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Introduction to
equality and
inclusion in health,
social care or
children's and young
people's settings

Standards

Understand the importance of equality and inclusion

Explain what is meant by diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination

Promoting equality and respecting diversity are central to life today. To provide care and support that meets the needs of everyone, you have to understand what these terms mean and take account of them in your work.

Diversity can be described as 'difference'. All individuals are different; the many different parts of a person's character and identity make them unique. Examples of the things that make up diversity are age, appearance, ability, disability, job role, health, background, gender, family, friends, sexual orientation, religion, belief, values, culture and marital status. Can you think of other factors that make a person unique?

It is very important to respect the factors that contribute to diversity to ensure that everyone experiences tolerance and inclusive treatment and that all individuals are accepted regardless of their differences. If individuals are treated unfairly and are disrespected because they are different, it can lead to labelling, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. In adult social care it is essential to recognise and respect the factors that contribute to a person's diversity. A person's individual differences will influence the type of care and support that they need to receive; this is called providing person-centred care which is different for each person because of their individual needs, wishes and preferences.

Equality is about treating people alike according to their needs. You should make sure that everyone is given equality of opportunity which means that individuals are provided with opportunities that take into account their differences and provide fair and equal access to support. For example, you may need to give information in different formats (for example Braille) or make sure there is access to a building for an individual in a wheelchair.

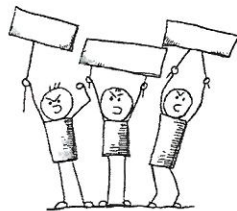


Inclusion is being included within either a group or society as a whole. Inclusion links with diversity and equality. It is important to understand someone's differences so that you can include them and treat them equally and fairly. People can feel excluded if they are not able to join in with activities. Excluding people because of their differences is known as 'discrimination'. If we consider an adult who has a mental health problem, they may struggle to gain employment and therefore may not have sufficient income to be able to afford to participate in recreational activities, for example. How would this affect them? They are likely to feel excluded from society less able to contribute to the economy

and unable to participate in activities that could increase their wellbeing and quality of life. The crucial word in the last sentence is 'excluded' as the individual is likely to feel that they are no longer part of or contributing to society. This is also called marginalisation.

For this reason, it is essential for society to be inclusive and for individuals to demonstrate an inclusive approach to others, taking into account people's differences and helping them to feel part of society. All workers in health and social care must make sure that they work in an inclusive way to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part when they want to.

So far, you have explored diversity, equality and inclusion and the importance of ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and in a way that respects their diversity. It is essential to acknowledge that, while everyone should have good intentions in relation to equality and diversity, negative attitudes and behaviours are present in society that lead to individuals or groups being oppressed or disadvantaged.



Discrimination is unfair treatment that is often based on a person's negative attitude towards others. It involves treating people differently because of assumptions made about a person or group of people based on their differences. Negative attitudes and behaviours exist in society that can lead to individuals or groups being oppressed or disadvantaged.

Some discrimination is done on purpose and can be easily noticed. This is known as direct or deliberate discrimination. Examples include treating a person differently because of their religion or sexual orientation, and excluding people who use wheelchairs by not providing access. Other forms of discrimination can be unintentional or accidental and are not as easy to see. There may be ways of working in place that apply to everyone but may disadvantage certain individuals or groups. For example, providing food at times which do not take into account religious fasting periods.



Labelling involves identifying an aspect of a person or group and using that to describe them. A label is often used to highlight something about the individual that makes them different and can be negative or positive. Sometimes it is important to use a label to identify a person's additional support needs. However, labelling is often negative when used to stereotype. Sometimes, the way people structure sentences can label individuals in negative ways. For example, of the 2 sentences below which do you think is more appropriate?

Sentence 1:

'A disabled person is coming to the centre today.'

Sentence 2:

'A person with a disability is coming to the centre today.'

It would be more appropriate to use sentence 2 as this acknowledges that having a disability is one part of the person, whereas sentence 1 describes the person by their disability.

Prejudice can be defined as an attitude which is usually based on labels and stereotypes. Prejudice means making a judgement about a person or group and is usually made before any information is gained or understood about the individual, for example believing that contact should be avoided completely with an individual who has HIV.

