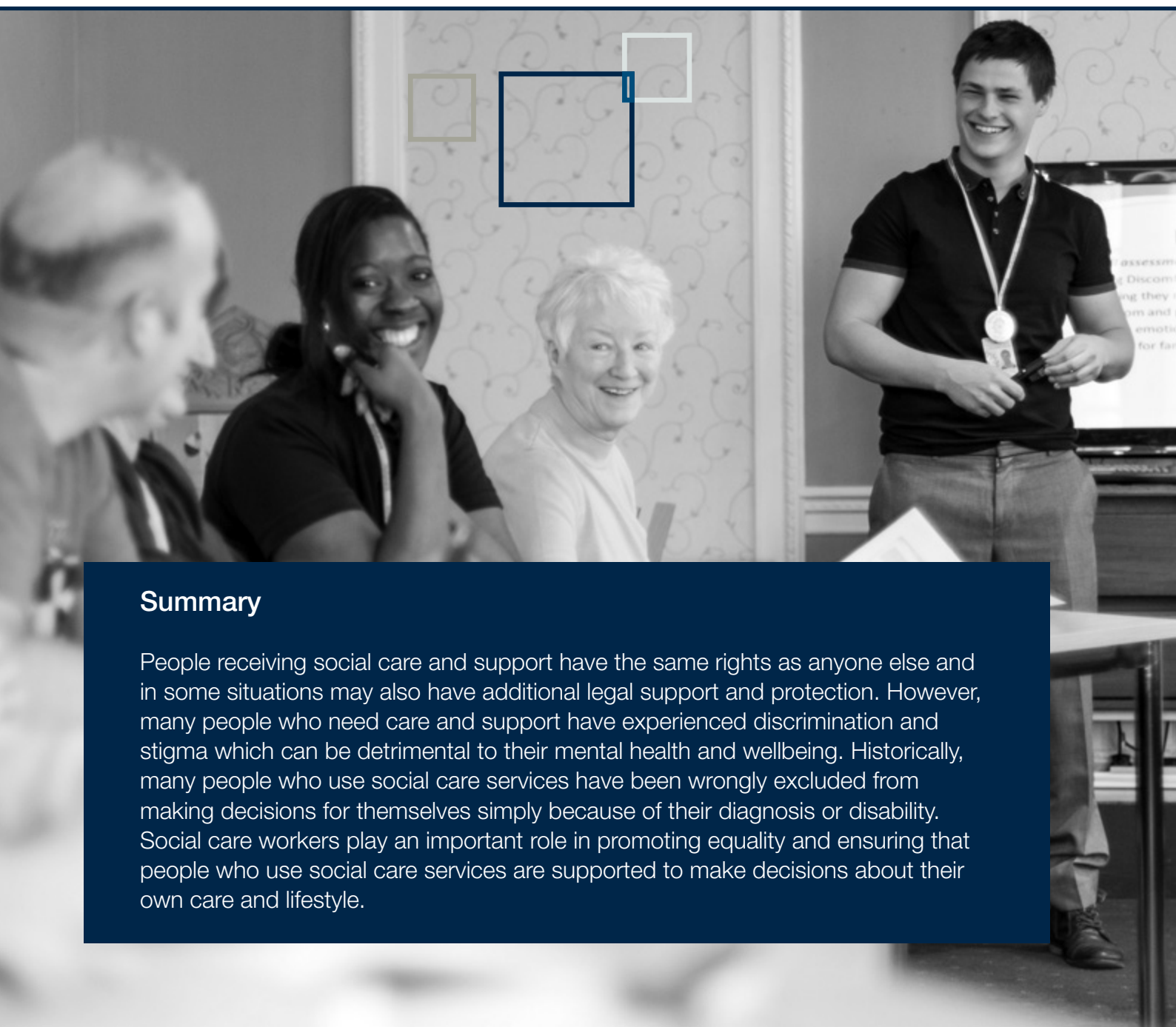
Ensure equality and rights are upheld under the law, especially in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005

“ If they do have the capacity to make decisions about where they want to live, and it's about facilitating that kind of informed choice of what I can do for you, to enable you to stay in your own home.

