CHCDIS009
Facilitate ongoing skills development using a person-centred approach

Learner guide

aspire
learning resources

Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Release 1, version 1.1	April 2017	First release
Release 1, version 1.2	January 2019	Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program

Contact details

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Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCDIS009 Facilitate ongoing skills development using a person-centred approach*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples and case studies	▶ Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	▶ Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
Summary	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Reading	▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements
Teamwork	▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Making decisions	▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions
Problem-solving	▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome
Innovation and creation	▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Identify individual skill development needs	1A Identify the person's skill development needs using a person-centred approach	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1B Document assessment outcomes according to organisation guidelines	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1C Identify skill development opportunities in collaboration with person and relevant others	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1D Make referrals to other staff or specialist services	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
Topic 2 Plan person-centred, ongoing skill development	2A Engage the person with disability in identifying their learning goals	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2B Identify learning strategies to address the person's goals	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2C Develop formal person-centred skill development or maintenance activities with relevant others	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2D Document ongoing skill development or maintenance in the person's individual plan	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident

Topic	Key outcomes		Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3 Implement person-centred, ongoing skill development strategies	3A	Work with the person to implement ongoing skill development strategies in a respectful, motivating and empowering manner	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3B	Ensure individual skill development or maintenance plan is implemented consistently	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3C	Access and use equipment and resources to facilitate learning	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3D	Document outcomes in the person's individual plan	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
Topic 4 Evaluate skill development and review plan	4A	Monitor the person's development and provide feedback about their' progress towards learning objectives	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	4B	Review records and update plan to meet changing needs	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	4C	Identify opportunities for ongoing skill development	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
Topic 5 Use incidental learning to enhance skill development	5A	Identify informal learning opportunities and encourage learning	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	5B	Provide prompt and constructive advice in an appropriate format	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	5C	Provide encouragement when the person takes initiative	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	5D	Withdraw support to an appropriate level to encourage experiential learning	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Identify the person's skill development needs using a person-centred approach

1B Document assessment outcomes according to organisation guidelines

1C Identify skill development opportunities in collaboration with the person and relevant others

1D Make referrals to other staff or specialist services

Identify individual skill development needs

A key aspect of a community services support worker's job is to empower people to achieve their true potential and take their rightful place in the community. Your role is to develop a person-centred plan, working with the person to identify their individual goals and assess their learning and development needs. Once you have helped the person through this process, you can identify skill development or skill maintenance opportunities to enhance their learning. Where necessary, the person's family or carer, other staff members or specialist health professionals may be involved. You must always follow organisation guidelines regarding the documents and processes required to make a referral to other services.

1A Identify the person's skill development needs using a person-centred approach

As a community services support worker, it is important that you assist people with support needs to achieve their potential and to have a meaningful place in the community. You can do this by developing a person-centred plan. This means working with the person to identify their goals and assess their learning and development needs. Once you have begun to help the individual through this process, you can identify skill development or skill maintenance opportunities to enhance their learning. In some cases it is appropriate to involve other staff members or specialist health professionals.

It is important to follow organisation guidelines and processes required to make a referral to other staff or specialist services. You must always be sure to properly document assessment outcomes.

The social model of disability

The social model of disability aims to remove the barriers limiting the life choices of people with disability. Adapting attitudes, communication, and physical and social environments to accommodate impairment enables people with disability to rightfully participate on an equal basis with other members of the community.

The model says that 'disability' is caused by the way society is structured, rather than by a person's impairment or individual differences. The model aims to change society in order to accommodate people living with impairment. The United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) marks an official shift in attitude towards people with disability and approaches to disability matters.
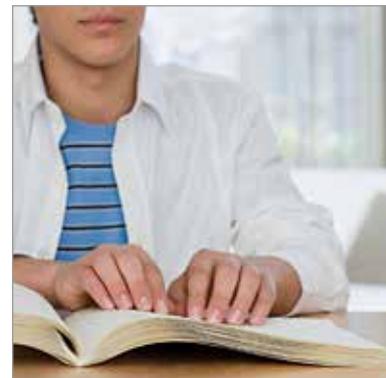
National Standards for Disability Services

The *National Standards for Disability Services* (National Standards) were endorsed by all state, territory and Commonwealth governments on 18 December 2013.

A copy of the National Standards can be accessed from the Department of Social Services website at: http://aspirelr.link/national-standards-disability-services

Here are descriptions of the six National Standards that apply to disability service providers.

1. Rights

▶ Your service must promote individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making, and actively prevent abuse, harm, neglect and violence.

2. Participation and inclusion

▶ Your service must work with individuals and families, friends and carers to promote opportunities for meaningful participation and active inclusion in society.

3. Individual outcomes

▶ Your organisation's services and supports must be assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed to build on individual strengths and enable individuals to reach their goals.

4. Feedback and complaints

▶ You must ensure regular feedback is sought and used to inform individual and organisation-wide service reviews and improvement.

5. Service access

▶ Your service must manage access, commencement and leaving a service in a transparent, fair and equal and responsive way.

6. Service management

▶ Your service must have effective and accountable service management and leadership to maximise outcomes for individuals.

Person-centred practice

The National Standards define 'person-centred practice' as services and supports that are focused on the individual and their needs, strengths, interests, and goals. Person-centred practices ensure that people with disability lead and direct the services and supports they use.

Person-centred practice is responsive to individual differences, cultural diversity and the preferences of people in need of support. It is easy to navigate for disability support workers so you can provide care in the most favourable environment.

Operating principles of person-centred practice

Focus on the individual
Get to know the person with disability beyond any physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment and ensure the individual is the focus of the planning process.

Share responsibilities
Partner with the person in setting goals, planning care and making decisions about treatment or outcomes.

Identify and foster natural supports
Encourage the person to identify and foster natural supports including family, friends, community connections or others in their social network.

Provide accessible and flexible services
Meet individual needs by being sensitive to values, preferences and expressed needs, providing accurate information so the person can make informed choices.

Work as a team
Work as a team to minimise duplication, explore informal and formal support options, and provide the person with a key contact at the disability service.

Maintain a person-centred environment
Enable disability support workers to be person-centred in the way they work and how they maintain the physical, organisational or cultural environment.

Aims of a person-centred approach to a person's skill development needs

To understand the importance of facilitating skill development or skills maintenance for the people you support, you must first understand the theory of social role valorisation and the concept of person-centred planning.

Each of these theories is outlined below.

Social role valorisation

Social role valorisation is the theory of enhancing and protecting valued social roles for people who are disadvantaged. If a person's social role is not valued, they are less likely to have access to the benefits society has to offer and be devalued. For people with disabilities, this may include:

▶ a home of their own

▶ family and intimate relationships

▶ dignity, respect and a sense of belonging

▶ acceptance into the community

▶ opportunities for education and skill development.

Disability services aims to enhance the skills, knowledge and social image of people with disability as this increases the value the community places on them.

Person-centred approach

Because of social role valorisation, greater emphasis is placed on the individual. The person-centred approach requires that all people have an individual plan to meet their own set of goals and objectives. It acknowledges that not all people with disability have the same interests and therefore a range of service options must be available, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

This type of approach does not fund programs and assign people to them; rather, it funds people with disability and sets up services to meet their individual needs. Each person has their development needs assessed before a program can be put in place. This provides greater flexibility and wider choice for the individual.

Assess needs

Government community services organisations in each state and territory provide comprehensive guidance for disability services practitioners who want information about assessing people's needs and establishing skill development plans.

Steps for assessing a person's skill development needs

▶ Set individual goals.

▶ Assess what the person needs to be able to do to achieve these goals.

▶ Assess what they can already do.

▶ Draw up a skill development plan to bridge the skills the person currently has and those required to achieve their goal.

Job role and boundaries

While carrying out your job you may encounter a range of people and environments. You will also be required to work in different types of situations. It is important to identify the boundaries of your role.

Here are more details about these factors.

Role

▶ A person's individual plan identifies what support workers are required to do to help the person achieve their goals. This includes roles in which it is your job to supervise or directly provide personal care, home care, respite, or vocational or employment support. Keep in mind you may be working with the person either directly or indirectly to achieve their individual life goals.

Boundaries

▶ You need to check your job description, duty statement and your organisation's policy manual to identify the boundaries of your role. You may be asked to carry out a formal assessment or to report any changes in the person's behaviour, skill level, and emotional and psychological status. These actively contribute to an assessment of the person's current skill level and their development needs.

People

▶ You could work with a wide range of people including a variety of ages and those living in the community, living alone or sharing with a partner, family or carers. Some individuals may be living in supported community accommodation or funded residential facilities.

Environments

▶ While you may be predominantly working in personal care and home care, there are other environments you may encounter in the course of your work role. These could include an individual's own dwelling, shared households or group dwellings, specialist residential facilities, community centres, employment venues (supported or open) and/or agencies (such as community/government, voluntary, training).

Informal assessment process

Assessment of the skills of a person with disability whom you are supporting may occur formally or informally, either on your own or with other health professionals.

Informal assessment is usually your responsibility as you carry out the duties set out in the person's individual plan. The process includes noting any discrepancies between what the person could previously perform for themselves and what they can currently do.

When making an informal assessment, keep these strategies in mind.

Strategies for informal assessment:

▶ Observe behaviour and check against the person's individual plan.

▶ Ask the person to repeat the activity and observe if the outcome is the same.

▶ Ask the person to talk to you throughout the activity, prompting them if necessary.

▶ Observe the behaviour on a number of occasions under varying conditions.

▶ If there are any changes in skill level, discuss them with the person.

