

Competencies for Person-Centred Thinking Tools

The Learning Community for Person-Centred Practices

Core Person-Centred Thinking Tools to be included in all training

Communication charts

Competency: Communication charts

What is it? (Skill)

The communication chart is a simple but powerful way to record how someone communicates with her or his behaviour, and how we are communicating with them. Everyone who is dependent on others for support has an especially critical need to have her or his communication understood.

What do I need to know? (Knowledge)

- The different ways that people communicate and how much of this is non-verbal communication.
- Why it is important to understand each person's unique way of communicating and the impact of when this does not happen.
- How to understand, see and record a person's behaviour as communication.
- How to integrate information, support and guidance that has been given by professionals e.g. Speech and Language assessments/reports about communication so that others are easily able to use this information to support a person with what matters to them.
- The different headings used in communication charts and what they mean
- How to write a communication chart in a way that is accurate and reflects the person. Writing in the first person carries with it a responsibility and should only be used when the person whose chart you are doing is clearly in control of what is written in it. In all other situations it should be completed using the third person.
- Where this information goes/contributes to a one page profile, person-centred plan or support plan.

What do I need to do to gather information and use it? (Behaviour/Attitude)

- Decide who to involve by looking at the person's relationship circle.
- Share a couple of examples and explain the meaning of each column.
- Fill out the second or third column first.
- Start with either the behaviour or the meaning of the behaviour and then the context and finally what should happen.

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- Gain detailed information about how, at times of stress or illness, a person may rely on non-verbal methods of communication – body language, facial expression, gestures, and different ways of behaving to express their views.
- Once you have a communication chart, find out whether everyone is responding to the person’s communication in the desired way – perhaps using working/not working.
- Add to the person’s one-page profile to begin a more detailed person-centred description.
- Review with individual staff in one-to-ones, and with the team together, as well as in the person’s person-centred review.

Within a team

- Ensure that the team knows why communication charts are being used and how this can enhance the performance of the team.
- Use team meetings to gather and share each person’s preferred style of communication in a way that feels comfortable for the team.
- Help staff reflect on what they are learning about themselves and how this relates to what they are discovering about the people they support. This ensures that the focused effort on team development remains linked and aligned to the purpose of supporting others to move towards lifestyles that matter to them.
- Use one-to-one/person-centred supervision to share what you are learning about the team member from their communication charts.
- Use this information within a team person-centred plan.
- Use this tool to develop each team members One Page Profile.
- Use this information in the person-centred team plan and extend this to inform the Stress and Support person-centred thinking tool.
- Review in team meetings, supervision, Personal Development meetings and at Person-Centred Team review.

What does ‘good’ look like (Standards)

- Strong positive statements (not ‘usually’ or ‘sometimes’).
- Clear, everyday language with no jargon or ‘service speak’.
- Inclusion of the date when the communication chart was completed, who has contributed, and what action will now be taken, and the date of review.
- The way the communication charts are represented reflects the best way for them to be used for example, using photos or links made to video clips of the person when they are communicating to aid understanding.

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- It includes detail about how a person communicates when they are stressed or unwell e.g. in pain, etc.
- There is a date to review how it is being implemented and someone is responsible for making sure this happens.

How can I demonstrate that I understand and practically apply the tools correctly? (How can this be assessed?)

The person can describe, by giving specific examples:

- Placement – is the information under the right heading of the communication chart?
- How people identified in the relationship circle have contributed to the development of the communication charts.
- How the communication charts are used to help people who do not know the person to understand what they are saying or to be able to communicate with them e.g. a communication chart being used to support someone when they go into hospital.
- How the person has remained at the centre of decisions and planning through others understanding their communication as detailed in the charts.
- How multi-media is or could be used to enhance and bring the charts to life.
- How communication and behaviours are linked and how communication that can be seen as negative can be addressed through asking:
 - Are their circumstances in which the negative is a positive?
If yes, this is added to Appreciations.
 - Does the negative reflect something that is important to the person?
If yes, this is added to what we know about what is important to the person.
Is the negative sometimes a problem?
If yes, what do other people need to know or do to support the person when it is a negative? This is added to “what others need to know or do to support list”.
- How the information has led to an action plan or contributed to the ‘what is important to the person and ‘how best to support’ sections of a one page profile. How the charts have been kept up-to-date, ensuring new learning is recorded, especially as communication changes and becomes more complex. Ensuring charts are made available to people who are with the person as these changes occur.
- How the tool can be used to share what others need to do when someone is ill. It can help others to appreciate that sometimes what you actually wish to communicate may be different from what you say or do.

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What connects to this?

One-page profiles, person-centred plans and support plans, other tools, Total Communication, Assistive technology, Intensive Interaction, Communication passports and dictionaries. Appreciations, Relationship circles, Good Day Bad Day and Decision Making Profiles and Agreements.

Advanced – further information and enhanced skills

- Total Communication.
- A Practical Guide to Delivering Personalisation - Person-Centred Practice in Health and Social Care.
- Planning in Health: tools to develop your support plan for your Personal Health Budget.
- Use examples and formats found on www.thinkandplan.com and www.thinkaboutyourlife.org.
- Essential Lifestyle Planning: A handbook for Facilitators (2001) and Essential lifestyle Planning for Everyone (2005) Michael Smull and Helen Sanderson.
- Using the information developed in the relationship circle and Communication charts to help with approaches like Support Decision Making - see Paradigm (2008) – A Guide to Supported Decision Making: A Guide for Supporter. It can help people to think about who can support a person with decisions and this can be recorded. It can be developed in the decision making profile and agreement.