

BACK TO BASICS -

**PROVIDING CULTURALLY
APPROPRIATE HOMECARE**



Providing Culturally Appropriate Homecare.

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Introduction – Understanding Cultural Diversity

In Hertfordshire County Council we believe that Culture and Identity are important to consider when providing a good homecare service. Culture is about a shared set of beliefs and values, shared history, customs and traditions that bring together families and communities. Culture affects the way we live on a day to day basis and the way we see the world around us. This toolkit acknowledges that understanding other people's cultural and identity needs can be difficult, especially when they are very different from your own; but it aims to help you think these situations through better – a better understanding of culture can help homecare workers avoid making assumptions and causing confusion or offence.

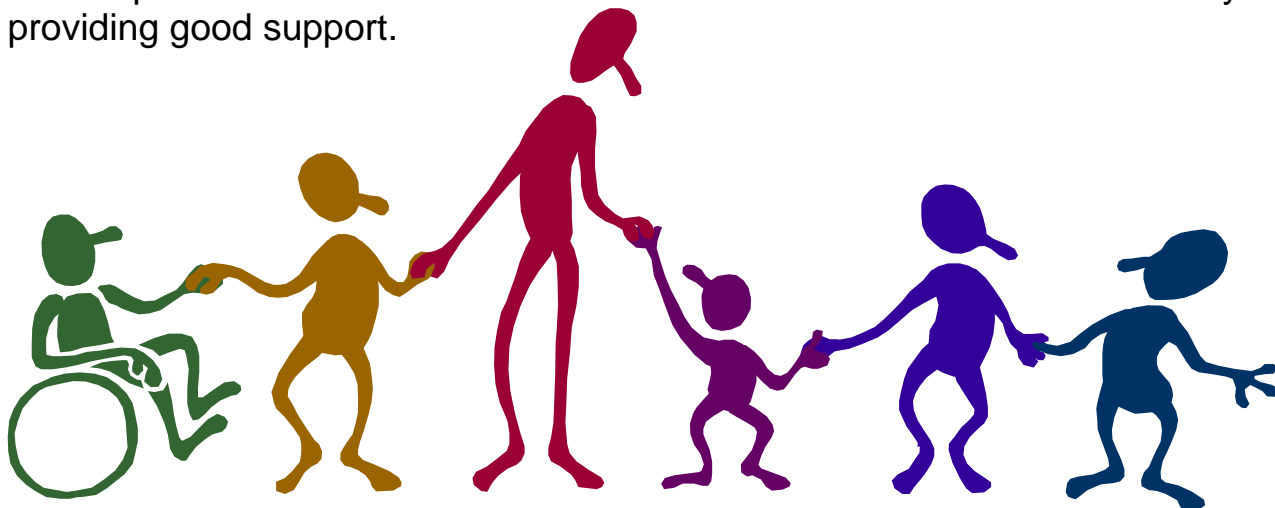
Culture is:

“The way of life of a group of people consisting of conventional patterns of thought and behaviour, including values, beliefs, rules of conduct, political organisation, economic activity, and the like, which are passed on from one generation to the next by learning and not by biological inheritance.”

The Social Services Encyclopedia 1985.

Good homecare support will allow more people to live independently, with dignity, and feel treated with respect. However, we do know that unfortunately this is not always the case and sometimes services are unavailable or inappropriate.

Discrimination is a reality for some people, and there is evidence that the needs of a number of people have not always been met adequately. This toolkit therefore, aims to support in delivering within the framework for both homecare workers and homecare agencies. It is designed for addressing cultural issues in your day to day work, carrying out risk or moving and handling assessments, writing care plans or providing personal care or support. It is not intended to provide all of the answers to every issue faced, but will help you to understand how important an individual's culture is to them and therefore enable you in providing good support.



Why is it so important to meet people's cultural needs?

Culture is at the heart of how we see ourselves and how we describe our own identity. How we see ourselves has an impact on how we feel and get involved with other people and the world around us. Culture also impacts on our self-esteem, self-worth, confidence and our ability to make choices and exercise our rights.

Where a homecare service is not able to support an individual with their cultural needs it becomes exclusive and inflexible. This can have a very detrimental impact on the health and well being of the very people who need support.