▶ Note any concerns, detailing possible environmental, interpersonal or internal influences.

▶ Request a formal review by the relevant health professionals.

Opportunities for skills assessment

Here are seven different informal opportunities for skills assessment.

Opportunities for skills assessment

1 **Life skills**
Can the person read a timetable and use public transport, handle money or prepare a meal?

Does the person have time management skills?

2 **Vocational skills**
Can the person read and write?

Does the person have any special talents or interests?

What was the person's past employment?

3 **Social skills**

Is the person comfortable meeting people for the first time?

Does the person speak up at public meetings or have close friends?

4 **Personal support skills**

Does the person know their rights or how to seek support for personal issues?

Does the person speak up for themselves in an assertive manner?

5 **Developing and maintaining relationships (including intimate relationships)**

Does the person have significant relationships with others?

Does the person treat you in a respectful and professional manner?

6 **Maintaining physical health (including sexual health)**

Does the person have good hygiene and grooming, good diet practices, regular medical check-ups and an exercise program?

Does the person display an understanding of sexual health issues?

7 **Safety**

Does the person understand issues involving personal safety?

Does the person have a smoke alarm and keep their house properly secured at night?

Formal assessment process

If you are a support worker without direct supervision and you provide home or personal care to people living in their own homes, it may not be within the scope of your role or job description to conduct a formal review of peoples' skills and competencies. Occasionally you may participate in the process alongside your supervisor.

However, if you are in a more senior or supervisory role, you may well have responsibility for undertaking assessments using a standard assessment tool or with the assistance of other relevant health professionals.

A formal review can be a multi-disciplined approach involving a number of health professionals and a range of methods.

Formal skills assessment tools

The most common formal skills assessment tool is a checklist. Typically it is designed around a skill set, such as life skills, vocational skills, personal care and hygiene. The checklist is used in conjunction with a question and answer technique. It may rate the person's performance on a scale or may classify skills as needing or not needing assistance.

Here is an example of what a skills assessment checklist may include.

ABC Disability Support Services Skills assessment checklist			
	Un-assisted	Some assistance required	Full assistance required
Prepares meals for self			
Eats and drinks independently			
Self-administers medication			
Showers and grooms self			
Is continent (bowel and bladder)			
Dresses and puts on shoes			
Transfers and bears weight			
Reads and understands documentation			
Communicates verbally			

Use different assessment tools

During the formal assessment process a number of different assessment tools may be used. For any of the assessment tools used, if you notice a change where the individual can no longer manage a task they used to be able to perform, then a re-assessment would be required. Ensure that it was not just a one-off by checking several times under different conditions and on several occasions.

Here are examples of some different assessment tools.

Different assessment tools

Lifestyle planning tools

A lifestyle planning tool helps a person establish life goals and then an action plan to achieve those goals. This process is usually carried out with help from a case manager, who uses it to determine what programs need to be put in place.

Most lifestyle planning tools identify where assistance is required and how success is measured. For those with low literacy or intellectual skills this may be done with pictures.

Assessment tools specific to the organisation

Your organisation may have its own assessment tools tailored to the services it offers. These tools identify what services may be relevant to the person. If you are working in education, recreation or vocational training, assessment tools are often competency-based.

Observation checklists

Observation checklists assess whether or not someone can demonstrate a set of skills. They are usually based on observation only, with very limited use of question and answer. Observation checklists are a useful quick reassessment method.

Specialised assessment tools

Specialised assessment tools are used by trained health professionals and often require the person to demonstrate a certain skill under controlled conditions. A variety of tools may be required to determine a person's skill in more complex areas. For example:

▶ a psychologist may use tests to measure cognitive ability and problem-solving

▶ a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or speech pathologist may use tests for fine motor skills and speech skill

▶ other technicians may assess vision and hearing.

Self-assessment tools

Self-assessment tools vary from simple checklists allowing a person to rate their own skill level, to comprehensive computer-based or interactive tools.

While some of these are not designed specifically for people with disabilities, they can still be used effectively in the privacy of a person's own home. This allows a support worker to help a person carry out their own skills assessment.

Example

Identify the person with disability's skill development needs using a person-centred approach

Don is 74 years old. He wants to stay in his own home as long as possible but is concerned about being a burden to his family.

Don works with an occupational therapist to design a checklist to assess the level of mobility he needs to stay in his own home. The checklist includes being able to get out of bed, walk 10 metres, get into and out of a chair and take himself to the bathroom.

Don is able to demonstrate all these activities to his occupational therapist. He gives the checklist to his support team so together they can assess his skill maintenance at regular intervals.

Practice task 1

1. What steps could you take to assess a person's skill development needs?

2. Describe informal opportunities you could use to assess a person's social skills.

3. Explain how observation checklists can be used to assess a person's skill development needs.

Click to complete Practice task 1

1B Document assessment outcomes according to organisation guidelines

While you may or may not be directly involved in the formal assessment process, you will be involved in facilitating the skill development or skill maintenance for people with support needs. You must understand the documentation that is required for this.

Keeping careful records from the initial assessment to the ongoing monitoring allows workers to document both informal and formal assessment outcomes within organisational guidelines.

The formal assessment process

Every service provider must have a formal assessment process. This is a requirement of the *National Standards for Disability Services* and a condition of funding. Formal assessment is usually carried out by a supervisor or a case manager before any services are put in place. Experienced support workers may, on occasion, also be directly involved in the process.

Formal assessment generally has five steps.

Step 1

The individual, or someone acting on their behalf, contacts the organisation and requests services.

Step 2

A supervisor or case manager visits the individual and conducts an assessment. This may be a skill-based assessment using a standard checklist, or it may consist of a life goals assessment and an action plan. Information gathered is recorded and a file is created. Additional observations may be recorded as a file note.

Step 3

The supervisor should then draw up a service contract and an individual plan for the person. Once the contract is signed, it becomes a legal agreement for the services to be provided.

Step 4

An individual plan setting out the person's goals and the support services to be provided to support these goals may then be implemented and staff can be rostered accordingly.

Alternatively, there could be a learning plan that records the person's skill development or skill maintenance goals. It would usually have:

▶ a set of learning goals the person has agreed to and a possible time frame

▶ an action plan for each goal, detailing the steps involved to achieve the goal, the resources required to complete each step and the evidence to demonstrate competence.

Step 5

Any variation to this individual plan must be documented. This may also require a variation to the services agreement.

Contents of a learning plan

The template for a learning plan will vary between organisations as the people they provide support to will vary.

Here is how one learning plan template organises information. Read the learning plan that was created for Jody.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">ABC Disability Support Services</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Name: Jodie McLean</td><td colspan="3">Commencement date: 29 October 2015</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Learning objective:
To be able to undertake weekly shopping for the groceries for the shared house.</td><td colspan="3">Links to personal goals:
Greater independence. Life skills.</td></tr>
<tr><th>Skills or knowledge to be learnt</th><th>Action plan</th><th>Person/s responsible</th><th>End date</th><th>Evidence</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Planning a weekly menu</td><td>Gain information on nutrition</td><td>Dietitian</td><td rowspan="3">30 Nov</td><td>Jodie explains basis of good nutrition</td></tr>
<tr><td>Plan menu for the week</td><td>Residents</td><td rowspan="2">Jodie can plan menus over a one-month period</td></tr>
<tr><td>Check with others to see all needs are met</td><td>Support worker</td></tr>
<tr><td>Budgeting</td><td>Check money in the kitty and the budget available</td><td>Support worker</td><td>30 Nov</td><td>Jodie demonstrates she can count the money in the kitty at the start of each week</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Making a list</td><td>Using menu to make a list of groceries</td><td>Support worker</td><td rowspan="4">30 Nov</td><td>Jodie can make up a list each week</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group similar items together</td><td>Support worker</td><td rowspan="3">List should come within budget and not include items already in cupboards</td></tr>
<tr><td>Check cupboard for what you already have and cross these off list</td><td>Support worker</td></tr>
<tr><td>Estimate cost and check against budget</td><td>Supper worker</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Shopping at supermarket</td><td>Collect items from list</td><td>Support worker</td><td rowspan="3">30 Dec</td><td rowspan="3">Jodie shopped unassisted on three occasions</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tick off items as you go</td><td>Support worker</td></tr>
<tr><td>When you have all items go to checkout to pay</td><td>Support worker</td></tr>
<tr><td>Handling money</td><td>Pay the correct amount and collect your change</td><td>Support worker</td><td>30 Dec</td><td>Jodie handles money accurately.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Resources required (e.g. technology, equipment): None</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Assistance required: Support worker to demonstrate and role model, dietitian to provide information in accessible form.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Evaluation methods: role-play, simulation, demonstration</td></tr>
</table>

Additional documents

In addition to checklists, service agreements and individual plans, there are two other essential documents that are used to record the assessment process.

Forms and reports

Reassessment request forms or incident reports

Where a skills assessment is an informal observation process but it is not linked to the person's learning plan, you need to document your observations on the relevant form. If you are working as a support worker without direct supervision, this may be by using an incident report form. You may report an incident you have observed or a concern you may have arising from your observations. Some organisations have a separate form to request a reassessment.

A supervisor may choose to undertake a formal reassessment and then negotiate changes to the person's individual plan.

Communication books

Support workers need to communicate their observations to other support workers working with an individual. These observations, including when an incident report form is lodged, should be documented in the communication book.

The communication book is an open document for all to see. It is to communicate with other staff and family members and will be seen by the individual themselves. Make sure you write in plain English and record only what you have seen. Do not express personal opinions. This is a legal document that could be produced in court.

