

## Unit 70: Understanding How to Support Healthy Relationships for People with Learning Disabilities

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<b>Level:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unit type:</b>	<b>Optional</b>
<b>Credit value:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Guided learning hours:</b>	<b>26</b>

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### Unit introduction

The purpose of this unit is for learners to develop the knowledge and understanding they need to support people with learning disabilities to have healthy and happy friendships and relationships. The unit is aimed at those whose role includes providing direct support to individuals.

This unit covers the role of the support worker in providing information and advice and keeping people safe. For many people with learning disabilities, the subjects of sex and sexuality have been taboo, so support workers need to feel confident and prepared to discuss these issues with individuals they support and to be aware of the legislative framework that underpins these issues. By using case studies, learners will be able to explore the complexities of supporting healthy friendships and relationships, understanding boundaries and appropriate courses of action, including when and how to escalate concerns. On completion of this unit, learners should feel confident about having open and honest conversations with the individuals they support and offering full and frank advice and support to them as needed.

### 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
<p>1 Understand the role of the support worker in informing and supporting healthy friendships and relationships for individuals</p>	<p>1.1 Describe the importance of friendships and relationships as part of a full and healthy life</p> <p>1.2 Describe the role of a support worker in enabling healthy relationships</p> <p>1.3 Describe good practice to support individuals around sex and relationships, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- open communication</li> <li>- boundaries</li> <li>- providing balanced information</li> <li>- not allowing own beliefs to impair support</li> <li>- human rights</li> <li>- escalating concerns</li> <li>- accessible information</li> </ul> <p>1.4 Explain the role of supported decision making in enabling healthy relationships for people with learning disabilities</p> <p>1.5 Describe the role of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in supporting decision making and consent for individuals</p>
<p>2 Understand how to give clear advice and information on the nature of friendships and relationships</p>	<p>2.1 Explain how healthy friendships are developed and maintained</p> <p>2.2 Explain the foundation of healthy relationships, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mutual support</li> <li>- shared decision making</li> <li>- boundaries</li> </ul> <p>2.3 Describe the basic principles of dating, long-term relationships, cohabiting, marriage and divorce</p> <p>2.4 Explain a person-centred way to give advice on finding and maintaining a healthy relationship</p>
<p>3 Understand how to give clear advice and information on consent, sex,</p>	<p>3.1 Describe what consent is and how it applies in a healthy relationship</p> <p>3.2 Explain the range of contraceptives and how to obtain them</p> <p>3.3 Explain the range of sexualities and the rights of individuals to explore these</p>

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
sexuality and sexual health	3.4 Identify the factors that are important in maintaining good sexual health 3.5 Explain an appropriate way to give advice on sex, sexuality and sexual health 3.6 Evaluate alternative communication strategies to give this advice
4 Understand how to support an individual to stay safe in the pursuit of, and within, a relationship	4.1 Explain the risks in pursuing a relationship (including online) and how to support individuals to stay safe 4.2 Describe what behaviour is acceptable in a healthy relationship 4.3 Identify behaviours of concern or vulnerability in relationships and the appropriate action to take for each 4.4 Explain what constitutes an abusive relationship and how to escalate

## Unit content

### What needs to be learned

#### **Learning outcome 1: Understand the role of the support worker in informing and supporting healthy friendships and relationships for individuals**

##### **1A The importance of friendships and relationships**

- Social/fun
- Wellbeing/self-esteem
- Support
- Part of an ordinary life
- Human right.

##### **1B Role of a support worker**

- Facilitating friendships/relationships
- Supporting healthy, independent decision making
- Remaining non-discriminatory and non-judgemental
- Providing information about safe friendships, relationships and sex as required (may include LGBTQ+, trans and masturbation)
- Helping individuals understand when a relationship is unhealthy or causing harm
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns
- Respecting privacy and confidentiality.

##### **1C Good practice**

*Open communication* – instigating conversations and being available to listen

*Boundaries* – explaining own role and limitations of ability to support

*Providing balanced information* – offering alternative choices and providing objective information from trusted sources

*Not allowing own beliefs to impair support* – focusing on individual's best interests rather than on own beliefs or prejudices

*Human rights* – recognising the right to a private and family life protected by Human Rights Act 1998

*Escalating concerns* – internal processes for escalating concerns; external support mechanisms, e.g. adult safeguarding

*Accessible information* – need to communicate information in a way the individual can understand.

##### **1D Supported decision making**

- Ensuring the right person is supporting the individual
- Presenting information in an appropriate format for the individual

## What needs to be learned

- Presenting information in manageable chunks according to the individual's concentration abilities
- Explaining consequences or potential consequences of different courses of action
- Returning to the information, reminding individual of previous discussions and checking their understanding.

### 1E Mental Capacity Act and relationships: five key principles

- Assume capacity of the person
- Support the person to make a decision
- Ability to make unwise decisions
- Best-interests decision making
- Least restrictive option.

Best-interests decision-making process:

- Encouraging involvement of the individual and their family
- Identifying relevant circumstances and information
- Consulting experts where needed (e.g. speech and language therapists, psychologists, social workers)
- Least restrictive option.

## Learning outcome 2: Understand how to give clear advice and information on the nature of friendships and relationships

### 2A The nature of friendships and relationships

- The difference between a friendship and a relationship
- Ways to meet new friends (jobs/social clubs/shared interests)
- How to treat friends and expectations of how to be treated
- Appropriate behaviour and expectations of a friendship or relationship.

