Communicating with people with learning disabilities
Welcome

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Head of Profession - Learning Disability Nursing
Close your eyes

Take a deep breath

In through your nose

Out through your mouth

In ... Out..

Imagine your self lying on the beach

Suddenly you become ill

What are your feelings; what do you want to know, how will you make yourself understood
Aim of the session:

• To clarify understanding of informed consent and accessible communication for people with learning disabilities
What is Learning disabilities?

Significantly below average intellectual ability

In addition, significant difficulty in 2 or more areas of following areas

- Daily living skills
- Personal care
- Mobility
- Work and leisure
- Psychological well-being
- Communication
- Emotional
- Socialising
Learning Disabilities:

Environment  Core Ability

Functioning and support
Is acquired before the age of 18 years

Not static, people can always learning more
The environments and the support people receive can be changed to reduce the impact of a person's learning disability on their everyday life.
What is informed consent?

Informed - knowing the facts

Consent - To give permission, voluntarily, agreement, compliance

Oxford English Dictionary
Possessing sufficient information relevant to the decision to be made

Having the capacity to make a decision and understand the consequences of the decision

Making the decision voluntarily and free from coercion

Arscott (1997)
For consent to be valid it needs to have the following elements

- Given by a competent person
- Be given voluntarily
- The person needs to be adequately informed
Capacity:

Able to receive and retain information

Able to believe the information

Able to use the information to make a decision

Able to communicate the decision
There will be a presumption against incapacity

Capacity should not be confused with the health Professionals assessment of the reasonableness of the persons decision
Need to be adequately informed?
What is adequate?
Benefits and risks of…
Explain what will occur…
Implications if don't agree and effects on life….
Any alternatives…..
How

Ensure all practicable steps are taken to maximise the decision making process

Ensure all practicable steps are taken to ensure understanding
Understanding; the hierarchy of symbolic development

Most easily understood

Harder to understand
Hierarchy of symbolic development

Real *Cup*

Miniature *Cup*

Photograph of actual *cup*

Photograph of any *cup*

Line drawing of a cup

Makaton sign for *cup*

Word *cup*
Poor communication, lack of information and appropriate support are some of the problems faced by people with learning disabilities accessing acute and primary care services (Mencap 1998)
Actions needed

Further training

Learning disability training for all
Understanding of communication with people with learning disabilities
Identification of champions in the workplace
Create further links with the Community learning disability teams
Communicating with people with learning disabilities

Speak clearly; short words- no jargon
Use short sentences
Don’t give too much information at once
Break down the information
List the important points
Write it down
Use pictures to help make the information clear
Allow time for the person to think about what is being said
Check understanding

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Make your information easier to understand
Use a plain font Arial is good, point 16 and above
Do not use fancy letter and fonts
Important points should be in bold
Write clearly using lower sentence cases
DO NOT WRITE IN CAPITALS
If using coloured pens, use strong dark colours
Do not use shiny or brightly coloured paper
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