**(Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**

“ Just because someone has got a diagnosis that says they're mentally ill, doesn't mean that we can stop them from making bad decisions.

**(Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council)**



### Summary

People receiving social care and support have the same rights as anyone else and in some situations may also have additional legal support and protection. However, many people who need care and support have experienced discrimination and stigma which can be detrimental to their mental health and wellbeing. Historically, many people who use social care services have been wrongly excluded from making decisions for themselves simply because of their diagnosis or disability. Social care workers play an important role in promoting equality and ensuring that people who use social care services are supported to make decisions about their own care and lifestyle.

## Situation

*You are supporting a young woman who has learning disabilities by accompanying her on day-to-day outings and activities.*

When meeting this young woman at her college, her tutor discloses to you how much the young woman enjoys working with the new class tablet computer. The tutor reported that the young woman was using the tablet in class to communicate more easily with other people. After talking with the young woman about her experience of using the tablet, you think that she may not have the mental capacity to make a request for or to arrange to buy a tablet unassisted. You consider that a tablet could be a valuable communication aid for the young woman so you take the following steps:

- passing the information on to the young woman's care manager (having told the young woman that you will do this) with the aim of exploring her needs and preferences about buying a tablet computer
- recommending that the young woman has an assessment of her mental capacity to decide to buy a tablet. You suggest that if she doesn't have capacity to decide, it could be in her best interests for the young woman's independent benefits appointee to buy her a tablet, which is what happens.
- providing information and support with accessing useful apps on the tablet for the young woman to use as communication and learning tools.

## Dilemma

You are supporting an older woman of South East Asian origin who is living with her son and his immediate family. In discussion, it emerges that her son has been carrying her up and down the stairs throughout the day. You are concerned that this poses a safety risk to the woman but she has refused offers for home care assistance. You understand that this woman has capacity to refuse the offer of care but you are aware that there may be alternative ways that you could support this woman in accessing care and support that is more appropriate to her situation.

- How would you find out about the range of available support services to ensure this woman receives the type of support that suits her needs and culture, taking into account her background
- Would you seek advice or refer the information to your manager?
- How would you support this woman and her family in considering practical arrangements that could increase her independence and mobility in the home, such as a stair lift?
- Would you consider the need for an independent interpreter so that this woman's views are accurately represented?



*For someone who is unable to express preferences, talk very simply about what is it that's concerning you, what it is that might help. Usually you get something that you can work with.*



**(Brent MIND)**



## Principle 5

Maintain safety and safeguarding responsibilities by appropriately assessing risks and supporting where necessary



*There's no easy answer, we can't say if this situation happens, this is how you respond because every situation will be different.*



**(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**



*It's giving advice without making judgement. You can't judge anybody but it's just making sure they have the necessary information available to them.*



**(Rethink)**

### Summary

People who are supported by social care services may be particularly vulnerable to risks due to their illness, disability, age or frailty. It is important that social care workers understand their role in supporting people to effectively manage risks and to safeguard their mental health and wellbeing. Safeguarding involves assessing and addressing risks to the health and wellbeing of people who need care and support which may include supporting people to safely manage risk-taking behaviours.



## Situation

*Supporting an older man who has a type of dementia and who receives care at home from his daughter.*

While making a home visit to this man, it becomes apparent that his daughter has been leaving him in bed almost all day and offering only a very limited and inadequate diet. As a result, the man has skin problems and seems under-nourished. You are fully aware that this situation poses significant health risks to your client which requires a prompt response, including:

- offering a carer's assessment to identify the daughter's support and information needs in order to provide adequate care
- discussing with the family why this was happening. It emerges that the father finds moving from bed painful due to his arthritis. The limited diet is due to the limited range of foods he will accept.
- increasing the amount of practical support provided for day-to-day assistance with the father's care needs
- providing honest information and education in a sensitive and supportive way to the daughter about the consequences of providing inadequate care, to ensure she is not left in a position where she is vulnerable to a safeguarding investigation.

## Dilemma

You are supporting a woman who often sniffs lighter fuel as a means of self-medicating. There are also risks to the public as the woman has occasionally lit fires in public areas. You talk to her about the health risks involved in sniffing lighter fuel, as well as the serious risks to herself and others should there be an explosion or fire. She does reduce this behaviour but she still returns to doing it when she is feeling particularly anxious.