Discrimination is behaviour that is often based on a person's prejudice or negative attitude towards others. It involves the act of treating others differently and unfairly because of stereotypical assumptions. A person's discriminatory attitudes and behaviour are often inflexible so they may refuse to change their beliefs and opinions. Discrimination can result in terrible consequences for the individuals involved, leading to inequality and oppression, affecting their health and wellbeing in very negative ways. For example, by refusing to care for an individual with HIV they will become marginalised and may not seek vital support in the future for fear of the reaction they may receive. Discrimination is unlawful and there is legislation in place to ensure that people do not experience discrimination, one piece of legislation being the Equality Act 2010.



Describe ways in which discrimination may deliberately or inadvertently occur in the work setting

There are a number of different types of discrimination that you should be aware of as a social care worker, including how to recognise the signs of discrimination. It is also important to consider that individuals may experience disadvantage and oppression, also known as multiple or dual discrimination, because of a number of factors, for example being treated differently because of their disability and their social class.

Direct discrimination can also be classified as overt discrimination. All discrimination involves treating people unfairly because of 1 or more of their protected characteristics (protected characteristics further explained later on), but this type of discrimination is further described as being clearly visible to others and intentional. For example, treating a person differently to others because of their religious beliefs; not treating someone because of their sexual orientation; not providing access to buildings and services for individuals who are wheelchair users.

Indirect discrimination is unintentional. It is not clearly visible to others, but may be evident in policies or procedures that are provided for everyone and may disadvantage a group or certain individuals. For example, a menu may not provide suitable meal options for individuals who have specific dietary requirements or the menu may state that alternatives are available but they may never be in stock, e.g. not providing Halal options for individuals who follow the Muslim faith.

Alternatively, a service may have provided access for wheelchair users in the form of a lift, but the lift is always out of order. All organisations should have policies and procedures in place to ensure that the likelihood of discrimination occurring is reduced. It is your role to ensure that these policies are upheld and implemented. Additionally, it is your responsibility to identify whether aspects of a policy or procedure do indirectly discriminate against an individual or group. To recognise that indirect discrimination is happening you must know those you provide care and support to well, understand their individual differences, understand the organisation's policies and procedures and be aware of how anything might be limiting their opportunities and affecting their rights.

Explain how practices that support equality and inclusion reduce the likelihood of discrimination

When you are working in any adult social care setting, it is your duty to work in a way that embeds equality, diversity and inclusive practice, as well as upholding the core care values that will support others to feel respected, treated equally according to their needs and accepted as unique individuals.

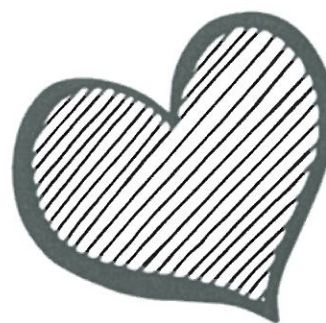
As a social care worker you recognise the importance of treating individuals fairly and equally as you recognise the worth in all human beings. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion should be present in your personal beliefs as well as your approach. Therefore, you should be familiar with how to embed these principles in your care practice.

The terms equality, diversity and inclusion are interrelated and each has an impact on the other. Practices that support these values can ensure that the likelihood of disadvantage and discrimination occurring can be reduced.

Respecting diversity

Remember that diversity means difference. It is essential to acknowledge these factors and take them into account when supporting an individual, to ensure that you are providing care specific to their needs, wishes and preferences, in other words, person-centred care.

Person-centred care is concerned with the individual as a holistic being, recognising that there are many aspects of the person. The person is always the expert on their care needs.



The concept of providing person-centred care was influenced by the work of Dr. Carl Rogers, an American psychologist, who specialised in therapeutic approaches. Rogers' work emphasised that a person would be able to achieve their potential if they were provided with the right support to do so. He theorised that by providing individuals with unconditional positive regard or non-judgemental warmth it would enable them to feel accepted by others which would increase their

self-confidence in their own capabilities. This principle is essential for social care workers.

Promoting equality and equal opportunities

All organisations are guided by policies on equality, diversity and equal opportunities. Ensuring that the workforce is aware of and follows these policies is the first step to providing an environment that will reduce the likelihood of discrimination occurring. Additionally, policies should be transparent and available for all individuals to see. This will provide them with confidence that the organisation emphasises the importance of treating all individuals fairly, irrespective of their needs and differences.

