

---

## Communication Skills

---

### Communication Skills

#### Definition

'a process that involves a meaningful exchange between at least two people to convey facts, needs, opinions, thoughts, feelings or other information through both verbal and non-verbal means, including face to face exchanges and the written word'<sup>1</sup>.

Communication is a basic human right, through which we control our existence, make friends and build relationships. It is essential to carry out proper assessments on service users with communication difficulties to ensure that each individual is able to communicate their needs in line with their wishes and preferences.

Even where staff are fluent in English, strong accents may affect the peoples ability to understand, particularly for people with dementia, communication difficulties or hearing impairments.

Good written communication between workers is also vital to providing a consistent service in line with service users' needs and preferences. As an employer we will ensure that workers have adequate literacy skills in English to facilitate good communication.

Communication is a two-way process by which messages are transmitted and understood, and sharing communication is fundamental to inclusion in society. The tendency to exclude those who cannot communicate from everyday life must be avoided and it is important that all views are heard and understood.

## 2. Communication Media

2.1 The various media for communication includes:

- Oral
- Written
- Objects, pictures, signs and symbols
- British Sign Language/ Finger spelling
- Audio and Video tapes
- Braille
- Makaton
- Behaviours

---

<sup>1</sup> Essence of Care (DH, 2003c)

### **3. Communicating Effectively, Our approach**

#### 3.1

- Ensure that service users are asked how they would like to be addressed and that staff respect this.
- Ensure that Service Users are given all the necessary information on the service, in the appropriate format and, wherever possible, in advance.
- When recruiting staff, ensure acceptable levels of both spoken and written English. Potential staff will be given assistance or 'signposted' to support services available.
- Specific training needs will be considered where English is not the first language of staff and where the Agency requires the skills of that particular staff member.
- Where the service is not able to provided staff who can converse in the preferred language of the service user, provide translation services in the short term and seek culturally appropriate services in the long term.
- Care planning should include opportunities for service users to talk with staff regularly.
- Don't make assumptions based on culture, ability or any other factor about what people want; they should always be asked.
- Ensure staff have appropriate training to enable them to communicate with service users with cognitive or communication difficulties.
- Ensure that time for proper handover of information, written or spoken, is scheduled in for staff.
- Involve Service Users in the production of information resources.
- Facilitate ways of getting the views of service users, such as through informal meetings.

#### 3.2

It is important for those who work with people who have difficulty communicating to learn and understand different methods of communication to meet the needs of the individual service users

#### 3.3

A lack of effective communication often leads to frustration, which in turn can lead to anger, withdrawal and aggression. Each individual has a unique set of abilities, experience and opportunities, and it is vital that an assessment takes place. A Speech and Language Therapist can often help with this. MOONSTONE CARE UK will ensure that service users with communication difficulties will have a communication assessment to ensure they are matched with an appropriately trained care worker.

#### 3.4

Staff training in effective communication is important and MOONSTONE CARE UK will ensure that all staff are given training in how to communicate with individual service users effectively.