It seems appropriate here to remind people of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry report (1999) which said that: "It is Incumbent upon every institution to examine their policies and practices to guard against disadvantaging any section of our community". Macpherson defined institutional racism as:

"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping, which disadvantaged ethnic minority people."

It seems very important here to also remember that culture is not something only Black and Minority Ethnic people have, as it applies to ALL people including white communities.

Understanding our limitations

It is important to consider that we are not cultural experts and therefore, it is essential that the cultural needs of service users / carers should be clarified at the earliest stage. Many myths and misunderstandings can exist around culture, and care must be taken not to impose our cultural beliefs during a care planning process. Also, care must be taken to avoid making assumptions about a service users / carers needs without checking these are correct.

Key National Equality and Diversity Law

Legislation relating to various aspects of equality impacts on service delivery. Within Hertfordshire County Council, all policies and guidelines are intended to make sure we meet our legal requirements. Listed below are some of the key pieces of legislation it is vital to be aware of.

The Human Rights Act 1998

This Act came into force in October 2000. It allows people in Britain to claim rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (1950) in UK courts and tribunals. The Act imposes a positive duty on all public authorities to ensure that respect for human rights is at the core of their daily work, and to act in a way that positively reinforces the principals of the conventions rights -

- Right to life – article 2
- Right to liberty and security – article 5
- Right to a fair trial – article 6
- Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment – article 3
- No punishment without the law – article 7
- Right to respect for a private and family life – article 8
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion – article 9
- Freedom of expression – article 10
- Right to marry and have a family – article 12
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property – article 1
- Right to education – article 2
- Right to free elections – article 3
- Right not to be subjected to the death penalty – article 1

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

The Race Relations Act 1976, places a specific duty on the provision of service providers not to discriminate.

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 also places a positive and enforceable duty to have due regard to the following –

- Promote good relations between different racial groups
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This was introduced to end the discrimination that disabled people can face and covers the following –

- Services providers must not refuse to offer a disabled person a service.
- They cannot offer a disabled person a lower standard of service.
- Service providers must not offer a service on less favourable terms.
- Service providers must make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access or use services.

Disability Discrimination Act Dec 2005

This amends the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. Changes include -

- A new positive duty to promote disability equality by considering the needs of disabled people at every stage in the decision making process
- Extension of the Disability Discrimination Act to cover almost all activities of the public sector including within the definition of disability, people diagnosed with HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer

Employment Equality Regulations 2003

The new Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 came into force in December 2003. The new law means that employers are prevented from treating any staff less favourably on the grounds of sexual orientation or religious belief.

What about positive action?

A homecare agency is allowed to take positive action under the Sex Discrimination Act and Race Relations Act. Employers can take positive action for staff of a specific racial group or particular gender to redress the effects of previous inequality or discrimination. This is not the same as positive discrimination, which is illegal. Employers are allowed to encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, but appointments must be made entirely on merit with all applicants treated equally. Employers can also provide training for a particular group only, to redress imbalance or under representation.

Contract Standards

Also, it is important to remember that as part of Hertfordshire County Councils contract standards for homecare providers, standard seven outlines the following –

‘The agency provides a professional service, respecting the rights of service users; and does not discriminate in the provision of services or its employment practices because of race, religion, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation’.

1. The agency has a clear written policy that seeks to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and actively promotes equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, and good relations between people of different racial groups.
2. The agency has procedures in place for dealing with discriminatory attitudes or remarks made by care workers, service users and their carers.
3. Services are provided in accordance with the needs of the service users and carers, including those relating to race and gender.
4. Where the experience and resources of the agency are not adequate to meet these needs, specialist input and advice is sought from appropriate sources including, where necessary, minority community resources.
5. Services are provided to take account of the physical social and emotional needs of service users.
6. Services are provided in ways that encourage service user participation and respect choice.
7. Information about service users is dealt with sensitively and confidentiality is maintained.
8. Individual records are kept which include: Name, address, date of birth, next of kin, GP, ethnic origin or religion, copy of the care plan, risk assessment, moving and handling assessment, local authority care manager (where appropriate), details of other services involved and contracts if appropriate.