Example

Document assessment outcomes according to organisation guidelines

Claire is a support worker who is rostered to assist Ian with home care once a week. Before Claire commences working with Ian, she is told that Ian is nonverbal as a result of an acquired brain injury.

Claire and Ian get on well and over the months establish a rapport. Once he feels comfortable with Claire, Ian starts to communicate using single words or short phrases such as 'lunch', 'getting tired' and 'bathroom dirty' to express his needs.

Claire is pleased they are getting on well and realises after this has been happening for a couple of weeks that she should document in Ian's learning plan that Ian can speak when he feels comfortable with people.

Claire records on the learning plan the times that Ian speaks and under what circumstances. She also notifies her supervisor by phone and makes an entry in the communication book for other support workers.

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Practice task 2

1. Identify two ways you could document a person's assessment outcomes.

2. Explain how communication books could be used to document a person's development needs.

Click to complete Practice task 2

1C Identify skill development opportunities in collaboration with the person and relevant others

Once a person has gone through a development or maintenance assessment, you must follow through and identify opportunities for skill development in the specific areas highlighted by the assessment process.

This should not be limited to formal training opportunities, nor to activities that are specifically for people with disability. Current thinking in disability services emphasises the importance of community integration, with the person with disability taking their rightful place in the community, and community education and capacity building.

Under these philosophies, it is desirable to empower the person by accessing and utilising social structures and services that are in place for the broader community. This has the twofold effect of community education and individual skill development.

Sources of opportunities

Having identified the development needs from the person's skills assessment and thought about the strategies that the person may use, you need to work with them to identify sources of information to implement these support strategies and learning opportunities.

Sources of information about training opportunities may include:

▶ other support workers or supervisors, case managers and relevant health professionals

▶ family members or peer groups

▶ advocacy groups or rehabilitation services

▶ schools, special schools, TAFE and tertiary institutions

▶ the internet

▶ local directories of services, clubs, activities and course providers

▶ the local newspaper

▶ clubs and sporting groups, art and performance groups, and specific-interest services

▶ services specific to the person's disability.

Strategies for identifying opportunities

For each of the main personal skill sets there are strategies that can be used to identify opportunity for development. Life skills, for example, can be taught in different settings using different techniques.

The following table shows a range of strategies you may use to identify life skills development opportunities, and examples for each strategy.

Strategy	Life skills
Formal training	Time management training Cooking class
Role modelling	Support workers and supervisor role model work–life balance
Demonstration	Meal preparation
Skills mastery	Practise using public transport
Contextualisation	Problem-solve how to get to the day centre
Drama and role-play	Role-play getting breakfast
Peer education	Share information on decision-making

Further strategies for identifying skill development opportunities

Different people will have differing needs for skill development in the following areas: vocational, social, personal support, relationships, and health and safety skills.

Here is an example of skill development opportunities for learning vocational and social skills.

Vocational skills
Formal training: TAFE courses
Role modelling: support worker and supervisor role model study skills and research skills
Demonstration: writing a letter
Skills mastery: learn to use a computer
Contextualisation: fill in job application or write a resume
Drama and role-play: role-play a job interview
Peer education: share information on part-time job opportunities

Social skills

Formal training: etiquette classes, behavioural sciences

Role modelling: support worker and supervisor model public behaviour when taking the person out

Demonstration: how to order a meal in a cafe

Skills mastery: practise speaking in public

Contextualisation: make a telephone call to a friend

Drama and role-play: role-play meeting someone for the first time

Peer education: share information on communicating with strangers

Capacity-building opportunities

Most local communities provide educational and recreational opportunities for people with disability to build their skills and knowledge, increase confidence and improve process skills such as problem solving, consensus building and collaboration.

Capacity-building strategies provide opportunities for participants to obtain new information and establish new networks that enhance their active and equitable participation in the community.

Here are some examples of useful capacity-building strategies.

Useful capacity-building opportunities

▶ Physical and creative activities for people of all ages with disability to participate in and enjoy, such as dance or drama classes, basketball tournaments, or swimming lessons

▶ Structured visits to government agencies, service organisations or office to provide people with opportunities to meet others, raise awareness, or ask questions

▶ Hosting customised workshops on nominated topics

▶ Conducting formal community learning programs

▶ Providing reading materials, videos or CDs to raise understanding of key issues prior to participating in an activity

▶ Ensuring all people with disability have access to the infrastructure needed to participate in community activities, such as access to email, or transport to meetings

▶ Local community employment or volunteer opportunities for people with disability

Incorporate learning opportunities in an individual plan

Formal skills assessment and identification of opportunities are a component of the person's annual review. Their person-centred plan will be amended to incorporate any new opportunities into a revised plan.

If assessment and the identification of opportunities has been part of an informal process, you need to document your observations and recommendations. Support workers working without direct supervision may need to arrange a case conference with a supervisor or the person's case manager to amend the plan. Check your organisation's procedures for recommending a formal reassessment or a variation to a person's plan.

A supervisor should then collaborate with the person to check that it aligns with what they want and amend the plan and obtain sign-off by all relevant parties. Once again, organisational procedures will determine the process to follow.

Collaborate with family and carers

During the assessment process, you may need to collaborate with the person's family and/or primary carer to monitor and assess the skills displayed by the person.

Family members

Family members can provide information on the person's education, professional history, schooling, hobbies, skills and interests. They can also provide information on the person's relationships and how they deal with conflict or frustration.
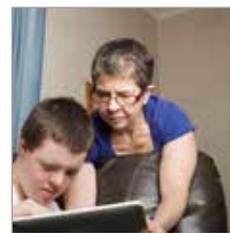
Primary carer

The primary carer can observe the person's abilities and development needs when the person is not being monitored by others. The primary carer can also provide information on the person's former skill level and any changes they have observed.

Collaborate with relevant others

During the assessment process, you may also need to collaborate with other relevant people, including health professionals, to identify the person's skill development opportunities.

Here are some of the people you may need to rely on and what they have to offer.

Case manager

The case manager can provide information about the holistic needs of the person based on their life goals and programs where the person has participated in the past. The case manager can identify strategies that have been successful, as well as those that were not appropriate, or did not meet the specific needs of the person.

Other support workers

Other support workers can provide information on the types of assistance you provide to a person, such as with their grooming and dressing.

Advocates

Advocacy workers can provide meaningful insight into the person's frustrations or grievances. They can also clarify the person's knowledge of their own rights and aspirations.

Outreach workers

Outreach workers have knowledge of the person's social and relationship issues. They can provide anecdotal information on the person's behaviours in different social settings.

Teachers

Teachers can provide information on the person's literacy and numeracy skills, academic ability, and study skills. Teachers can also provide information about learning strategies and skill development opportunities.

Behavioural consultants

Behavioural consultants can provide information on the person's behavioural issues and behaviour management strategies; for example, those specific to Acquired Brain Injury.

Development officers

Development officers can provide information about the person's progress in formal skill development assessment activities.

Educational psychologists

Educational psychologists can conduct a psychological assessment of the person to identify any learning impairments or special needs.

Employment officers

Employment officers can conduct an assessment of the person's pre-employment, or employability skills.

Occupational therapists

Occupational therapists can provide a professional assessment of the person's physical skills, mobility issues, and fine motor skills.

Programming staff

Programming staff can provide information about the person's goals and aspirations, and identify the skills necessary to achieve these.

Technicians

Technicians have the ability to use various devices and equipment to assist with the person's communication, mobility and motor skills.

Example

Identify skill development opportunities in collaboration with the person and relevant others

Simon is 17 years old and has Down syndrome. As part of his skills identification he says he wants to develop his social skills, find a girlfriend and get to act on the stage. Wendy, his supervisor, helps Simon research what local performance groups are in the area. They use the local paper and then check through the Arts Access Victoria website (http://aspirelr.link/arts-access).

They locate several performance groups for people with disability and a theatre group in the area. Simon is now deciding which he wants to attend. He thinks he would like to join the theatre group that is run for adolescents in the 14 to 19 age range, and later join the performance group for people with disability once he has developed some performance skills.

Practice task 3

1. Describe two sources of information you could access to find out about training opportunities for a person with disability.

2. Explain a strategy for identifying a person's social skills development needs.

3. Other than the person in need of support, who are two relevant people you could collaborate with to identify a person's skill development opportunities?

Click to complete Practice task 3

1D Make referrals to other staff or specialist services

Whether you are a supervisor or an experienced support worker employed in the disability services sector, it is important to know the boundaries of your own role and expertise, and when to seek expert advice or assistance.

Support workers

Here is more information about the role of an experienced support worker in facilitating skill development or skill maintenance.

Your role

The role of an experienced support worker is largely to observe, assess, role model, demonstrate and assist in the areas covered by the:

▶ individual plan

▶ duties given in your roster and job description.

For example, if your role is to provide personal care you can observe, assess, role model, demonstrate and assist skill development in personal care and grooming, as well as in underpinning life skills such as problem-solving and time management.

Scope of role

Unless stipulated in the individual plan and your roster, it is not within the scope of your role to assist with skill development in other areas, other than through the opportunities that arise for incidental learning.

Scope of duties

Where the required skills are outside of the scope of your duties, you should:

▶ contact your supervisor

▶ make a referral to the appropriate specialist (with consent from your supervisor).

It is within the scope of a supervisor's responsibilities to make a referral and call on the expertise of specialists. Follow your organisation's guidelines to identify preferred providers of specialist services.

Use specialist services

During the assessment process, you may need to use other specialist services to provide the skills and expertise that are outside the scope of your role.

Here is a list of seven skill areas and the related specialist services.

