



Staffordshire
Social Care
Workforce

CMDT
Care Market Development Team

Dignity and Respect Guide

V1 JUNE 2024

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Foreword

This guide has been developed to introduce the subject and further research and learning is recommended to provide a complete understanding. Requirements are often unique to individual care services, and you should consider how best to implement practices.

Introduction

Dignity and respect are fundamental values in adult social care. They mean treating each person as an individual, with their own preferences, needs, and rights. Dignity and respect also involve promoting the autonomy and privacy of people and ensuring that they are treated with kindness and compassion.

Communication

Communication is a vital aspect of dignity and respect. When talking to someone, you are not only exchanging information, but also expressing feelings, opinions, and preferences.

Communication can help to build trust, rapport, and understanding between the people and the care workers. Therefore, it is important to communicate in a way that respects the person's individuality, dignity, and rights.

Some of the ways to do this are:

- Use active listening skills, such as nodding, smiling, and asking questions, to show interest and attention to what the person is saying.
- Use the person's preferred name and title and address them in a polite and respectful way.
- Speak clearly and at the correct speed for the listener, and use understandable language, avoiding jargon, slang, or acronyms.
- Adapt your communication style to suit the person's needs and preferences, and use alternative methods, such as gestures, pictures, or devices, if needed.
- Be aware of your body language and facial expressions, and avoid any signs of impatience, boredom, or irritation.
- When communicating with someone, ensure you are at their level and not stand over them.
- Give positive feedback and encouragement, and acknowledge the person's feelings, opinions, and experiences.
- Engage in a two-way conversation with the person, and not just talk to them or lecture them.
- Encourage the person to share their thoughts, feelings, and preferences, and not make assumptions or decisions for them.
- Ask for the person's opinion and feedback, and not ignore or disregard them.
- Involve the person in any discussions or plans that affect them, and not exclude or sideline them.
- Respect the person's confidentiality and privacy, and not disclose or share any personal or sensitive information without their consent.
- Recognize and value the diversity and uniqueness of each person, and not stereotype, judge, or discriminate them based on their age, gender, race, religion, culture, disability, or any other factor.
- Support the person to exercise their rights and responsibilities, and not infringe or violate them.
- Empower the person to make their own choices and decisions, and not coerce, manipulate, or override them.
- Collaborate with the person and their family, friends, and other professionals, and not work against or in conflict with them.

Support at mealtimes

Eating and drinking are essential activities that affect the health and well-being of the person, as well as their social and emotional state. By treating the person with dignity at mealtimes, you can help them maintain their self-esteem, confidence, and identity, as well as enjoy their food and drinks. You can also prevent any distress, embarrassment, or discrimination that might arise from a lack of dignity at mealtimes.

Some of the ways to do this are:

- Ask for consent and explain what you are going to do before providing any assistance, and check if the person is comfortable and happy with your help.
- Use respectful and appropriate language and tone of voice, and avoid making jokes, comments, or gestures that might be embarrassing or offensive.
- Offer choice and variety in the food and drinks that are provided and respect any dietary or cultural preferences.
- Food should be well presented, whether it is in its original form or if it has been prepared to meet a IDDSI consistency level.
- Encourage independence and self-help by providing appropriate utensils, plates, cups, and assistance devices, such as straws, bibs, or trays.
- If someone potentially requires the use of a bib while eating, they should be asked if they would like to use one. It should not be put in place without their consent.
- If someone would like to eat independently and chooses not to wear a bib, staff should discreetly offer support to clean any spills and support them change into clean clothing after the meal if they would wish.
- Provide a comfortable and pleasant environment for eating and drinking, with adequate lighting, ventilation, and seating arrangements.
- Avoid rushing or interrupting people while they are eating or drinking and allow enough time for them to finish at their own pace.
- Support people to eat and drink in a dignified manner, by offering discreet and respectful assistance if needed, and respecting their wishes and preferences.
- When assisting a person to eat, ensure you are sitting at the same level and not stand over them.
- Support should not be split between one or more individuals. The focus should be on one person and once they have eaten you can move on to support another person.
- Mealtimes are a social time and staff need to engage with individuals to make it an enjoyable experience.
- Ensure good hygiene and infection control practices, such as washing hands, cleaning surfaces, and disposing of food waste properly.

Personal care

Dignity is important in personal care because it shows respect for their human rights and individuality. Dignity means treating people with care, compassion, and kindness, and valuing them as a whole person.

Some of the ways to do this are:

- Respect the privacy and dignity of people who need to use the bathroom, by knocking before entering.
- Ask for consent and explain what you are going to do before providing any assistance, and check if the person is comfortable and happy with your help.
- If a person is being supported to use the bathroom, ensure their dignity and privacy is maintained. Ensure doors are closed and they are your focus.
- Use respectful and appropriate language and tone of voice, and avoid making jokes, comments, or gestures that might be embarrassing or offensive.
- Provide or support with the necessary equipment and supplies, such as toilet paper, wipes, pads, towels, soap, and water, and ensure that they are clean and accessible.
- Dispose of any waste or soiled items in a safe and hygienic manner and clean the bathroom after use.
- If you identify that someone has wet or soiled clothing, discreetly speak with them to make them aware and offer support. If there is a toilet or bathroom nearer than their own room, it would be more dignified to assist in the toilet or bathroom and ask another member of staff to bring fresh clothing.

Personal grooming and attire

A person's decisions around their personal grooming and attire is important to ensure their independence, autonomy and dignity, by enabling them to make choices and decisions about their own body and appearance.

Through supporting a person to present how they would like, you can show respect for them as an individual, but ensure you avoid negative judgments or stereotypes based on their appearance.

Some of the ways to do this are:

- Support the person to maintain their personal hygiene and appearance, by helping them to wash, dry, and dress themselves if needed, and respecting their choices and preferences.
- Ask people what routines they would like to follow, if someone wants to be supported to dress up in more formal wear on a Friday evening, they should be supported to continue this routine.
- Discuss with an individual how they would like their hair and facial hair presented or maintained.
- Some people like to wear makeup or have their nails done, ensuring their can continue with these supports with preserving their dignity.
- People should be offered the option of being supported to have a shower or bath, as people may have their own preference. You should always ask what support they would like as each individual will have their own preference and it not be assumed.
- When supporting someone that could leave them feeling exposed, such as a bed bath, keep the individual covered, only exposing the area that for example is being washed.

Manual handling

Manual handling is the process of moving, lifting, or supporting a person who needs assistance with their mobility. Manual handling should be done in a dignified way that respects the person's autonomy, preferences, and comfort.

Some of the ways to do this are:

- Ask for consent and explain what you are going to do before providing any assistance, and check if the person is comfortable and happy with your help.
- Use respectful and appropriate language and tone of voice, and avoid making jokes, comments, or gestures that might be embarrassing or offensive.
- Use appropriate equipment and techniques that suit the person's needs and follow the care plan.
- If an individual has their own equipment, ensure you use it. Do not use equipment such as a sling that might be designed for someone else.
- Respect the person's privacy and dignity by covering them with a towel or blanket, and close doors or curtains if needed.
- Be sensitive to the person's cultural, religious, or personal beliefs and values, and avoid touching or exposing parts of their body that they may consider private or sacred.

Summary

Adult social care is based on the core values of dignity and respect. This means recognizing each person as a unique individual, with their own wishes, needs, and rights.

Through focusing on always delivering care with dignity and respect, you can ensure people are supported to live more fulfilling lives.

Always focus on ensuring people are treated in a way in which you would want people to treat you.

For further information,
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