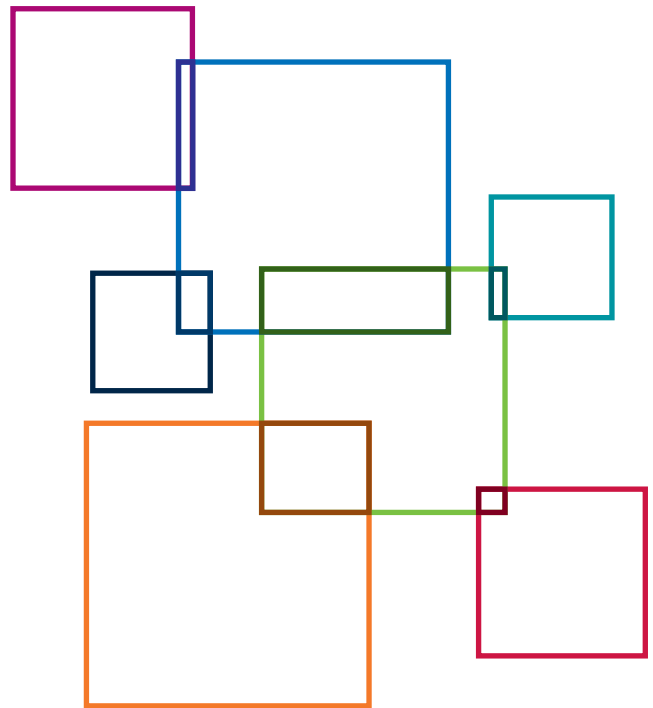
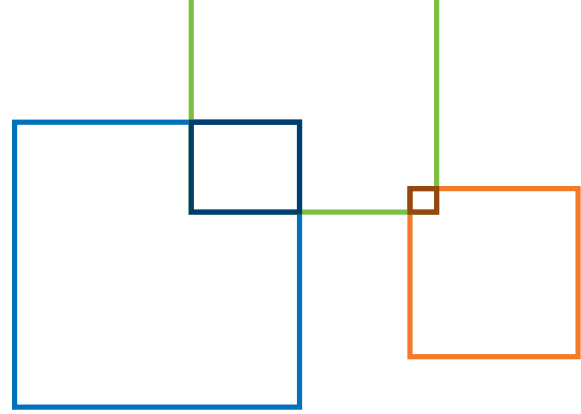


Principles to practice

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



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 Practice*, 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.

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Key contributors:

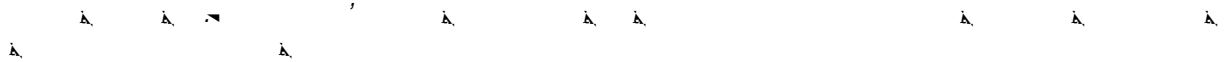
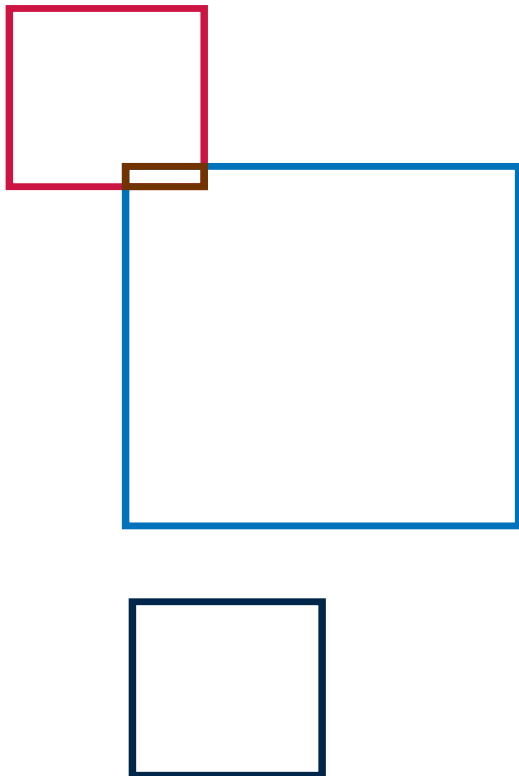
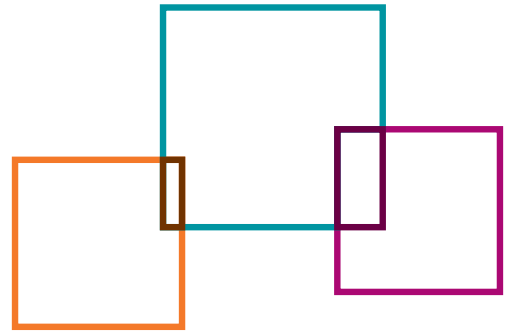
Brent MIND

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Adults and Communities Workforce Development Unit

Rethink

Satash Community Care

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust



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Principle 1

Know the key signs of  and  and be able to respond appropriately.