Life skills

▶ Physiotherapist or occupational therapist: mobility and fine motor skills

▶ Speech pathologist: speech and communication

▶ Continence nurse: continence issues

▶ Dietitian: nutrition issues

Vocational skills

▶ Educational expert: language and literacy

▶ Vocational trainer: vocational skills

▶ Career advisor: various forms of vocational assessment

▶ Volunteer coordinator: volunteering opportunities

Social skills

▶ Behavioural consultant: learning social skills

▶ Relationship counsellor: problems with relationships

Personal support skills

▶ Advocate or Advocacy Group: rights

▶ Counsellor: personal issues

▶ Grief counsellor: feelings of grief and loss

Developing and maintaining relationships (including intimate relationships)

▶ Marriage counsellor: marriage and family issues

▶ Sex educator: information on sexuality and reproduction

▶ Relationship counsellor: problems within relationships

▶ Psychologist: depression or relationship issues

Maintaining physical health (including sexual health)

▶ General practitioner: medical and health issues

▶ Fitness instructor: general health and fitness

▶ Yoga teacher: relaxation and meditation

▶ Sexual health clinic: sexually transmitted infections

▶ Family planning officer: information on fertility and reproduction

Safety

▶ Social worker: general family and lifestyle issues

▶ Fire brigade: fire safety procedures

Make a referral

A referral can be made by phone or in writing. Refer to your organisational procedures to find out what your organisation requires.

In general, a referral needs to include:

▶ the person's name, date of birth and address

▶ the nature of their disability and how long they have had the disability

▶ details of learning goals and activities

▶ the purpose of the referral

▶ a description of the behaviour you have observed, how often it occurs and under what conditions

▶ why the behaviour appears to require a specialist assessment

▶ any documentation to support your observations, such as learning plan or incident reports

▶ the desired outcome of the referral.

Example

Make referrals to other staff or specialist services

Claire has discovered that Ian can communicate using single words when he is in an environment of trust. Claire reports this to her supervisor, then records it on the learning plan and in the communication book.

After discussions with her supervisor, it is decided to refer Ian to a speech pathologist for a professional assessment and a program to develop his speech. Claire's supervisor makes the referral and includes a copy of Claire's report and the learning plan as part of the referral.

Practice task 4

1. Explain when you should seek expert advice or assistance.

2. What specialist services could you access to improve a person's vocational skills?

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Click to complete Practice task 4

</div>

Summary

1. Skill development and maintenance is important to promote a person's social role.

2. Skill assessment can be formal or informal.

3. You must follow organisational guidelines on documenting the assessment.

4. Opportunities for skill development and maintenance should be targeted to meet a person's individual learning goals.

5. Learning opportunities should consider issues of community integration.

6. You may need to make a referral to a specialist for skills assessment and development or maintenance in areas outside of your job role.

Learning checkpoint 1
Identify individual skill development needs

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in identifying individual skill development needs.

Part A

1. Explain what is meant by person-centred practice.

2. Explain what is meant by the 'social model of disability'.

3. Describe how social role valorisation enhances a person's competency and social image as a means of addressing devaluation.

4. Describe how people with disability can maintain their rightful place in the community.

5. Identify and describe two local community education opportunities and their potential use in capacity building.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Ronald is 77 years old and has just returned from hospital after a stroke. He lives on his own since his wife passed away three years ago. As a result of the stroke Ronald has some difficulty with balance and has to walk with the aid of a walking frame. Ronald was a sports journalist prior to his retirement and has also always taken an interest in local history and in genealogy.

Susanna, a support worker, has been sent to assess Ronald's needs and to put in place support services to help him regain his sense of independence. Susanna conducts a formal assessment and discusses an individual plan with Ronald. Ronald tells Susanna that he wants to become more confident going out in the community. He tells Susanna it is time he took up his hobbies again. He also agrees that it may be useful to have some physiotherapy to help with walking and balance.

1. Describe how Susanna could identify and assess Ronald's skill development needs using a person-centred approach (assessment processes relating to on-going skill development).

2. Describe how Susanna should document Ronald's assessment outcomes.

3. Identify two skill development opportunities Susanna could recommend to Ronald.

4. Who could Susanna collaborate with to identify Ronald's skills development opportunities?

5. Identify and describe two specialist services Susanna could access or make a referral to in order to help Ronald gain a sense of independence.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A Engage the person with disability in identifying their learning goals

2B Identify learning strategies to address the person's goals

2C Develop formal person-centred skill development or maintenance activities with relevant others

2D Document ongoing skill development or maintenance in the person's individual plan

Plan person-centred, ongoing skill development

The way services are provided in the disability services sector has changed profoundly through the social model of disability. Person-centred planning is an individually-focused approach to planning for people in need of support and services, and centres on the unique needs, strengths, preferences, capacities and goals of the individual.

Person-centred plans provide a holistic approach to skill development, ensuring a person's social, sexual, emotional, psychological and cognitive development is encompassed. Working in this sector, you need to understand the process of person-centred planning and how to engage the person you are supporting in the process. You will become familiar with ways to identify strategies to meet the individual needs of people and develop a formal plan setting out those strategies.

2A Engage the person with disability in identifying their learning goals

To work effectively with a person with disability when establishing their learning goals, you need to create an environment of trust. This means the person feels free to communicate openly and honestly on issues relating to their physical, social, sexual, emotional, psychological and cognitive development.

The basics of good communication are the same for whoever you are dealing with. It is fundamentally about effective listening and showing respect. It may take some time to establish trust with the person. Often goals will be identified over a series of meetings.

Good communication: the way you act

Good communication is not just about speaking and listening. Here are six ways to improve your communication based on how you should act when interviewing a person to establish their learning goals.

Respectful communication

1

Act respectfully
- ▶ Address the person by their full name.
- ▶ Speak directly to the person and not to their primary carer.

2

Establish rapport
- ▶ Do not make value judgments.
- ▶ Introduce yourself and explain why you are there.
- ▶ Be friendly and open.
- ▶ Take time to establish trust by talking firstly about things that are safe and easy to talk about.
- ▶ Ask if the person needs any aids to be able to communicate clearly.

3

Be culturally appropriate
- ▶ Observe any special customs, such as removing shoes or avoiding eye contact.
- ▶ Sit beside, rather than facing, an Indigenous Australian person.
- ▶ Respect cultural norms regarding gender differences.
- ▶ Be sensitive to religious and spiritual beliefs.

4

Be patient
- ▶ Do not assume you know what someone will say or finish their sentences for them.
- ▶ Do not interrupt or hurry the person along.
- ▶ Give people time to find the right words.

5

Observe body language

▶ Observe body language and see if it agrees with what they are telling you.

▶ Use open and friendly body language in return.

Communicate nonverbally

6

▶ Use touch and hand gestures if appropriate.

▶ Use pictures to sum up complex ideas.

▶ Try storyboarding an idea.

▶ Use simple sign language or Auslan Signbank if appropriate.

Good communication: the way you speak and listen

Here are seven ways to improve your communication based on the way you speak and listen when interviewing a person to establish their learning goals.

Practise active listening

▶ Repeat what you have heard to clarify.

▶ Paraphrase where necessary.

▶ Use attentive body language.

▶ If things are unclear, state what you do not understand.

Listen rather than talk

▶ It is more important that you hear what the person is saying than getting your point across. It is *their* plan.

▶ Be comfortable with silence – give the person time to think.

Use appropriate language

▶ Consider the cognitive ability, education, gender and age of the person and use language they will understand.

▶ Language needs to be relevant to the person's current development.

▶ Use simple, plain English.

▶ Avoid using jargon.

Avoid acronyms and clinical language

▶ Avoid acronyms and clinical terminology.

▶ It is alright to use colloquial language to discuss sexuality and emotional needs.

Try to understand what is important to the person who is speaking

▶ Listen carefully and ask about feelings and fears.

▶ Ask about needs and also about wishes.

▶ Note when and why the person becomes upset or emotional.

▶ Ask them to prioritise their concerns or rate them on a scale of one to 10.

Summarise what has been agreed

▶ Summarise what you think has been agreed, or ask the person to summarise.

▶ At the end of the interview summarise key points.

Use an interpreter if necessary

▶ If the person has language difficulties because English is not their first language or they use Auslan to communicate, consider using an interpreter.

▶ If you cannot understand the communication system they use, ask for assistance from someone who does.

▶ Avoid using family members as interpreters as they may give you their version of the person's needs.

Communicate with people who have unique communication issues

Depending on the person's disability, you may also need to take into account unique communication issues.

Here are some ways to work with various communication issues you may encounter.

Vision impairment

▶ Travel to the person rather than having them come to you.

▶ Try to restrict the number of people at a meeting to reduce confusion.

▶ Ask how the person likes to have information provided to them.

▶ Consider large print, braille or other aids.

▶ Ask if the person would like an audio recording of what has been discussed.

▶ Ask if it is helpful to give the person information in electronic form before you meet with them.

Hearing impairment

▶ Make sure there are few auditory and visual distractions.

▶ Ask if the person prefers to face you so they can see your face clearly.

▶ Make sure the area is well lit.

▶ Do not shout or raise your voice.

▶ Do not exaggerate your lip movements – use signing if appropriate.

▶ Consider using an Auslan interpreter.

▶ Write things down and show the person your notes.

Communication device users

▶ Become familiar with the device the person uses (for example, communication boards) before you start the goal-setting discussion.

▶ Be patient.

▶ Keep your sentences simple.

▶ Try to clarify by using yes or no questions.

▶ Allow extra time for the process.

▶ Do not interrupt or finish sentences for the person.