An inclusive approach

Inclusive practice, as an approach to providing care, aims to appreciate the value of all individuals, emphasising that they have a right to be accepted within society and have a valuable contribution to make. Working in an inclusive way ensures all social care workers are providing a high standard of care to all individuals that takes into account their needs, wishes and preferences as a basis for providing person-centred care. Inclusive practice helps to safeguard individuals, ensuring that they do not experience unfair treatment or disadvantage and marginalisation.

Understand the importance of equality and inclusion

Identify which legislation and codes of practice relating to equality, diversity and discrimination apply to your own role

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**
- **Race Relations Act 1976**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 is a piece of legislation that combines the principles of a number of previous acts making it unlawful for any individual to be treated unfairly because of the factors that make them different.

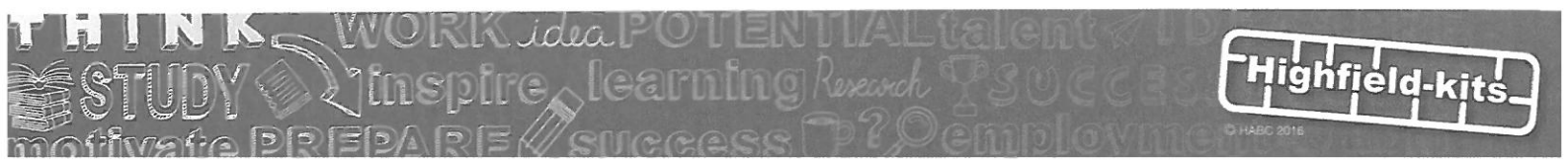
The principles of many other acts have also merged to create the Equality Act 2010. The act describes how individuals should experience equality of opportunity in society and that there are a number of protected characteristics that help to safeguard people from discrimination.

The aim of this act is to consolidate many of the principles of previous pieces of legislation to make it easier to understand, such as the:

The **9** protected characteristics are:

- **age**

- **disability**



- **gender reassignment**

- **marriage and civil partnership**

- **pregnancy and maternity**

- **race**

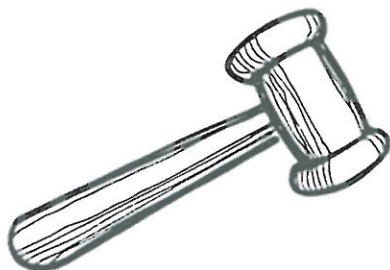
- **religion and belief**

- **sex**

- **sexual orientation**

The act also provides protection for individuals who experience discrimination by association, so the carers of individuals are also protected. For example, an individual who has particular sight needs wishes to make a complaint to their local council concerning a loose pavement slab that caused them to trip and fall.

As their care worker, you accompany them to the council offices. The complaint is dismissed by the attendant as they put the fall down to the individual's sight needs and not the loose pavement slab. You speak on the individual's behalf to explain that the accident was not due to this, but the complaint is still dismissed. On this occasion the individual has experienced discrimination and, as you are associated with them, you would both be protected under the Equality Act 2010.



It also provides information to make it easier for employers to understand their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and access to services. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has now created codes of practice to support organisations and individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Human Rights Act 1998 is government legislation that incorporates into UK law the conventions outlined in the European Convention of Human Rights. This means that all individuals within the UK are protected under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention of Human Rights.



Everyone has access to human rights and all individuals have a responsibility to uphold human rights for others. Within the UK, the Human Rights Act states people should have access to the following rights and entitlements:

- **right to life**

- **freedom from torture and inhumane or degrading treatment**

- **right to liberty and security**

- **freedom from slavery and forced labour**

- **right to a fair trial**

- **no punishment without law**

- **respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence**

- **freedom of thought, belief and religion**

- **freedom of expression**

- **freedom of assembly and association**

- **right to marry and start a family**

- **protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms**

- **right to peaceful enjoyment of your property**

- **right to education**

- **right to participate in free elections**

Social care regulators and codes of conduct or practice

The regulators provide the standards, codes of conduct, practice and charters that should be followed and implemented by all workers within the social care sector. Some regulators have the responsibility for registration of professionals who are then accountable for their behaviour and practice.