- How can you respond appropriately to the serious risks this woman and the public may be exposed to?
- Would you consider speaking to local newsagents to ensure they do not sell her items that contain lighter fuel?
- How could you support this woman to develop alternative interests and safer coping behaviours?
- How can you ensure that other staff members are aware of new incidents or attempts to buy lighter fuel?



*You need to have a very good understanding of the person and if there is a variation in the staff team supporting that person, there needs to be very good communication and understanding of what that person needs.*



**(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**

## Principle 6

Deliver flexible and personalised care that reflects the individual's identity and preferences

“ Sometimes it's the small things that are really important for people. ”  
(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)

“ You find sometimes you can have a really positive day with someone but then not the next day, so you've got to make the most of a good day. You do have to learn to be quite flexible. ”  
(Rethink)

### Summary

Social care workers can promote mental health and wellbeing by delivering timely, flexible and responsive support which addresses the fluctuating needs of people being supported by social care services. Many people being supported have experienced a 'one size fits all' approach from the services they have received in the past. Personalised services should aim to fit around the individual by supporting them to choose and access the services that are most suited to their needs.

### Situation

*Supporting a man with learning disabilities in a residential care home.*

When discussing personal goals with this man, he expresses an interest in buying a real-size military tank. He suggests there is room for parking and has already looked into buying one on eBay. You explain the various difficulties with owning a tank in a residential area and point out the high costs of buying a tank. You also point out he doesn't have a licence to drive a tank. It is clear to you that this man has a keen interest in historic military vehicles so you suggest a number of ways he can further his interests. These include:

- planning trips to relevant museums and supporting this man to research when exhibitions are taking place
- suggesting that he buys model tanks and other military vehicles so that he can build a collection
- supporting this man to further his knowledge in his field of interest, including going to libraries and researching information online

## Dilemma

You are supporting a woman who has recently moved from her family home in an African country into a UK residential care home because she has severe learning disabilities and her family were no longer able to cope. Both her and her family have found the transition difficult and the woman experiences considerable anxiety, particularly during trips out of the home. She often expresses the desire to go back to live in her country of origin with her family but you are aware this is no longer possible.

- How could you provide flexible and personalised care so that this woman feels supported in her adjustment to her new residential settings?
- Would you enable her to continue her cultural interests and habits or encourage her to enjoy local foods and customs?
- How could you enable communication between this woman and her family? Would you use technology to facilitate the women's family connections, such as setting up a Skype account?

“ As part of your interview you pick up hobbies and things like that as well, right at the very beginning. There's loads of stuff out there they can do. ”

**(Rethink)**





## Principle 7

Enable informed choice and control by appropriately supporting people who need care and support to make well-informed social care and lifestyle decisions, building on their strengths and personal resources

“ All these things are based around understanding people’s backgrounds and life stories, understanding what makes people tick, what was important to them.

**(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**

”

“ The important thing is to listen more than talk and let the person explain what they think might best help their recovery. And then you look for means together to see how you can address those needs.

**(Brent MIND)**

”

### Summary

Social care workers have a unique opportunity to promote good mental health and wellbeing for people they are supporting, by enabling them to take an active role in making their own choices, with offers of support where necessary. It is important to find ways of supporting people towards their own empowerment and to take initiatives. This will often involve working in partnership with people to support them in making decisions based on their lived experiences, needs, preferences and ambitions.



## Situation

*Supporting a young woman living at home with her Mum, in working towards her goal of completing her university degree. .*

When discussing this young woman's future goals, you understand how important it is to her that she completes her university degree. She tells you that in the past the pressure of deadlines has had a negative impact on her mental health. Your organisational policy is to encourage people to re-engage with education and/or employment but you understand this young woman's concerns. You present a range of support services that may help this young woman to take manageable steps towards her longer-term goals. These include:

- offering to help her find supported housing to provide an alternative to her current living situation which has been detrimental to her mental health. Supported housing would enable better access to support during crisis moments.
- providing information about mindfulness-based therapy to enable and empower this young woman in developing and building on her personal resources and coping strategies
- supporting the young woman to engage in activities that promote a healthy lifestyle— she decides to take up badminton. She likes board games and you discuss with her how supported housing might enable her to meet people with similar interests—this will encourage social interaction on the days that she feels too tired to go out.