The Provider must have a written policy that sets out guidance on equal opportunities, sex discrimination, harassment and bullying. In addition they must provide their employees with appropriate training and guidance on equal opportunity to ensure that their staff are protected as far as possible from the risk of violence, threatening and abusive behaviour from service users and / or other employees. The provider shall share this policy if requested for Hertfordshire County Council's approval. If in the opinion of the Contract Manager the providers equality policy fails to adequately address equality issues, Adult Care Services (ACS) may offer support and training to align these policies with our own standards and expectations.

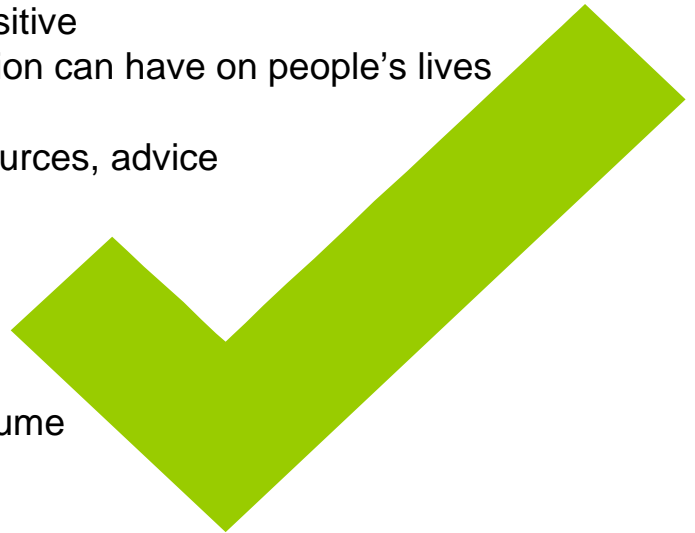
If a member of the Providers staff should be subject to personal harassment by a Service User and the provider considers the incident to be of such a serious nature as to put their Homecare Worker at risk, the provider should contact the Care Manager who will convene a case conference with all appropriate parties in order to agree how to proceed.

All other harassment complaints dealt with by the Provider should be reported on a quarterly basis as part of the agreed reporting cycle with ACS.

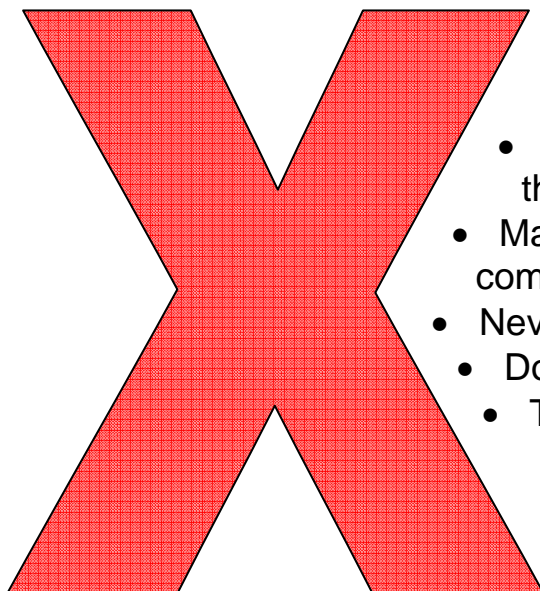
What Makes a Culturally Competent Homecare Worker?

A good, culturally competent homecare worker needs to be committed to delivering services that are fit for purpose. The following list gives some ways in which homecare workers are expected to demonstrate cultural competence.