“           ”

(Brent MIND)

“          ”

(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

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.

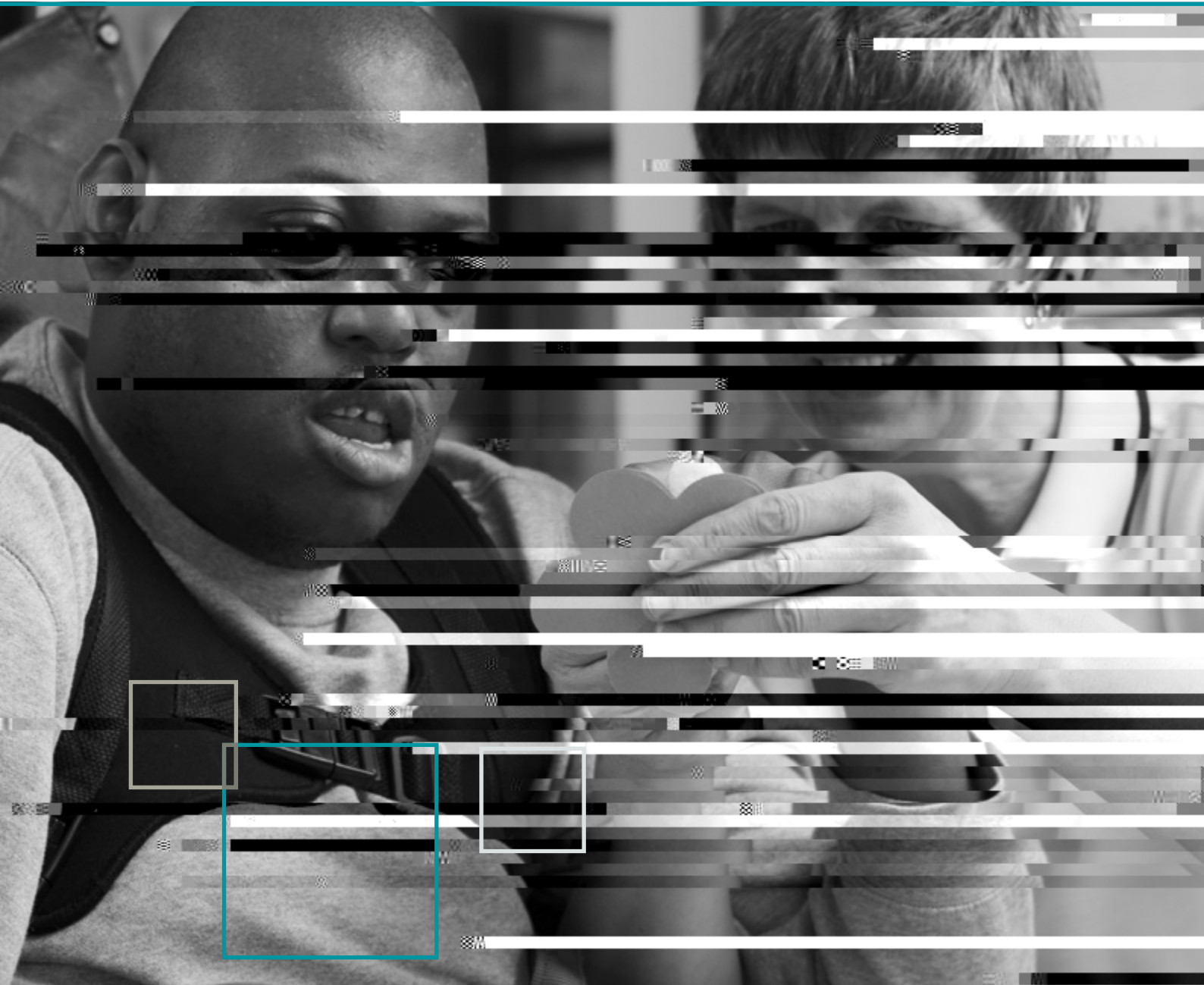
What would be the appropriate response in this situation?

