

## Unit 63: Support Individuals with Specific Communication Needs

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<b>Level:</b>	3
<b>Unit type:</b>	Optional (Group B2)
<b>Credit value:</b>	5
<b>Guided learning hours:</b>	35

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### Unit introduction

This unit is for those who support individuals with specific communication needs. It provides the learner with the knowledge and skills to address personal interaction and the use of special methods and aids to promote communication.

Communication needs may be due to genetic factors, for example inherited deafness, biological factors, for example cerebral palsy or acquired due to illness, trauma or older age. They can also arise due to the with the development of dementia, which, while more prevalent in older age, can also develop in middle adulthood.

Individuals who are not supported by appropriate methods of communication can feel isolated and experience a reduced quality of life.

This unit will give you knowledge of the different methods of communication which may be used to support individuals with diverse communication needs. You will also consider ways to minimise barriers gaining an insight into the importance of using communication aids and methods effectively.

You will have the opportunity to demonstrate your skills in supporting individuals with specific communication needs to communicate and interact with others in a positive way.

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, learners need to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria
1	Understand specific communication needs and factors affecting them	1.1 Explain the importance of meeting an individual's communication needs 1.2 Explain how own role and practice can impact on communication with an individual who has specific communication needs 1.3 Analyse features of the environment that may help or hinder communication 1.4 Analyse reasons why an individual may use a form of communication that is not based on a formal language system 1.5 Identify a range of communication methods and aids to support individuals to communicate 1.6 Describe the potential effects on an individual of having unmet communication needs
2	Be able to contribute to establishing the nature of specific communication needs of individuals and ways to address them	2.1 Work in partnership with the individual and others to identify the individual's specific communication needs 2.2 Contribute to identifying the communication methods or aids that will best suit the individual 2.3 Explain how and when to access information and support about identifying and addressing specific communication needs
3	Be able to interact with individuals using their preferred communication	3.1 Prepare the environment to facilitate communication 3.2 Use agreed methods of communication to interact with the individual 3.3 Monitor the individual's responses during and after the interaction to check the effectiveness of communication 3.4 Adapt own practice to improve communication with the individual

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
4	Be able to promote communication between individuals and others	4.1	Support the individual to develop communication methods that will help them to understand others and be understood by them
		4.2	Provide opportunities for the individual to communicate with others
		4.3	Support others to understand and interpret the individual's communication
		4.4	Support others to be understood by the individual by use of agreed communication methods
5	Know how to support the use of communication technology and aids	5.1	Identify specialist services relating to communication technology and aids
		5.2	Describe types of support that an individual may need in order to use communication technology and aids
		5.3	Explain the importance of ensuring that communication equipment is correctly set up and working properly
6	Be able to review an individual's communication needs and the support provided to address them	6.1	Collate information about an individual's communication needs and the support provided
		6.2	Contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of agreed methods of communication and support provided
		6.3	Work with others to identify ways to support the continued development of communication

## Unit content

### What needs to be learned

#### **Learning outcome 1: Understand specific communication needs and factors affecting them**

##### **Individual**

- Someone with specific communication needs who requires care or support.
- Importance of support:
  - facilitation of effective interaction
  - ensuring delivery of accurate information
  - demonstrates respect and respect of dignity
  - promotes independence
  - promotes inclusivity
  - promotes self-esteem and recognises individuality
  - compliance with current legislation
  - part of a duty of care.

##### **Impact of own role and practice on communication**

- Create barriers due to:
  - defensive/aggressive non-verbal communication
  - lack of skills and knowledge in using specific techniques/communication aids
  - not using an appropriate method of communication
  - not recognising cultural norms
  - poor verbal skills
  - use of slang, regional expressions, non-inclusive language.
- Enable positive communication through:
  - non-defensive non-verbal communication
  - agreeing communication methods with individuals
  - current skills in use of specific techniques/communication aids
  - recognition of cultural norms
  - positive verbal skills
  - use of age-appropriate, inclusive language.