- Is aware of different people's beliefs and values
- Values other people's differences as positive
- Understands the impact that discrimination can have on people's lives
- Communicates clearly and listens too!
- Knows where to go for information, resources, advice and knowledge
- Challenges bad practice and discrimination
- Understands personal limitations and acknowledges personal prejudice
- Is someone who asks and does not assume

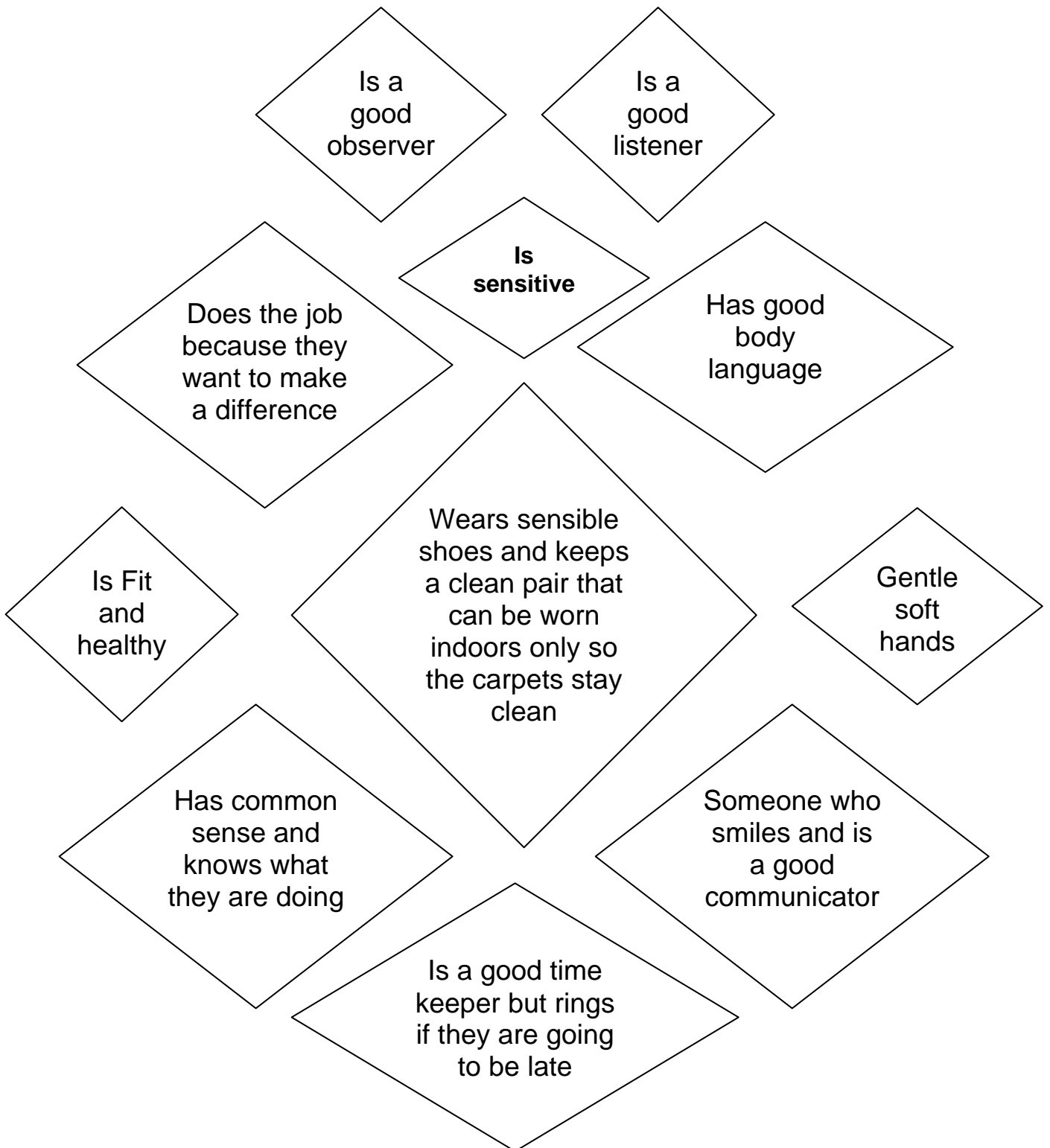


What Makes a Culturally Incompetent Homecare Worker?



- Has poor awareness of different cultures and religions
- Sees other people's way of life as of less value than their own
- Makes no attempt to overcome barriers of communication
- Never asks but makes assumptions
- Does not challenge poor practice
- Thinks that culture is about people who are Black or Minority Ethnic

**What Users and Carers have told us makes
a good homecare worker**



Some Things to Remember

Eating Habits

- Individuals may have different preferences for the way they eat as well as the food itself
- Using hands may be preferred to cutlery or different utensils may be used, e.g. the use of chop-sticks or specially designed eating aids
- Individuals may observe the right hand / left hand rule of hygiene in which the left hand is used for personal cleaning and therefore not used to eat with

Modesty, Privacy and Appearance

- It is important that people are given a choice in how they dress.
- Everyone has different preferences for what is comfortable and appropriate to them.

