

Dignity in Care factsheet

June 2010

Communication in practice

- Ask people how they prefer to be addressed and respect their wishes.
- Give people information about the service in advance and in a suitable format.
- Don't assume you know what people want because of their culture, ability or any other factor – always ask.
- Ensure people are offered 'time to talk', and a chance to voice any concerns or simply have a chat.
- If a person using the service does not speak English, translation services should be provided in the short term and culturally appropriate services provided in the long term.
- Staff should have acceptable levels of both spoken and written English.
- Overseas staff should understand the cultural needs and communication requirements of the people they are caring for.
- Staff should be properly trained to communicate with people who have cognitive or communication difficulties.
- Schedules should include enough time for staff to properly hand over information between shifts.
- Involve people in the production of information resources to ensure the information is clear and answers the right questions.
- Provide information material in an accessible format (in large print or on DVD, for example) and wherever possible, provide it in advance.
- Find ways to get the views of people using the service (for example, through residents' meetings) and respect individuals' contributions by acting on their ideas and suggestions.

Ideas you could use

Use advice posters to remind staff about better communication

Produce posters with advice to staff on how best to communicate with people. You can include reminders on good telephone manners, tips on how to communicate well face to face, and factors to bear in mind when speaking or writing to someone who has a communication difficulty, whether through a disability or because of a language barrier.

Use video or DVD to communicate people's individuality

Consider how you could use video or DVD to support the people who use your service. For example, a video of family and friends can be a comfort to people, and if it includes information about people's likes and dislikes, this can be an excellent way of communicating a person's individuality to care workers.