Codes of conduct or practice set out the standards and values that care workers must meet to provide effective and supportive care. In England, the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers is overseen by Skills for Health and Skills for Care.

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/code-of-conduct



The Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers includes the following principles:

- **be accountable by making sure you can answer for your actions or omissions**

- **promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health and social care services and their carers at all times**

- **work in collaboration with your colleagues to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe and compassionate healthcare, care and support**

- **communicate in an open, and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use health and social care services and their carers**

- **respect a person's right to confidentiality**

- **strive to improve the quality of healthcare, care and support through continuing professional development**

- **uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion**

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) regulates their social care workforce only by registering and regulating social care workers. The Care Council for Wales (CCW) regulates the social care workforce for their country and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is responsible for registering individuals who work in social services in Scotland. They each have codes of practice that you can find on their websites that are similar to the code of conduct in England.

Show interaction with individuals that respects their beliefs, culture, values and preferences

You should now understand the importance of promoting equality and diversity to encourage equal opportunities and ensure that all individuals who require care and support feel they are part of society, with a valuable contribution to make. There are a number of approaches to caring for individuals that will ensure that you interact with individuals in an inclusive way.

Providing person-centred care

You should now be familiar with the importance of treating each person as an individual. All individuals are different. While there may be those who have the same condition, each experience of that condition will be different. Remember that this is diversity and it is essential to respect individual differences when supporting individuals in a person-centred way. Providing person-centred care will ensure that the individual is always at the centre of their care. Providing support that focuses on their needs, rather than anyone else's, acknowledges their rights and choices.

For example, it is essential to encourage positive risk-taking that will support individuals to participate in activities that may be considered inappropriate, or which they may be perceived as being unable to undertake because of their ability, condition or health status. If positive risk-taking is discouraged, possibly due to assumptions and stereotypes about their condition or ability, it would limit a person's capabilities and self-confidence. Ensuring individuals are provided with opportunities to engage in all aspects of life means that the principles of equality of opportunity and equal treatment are being applied to all individuals, irrespective of the factors that make them diverse.

Empowering individuals



The word empowerment is very important in social care practice. It is concerned with providing individuals with the tools to feel capable, effective, confident and knowledgeable, so that they are in control of their lives. Empowerment links closely with person-centred care. By respecting an individual's choices and rights, and encouraging them to participate actively in their care and in society, you are providing them with the skills they need to feel confident in their own capabilities and decisions; you are helping them to become independent. This also means that individuals will know what to expect from their care workers; they will be

knowledgeable about appropriate person-centred care and how they should expect to be treated. If they feel that their care is inappropriate, that they have been discriminated against or that their care does not meet the standard that they should expect, they will feel empowered to raise their dissatisfaction or to make a complaint.

Communication skills

The communication skills that you use to engage with individuals will also have an impact on inclusive practice. It is essential to use your 'toolbox' of communication skills to work with individuals in a way that will help to address their particular needs, wishes and preferences. For example, when working with those whose first language is not English, you may need to communicate via a translator or perhaps use pictures, images or methods of non-verbal communication. Similarly, to ensure inclusive practice for individuals who have hearing impairments, you may need to develop your communication skills to include basic sign language or Makaton or request the use of an interpreter to support your interactions. Using the individual's preferred communication method helps to demonstrate inclusive practice and respects their choice to communicate in a way that is suitable for their needs.

Imagine working with an individual who has dementia; they used to be bilingual and could speak English, but it was not their first language. As their dementia has worsened they have forgotten how to communicate in English and can only remember to communicate in their first language. Consider how this person would feel, not being able to communicate with

the people around them because of their dementia, but also because of language differences. This example demonstrates why it is so important to understand individuals, and to provide care that is centred on them, and helps them to feel respected and supported.

The inclusive approach is essential for ensuring individuals feel safe in these frightening and frustrating situations.

It is also important to consider how your non-verbal communication skills can impact on individuals as we often convey a great deal of information to others without realising it. For example, consider your facial expression if a friend or family member told you something you thought was shocking or something that was quite disgusting.