##### **Environments**

- Positive:
  - external noise minimised
  - furnishings that reduce echoes/issues with acoustics
  - suitable lighting
  - seating arranged to facilitate conversations
  - assistive technology working.
- Negative:

## What needs to be learned

- external noise
- poor acoustics due to, e.g., lack of furnishing/carpets causing echoes
- poor lighting, e.g. insufficient to facilitate lip reading
- seating that does not enable face-to-face interactions
- poorly maintained assistive technology
- busy settings with a lot of movement/personnel
- distance between speakers
- beards, moustaches
- head movements
- visual noise/distractions.

### **Communication theories**

- Argyle's communication cycle.
- Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Theory.

### **Information may include:**

- observations
- records
- feedback from the individual and others.

### **Non-formal communications systems**

- Gestures.
- Vocalisation.
- Pointing.
- Changes in breathing patterns.
- Eye pointing.
- Facial expressions.
- Body language.

### **Reasons for use**

- Complex disabilities.
- Congenital deafblindness.
- Complex physical needs affecting speech and language.
- Additional learning disabilities.
- Hearing impairment.
- Visual impairment.
- Mental health issues.
- English is not the home language.

## What needs to be learned

### Aids

- Technological aids, including:
  - voice amplifiers
  - Braille writers
  - computer software
  - hearing aids
  - audio equipment, e.g. voice recorders, audiobooks.
- Non-technological aids, including:
  - communication passports
  - objects of reference
  - storyboards
  - enlarged print, coloured paper
  - picture exchange communication systems (PECS).
- Human aids, including:
  - advocates
  - interpreters
  - translators
  - signers (British Sign Language (BSL))
  - finger spellers.

### The effects of unmet communication needs

- Infringed human rights.
- Inability to express needs, wants, wishes.
- Social isolation.
- Emotional withdrawal/depression.
- Frustration.
- Anger/aggression.
- Breakdown of relationships due to restricted communication.
- Reduced self-esteem.
- Low self-image.

### Learning outcome 2: Be able to contribute to establishing the nature of specific communication needs of individuals and ways to address them

#### Contexts

- Formal.
- Non-formal.
- Residential.
- Day care.

## What needs to be learned

- Domiciliary.

### **Skills**

- Using a person-centred approach.
- Involving individuals, family, friends, carers, colleagues in decisions regarding communication.
- Participation in formal assessment of communication needs.
- Use of observation to identify methods of communication.
- Use of agreed communication methods with individuals.

### **Accessing information and support**

- When to access support:
  - methods used are ineffective
  - lack of knowledge of communication methods
  - the individual is distressed
  - the individual has complex needs.
- Accessing support:
  - discussions with senior colleagues
  - discussions with specialist communication professionals
  - accessing individual records
  - discussions with family, friends, carers
  - specific training, e.g. BSL, use of computer software
  - access to relevant websites, e.g. the Makaton Charity.

## **Learning outcome 3: Be able to interact with individuals using their preferred communication**

### **Preparation of environments**

- Checking equipment.
- Ensuring all aids are present and in working order.
- Ensure own competency.
- Reducing noise levels.
- Arranging seating.
- Minimising visual distractions.
- Ensure lighting is at an appropriate level.
- Arranging furniture for optimum position.
- Adjusting room temperature if required.

### **Agree methods**

- Reference to care plans.

## What needs to be learned

- Discussion with agreed personnel, e.g. manager, supervisor, key worker.
- Respond to feedback from individual user of services.
- Record interaction using agreed methods.

### **Interactive skills – verbal and non-verbal**

- Listening and responding.
- Clarifying or repeating questioning.
- Using paraphrasing and reflective listening.
- Tone, pace.
- Use of age-appropriate and inclusive language.
- Proximity, including awareness of cultural norms.
- Responding to difficult situations.
- Effective use of technological and non-technological aids.
- Awareness of own attitudes.
- Awareness of barriers, e.g. mental health issues, levels of self-esteem, cultural barriers including gender.

### **Check effectiveness of communication in group and one-to-one situations**

- Awareness of needs and preferences.
- Observing visual clues.
- Observing non-verbal communication
- Monitoring response of individuals.