## Dilemma

You are providing practical support within a drop-in service at a community centre. During a group discussion it becomes clear that several members of the drop-in service feel bored with their day-to-day activities. You talk with them about the various activities on offer within the community centre but they seem more interested in activities outside of the community centre, such as using the local sports centre. You are aware that your role is to support people who use the drop-in centre to access the information they need to make decisions independently.

- How could you enable these individuals to build on their strengths and personal resources?
- Would you suggest they support each other in finding more information, such as by doing internet searches together or bringing in information leaflets to share their interests and activities with the others?
- Would you suggest the possibility of starting a new activity within the service if several members showed an interest in similar types of activities?
- Would you look for information about concessionary discounts offered by local services and business, such as discounts offered at gyms, cinemas or colleges?

“ If you feel that you've made sure you've given them all the information they need, that they know what to do and who to contact if something happens, that's all you can actually do. Then they're making an informed choice. ”

**(Rethink)**

## Principle 8

Promote social inclusion by facilitating opportunities for maintaining positive relationships and family contact, peer support, active community involvement, and by enabling carer<sup>1</sup> involvement

“Where he was brought up a lot of his life was without [family], and I think these people [other residents] and the staff to a certain degree, he finds they’re his family.”

**(Satash Community Care)**

“The important thing is to listen more than talk and let the person explain what they think might best help their recovery. And then you look for means together to see how you can address those needs.”

**(Rethink)**

### Summary

Through supporting people to be more social included, social care workers can contribute to individuals’ overall wellbeing and recovery. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships are essential to building people’s confidence and life satisfaction. People being supported by social care services may also want to become actively involved in their communities through accessing ordinary community activities, peer support groups, volunteering opportunities, and/or paid employment.

### Situation

*You are supporting a woman with planning to move to independent accommodation. She has been deaf since birth and has communication support needs.*

When supporting this woman to complete the necessary assessment forms, it emerges in conversation that the woman’s family are concerned about their daughter becoming isolated by living alone. The woman is keen to build more independence into her living circumstances, including finding full-time employment. Her family’s concerns cause her to feel anxious about being unable to cope with independent living. You support this woman in finding ways to cope with her adjustment into independent living.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Carer’ is used throughout to mean family and friends who provide social care support, as distinct from social care or health workers.

This includes:

- finding ways to support the woman and her family to continue communicating and maintain a connection to reduce isolation she may experience during her period of adjustment
- encouraging the woman to continue in her aim of finding employment, identifying small, manageable steps towards full-time employment, such as looking at jobs vacancies online
- offering the woman referrals for specialist support, such as to a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter and peer or community support groups.

## Dilemma

Late on a Friday afternoon, a young man you support appears to be agitated and anxious. When you discuss with him what might be troubling him, it surfaces that he has no plans for the weekend and is concerned about being alone for two days. You are aware that he would usually look forward to his weekends and so you are concerned about this unusual behaviour.

- What could you do to facilitate social opportunities for this young man to engage in during the weekend?
- Would you offer information about out-of-hours or crisis support helplines or make an appointment to see him on the following week?
- Would you support this man to find out about local groups and weekend drop-in services, such as Sunday lunch at a local church or community centre activities?

“ *he underplays what she is doing because she doesn't see that, so it's about highlighting that she actually is doing really well, she's doing a lot.* ”

**(Rethink)**





## Principle 9

Promote creative activities that are meaningful to the individual to enable the best possible quality of life and fulfilment

“*...and his remote controlled trains, he loves things like that. It keeps him busy, he's definitely got a sense of ownership now.*”  
**(Satash Community Care)**

“*[She] had one activity that she loved, just one very simple activity which was polishing. And she did it all day long, she felt busy, she felt valued and therefore for her that was very positive.*”  
**(Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)**

### Summary

Being involved in activities and having personal abilities and strengths recognised by others group can be highly beneficial to mental wellbeing. Activities should be matched to each individual's skills, abilities and interests. Overly demanding, stressful or meaningless activities are tokenistic and can be harmful to a person's mental health and wellbeing. Social care workers can promote mental health and wellbeing by enabling people to identify the interests and skills they would like to pursue or develop.