Now imagine that an individual told you something that you were not expecting and you responded with facial expressions that gave away your opinions or assumptions about what they had just said. How do you think your non-verbal communication would be making the individual feel? It could make them feel judged, that you are making assumptions about what they should and should not do, based on your opinions of what is acceptable or appropriate for that individual. They may feel as if you will now see them differently and that they cannot express themselves or their choices. Therefore, it is very important to consider how your assumptions and personal values could limit and influence an individual's experience of inclusive practice, by making sure that you use communication methods and responses that will encourage others to feel comfortable and accepted.

Describe how to challenge discrimination in a way that encourages change

It is very important to acknowledge that the reasons why people discriminate can be many and varied. It could be due to:

- **socialisation**

- **background**

- **personal beliefs and values**

- **family history**

- **experiences**

- **media influences**

Knowing why a person discriminates does not make it acceptable, but it does emphasise that sometimes it can be very difficult to challenge: for example trying to change negative or prejudiced beliefs that a person may have grown up with and which may be deeply ingrained in their personal values. However, it is very important to acknowledge that there are many ways in which discrimination can be challenged and it is very important to be aware of these.



Values and beliefs

You will have come across these words many times in relation to social care practice. Being aware of the appropriate ethical values for work in social care is essential. A person's beliefs are often influenced by their values and vice-versa. So, being fully aware of what your values are will help you acknowledge those that are unsuitable and potentially damaging for those you work with.

When you are conscious of the values that you have, which could have a detrimental or damaging effect on others, you can take steps to try to challenge this yourself. This could be through:

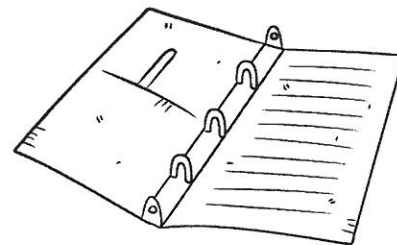
- undertaking reflection and self-awareness activities to explore where the values came from and why they exist
- developing your understanding of the impact of negative values on others
- undertaking training and further education to extend your understanding of differences

Training and CPD

It is essential to undertake further training and qualifications to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding. The development of our capabilities is often referred to as continuing professional development (CPD). It could involve formal learning, such as undertaking qualifications to advance your knowledge and skills within a certain area, or it could be informal learning, such as watching documentaries that are relevant to your role or reading textbooks or journals. CPD may also involve observing your peers or supervisors

to develop your understanding of different ways of working with people. Continual learning is especially important within the social care sector as changes happen on a regular basis. For example, legislation and policies may change, certain therapeutic interventions may be seen as more effective than others and ways to complete documentation may be improved.

Training, as part of CPD, is an effective way of learning more about areas of work that you are unfamiliar with and training courses can increase awareness of issues of equality, diversity and anti-discrimination practice. They can educate people to be more aware of the factors that contribute to diversity and of the disadvantage that is often experienced by those individuals affected. This form of development should challenge a person's perspective on their approach to individuals who are different, so that they learn tolerance, patience and understanding, rather than have any tendency to be judgemental or stereotypical.



Policies and procedures

Standards of good practice and how to provide person-centred care contribute to challenging discriminatory practice. Policies that are concerned with promoting diversity, respecting rights and giving equal opportunities are central to challenging practices that can exclude and

disadvantage particular groups or individuals. All social care workers should be familiar with the policies of their organisation as well as being responsible for ensuring that they are implemented in day-to-day practice.

This includes recognising when individuals are treated unfairly and their rights have been disrespected, and reporting such incidents to their supervisor or manager.

Additionally, the code of conduct or practice that you will follow as a social care worker outlines how you should treat those in your care. It provides individuals with clear details on how they should expect to be treated. In following the principles in the code you are committing to uphold the core values of social care. Being aware of the importance of this means that you recognise the importance of respecting the diversity of individuals, you understand how to provide care that is fair and encourages equal opportunities, and you can apply practices to avoid the possibility of harassment or discrimination. Discrimination can be challenged by encouraging individuals to commit to the code of conduct or practice. This may involve discussions at team meetings to explore good practice or highlight areas for improvement in current policies and procedures, including positive strategies to challenge discrimination. Undertaking reviews of the policies and procedures of your organisation is the responsibility of the employer, but this is a continuous process and your views and feedback could contribute to improvements in provision that increase opportunities for individuals.