Personal Care

What is considered to be good hygiene varies amongst individuals and cultures. It is therefore important to check out the individual's needs and wishes. The following should be considered -

- Preference to wash in running water.
- Bathing/washing by same gender staff.
- Use of bidet, wet wipes or a water bottle in toilet.

Skin Care

- Skin can differ in texture, type and colour. It can require specific creams, lotions and oils. It is therefore important to find out about individual skin care needs.
- Skin care can be a reflection of the care given and can have a big effect on an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem. Poorly cared for skin can be prone to other problems like chapping, excessive dryness and lesions.



Hair Care

- It is also important to be aware that there are differences in hair care needs. For some individuals this can include the use of certain hair oils.
- Service users should be enabled to share personal needs, choices, wishes and preferences. It is important to be aware that hair may be worn in different ways and assistance maybe needed in this.

Jewellery

For some people this can be very symbolic, therefore it is important to be sensitive. Jewellery like wedding rings, necklaces and bracelets should not be removed without prior consent from the individual or their family.

Religious objects or symbols

These should be treated with respect and should not be removed without consent. Some examples are:

- Prayer mat.
- Prayer book.
- Head covering e.g. turban, veil, skull caps and scarves.
- Holy beads, rosary.
- Objects worn on the body, e.g. five K's of Sikhism.
- Washing facilities e.g. Muslim people may wish to wash before prayer.



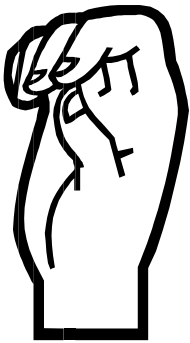
Family

Family relationships and concepts of family may also vary across cultures, for example within some traditional extended families terms like 'uncle', 'aunt' and 'cousin' may be used to describe relationships with 'unrelated' people.

Gender Differences

Family duties and responsibilities, roles within a family, processes of decision making within families, and values and beliefs about relationships and sexual conduct will all be unique to different communities and families.

Verbal Communication



- Accent pronunciation, jargon, slang, humour, tone of voice etc will all differ across cultures. It is important to gain an insight into how cross cultural communication can be affected by what is said, how it is said, and the message intended and received.
- Research in Hertfordshire has highlighted increased satisfaction for non English speaking service users when homecare workers have learnt a few words in their preferred language. This helps service users feel valued and respected and actively demonstrates a commitment to enhancing effective communication. The hotlink below shows a series of short films showing homecare workers how to say '10 key words' in Punjabi, Gujarati and Urdu.

To view please click on <http://www.hertsdirect.org/caresupport/carersupport/> and then click on 'Support and Advice for Carers' and then 'Black and Minority Ethnic Carers'.

It would be good practice to apply the '10 key word' concept on all non English speaking service users and not just those speaking the above languages.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Use of gestures, body language, eye contact, gaze, touch, smell, appearance and dress can give messages. It is important to be aware of how our perceptions and understanding of certain things can be different across cultures. How we see things, may not be how others see them.
- Following on from the '10 key words' concept in the Verbal Communication section above, for those service users who may be non verbal, (for example service users that use British Sign Language), learning a few key 'signs' would enhance effective communication and should be encouraged.



Symbolism

Uniform, religious items, wedding rings, certain colours, flags, national symbols etc, can all mean different things to different people. It is important to be aware of this without making assumptions.

Cultural Stereotypes

Do not assume that what applies to one service user / carer will automatically apply to another service user / carer of the same religious or cultural group. There are general rules and principles that may apply but incorrect assumptions about individuals cultural needs indicates that we have not dealt with our stereotypes about certain groups of people all sharing the same beliefs, cultural needs and patterns of behaviour.

Language and Terminology

The terminology set out below gives a general guide. Opinions and views on any particular word may differ, and meanings of words may vary.