## Situation

*Supporting a woman who has physical disabilities in her own home with day-to-day tasks and engaging in services and activities.*

You spend some time catching up with this woman over a cup of tea when you begin your home visit. It emerges in conversation that she feels isolated and often feels life is passing her by. In discussing this further, you discover that the woman rarely leaves the house and that she has very few hobbies or activities that she enjoys. From previous conversations, you recall that she used to enjoy baking elaborate cakes and pastries as well as being a skilful sculptor. Together with the woman you explore various ways of re-engaging with her hobbies and creative outlets that promote her mental health and wellbeing. These include:

- exploring local opportunities for creative activities that are suited to her wishes and current physical abilities and which she may find interesting, such as pottery or painting
- supporting her to shop online for cooking ingredients so that she can continue enjoying baking without the need to go out to the shops
- looking together for other local services and groups that she would enjoy going to, such as a book club or classes at a local college.

## Dilemma

You are supporting a young man who has learning disabilities and also suffers from long-term depression. Part of this young man's recovery journey is to enrol in college to study music. However, several weeks into the first term, the college suggests that the young man should not attend the college because of comments from other students about this young man's appearance and unusual habits. You understand the importance of studying music for this young man's wellbeing and recovery. How can you best continue supporting the young man to achieve his goals in this situation?

- Would you support this man to challenge the college's suggestions or would you suggest that he should learn at home instead?
- Would you communicate with the tutors about learning disabilities and mental health issues to help them better understand the nature of this young man's difficulties?
- Would you work with the young man to help him identify any habits or behaviours which may contribute to his difficulties at the college?



*He's from the '70s, '80s, so I can relate really well with him because he's my age. So we know the music and everything, all the groups and he'll talk to me about UB40 and Rolling Stones, things like that.*



**(Satash Community Care)**

## Principle 10

Enable capacity and confidence building in people who need care and support to maintain their independence and control by supporting them in managing risk-taking activities, lifestyle decisions and setting goals

“*But you can try and work on things like self-esteem and getting confidence and exposing them slowly to certain different situations.*”

**(Rethink)**

“*It's giving praise where praise is due. Sometimes it's surprising what a little bit of praise can do for somebody, it really gives them the confidence to have another go at something.*”

**(Satash Community Care)**

### Summary

Encouraging and supporting people to continue as much as possible to remain active and do the things they like doing can help to improve people's mental health and wellbeing. There is a risk that people being supported by social care services can experience a loss of independence and choice, which can lead to deterioration in people's self-esteem, mental health and overall wellbeing. An important part of developing confidence is in supporting people to recognise and build on their existing strengths, skills and abilities.





## Situation

*Supporting a man in his middle years who has recently moved into independent housing, having previously lived in residential care.*

When looking at his various options for support, the man requests help with managing his money to enable him to continue living independently. He does volunteer work during the week but is often unable to manage his spending. In discussing his spending habits with him, he notices that he often spends most of his money during weekends, when he likes to place bets on the races. He requests support with managing the amount of money he spends at the betting shop. You review various options with the man to provide support with managing his finances, which include:

- choosing to have an appointee who will look after financial management of his bills, tenancy and any other significant costs. Any remaining money is transferred back to the man for personal spending.
- encouraging the man to visit his previous residential service whenever he feels the need for advice or support
- offering opportunities and information to about new hobbies and interests which the man might also enjoy
- offering to find out about local budgeting or budgeting combined classes, such as Budget and Cook, to promote his money-management skills.

## Dilemma

You are supporting a man who previously worked on a farm but has been unable to work for many years due to illness. You understand that having had his tractor driving licence taken away when he fell ill continues to affect his confidence for seeking employment. You are aware that it is unlikely that this man will be re-issued a driving licence for quite some time, due the nature of his illness.