▶ Allow for breaks if the process is tiring.

Intellectual disabilities

- ▶ Use simple language.
- ▶ Consider using pictures or a storyboard format.
- ▶ Give one instruction at a time.
- ▶ Try not to use leading questions, as people with intellectual disabilities will tend to say 'yes' to please you.
- ▶ Remember that people with intellectual disabilities are usually concrete thinkers.
- ▶ Let the person know they can share their fears and emotions.
- ▶ Check that the person really understands and is not just repeating what someone else has said.

Example

Use appropriate communication strategies to engage the person in identifying learning goals

Sarah has cerebral palsy and is classified as nonverbal. She communicates effectively using a spelling board and pointing to the letters. She spells well, but this is a slow and sometimes frustrating process for her.

Christine, a disability services worker, is asked to help Sarah establish her learning goals. Christine introduces herself and explains the purpose of the planning exercise. Sarah agrees that she wants to establish some new learning goals.

Practice task 5

1. What verbal communication strategies are effective and appropriate for engaging people with disability to identify their learning goals?

2. Make a simple communication board by writing the alphabet around the edge of a piece of paper and use it to have a conversation about the learning goals of a family member or friend. What do you need to do to use a communication board effectively?

Click to complete Practice task 5

2B Identify learning strategies to address the person's goals

This section investigates how you can use a range of strategies to address a person's goals and how the choice of strategies may vary according to the person or group of people with disability.

Strategies should be selected according to each person's disability. Not all strategies are appropriate for all groups. Although you can make some generalisations, be aware that there will always be exceptions.

Different learning strategies

Here are some different learning strategies and how they can be used to address the goals of different groups of people you support.

Effective learning strategies

Role modelling

▶ Physical disability: Used to model motivation, community involvement and some life skills.

▶ Cognitive impairment: Used to address socially inappropriate behaviour along with other strategies.

▶ Intellectual disability: Used with younger people with intellectual disabilities.

▶ Sensory impairment: Less useful than peer group support.

▶ Psychological impairment: Used with less-permanent psychological problems (for example, depression and eating disorders) along with other strategies.

Demonstration

▶ Physical disability: Used in rehabilitation process to learn fine motor skills (for example, new equipment and aids).

▶ Cognitive impairment: Used to teach life skills and mental activity (for example, problem-solving).

▶ Intellectual disability: Used to learn personal grooming, meal preparation and social skills. Good for concrete thinkers.

▶ Sensory impairment: Difficult to use with vision or hearing impaired people unless adjustments made.

▶ Psychological impairment: Some use with phobias and irrational fears.

Skills component mastery

- ▶ Physical disability: Used to learn new physical skills.

- ▶ Cognitive impairment: Difficult for those with short-term memory issues.

- ▶ Intellectual disability: Very satisfying for those with mild disability.

- ▶ Sensory impairment: Good strategy to help vision impaired people learn life skills.

- ▶ Psychological impairment: There are seldom issues around skills mastery with this group.

Contextualisation

- ▶ Physical disability: Of some use for physical skill development.

- ▶ Cognitive impairment: Used to learn social skills and life skills.

- ▶ Intellectual disability: Used to learn social skills and relationship skills.

- ▶ Sensory impairment: Used to gain sensory awareness of situations.

- ▶ Psychological impairment: Used to address fears and social anxiety.

Drama and role-play

- ▶ Physical disability: Limited use except for social skills.

- ▶ Cognitive impairment: Can be a difficult concept for people with a cognitive impairment.

- ▶ Intellectual disability: Used to learn a range of skill sets. People often enjoy the performance or play element.

- ▶ Sensory impairment: Limited use.

- ▶ Psychological impairment: To be avoided except in the hands of a specialist.

Peer education

- ▶ Physical disability: Used for those with acquired disability.

- ▶ Cognitive impairment: Limited use.

- ▶ Intellectual disability: Good supportive environment for people to learn.

- ▶ Sensory impairment: Good support for life skills.

- ▶ Psychological impairment: Limited use until the post-recovery stages.

Useful learning theories

To identify the strategies most appropriate to an individual's learning goals, it is useful to understand the different theories of how people learn under various conditions and at various stages of their life. People vary considerably from one individual to the next and you will often encounter new situations where you need to learn about options you haven't encountered before. These theories provide guidance when you are working with a person with disability to find suitable strategies and opportunities for learning.

Here are three useful learning theories.

Strengths-based practice

Strengths-based practice means selecting learning strategies that build on the skills, abilities and strengths a person already has. Start with what the person can already do well and use this as the basis to move forward. This would include identifying whether their preferred learning style is visual, auditory or kinaesthetic or a combination of all three.

Active support

Active support is practical hands-on support that encourages the person to actually acquire the skills they need, rather than merely reflect on, study or discuss them in a more conceptual way. Active support has an action base and results in the person doing something new. It will use reinforcement, prompting and other motivators to assist the learning. Rather than asking, 'What can I do for you?' it will ask, 'What can I do *with* you?'

Task breakdown

Many people learn best by doing. Practising new skills step-by-step generally results in the person being able to physically demonstrate the new skill they have acquired, rather than merely talking about it. To achieve this, the task needs to be analysed and broken down into steps, including the skills and knowledge required to carry out the complete task.

Adult learning principles

Research has shown that while children learn by rote or to please the teacher, adults learn quite differently. Listed here are some of the principles of adult learning.

Adults learn best when:

▶ there is a strong motivation for learning

▶ the learning experience is satisfying and encourages a better self-image

▶ learning takes place in a non-judgmental climate characterised by openness, trust, caring, valuing and understanding

▶ the content of the learning is learner-centred and experiential, using the experiences of the learner as a starting point

▶ the language is clear, direct and easy to understand

▶ cooperation, dialogue and sharing are promoted, rather than competition

▶ the content of the learning is relevant and applicable to their lives
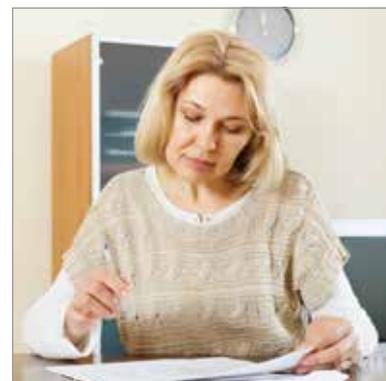
▶ they can try out ideas or skills, followed by constructive feedback

▶ the information, skills and ideas build on previous knowledge, and theory and practice are linked

▶ informal learning is used to provide an opportunity for new learning in an appropriate and meaningful context.

Your organisation's policies and procedures

In addition to knowledge of learning strategies, you need to observe workplace policies, procedures and guidelines on:

▶ duty of care

▶ dignity of risk

▶ privacy and confidentiality

▶ work health and safety.

Example

Identify learning strategies to address the person's goals

Tara, 24, became an amputee after losing her right arm in a car accident in which her partner was killed. Tara is undergoing rehabilitation and physically is managing well, but she has lost confidence in herself. She says she 'feels deformed' and that people stare at her as if she is a freak.

Tara identifies one of her goals as being able to mix socially with confidence once more. She discusses this with her support worker, Shirley, who suggests peer support may be useful. Shirley thinks if Tara gets to talk to other women who have lost a limb, she can overcome her negative feelings.

Practice task 6

1. Identify a type of activity that does not work well when adults are in a formal learning situation, and three factors adults prefer when engaged in learning activities.

2. Explain three theories that are useful when working to identify learning strategies and opportunities to assist the person you are supporting to achieve their learning goals.

Click to complete Practice task 6

2C Develop formal person-centred skill development or maintenance activities with relevant others

In addition to your ongoing role in empowering a person to maximise their independence, you may also be involved in planning formal or informal person-centred skill development activities.

The *National Standards for Disability Services* reflect the move towards person-centred approaches in the planning and delivery of services for people with disability. You must ensure the individual shapes and directs all skill development activities to suit their strengths, needs and goals, with the support of families, friends, carers and advocates.

The skill development or maintenance plan ensures that appropriate services and learning processes are put in place to support the person's individual needs. This enables the person to maximise their potential in the areas identified by their individual goals.

All of this must be consistent with your organisational guidelines. If a formal person-centred planning methodology is adopted, you may be required to use a set of planning documents and an interview process.

Person-centred plans

A formal, person-centred may include, but is not limited to, the following 12 components.

Components of a person-centred plan

1 **Learning objectives**
Learning objectives set out in active terms what the person would like to achieve as a result of the learning. It may be in one skill set or across several. Most person-centred plans have more than one learning objective.

Learning objectives can be broad or quite specific. For example, to:

▶ regain the skills to be fully independent living in my own home

▶ undertake vocational training to become a chef

▶ improve social skills and be able to form a long-term relationship.

2

Performance expectations

Performance expectations set the standard at which the person will be able to perform and under what conditions. They must be quantifiable so that you can measure if they have been met. They must also be realistic and achievable for the person concerned, and identify whether the performance requires support, or if it can be achieved unassisted.

For example:

Aimee will be able to shower herself and wash her own hair to maintain personal hygiene to the level expected by her school and housemates.

3

Criteria for achievement

Criteria for achievement provide a way of judging that the person has achieved their desired level of learning and independence with regard to specific learning objectives. The criteria usually define what the person needs to demonstrate, under what circumstances and how many times, in order to establish they are competent.

For example:

Lorena will be up and ready for school on time every day for a week.

4

Baseline assessment

Baseline assessment is an assessment of the person's ability in the area before training. It shows where they have to start from and is used to measure progress.

