

## Unit 5 - Awareness of Mental Health, Dementia and Learning Difficulties

### Learning Outcomes for this Unit:

The overall focus for this unit is to make sure that learners understand some illnesses they may encounter in their practice and ways they can deal with these issues and therefore better care for the people they are looking after.

### Evidence for learning in this unit:

Most evidence here will be demonstrated on the job and witnessed and recorded by assessors and mentors. Learners may also record reflections in a learning journal.

### Detailed Guidance for the Delivery of this Unit:

## 1. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of mental health, dementia and learning difficulties

### 1.1 I can understand the needs and experiences of people with mental health conditions, dementia or learning difficulties

Learners will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the people's needs and experiences in their care.

#### Additional information and guidance

This is a wide range of conditions, and not all learners will have direct experience as it will depend on where they are working within the sector. However, they should at least be aware of some of the main characteristics of people with these conditions so that they are fully aware if they do come across them in their practical activities. Obviously the terms are undefined and the term "mental health" covers a wide range of conditions, but some examples will be enough.

If learners can not gather information about all of these conditions, then one in depth, perhaps the one they are directly working with, for example in a children's care setting, will be enough at this level.

### 1.2 I can explain how these conditions may influence a person's needs in relation to the care that they may require

Learners will be able to give some examples based on their understanding to reinforce their understanding.

#### Additional information and guidance

As with 1.1 above, the direct experience of a condition that learners have will dictate what they can write about and comment about here. If they are working in an organisation that specialises in helping people with dementia, then they will have good hands on experience of how this operates and what they can do to help. This will also allow them to articulate, verbally or in writing, what needs to be done to assist the people in their care that have the condition. They need to show they know what the needs are and give examples in relation to the condition. Therefore, they might discuss what actions they take to support a person in their care who suffers from dementia.

### **1.3 I can explain why it is important to understand that the causes and support needs are different for people with mental health conditions, dementia and learning disabilities**

Learners will be able to demonstrate they know how to match the support they offer to the identified need of the people in their care.

#### **Additional information and guidance**

All of this section is about an overall appreciation of the complexities of some people's conditions and therefore their needs. Also, that these conditions can fluctuate and therefore the learners need to be flexible to meet these changes. They also need to appreciate that they will be called upon to work with a wide range of people and their skills in one area of care may not be enough or well suited to other areas. The type of support and help they give someone with a mental disability is completely different in many ways to the care for someone with dementia. They need a good understanding and working knowledge of these conditions to be best placed to help at all times.

## **2. Understand the importance of promoting positive health and well-being for an individual who may have a mental health condition, dementia or learning disability**

### **2.1 I can explain how positive attitudes towards those with mental health conditions, dementia or learning disabilities will improve the care and support they receive**

**Learners will be able to demonstrate a positive attitude in the interactions and understand what impact these have.**

#### **Additional information and guidance**

It may well be difficult at times as some people in the learner's care, through no fault of their own, may find interactions difficult and may not always respond in a positive way to interactions, but they will always foster a more positive environment over the long term. It is important for learners and the people they care for to be positive as it will help improve overall resilience in the face of challenging circumstances. As long as learners can discuss this and show an awareness of it this will fulfil the criterion.

### **2.2 I can describe the social model of disability and how it underpins positive attitudes towards disability and involves people in their own care**

Learners will be able to describe the social model of disability and how this helps in their work.

#### **Additional information and guidance**

The social model of disability is an approach to working with people with disabilities that takes away the medical "blame" and tries to treat the underlying problems which are more often than not social.

Many social structures treat disabilities as some form of abnormality, which they are not. This approach then acts in a negative way. The society itself is the problem, not the person themselves.

This is a huge change in emphasis and means that a more caring approach is taken from the start.