If you are unsure of the appropriate term to use, ask the individual how they wish to be identified.

Black

An inclusive term that refers to all ethnic groups who have common experiences of discrimination on the basis of their skin colour.

African Caribbean

This term is more widely used and accepted. It does not cover all people of Caribbean backgrounds who may be from a diversity of backgrounds.

African

This term is acceptable and often used as self – identification. Many people prefer to be known in national terms eg Nigerian.

Asian

This is a collective term used to apply to all those from the Indian Subcontinent. Some people may prefer to identify themselves in terms of their country of origin, religion of origin or their religion.

British

This term refers to Citizenship. It does not relate to ethnic or racial origin, and does not mean the same as White, English or Christian.

Coloured

This term is generally disliked and felt by many to be offensive and patronising.

Oriental

This term is generally classed as racist and offensive.

Half- Caste

Although until recently this term was widely used it is considered to be generally offensive.

Mixed Race.

This term can appear negative. It is better to use terms such as 'mixed heritage', 'multi racial' or 'mixed cultural heritage'.

Definitions

The following definitions show how different types of attitudes, behaviour or treatment results in individuals being treated unequally or unfairly.

Prejudice

Literally means pre-judging someone, knowing next to nothing about them but jumping to conclusions because of some characteristic, like their appearance.

Stereotyping

Making broad generalisations about particular groups of people based on prejudices and expecting all members of that group to think and behave identically.

Discrimination

Occurs when someone is treated less favourably on grounds, for example, of their gender, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sexuality, marital

status or responsibility for dependants. Race, sex and disability legislation highlight that discrimination falls into three categories: direct, indirect and victimisation.

Direct discrimination

This occurs when an individual or people from a particular group, are less likely to be able to comply with an apparently neutral requirement or condition (which applies to everyone) because it disproportionately disadvantages an individual, or members of an ethnic group, and where it cannot be objectively justified.

For example: a requirement that all employees or pupils must not wear headgear could exclude Sikh men and boys who wear a turban or Pakistani women and girls who wear a hijab (headscarf), in accordance with their cultural and religious practice.

Victimisation

This occurs where an individual is treated less favourably because they have complained about discrimination or supported someone else who has.

Racist Incident

A Racist Incident is any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or and other person.

Institutional Racism

“The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping, which disadvantaged Ethnic Minority people” , (Macpherson 1999).

Managing Diversity

The basic concept of managing diversity accepts that the workforce consists of a diverse population of people. The diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences, which will include factors such as sex, age, background, race, disability, personality and work style. It is founded on the premises that harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met, (Kandola and Fullerton 1998).

QUIZ – Valuing Difference

Valuing your own culture and identity gives you confidence, valuing other peoples culture and identity helps give them confidence and helps them feel valued. Providing good homecare support is about respecting needs and beliefs which may be very different from your own.

You can try the exercise below with a small group of homecare workers. Answer the questions on your own and then compare them with the rest of the group. Your answers will be based on your personal identity. Comparing the results will help highlight how different we all are from each other but also that it doesn't mean we can't get on or have things in common, despite your differences.

Identify 3 things for each of the following:-

1. You like about people

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

2. You dislike about people

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

3. You feel emotionally about (for example anger, happy, sad)

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

4. The way you look

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

5. Your personality (for example outgoing, shy)

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

6. Things you like to do

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

7. Things that are really important to you

- a) .
- b) .
- c) .

Now share what you have written

Case Studies

Scenario One

Mrs Khan needs personal care support which will include bathing (this also means washing her hair) dressing and support on and off the commode. Mrs Khan speaks only Urdu and lives with her daughter and son-in-law who both work full time – they both speak fluent English.

She would like a 9am visit and a 5pm one. These times are important to her as they fit in with her life long prayer times – as a Muslim it is important to her that she has a wash before praying.

- What do you think homecare workers need to consider in terms of providing the personal care for Mrs Khan?
- How do you think communication needs could be addressed between Mrs Khan and the homecare workers who will be supporting her?