Baseline assessment may include statements such as:

▶ the person can walk 10 metres unassisted

▶ the person needs full assistance with meals

▶ the person can communicate yes or no answers only.

5

Formal training

Formal training includes rehabilitation, attending TAFE courses, skills coaching or any other type of organised training. This section of the plan details if, when and under what circumstances it is to occur.

For example:

Luke will attend pre-employment training two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), commencing 27 November.

6

Equipment and resources

Equipment and resources include anything required to assist the person to achieve their desired level of competence. Examples of equipment include communication devices, mobility and lifting devices, voice-activated computers or talking clocks. Examples of resources include material resources (for example, art and craft material, finances or consumables) and human resources (for example, a page turner, note taker or driver).

7

Prompting and reinforcement

This technique can be used to prompt or verbally assist someone by telling them the next step if they seem unsure. It is a positive tool to use and should be seen as encouraging rather than correcting or nagging.

Reinforcement means to give added support, either by repeating the act to gain competence or by there being a positive outcome to undertaking the task.

8 **Progress and independence**

This section documents progress made towards the learning objectives and the level of independence that has been achieved.

Progress should be signed off with a statement of the evidence provided.

9 **Task analysis**

Task analysis breaks an activity down into its various steps or components and takes into account the skills and knowledge required for mastery of each step.

10 **Sequence of training**

The sequence of training is the order in which the training takes place. For instance, a person may need to attend relationships training and sexual health training before looking at avenues to form relationships.

11 **Assistance required**

Assistance required lists any assistance that a person might need to complete the training; for example, a support worker to demonstrate and role model, or a dietitian to provide information in an accessible form.

12 **Evaluation methods**

Evaluation methods indicate how the learning will be evaluated (for example, role-play, simulation, demonstration).

Person-centred skill development or maintenance activities

Person-centred planning builds upon the person's individual strengths and capacity to engage in community activities while respecting the person's preferences, choices and abilities.

Self-determination means having freedom and independence. It means being able to do things of your own free will. It guides support workers to involve the people they are supporting in decisions which affect them, and to encourage and assist people to have as much independence as possible.

Self-determination enables the person with disability to share responsibility for planning activities and to decide how resources should be allocated to obtain the supports necessary to live and participate in the community.

Person-centred activities benefit a person with disability by:

▶ bringing enjoyment and pleasure

▶ allowing the person to maintain their skills and independence for longer

▶ assisting the person to express their feelings

▶ increasing social interaction and reducing isolation

▶ promoting shared interests and understanding

▶ enhancing the person's social image and value

▶ promoting a sense of belonging

▶ positively impacting the person's wellbeing by promoting physical activity.

Sources of advice and expertise

You and the person you support may need assistance to develop ongoing skill development activities and a person-centred plan. You may need to consult other people for input and expert advice to ensure learning objectives, performance expectations and criteria for achievement are realistic and the training is sequenced in the most beneficial way.

Here is a list of some of the other relevant people who may be involved.

Sources of information, advice and support
▶ Family members or primary carers
▶ Behavioural consultants (for acquired brain injury)
▶ Advocate/s
▶ Development officers
▶ Disability support workers
▶ Educational psychologists, teachers, trainers or assessors
▶ Employment officers or outreach workers
▶ Occupational therapists or other health professionals
▶ Programming staff
▶ Technicians

Example

Develop person-centred skill development activities with others

Sophie Madison is a person with a mild intellectual disability who wants to become a chef. Her person-centred activities are drawn up at the time of planning. Sections on progress and independence, prompting and evidence will be completed as Sophie progresses.

This is the plan drawn up for Sophie.

ABC **Disability Support Services**
Name: Sophie Madison
Commencement date: 30 October 2015
Learning objective: To undertake vocational training to be a chef
Performance expectations: Sophie will enrol and attend vocational training and complete the program possibly as a traineeship or apprenticeship.
Criteria for achievement: ▶ Achieve literacy skills to standard required for course entry ▶ Enrol in course and attend regularly ▶ Complete all course work including practical ▶ Graduate from course as a chef

Formal training	Equipment and resources	Progress and independence	Prompting / reinforcement	Evidence signed
Pre-employment literacy training				
Certificate course TAFE	Chef kit Course materials			

Sequence of training: Literacy training Certificate course as chef
Assistance required: Support worker to demonstrate and role model Dietitian to provide information in accessible form
Evaluation methods: role-play, simulation, demonstration

Practice task 7

1. Develop a formal person-centred skill development or maintenance plan for a person with a hearing impairment who would like to undertake a Certificate III in Retail Baking (Bread) to obtain employment as a baker.

2. Include a list of skill development or maintenance activities that will assist the person to achieve their learning objective.

3. Identify other people you or the support recipient may need to seek input or expert advice from to ensure learning objectives, performance expectations and criteria for achievement are realistic, and the training is sequenced in the most beneficial way.

Click to complete Practice task 7

2D Document ongoing skill development or maintenance in the person's individual plan

Person-centred skill development planning and activities should be contained in the person's individual plan. It may require a number of separate documents.

Always follow workplace guidelines when documenting a person's skill development or maintenance plan to confirm what is required.

Make it accessible

A formal person-centred plan is a legal document. It must accurately describe the goals of the person and how they are to be achieved. It must also be documented in a style that makes it accessible to the person, as well as to those providing support.

If you are working with a person with an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment, you might incorporate pictures to help with understanding. Pictures can sum up complex thoughts, help concrete thinkers to focus on the goal and provide a context for the skill or skills. Consider using photographs of the person themselves and what they want to achieve. Cartoons or storyboards can also be used as part of the process.

Be mindful, however, that while pictures can sum up complex ideas, the meaning may not be as clear to others as to the person themselves. This can present ambiguities if you are not careful.

Use effective written communication

Effective written communication skills must be applied when documenting a person-centred skill development or maintenance plan.

Principles of effective written communication

▶ Use plain English in short, concise sentences, and language that the person can understand and is comfortable with.

▶ Avoid using jargon, acronyms or colloquial language.

▶ Quote the person's own words.

▶ Be objective, recording only what you personally observed.

▶ Document evidence as soon as possible after the event.

▶ Record how you have prompted and reinforced the person.

▶ Note the conditions under which tasks were performed.

▶ Use the SMART goal-setting formula: specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and time-based.

▶ Use dot points or numbering for action plans or when breaking down a task.

▶ Initial any changes or variations, sign and date all entries, and ask the person to sign.

Example

Document ongoing skill development in the person's individual plan

Glenda lives in a shared house with four other residents. When she is asked to set some personal goals, all she can think of is that she wants a dog.

Her support worker helps Glenda decide what sort of dog she wants by looking at a series of pictures. They then cut out a picture of the breed of dog Glenda wants and stick it on a chart. Glenda and her support worker then work out what she needs to do before she can get a dog and what she needs to learn to look after it.

They write in simple sentences and put a picture with each point so Glenda can follow the plan.

Practice task 8

Prepare and conduct an interview with a disability support worker or manager. Identify how the worker ensures ongoing skill development is documented effectively in a person's individual plan. Identify how the person makes adjustments to their written communication to ensure the information is accurately recorded and understood by the person with disability.

Click to complete Practice task 8

Summary

1. Use active listening and culturally appropriate communication techniques to establish a rapport with people you support to engage them in the planning process.

2. Identify the strategies most appropriate to an individual's learning goals, and understand the different theories of how people learn under various conditions and at various stages of their lives.

3. Ensure a person's skill development or skill maintenance plan includes appropriate services and learning processes that support the person's individual needs. This enables the person to maximise their potential in the areas identified by their individual goals.

4. Document ongoing skill development in the person's individual plan in plain English, being mindful that it could be a legal document.

5. Consider the use of pictures and storyboards for people with intellectual disabilities or cognitive impairment.

Learning checkpoint 2
Plan person-centred, ongoing skill development

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in planning person-centred, ongoing skill development.

Part A

1. Explain how person-centred activities enable self-determination for the person with disability.

2. Describe one way to document ongoing skill development in the individual plan of a person with an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Josephine is an 18-year-old person with an intellectual disability. She wants to move out of her parents' home and into low-care group home in the community. Josephine has the full support of her parents who are partnering with her and her disability support worker, Alice, to find a home that suits Josephine's needs and preferences.

Alice accompanies Josephine and her parents to visit a group home that is only 10kms from Josephine's parents' house. There are three other people with intellectual disability living in the home, as well as a room for disability support workers to stay when on roster. Josephine is very excited and her parents are comfortable with the arrangement. Alice sits down with Josephine and her parents to discuss the best ongoing care for Josephine to ensure she lives in a safe, happy and home-like environment. Alice collaborates with Josephine to plan ongoing person-centred skill development activities that will assist Josephine to participate equally in community life. Josephine says her number-one priority is to improve her social skills and form long-term relationships.

1. What communication techniques should Alice use to engage with Josephine in identifying her learning goals?

2. Describe two learning strategies or opportunities Alice could use to address Josephine's learning goals.

3. Identify and describe two ongoing person-centred skill development activities that could assist Josephine to achieve her learning objective to improve her social skills and form long-term relationships.

4. Describe two people whom Alice could seek input or advice from to ensure Josephine's learning objectives, performance expectations and criteria for achievement are realistic, and the training is sequenced in the most beneficial way.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Work with the person to implement ongoing skill development strategies in a respectful, motivating and empowering manner

3B Ensure the individual skill development or maintenance plan is implemented consistently

3C Access and use equipment and resources to facilitate learning

3D Document outcomes in the person's individual plan

Implement person-centred, ongoing skill development strategies

Whether you are employed as a support worker or a supervisor in the disability sector, you will be required to help implement skill development plans. This involves encouraging and motivating the people you support and providing positive reinforcement to their learning. You must also ensure the plan is implemented in a consistent and respectful manner that acknowledges their individual needs and learning style. You may need to draw on different learning strategies and access a variety of equipment and resources. You will also be involved in documenting their progress.

