Tools for Talking

How to use the tools for talking

Instructions for support workers

What are the tools for talking?

The tools for talking include five short videos and five activities. They were developed primarily for use in social support settings to facilitate communication and information sharing between people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities and service providers. However, they may have wider applicability and could be used in a variety of settings. The tools were developed during the ASC-LD study and are based on the results of interviews with 32 adults with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities and a Partnership Event held in November 2013. Amongst other themes, five topics emerged as important which were each developed into an illustrative video and an exploratory activity.

The five topics relate to:

- Culture
- Good support
- Independence
- Relational networks
- Activities.

What are the tools for talking for?

The tools for talking are to help service users think about what is important to them, to help them communicate their preferences, and to help you understand their wants, needs and desires. They were designed to stimulate discussion and development of services rather than just record the preferences of service users. They may facilitate person-centred service planning by ensuring services respond to what is important to the person. They may be especially useful for newer members of staff to help them get to know the person they support. They may also be used for training purposes, to prepare for discussions in review meetings, and to monitor/evaluate services.

Who are the tools for talking for?

The tools for talking can be used by anyone with learning disabilities who receive support. Some of them might also be relevant to people who do not receive any support. They can be instigated by service providers, support workers or might be instigated by the person themselves. They can be used by the person on their own

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or in groups, however, the activities are designed to be completed by the person along with their support worker(s). The aim is to facilitate discussion, improve understanding and identify areas for development through the completion of the activity.

How do I use the tools for talking?

Start by planning the activity. Watch the video on your own first to familiarise yourself with the topic. The videos present an overview of issues that were important to the people we interviewed. Each activity starts by watching the relevant video. The aim is to provide an introduction to the topic and to help the person to start thinking about the topic and how it relates to them. Next, familiarise yourself with the activity by reading the instructions for support workers. There are instructions for support workers and people with learning disabilities for each activity. You might like to use the easy read instructions to help explain the activity to the service user. Each activity uses a poster and additional resources including worksheets, cards or stickers, these should be printed out as large as possible. The activities should be tailored to suit the needs and abilities of the service user.

The activities are primarily designed to help support workers find out about and understand the person they support. Whilst completing the activities, areas for development may be identified by you or the service user. You may like to produce a plan to develop that area of service provision, there is a worksheet to help you do this with the service user.

In planning the activity, think about what you will do should any sensitive information be divulged that might put the person or others at risk. Have a plan for who you would inform and when you would need to instigate Safeguarding procedures.

Top tips on using the tools for talking:

1) Plan:
   a. Watch the video to familiarise yourself with the topic
   b. Read the instructions for support workers
   c. Prepare the materials
   d. Think about how to capture the preferences expressed by the service user during the activity (not all preferences will be captured on the worksheets and posters)
   e. Think about how you will end the activity and how you will act on what was discussed during the activity.
2) Do:
   a. Watch the video with service user

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    b. Complete the activity with the service user

    c. Encourage discussion and reflection – ask the service user to explain their choices and describe what is important to them

    d. Collaboratively identify areas for development and discuss how to achieve goals

    e. Use the planning worksheet to help develop and record any plans.

3) Act:

    a. Think about what you have learned

    b. Plan how you might respond to areas identified for development

    c. Plan a follow-up to review progress

    d. Plan a follow-up to review changes in preferences.