### **Adapting own practice**

- Reflecting on own performance.
- Requesting and acting on feedback from individuals and observers.
- Adjusting interactions in response to individual reactions.
- Updating knowledge and skills following feedback.

## **Learning outcome 4: Be able to promote communication between individuals and others**

### **Supporting individuals**

- Support individuals by:
  - enabling choice of communication methods
  - acting as advocate to enable conversations
  - effective use of alternative communication methods
  - person-centred approach
  - reference to care plans.
- Providing interactive opportunities by:



## What needs to be learned

- ensuring activities are inclusive
- involving other users in interactions.
- Others may include:
  - family
  - advocates
  - specialist communication professionals
  - others who are important to the individual's wellbeing
  - other users of the services.

## Learning outcome 5: Know how to support the use of communication technology and aids

### Specialist services including

- Charities, e.g. Sense.
- Speech and language specialists.
- Signers.
- Deafblindness communicators.
- Arrangements for assessments and possibly funding can also be made by local authorities.

### Types of support

- Technicians, experts, e.g. in using Braille, sign language, computer software.
- Signers (BSL).
- Interpreters.
- Advocates.

### Importance of effective equipment

- Enabling of clear communication.
- Empowerment of individuals.
- Supporting rapport and trust with individuals.
- Part of the duty of care.
- Demonstrating dignity and respect of the individual.

## Learning outcome 6: Be able to review an individual's communication needs and the support provided to address them

- Collate information by:
  - discussion with others
  - reference to care plans
  - observation of individuals

## What needs to be learned

- discussions with individuals, use of open and closed questions.

### **Evaluation of method effectiveness**

- Team discussion.
- Analysis of responses from individuals.
- Recording of interactions (with informed consent).

### **Working with others to support communication**

- Others may include:
  - family
  - advocates
  - specialist communication professionals
  - others who are important to the individual's wellbeing.

## Essential information for tutors and assessors

### Essential resources

There are no special resources needed for this unit.

### Assessment

This unit is internally assessed. To pass the unit, the evidence that learners present for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

This unit must be assessed in accordance with the assessment strategy (principles) in *Annexe A* of the associated qualification specification.

Learning outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 6 must be assessed in a real work environment..

The unit is assessed by a portfolio of evidence. Further information on the requirements for portfolios is included in *Section 4 Assessment requirements*.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt a holistic and integrated approach to assessing the skills units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour, minimises repetition and saves time. The focus should be on assessment activities generated through naturally occurring evidence in the workplace rather than on specific tasks. Taken as a whole, the evidence must show that learners meet all learning outcomes and assessment criteria over a period of time. It should be clear in the assessment records where each learning outcome and assessment criterion has been covered and achieved.

## Suggested resources

This section lists resource materials that can be used to support the delivery of the qualification.

### Books

Battye A – Who's Afraid of AAC? The UK Guide to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (Routledge, 2017) ISBN 9781911186175

Bryan K and Maxim J (editors) – Communication Disability in the Dementias (Wiley, 2006) ISBN 9781861565068

Plante E M and Beeson P M – *Communication and Communication Disorders: A Clinical Introduction* (Pearson, 2012) ISBN 9780132658126

### Websites

<a href="http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/content/factsheets/pdf/Communication%20Aids.pdf">www.abilitynet.org.uk/content/factsheets/pdf/Communication%20Aids.pdf</a>	Ability is a charity that provides information on a wide range of assistive technologies to support communication
<a href="http://bda.org.uk">bda.org.uk</a>	The British Deaf Association is a charity that provides information for individuals with a hearing impairment
<a href="http://blog.diversitynursing.com/blog/effective-communication-in-nursing-theory-and-best-practices">blog.diversitynursing.com/blog/effective-communication-in-nursing-theory-and-best-practices</a>	This website provides information on communicating with individuals who have diverse communication needs
<a href="http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/practical-tips-if-you-care-for-someone/how-to-care-for-someone-with-communication-difficulties/">www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/practical-tips-if-you-care-for-someone/how-to-care-for-someone-with-communication-difficulties/</a>	NHS website providing advice on supporting individuals with communication difficulties