3A Work with the person to implement ongoing skill development strategies in a respectful, motivating and empowering manner

Research clearly shows that adults learn best when the environment is supportive and the subject of their learning is relevant to their daily lives. If you make sure that learning is part of a planned, person-centred program targeted to meet a person's individual goals, learning will remain relevant to their daily life.

Provide a supportive learning environment

It is your responsibility, if you are a worker in the disability sector, to provide an environment which supports the learning of people with disability whom you support. A supportive environment is one that acknowledges the person's learning needs and preferences.

Factors involved in childhood learning

If you are working with a child or a person with delayed development, there are a number of things to consider.

Here are some things to consider when working with children or people with delayed development.

Make use of the learning style they prefer

▶ There is some evidence that learning style preference emerges as young as six and is fully apparent by middle school years.

▶ Like adults, children will have a preference for visual learning, kinaesthetic learning or auditory learning, or perhaps a combination of the three. In addition, some children are better as solitary learners, while others enjoy group learning.

Consider the environment

▶ Environment is also a factor. Some children prefer a noisy environment with lots of different stimuli at the one time, while others may find this distracting.

Remember they are concrete thinkers

▶ Children also tend to be concrete thinkers; the ability for abstract thinking does not develop until the adolescent phase. Concrete thinkers have difficulty applying information learnt in one environment to another situation. For instance, a child may learn how to catch the bus to school but not be able to apply this experience to catching a bus into the city.

Factors involved in adult learning

If you are working with an adult learner, there are a number of considerations to keep in mind.

Factors involved in adult learning

Learning style

As with children, make use of the learning style they prefer: visual, auditory or kinaesthetic. This style becomes apparent through observation and listening to the language the person uses when talking about their learning needs. For example, a visual learner says, 'Show me', while a kinaesthetic learner says, 'Let me have a go'.

Active support

Active support is a practical, hands-on style of support that encourages the person to actually acquire the skills they need. Active support has an action base and results in the person being able to do something new. This is particularly useful for people who are kinaesthetic learners.

Strengths-based practice

Using strengths-based practice, each person is treated as an individual and skill development for that person builds on the skills, abilities and strengths they already have. Start by recognising what they can already do and use that as the basis to move forward.

Prompting and fading

When encouraging your person with support needs, you can prompt them by talking them step-by-step through a process. This technique should be slowly withdrawn as the person gains confidence and no longer requires assistance. This method is particularly useful for people with an auditory learning style but can prove frustrating for those who are kinaesthetic learners.

Reinforcers

It will motivate your person if you use reinforcers to support their learning. One of the most common forms of reinforcement is assisted repetition, used until the person gains confidence. External reinforcers, particularly praise and positive feedback, are essential when working with people with intellectual disability.

Respect

People learn best in a supportive environment that shows respect for individual differences without making value judgments. Everyone learns at their own pace and according to their own style, and should be provided with the time, environment and support appropriate for them.

Common demotivators

The person you are supporting is likely to lose motivation easily under the following circumstances:

▶ Communication difficulties

▶ Fatigue

▶ Unrealistic expectations

▶ Ridicule or sarcasm

▶ Repeated failure

Prevent these from happening by ensuring the person has established realistic achievement criteria and providing an environment that encourages empowerment.

Example

Work with the person to implement ongoing skill development strategies

Glenys contracted polio as a child. At 64 she is now feeling the late effects of post-polio syndrome. As part of her program to develop better mobility in her lower body, Glenys has commenced a program of hydrotherapy.

Hydrotherapy is part of Glenys's program on every second Tuesday because it is only through repeating the therapy over a period of time that she will improve her mobility.

Her disability support worker, Anna, accompanies Glenys to the pool and assists her with the hydrotherapy. Glenys has known Anna for some time and is quite relaxed with having her around. It was Anna who suggested hydrotherapy, as Glenys has always enjoyed exercising in the water and can float quite confidently on her own. Glenys likes Anna because Anna always asks what she can do to support Glenys but never takes over.

Anna's support includes assisting Glenys in the changing room, pushing her down the ramp and helping her into the water. Anna talks Glenys through the process of transferring from the chair into the water just to give her confidence.

After hydrotherapy they always have a coffee together at the cafe and talk about how it went. Anna always makes a point of encouraging Glenys, highlighting how much she has improved in the pool.

Practice task 9

1. In what kind of environment do adults learn best?

2. How does having a planned person-centred program benefit an adult learner?

3. If you are using a strengths-based approach with a person you are supporting, how might you begin a skill development session?

4. Describe active support. Which learning style does it particularly suit?

5. List three requirements for working with a person to implement ongoing skill development in a way that respects their individual differences.

Click to complete Practice task 9

3B Ensure individual skill development or maintenance plan is implemented consistently

If you are a supervisor, or a support worker working without direct supervision in the disability sector, you are required to inform colleagues, health professionals and significant others of their role in implementing the skill development program of a person with disability whom you are supporting. This may include receiving special training in order to implement the program effectively.

Information must be shared to ensure consistency in program delivery. Consistency leads to greater opportunities for skill mastery and greater empowerment for the person you are supporting.

Provide consistency

Consistency means doing the same thing the same way each time the opportunity arises. This reinforces the learning. This means having a regular program of planned for the person you are supporting, including formal and informal learning activities and, wherever possible, having the same people working with them each time they engage in the learning activity.

Whoever is working with the person must give exactly the same message to the person, particularly in terms of encouragement and support. This is why it is important that specific guidelines are written down not only to support the activity, but also so that specialist training or education can be provided to the support team.

Share information with others

Information must be shared to ensure consistency in how a person's skill development or maintenance plan is implemented. Here are 10 of the support people you may need to inform of the person's skills and the types of information they may require.

People who may need to be informed

Family members

1
- ▶ Full details of program and strategies such as reinforcement, prompting and general motivation
- ▶ Details of behaviours to be avoided and methods to deal with them

Support workers

2
- ▶ Details of program and their role in it
- ▶ Any special skills needed to assist, such as with stretching exercises or life skills support

3

Recreational officers, lifestyle and leisure consultants
▶ Information on how activities are integrated into the development plan
▶ The current level of performance that can be expected

4

Physiotherapists or occupational therapists
▶ Baseline assessment and expected outcomes
▶ Time lines and activities to be undertaken
▶ The current level of performance that can be expected

5

Dietitians
▶ Any special requirements regarding nutrition and hydration

6

Education psychologists
▶ Support and encouragement strategies that are in place; expected outcomes
▶ Assistance they can offer for holistic growth

7

Teachers
▶ The program or plan the person has commenced
▶ Desired outcomes
▶ Any special needs such as communication devices; other resources such as scribes and note takers
▶ Information on the current level of performance that can be expected

8

Development officers
▶ The program the person has in place and their role, plus the role of others

9

Employment officers
▶ Expected outcome of program and time lines
▶ Any vocational component of the program
▶ Information on the current level of performance that can be expected

10

Technicians
▶ Any special assistance, equipment or devices required
▶ Information on the current level of performance that can be expected

Guidelines on sharing information

You need to be aware of your organisation's guidelines on the sharing of information. There are a number of policies and procedures you have to be familiar with, including:

▶ privacy and confidentiality
▶ duty of care and dignity of risk
▶ informed choice
▶ record maintenance
▶ organisational guidelines for sharing information.

Methods of sharing information

Information can be shared with the relevant people through a number of resources. These include:

▶ skill development or individual plans

▶ guidelines, work instructions, communication book and rosters

▶ referrals, staff meetings, case management meetings and case conferences

▶ training or information sessions.

Example

Importance of consistency

Huon is 13 years old and has autism. He is learning to ride a bike as part of his development plan. One of his performance criteria is to be able to ride his bike on his own to visit his grandparents who live two streets away. Huon is already competent on his bike when he is riding in his own yard and he also knows the road rules.

Because Huon has autism, he likes things to be done the same way each time. His family members, the support team and his grandparents have all been informed of the routine for going to his grandparents, which is:

1. Huon puts on his bike helmet.

2. He collects some fruit in a bag from the kitchen table.

3. He puts the fruit in the bag on the back of his bike.

4. He wheels his bike out through the gate and closes the gate.

5. He rides a set route to his grandparents' house.

6. He gets off his bike and leans it against the wall on their front porch.

7. He takes the fruit out of the bag on the back of the bike.

8. He knocks on the door.

9. He gives the fruit to his grandmother when she answers the door.

If this routine is varied Huon becomes very agitated. He is learning this as a routine that is reinforced by repetition.

Practice task 10

1. How does good teamwork facilitate skill development in the person you are supporting?

2. Provide three examples of people who may need to be informed of a person's skill development activities plan.

3. How are the information requirements for family members different from what the teachers of a child with disability may need to know so that they can support the child's ongoing skill development plan?

Click to complete Practice task 10

3C Access and use equipment and resources to facilitate learning

To effectively facilitate learning, you may find that the person requires adaptive equipment or technology to assist with their skill development. Alternatively, they may require extra resources or support to help them access learning opportunities that are already available to the general population.

To identify and access the necessary equipment and resources you need to consider the following factors.

Identifying and accessing equipment and resources
Understand the person's abilities and disabilities.
Be familiar with all aspects of their individual skill development or maintenance plan.
Understand current resources and technology and how these can assist the person.
Know how and where to access these resources and equipment for the person.