Characteristics of a healthy relationship:

- Mutual support: care, two-sided, resolving problems, empathy
- Shared decision making: respecting other views, listening, reciprocation
- Boundaries: respecting boundaries, socially appropriate behaviour, privacy, consent.

### 2B Types of relationship

*Dating* – casual relationship, not committed, based around shared activities, sexual activity

## What needs to be learned

*Long-term relationship* – exclusivity, expectations, commitment, problem solving, sexual activity

*Cohabiting* – living together, shared financial responsibilities, no legal commitment, sexual activity, possibility of starting a family

*Marriage* – living together, shared financial responsibilities, legal commitment, sexual activity, possibility of starting a family

*Divorce* – legal responsibilities, division of joint assets, shared custody of any children.

### 2C Person-centred advice on finding and maintaining a healthy relationship

Considerations before offering advice:

- The right person to offer the advice
- Finding a suitable space and time to give advice
- Any mental capacity issues.

Advice, e.g.:

- safe places to seek a relationship
- checking that there is a shared understanding
- ensuring that the individual is confident of their right to consent
- ensuring that the individual is aware of what constitutes a healthy relationship
- making sure that the individual is safe and knows what to say if they are concerned.

## Learning outcome 3: Understand how to give clear advice and information on consent, sex, sexuality and sexual health

### 3A What is consent?

- The person chooses what they participate in, what they don't participate in, or to abstain completely
- The person can change their mind at any time
- The person must fully understand what they are agreeing to – consider the Mental Capacity Act
- The person must consent without pressure, manipulation or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Consent should be given every time and not taken for granted.

### 3B Contraception

- Purpose of contraception (i.e. to prevent pregnancy)
- Range of contraceptives
- Where contraceptives can be obtained
- Where to get further information about contraceptives.

## What needs to be learned

### 3C Range of sexualities

Heterosexual (straight)

L = Lesbian

G = Gay

B = Bisexual

T = Transgender

Q = Queer/Questioning

I = Intersex

A = Asexual

+ = Inclusivity

- Rights with regard to sexuality: Human Rights Act 1998; Equality Act 2010; Gender Recognition Act 2004.

### 3D Good sexual health

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) – what they are and how people catch them
- Range of STIs
- Common symptoms of STIs
- Where to get support and testing
- How to avoid catching STIs: abstinence, exclusive relationship with one sexual partner, use of condoms.

Use of appropriate person-centred communication techniques, e.g.:

- simple language
- photos or images
- videos
- objects of reference.

## Learning outcome 4: Understand how to support an individual to stay safe in the pursuit of, and within, a relationship

### 4A Dating and keeping safe

- Online dating risks and how to stay safe (get to know someone, never give personal details online, never give money to someone online, arrange to meet in a public place with support if needed)
- Safe practices when out on a date (make sure someone knows where you are, stay in a public place, watch your drink, take care with alcohol and drugs, keep phone on you, take someone with you).

### 4B Behaviour in relationships

## What needs to be learned

*Acceptable behaviour* – sharing responsibilities, joint financial responsibility, mutual support, freedom to be independent, freedom of choices, open communication, kindness.

*Unacceptable behaviour* – taking or asking for money, physical abuse, coercion or 'gaslighting', controlling behaviour, jealousy, intimidation, threatening, sexual coercion or control, isolating behaviour.

Where to get support for concerns:

- Safeguarding referral
- Community Learning Disability Team
- Local authority social worker
- Domestic abuse support organisations.

## 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.

It is expected that this unit will be assessed in a real or simulated working environment, where evidence is naturally occurring and collected over a period of time.

Centres are responsible for deciding on the assessment activities that will enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence to meet the assessment criteria.

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.

### Unit assessment requirements

This unit must be assessed in accordance with Skills for Care and Development's Assessment Principles in *Annexe A*.

Assessment of all learning outcomes (knowledge) may take place in or outside of a real work environment.

## Suggested resources

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

### Textbooks

Bates C (ed) – *Sexuality and Learning Disabilities* (Pavilion, 2018)

ISBN 9781911028550

Collins S – *Supporting Relationships and Friendships: A Workbook for Social Care Workers* (Jessica Kingsley, 2010) ISBN 9781849050722

Reynolds K – *What are...relationships? A book for young people with autism, developmental and intellectual disabilities* (KER Ltd, 2018) ISBN 9781999612702

Thompson D – *Sex, Personal Relationships and the Law for Adults with Learning Disabilities* (Pavilion, 2018) ISBN 9781911028888

### Information pack

Dodd K, Jones K, Liddiard H, Stroud J – *Exploring sexual and social understanding: an illustrated pack designed for working with people with learning disabilities* (Bild)

### Websites

<https://www.changepeople.org/>

Human rights organisation led by disabled people, with resources for sale in online shop

[www.choicesupport.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/supported-loving/supported-loving-toolkit](http://www.choicesupport.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/supported-loving/supported-loving-toolkit)

A series of guides to help support people with learning disabilities with issues around sex and relationships

[https://www.ndti.org.uk/assets/files/Supporting\\_people\\_to\\_develop\\_relationships\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ndti.org.uk/assets/files/Supporting_people_to_develop_relationships_Report.pdf)

Supporting people with learning disabilities to develop sexual and romantic relationships

<https://www.scie.org.uk/lgbtqi/video-stories/learning-disabilities>

Working with LGBT  
people with learning  
disabilities: video