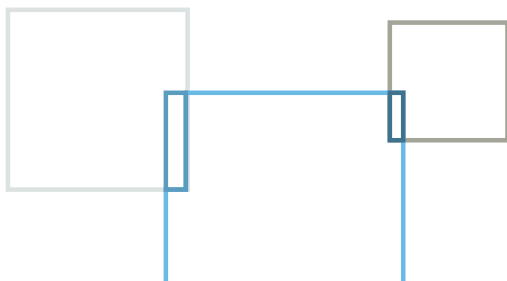
- How could you support this man to realise his goal of returning to work on a farm?
- Would you suggest exploring the possibility of part-time voluntary work on a farm as a starting point?
- Are there other similar job possibilities that you could research with this man which he might also enjoy?



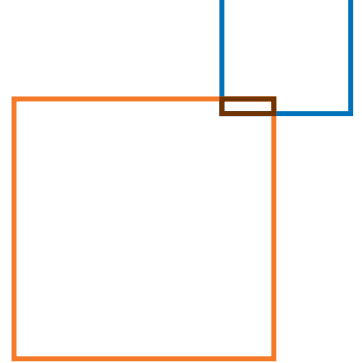
*People are able to recognise what helps them become unwell and can choose whether or not to engage in those behaviours.*



**(Rethink)**



# Key areas



## Key area 1

All staff should work together across agencies, health and social care sectors and communities to ensure consistency and co-ordination in care, support and safeguarding

“ It’s around not being arbitrary about how you support somebody, even if you’ve got a team of care [workers], which is where communication comes in. ”

**(Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)**

“ It’s just thinking out of the box a bit sometimes and trying to get help for people to cope with these situations. ”

**(Rethink)**

### Summary

Multi-agency working is crucial to social care services support for people. Care and support should be designed specifically for each individual with all practitioners liaising together to ensure coordinated care is provided. An important element of providing co-ordinated care which promotes the mental health and wellbeing of people being supported by several services is sharing relevant information where appropriate, but obtaining informed consent before sharing the personal information.

### Situation

*Supporting a woman who has recently moved from a supported living environment into independent accommodation.*

During a visit to this woman’s home, you become concerned that she is at risk of, or has already suffered, domestic violence. You are aware that she has problems with substance abuse and is particularly vulnerable when she uses substances. After some discussion, she asks for your help and states that she does not feel safe where she is.

You take several steps to ensure safeguards are put in place to protect and support this woman, including:

- offering information about emergency services, such as crisis support numbers to call if she is vulnerable after using substances
- talking with the woman about the possible benefits and importance of sharing this information with other individuals or agencies, such as the police, emergency housing services or domestic violence support agencies
- discussing routes to additional legal protection such as seeking an injunction or restraining order.

## Dilemma

While providing support in the home of an older man who has recently had a stroke you notice that he seems disinterested and in a very low mood. After asking further about how he's been feeling, it becomes apparent that this man has been feeling low and isolated for quite some time. You do your best to provide reassurance and support in the moment but you believe this man would benefit from specialist mental health support.

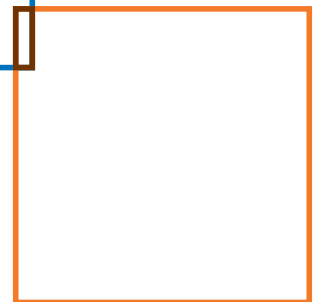
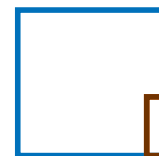
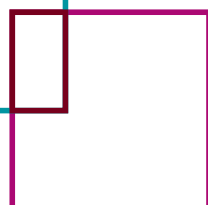
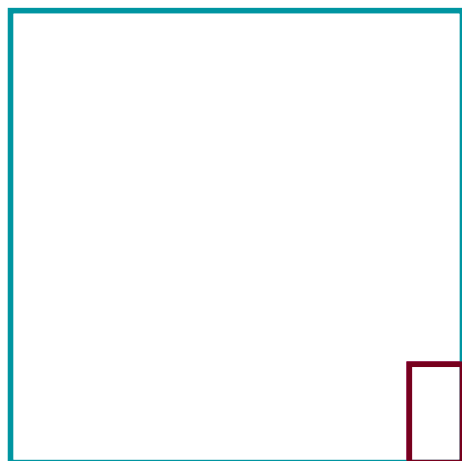
- Are there ways you can ensure that this man has access to appropriate emotional and mental health support, such as liaising with his GP and finding out what other support is available?
- Would you offer him information about crisis helplines, such as Samaritans?
- Would you seek his consent to share the information about his mood to another professional or agency? If so, who would you share the information with?