A good example from the Mental Health Foundation to overcome this way of thinking is that the built environment could be built with ramps and easy access for people with wheelchairs. This would enable their independence and remove the social mentality of them being a burden as they can't easily get up stairs etc. Learners need to think about how the social structures around them have this impact and how they can change it in their actions.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/a-to-z/s/social-mo...> [1]

### **2.3 I can identify the adjustments which may be necessary in care delivery**

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### **relating to an individual who may have a mental health condition, dementia or learning disability**

Learners will be able to demonstrate some level of flexibility.

#### **Additional information and guidance**

The nature of people suffering from some of these conditions is that their behaviour may be quite variable. It may be possible to make huge advances in the improvement of a person's condition, only to see this be reversed over night. Learners need to be flexible and to try different approaches and not be too disheartened if one particular element was working but no longer seems to work.

They can try different things and keep challenging their desire to find the best care.

### **2.4 I can describe the importance of early detection of mental health conditions, dementia and learning disabilities**

Learners will be able to describe the importance of early intervention for many issues.

#### **Additional information and guidance**

Many of these conditions are difficult to reverse once they take hold, such as dementia, but early detection can at least put into place some practices that may make the symptoms less onerous on the people affected by them. Learners should demonstrate an understanding of the life cycle of some of these conditions and be able to show they understand some early signs that may present themselves. They might be looking after a person with a completely different condition and notice early signs of one of these conditions and might therefore be able to make a small difference to their overall care.

## **3. Understand legal frameworks, policy and guidelines relating to mental health conditions, dementia and learning disabilities**

### **3.1 I can explain how the legislation and policies listed may affect the day to day experiences of individuals with mental health needs, dementia or learning difficulties**

Learners will be able to explain their working environment, the legal requirements and their overall effectiveness.

#### **Additional information and guidance**

There are a number of laws which are designed to assist people coping with a condition for which they require some assistance. Learners should be able to explain the main laws and what conditions they expect for people as part of the legal rights they protect. The following are a few examples.

<https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person> [2]

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/> [3]

The work based guidelines will be the policies and procedures they will be asked to understand and follow at their place of work. These will clearly vary depend on where they are working, but in general, learners should be able to discuss what they think about them, if they agree with what is being asked and if they understand the importance of what is asked to be done. This should give their assessor a good idea of their overall appreciation of the job and people in their care. It would be useful to make some reflective notes on any work guidelines to show that there has been some consideration of them.

### **3.2 I can identify the meaning of mental capacity in relation to how care is provided**

Learners will be able to define this term.

### **Additional information and guidance**

The term mental capacity can perhaps be seen as a rather derogatory term, but is an official term defining what people are capable of understanding and therefore what help they require in their day to day lives to make sure they are autonomous and well cared for.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/making-decis...> [4]

Once they have shown they understand the term, they can give some simple examples of how they understand it in terms of the care they will provide.

### **3.3 I can explain what is meant by “capacity” and why it is important to assume that someone has capacity unless there is evidence that they do not**

**Learners will be able to explain a working definition of the term.**

### **Additional information and guidance**

The link in 3.2 above gives a good definition of capacity and learners can use this for their own working definitions, as well as work based ones they will have been shown. The overall aim, as far as possible, is to support people in their independence as far as possible. If they have capacity for independent movement, then this should be supported as far as possible. If someone does not want to move independently, they should be encouraged as it is within their capacity.

### **3.4 I can explain what is meant by “consent” and how it can change according to what decisions need to be taken**

Learners will be able to define the terms with simple examples.

### **Additional information and guidance**

In terms of consent, they need to understand the rights of the people they care for, as well as their immediate family, to ensure that everything they do for and with the people in care is something they have agreed to. Consent from people is important in terms of their legal rights and should be central to the learner's working practise. In some cases, they may need to get written and agreed documentation to show this before proceeding with anything.

**Source URL:** <https://theingots.org/community/emcarel2u5x>

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/a-to-z/s/social-model-disability>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person>

[3] <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/legal-rights/>

[4] <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/making-decisions-for-someone-else/mental-capacity-act/>