Some things to consider regarding the above issues –

- Mrs Khan may have particular oils or creams to use when washing her hair or her skin so it is important to check. Also, due to the intimate nature of the care it will be highly likely that a female homecare worker would be preferable. Please do check to identify her preference.
- It is good practice to ensure that for practising Muslims who are supported in using commode to check that the commode does not face Mecca which is the holy city for Muslims and is the direction in which they pray.
- For many Muslims and some members of the wider Asian community it is critical that they have a wash before prayer times – such considerations should be taken by providers when arranging the times that support is given.
- Learning a few key words in the language of a service user who does not speak English can enhance communication and increase service user satisfaction. Please refer to 'verbal communication' section page 12.

Scenario Two

Vera is 98 yrs old and lives with her husband Fred who is 96 yrs old. Lately, Vera has been sent some male homecare workers from the agency; she requires the support for intimate personal care. She has not undressed in front of any male, other than her husband for the last 65 years and feels embarrassed. The agency did not ring Vera before sending the male homecare workers to say that someone other than the usual female homecare workers would be visiting her and would she be happy with a male homecare worker. Vera is worried about telling the agency how she feels – she does not want to be seen as a trouble causer.

Also, Fred has noticed that sometimes mud from a particular homecare workers shoes gets left on the carpet. As the carpet is beige this can be a nuisance as any dirt shows up and is very hard to remove. Fred tells the homecare worker about this.

- What do you feel the agency should have done before sending Vera a new but also male homecare worker?
- What do you think the agency could do to address Fred's concerns about the carpet?

Some things to consider regarding the above issues –

- Providers should always ensure that where a different homecare worker is supporting a service user for the first time that they ring the service user to make them aware that a new homecare worker will be visiting them and also, if they are of a different sex to make sure that the service user is also made aware of this.
- Agencies are expected to provide careworkers with overshoes should the need arise – certainly in the above scenario it would resolve the issue of the dirty carpet. The other practical alternative would be if careworkers have a spare pair of clean shoes that they change into at arrival of the service user's home.

Scenario Three

Jo is 15 yrs old. His mum Katrina suffers from severe depression. Jo leaves for school everyday at around 8.30am which is the same time that the homecare worker should arrive to help Katrina take her medication and get her breakfast. However for the last few months the homecare workers have been arriving at about 10am and have not phoned to say they will be late. On three occasions nobody has turned up from the agency which Jo has only noticed on his return from school as Katrina's morning tablet is untouched. It is vital for Katrina's health that she has her tablets at roughly the same time every day.

- What potential impact could the above have on Jo who is a young carer but also a main carer for his mother? Consider the impact this could have on Jo's education?
- What impact could the above have on Katrina?

Some things to consider regarding the above issue –

- This could result in the young carer being less able to concentrate on their education due to worry about whether the service user is getting their medication on time as well as her breakfast – eventually this could even result in the young carer waiting at home until the homecare worker turns up and therefore taking time off from school. It could also have a negative impact on the young carer as they may feel less able to spend time with friends at a social level or get involved in out of school activities, due to feeling unable to leave the service user.
- For the service user it is vital that she has her medication around the same time daily. If homecare workers are running over fifteen minutes late they must ring the service user to inform them of this. It would be helpful if homecare workers and agency managers have an awareness of different care needs in order to fully understand how they can best meet needs but also to better understand the negative impact that an inconsistent service may have on an individual and their family. Such situations confirm the importance of good continuity of service as well as the need to be culturally competent and sensitive in the way we work.

Resource List

There is a huge amount of information telling you about different cultures and equalities on the internet. Below is a list of some of the key sites where you can get more information -

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk

www.statistics.gov.uk

www.lg-employers.gov.uk/diversity/

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

www.chinatown-online.co.uk

www.hindu.org

www.sikhs.org

www.bahai.org

www.islamia.com

www.cofe.anglican.org

www.methodist.org.uk

www.somethingjewish.co.uk

www.africana.com

<http://buddhanet.net>

If you require further information on this toolkit, or have any questions about it please contact me as below:

Shazia Butt – Involvement Worker for Black and Minority Ethnic Users and Carers, Users and Carers Team, Adult Care Services, Hertfordshire County Council . To contact ring – 01707 280659

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