

Activity: Safeguarding people with dementia

Difficulties with communication and memory are common signs of dementia. They can make people with dementia vulnerable and put their human rights at risk. A care worker should play an important role in ensuring a person's human rights are maintained at all times.

This can be completed on your own or as a part of a group.

Look at the following list and tick all the ones that you feel affect a person's human rights:

- the right to make routine decisions about what to eat and drink
- the rights to information about how care can be provided
- respect for religious or cultural beliefs
- protection from psychological and emotional abuse
- freedom from bullying and threats
- freedom to control personal possessions and where to live
- respect for privacy (including bathing, toileting and personal space)
- maintaining relationships with family and friends
- participating in social events and activities (of personal choice)
- the right to be offered choice
- to be helped to maintain physical wellbeing.

Trainer's notes

Answers: They all do. You could use any of the following to form the tick list or as a base for group conversations.

Human rights covers a vast area. The following list was taken from the 'European Human Rights Commission: human rights based approach to delivering home care'. The following may provide a useful starting point for commissioners and providers of services who are thinking about adopting a human rights approach to home care.

Dignity and security

- physical wellbeing
- freedom from intentional physical abuse
- freedom from unintended/careless neglect
- protection from pharmaceutical/medical abuse
- protection from sexual abuse
- psychological and emotional wellbeing
- freedom from bullying and threats
- freedom from disrespectful treatment
- freedom from being ignored/not talked to
- respect for cultural heritage/religion
- financial security/security of possessions
- protection from financial abuse
- financial decisions taken in one's best interests (if someone lacks capacity)
- freedom to control one's personal possessions

Autonomy and choice

- self-determination in one's life
- right to live as independently as possible
- right to make routine decisions (i.e. what to eat/wear)
- right to be consulted about ongoing professional decisions
- right to determine the timetable of one's day

Support for decision-making about care

- right to information and advice about options
- right to be offered meaningful choices and time to decide
- right to be offered support for personalisation of care
- right to nominate a third party to decide, if desired
- appropriate application of Mental Capacity Act (if someone lacks capacity)

Privacy

- respect for privacy
- modesty when dressing/bathing
- privacy when one's personal circumstances are discussed by others
- respect for personal space
- respect for wish to be alone
- respect for wish to be intimate with others
- respect for private correspondence
- respect for private letters
- respect for private documents
- respect for private phone calls

Social and civic participation

- friends and family
- right to maintain relationships with family
- right to participate in the community
- right to participate in elections