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?



(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



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

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?



(Brent MIND)



Situation

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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

Principle 5

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

“We have a duty of care to our service users and we must ensure that we are taking appropriate steps to assess and manage risks to their safety and wellbeing.”

(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)

“We need to ensure that we are taking appropriate steps to assess and manage risks to the health and wellbeing of our service users, and that we are providing the support and resources needed to do this.”

(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.



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?



Principle 9

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

“Creative activities are a vital part of life for people with mental health problems. They help to build self-esteem, confidence and a sense of purpose. They also provide a safe space to express feelings and experiences.”
(Satash Community Care)

“Creative activities can be a powerful tool for promoting mental health and wellbeing. They can help to reduce stress, improve mood and increase resilience. They can also provide a sense of community and support for people who are experiencing mental health problems.”
(Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)

Summary

Being involved in activities and having personal abilities and strengths recognised by others in a 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

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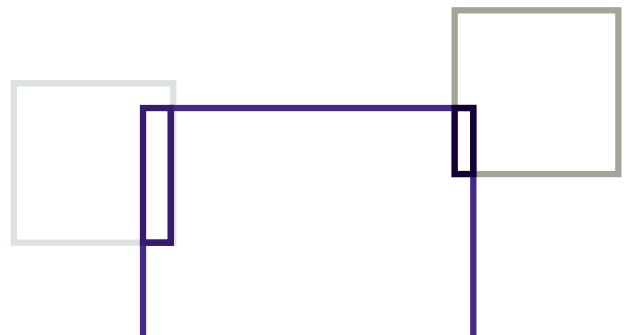
4.

5.

6.

7.

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:



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



“Building confidence 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”



(Rethink)



“Building confidence 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”



(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

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

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.

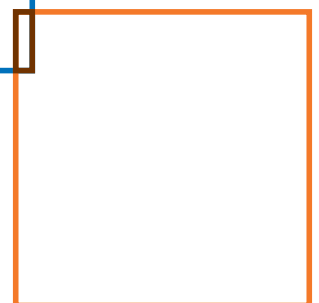
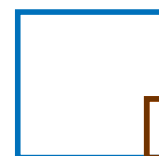
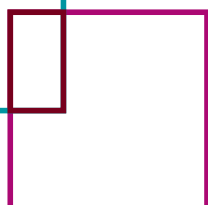
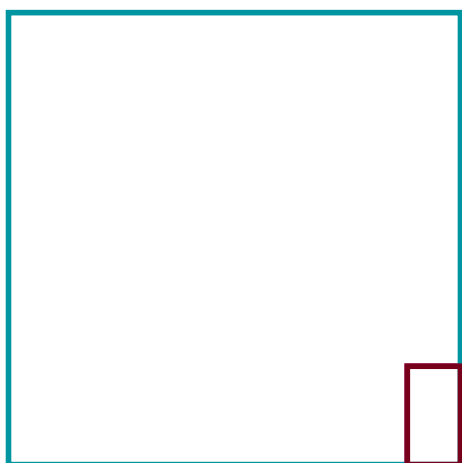
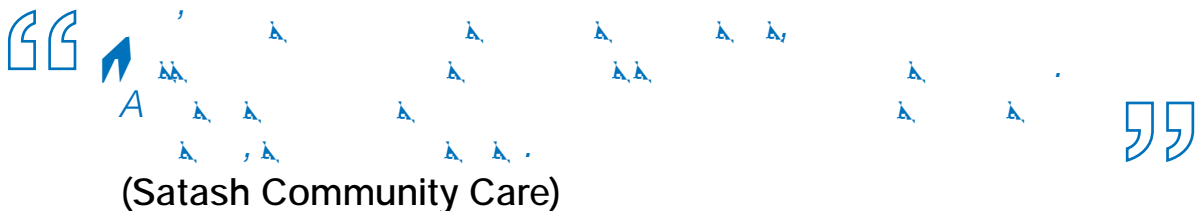
Dilemma

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?



Key area 2

All staff should demonstrate key personal qualities relevant to social care



(Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)



(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



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



(Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust)