*We've got mood charts and stuff like that, so we can see a pattern of how he is throughout the day or on certain days. And that we give to professionals when he goes to see the doctors, the psychiatrists.*





**(Satash Community Care)**





## Key area 2

All staff should demonstrate key personal qualities relevant to social care

 *The person you're supporting doesn't care whether you're a social worker or a doctor or a plumber or a nurse. They just want somebody to support them and help them and be there for them.* 

**(Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)**

 *Sometimes it's appropriate to share a little bit of your life because it normalises things for people. Because people often think it's only them that are feeling like that.* 

**(Rethink)**

### Summary

People being supported by social care services place particular value on the personal qualities of the people who provide their social care. Some key personal qualities which promote the mental health and wellbeing of people being supported include empathy, being non-judgemental, consistency and integrity, as well as using a collaborative approach to making decisions and providing care and support.

### Situation

*Supporting a man in his middle years who has recently moved out of a supported living environment into his own flat.*

When you arrive at this man's home, you ask about his day and how he's been feeling. He begins to tell you about his troubles with the housing benefit office and recurrent problems with debt. He also feels frustrated at not being listened to in a meeting earlier that day regarding a review of his medication. After listening to his frustrations and concerns, you discuss with him the various ways that you might be able to support him in coping with these challenges. These include:

- being honest about what you are able to provide practical assistance with, to avoid later disappointment or frustration for this man
- researching together for specialist advice and support agencies that this man can access
- helping him to maintain an optimistic outlook and to feel empowered by emphasising his existing skills and finding ways to build new skills, such as taking a money management course.

## Dilemma

You are supporting a woman who has refused to take a bath or shower for the past week. You are aware that this woman has always found bathing to be a bothersome chore but she was previously content to work with her social care workers to maintain her hygiene. You discuss with this woman the risks to her health of having poor hygiene for a long time and look for ways together of supporting her to maintain good hygiene.

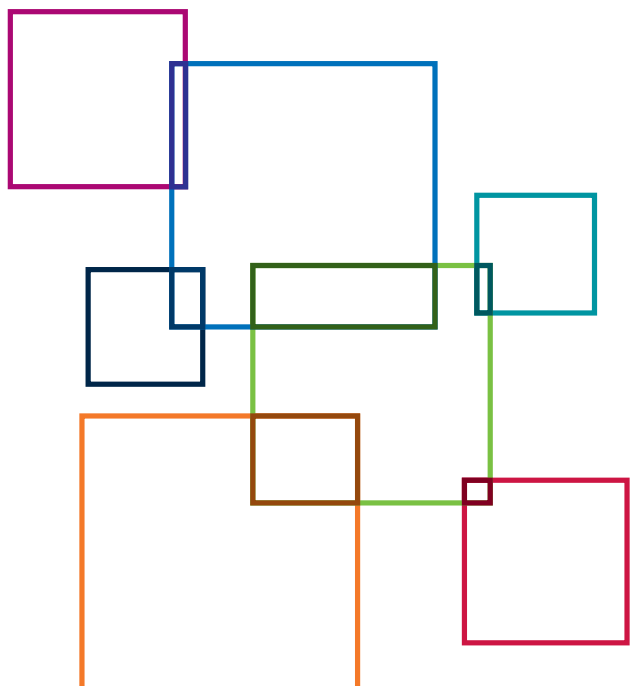
- Would you try to find out the reasons behind this woman's refusal to bathe or shower?
- How could you use sensitivity and a non-judgemental approach to talk about the possible effects of poor hygiene on her interaction with other people?
- Would you look for ways of making her daily hygiene-related tasks more enjoyable, such as having her favourite music playing while taking a bath?
- What are the risks of focusing too much on her hygiene if she insists she doesn't want to talk about this? Is it important for you to be flexible in how you approach these situations?



*It's communication without a purpose, when you just sit with them, [it] might be chat for five minutes about what you watched on the telly or whatever. That's really releasing and builds the relationship.*



**(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)**



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