Ensuring individuals know their rights

Discrimination can also be challenged through empowering individuals to know their rights and voice their concerns. It can be very difficult for individuals to speak out if they feel they are experiencing disadvantage or discrimination. Why do you think this is the case?

Individuals rely on the invaluable care provided by others and they may feel that if they make a complaint or express dissatisfaction they will lose the opportunity to be cared for. Alternatively, they may think that the behaviour is acceptable practice. Being involved in this situation means that individuals often feel helpless and vulnerable as they do not have the confidence or power to ensure their voice is heard.

As a social care worker, it is essential that you make individuals aware of their rights, not just the right to complain, but also their human rights and the appropriate care and treatment that they are entitled to. They have the right to be accepted as a unique individual, to be respected as a valuable contributor to society and to be treated fairly in relation to their needs. This brings us back to empowerment: it is your role to support individuals to take control and exercise their power to speak out if necessary. Obtaining feedback from customers is essential to improving a business; therefore, obtaining feedback from individuals will contribute to improving the quality of care.

Know how to access information, advice and support about diversity, equality and inclusion

Identify a range of sources of information, advice and support about diversity, equality and inclusion



As a social care worker, it is very important for you to know where to turn to when you need further information concerning diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination. There may be occasions when you need further guidance from other professionals about working in an inclusive way; or it could be that you would like to search for case studies that relate to the protected characteristics and how the principles are applied in practice to increase your understanding. You may have seen evidence of discrimination or unfair treatment, but you are unsure how to respond or deal with it.

You may find that referring to the relevant guidelines of your organisation will provide you with the answers that you are looking for. Policies are there for a reason, so make sure that you always refer to these to support the development of your practice. You could also refer to the standards that your regulator uses to monitor care settings, e.g. Fundamental Standards of

Care from the Care Quality Commission in England, for further guidance on how to promote equality and diversity.

Your supervisor, manager or mentor will be on hand to provide you with information, advice and support about diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination. Additionally, they could provide guidance and advice during appraisals that may help to improve aspects of your work.

Remember, this feedback is always supportive and will help you to improve the quality of care that you provide. There may be times when you feel that it would be inappropriate for you to speak with your manager or supervisor, especially if you have concerns regarding their practice or the running of a service. In this case, follow your internal procedure. It may be that there is a senior member of staff that you are able to speak to or you can seek guidance from your regulator who will provide a confidential and anonymous service for individuals who wish to raise concerns. Your organisation should have a policy on whistleblowing and you should ensure that you familiarise yourself with this.

Within your organisation you may have a designated equality and diversity champion, who has been allocated the role of leader for equality and diversity. Many settings have introduced 'champions' who will be a point of contact and ensure that equality, diversity and inclusive practice are always at the forefront of provision, and will seek action to challenge unfair treatment

and practice. These individuals will be keen to provide you with information, advice and guidance to support your understanding of diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination. You could even become an equality and diversity champion yourself.

You will find a great deal of information on the internet to support you and provide further sources of information. The Equality and Human Rights Commission could be a starting point for further research.

Describe how and when to access information, advice and support about diversity, equality and inclusion



It is essential to reflect on your practice. Reflection is the process of thinking about a situation, what happened, what went well, what could have been improved and how you would do it differently next time. Through the process of reflection you may identify areas of your practice in relation to diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination that you should improve. For example, through working with an individual who abuses drugs or alcohol, you may recognise that you feel judgemental about them, their substance misuse and their situation. Through reflecting on this, you may identify that your values surrounding substance misuse need to be challenged. Therefore, you might wish to

talk to someone about obtaining further information or attending a training course on substance misuse.

Reflecting on the situations that you encounter within your work role will allow you to recognise that you may need further information, advice, training or support to help you develop.

Additionally, team meetings, supervision or your appraisal with your manager should provide you with actions or strategies to support your development. These actions may involve formal or informal learning, observing your colleagues or attending training events. To maintain your development, you will work with your manager, supervisor or mentor to ensure that you access appropriate information, advice and help to support your progress. This could involve reading about an individual's condition to ensure that you understand how to respect their needs, or attending a training event. These processes enable you to grow as a worker and will ensure that you are always placing individuals at the centre of their care and support.