Special training

You may also require special training. Often the person themselves can best teach you how to use their assistive device, such as a hoist or communication system. In other cases, you may need to be trained by the health professional who has recommended the particular device or equipment. Often suppliers of assistive devices provide training and information free of charge.

In the course of your work there will be incidental learning involved in using the equipment. For example, when a person with disability uses a mobility device such as a wheelchair, estimating widths of doorways is necessary.

Select and acquire devices

Assessment for the use of assistive devices and the selection of the most appropriate device or equipment is carried out by a specialist health professional. Your role is to learn what benefits the device has to offer and to help the person become familiar with its use.

Different devices and equipment are used for people with different disabilities. Some of these are outlined below.

Physical disability

To facilitate learning for a person with physical disability you may need to access:

▶ communication devices – electronic communication device, communication board, spelling board

▶ fine motor skills assistance – note taker or page turner, nutrition and hydration support, ventilator, voice-activated computer, continence aids

▶ mobility devices – wheelchair, walking frame, slide boards, hoist, special taxi.

For further information contact the Independent Living Centre in your capital city.

Sensory disability

To facilitate learning for a person with a sensory disability you may need to access:

▶ braille, talking books, large-print books or adaptive devices such as talking clocks for people with vision impairment

▶ hearing aids, Auslan, TTY, interpreter, note-taker or scribe for people with hearing impairment.

For further information contact Vision Australia via their website (http://aspirelr.link/vision-australia) or a deaf society in your state.

Intellectual disability

People with intellectual disability may require language and literacy support, classroom aid, or help with problem-solving or life skills. You may also facilitate learning through the use of storyboards, picture books and charts.

Example

Access and use equipment and resources to facilitate learning

Laurie is profoundly deaf and has to lip-read. When Laurie decides he wants to return to university to complete his degree, he requests extra resources in the form of a note taker. Laurie needs to sit near the front of the lecture room and watch the lecturer's face in order to understand, so he can't look down to take notes. A support worker is provided to accompany him to lectures and take notes for him.

Practice task 11

1. Complete the table with examples of devices that can assist with skill development. The first one has been done for you.

Device	Examples
Communication device	*Electronic communication device, spelling board*
Mobility device	
Vision impairment aid	
Hearing impairment aid	
Fine motor skills aid	

2. What is the role of a support worker in assessing a person with disability for the use of adaptive devices to assist with their skill development? Why is this important?

Click to complete Practice task 11

3D Document outcomes in the person's individual plan

Maintaining records to demonstrate the person's achievements has a dual purpose; records both monitor a person's progress and function as a tool to share information with other members of the support team.

Maintain a skill development plan

Once you have drawn up an ongoing skill development plan for the person with disability whom you are supporting, maintaining records and monitoring progress usually involves recording any evidence of achievement of expected learning outcomes.

When making or recording observations remember these points.

When making and recording observations:

▶ record only what you have observed, such as: 'Shirley washed her upper body unassisted'

▶ quote exact words if you are reporting what someone has told you, and mention who it was

▶ state the number of times the activity was performed and under what conditions

▶ sign and date all entries

▶ consider a reward system like stars to show achievement. Inform others of change

Any increase or decline in skill level must also be recorded in the person's individual plan. These changes should be discussed with the person and an amended individual plan should be documented and signed by the person and you. You then need to make sure all support workers are informed of the changes.

Here are some of the methods used to inform support workers of the changes.

Rosters

Once you have amended the individual plan, a supervisor needs to adjust rosters to cater for this amendment. Most organisations have a computer-based rostering system that you update with any changes to the duties to be performed or changes to the support workers providing the service.

Work instructions

When new procedures are added to a person's program, you may need to write a detailed work instruction to ensure consistency in the way the procedure is performed. You may also require the assistance of other health professionals. For example, if you are introducing a program of stretching exercises you may need the assistance of a physiotherapist to write the work instruction. Check your workplace guidelines, as any work instructions form part of the quality system.

Guidelines

Where the change in a person's skill level requires a change to guidelines, you need to follow workplace procedures as this also involves a change to the quality system. An example would be if you change guidelines for support workers assisting people to access an ATM.

Communication books

A communication book is used to communicate information between support workers, the family, the person and other relevant health professionals. It remains in the person's home and is an open document for all to see. Entries must be fact, not opinion; report only what you have observed. All entries should be signed and dated.

Files notes

When you have had a face-to-face discussion with the person about their skill development progress, record the conversation in a file note. Follow workplace procedures, as file notes are a legal record of dialogue.

Staff meetings

A person's skill development requirements may be discussed at a staff meeting. In order to disseminate information, it should be shown on the agenda and added to the meeting minutes.

Training sessions

Where training or an information session is run for staff who will be working with a person in their skill development, this information should be recorded as a file note and in the support worker's training record.

Case management meetings

A formal agenda and minutes should be recorded for case management meetings. This is usually undertaken by the case manager.

The importance of documentation

You will generally be given information about documentation needed in your work role as part of your induction process and on an ongoing basis by your team leader or manager. You can also consult your organisational policies and procedures, which will be provided in hard copy and/or in electronic format. Depending on your role, you may be regularly involved in the process of reviewing and updating policies and procedures.

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Example

Document outcomes in the person's individual plan

You are providing assistance to Jimmy to learn to dress himself in the morning. Jimmy is 19 years old and has cerebral palsy. It is one of Jimmy's performance criteria that he be able to live independently.

This morning when you are dressing him, you suggest that he tries to do up the buttons on his shirt for himself. Jimmy tries to do this, but is unsuccessful because of his lack of fine motor skills. He tries three times to get the buttons through the holes. He then shouts at himself for not being able to do it. You intervene and assist him to button his shirt.

Here is an example of good and poor recording in a communication book.

Poor reporting

Jimmy got frustrated getting dressed this morning.

Good reporting

Jimmy attempted to do up the buttons on his shirt three times this morning and then needed assistance from me to achieve this. (signed/dated)

Practice task 12

1. Provide two reasons why maintaining records is important to demonstrate a person's achievements.

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.   ...

2. Identify and describe at least two ways you could inform others of any improvement or decline in a person's skill level, or changes made to an individual plan.

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

Click to complete Practice task 12

Summary

1. A person with disability learns best when you provide a supportive learning environment that encourages development.

2. In order to promote the person's development, information must be shared with all relevant people and consistency must be assured in implementing the skill development plan.

3. There are aids and specialised equipment you can access to make learning easier for the person with disability.

4. In some cases, people with disability may require extra resources to support them to carry out functions such as turning pages or taking notes, or to help with health needs during formal training sessions.

5. You must monitor and record people's progress accurately against their development plan and all other relevant documentation.

Learning checkpoint 3
Implement person-centred, ongoing skill development strategies

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in implementing person-centred, ongoing skill development strategies.

Part A

1. Explain what is meant by 'active support'.

2. Explain what is meant by 'strengths-based practice'.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Kathleen is a supervisor with an organisation that provides services to older people and people with disability. Kathleen is asked if she can meet with a person in need of support, Duane, who has had a stroke and is about to return home. Kathleen will assess what services Duane needs to be put in place to assist with his rehabilitation.

Kathleen visits Duane and talks to him about his needs. Duane's goal is to regain full mobility so he can continue to live on his own. As a result of the stroke, Duane's balance is impaired and he is very slow and unsure in his movements.

Kathleen talks to Duane for about an hour and discusses an ongoing individual plan with him. They decide he needs home care twice a week and personal care every morning until he gains enough confidence to be able to shower himself. Duane tells Kathleen that he wants to continue his weekly session with a physiotherapist as part of his rehabilitation. She encourages him to do this, suggesting she arrange transport as part of his program. Kathleen also suggests she organise a walking frame for Duane to use around the house to help with his balance.

Upon returning to the office Kathleen draws up a person-centred plan and enters Duane's details on the database. She phones two support workers, Jenny and Pallini, to organise home care and personal care, briefing both on Duane's goal of becoming independent and the details of his program. These details are recorded on Duane's care plan for the support workers to see. Kathleen also organises the hire of a walking frame, ensuring it is there when Duane arrives home from hospital.

Jenny calls on Duane twice a week to provide home care. She gets on well with Duane and he often chats to her about how he used to go swimming in the bay each morning. Jenny suggests that Duane may like to try swimming again as part of his rehabilitation. After completing her shift, Jenny makes a note of this conversation in the communication book and gives Kathleen a call to tell her.

Pallini assists Duane to shower each morning. Duane undresses in the bedroom and then uses his walking frame to go to the bathroom where Pallini assists him to sit on a shower chair. She turns the water on for him and he can then wash himself.

In the second week, Duane decides he will try walking to the bathroom without the walking frame. Pallini assists and he manages to walk to the shower chair on his own. Pallini records this in the communication book so Jenny will know. She also phones Kathleen to tell her of Duane's progress, which Kathleen notes on Duane's development plan.

1. List at least two things that Kathleen and the support workers did to encourage Duane and show him respect in the implementation of his development plan.

2. What equipment and resources did Kathleen access for Duane? Consider both human resources and equipment.

3. What information needed to be shared? With whom and by what means?

4. What evidence needed to be recorded by Kathleen and where would it be recorded?

Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

4A Monitor the person's development and provide feedback about their progress towards learning objectives

4B Review records and update plan to meet changing needs

4C Identify opportunities for ongoing skill development

Evaluate skill development and review plan

A skill development plan should be considered a living document to be reviewed and amended as the person progresses toward their goals. To review a skill development plan, you need to evaluate the person's progress and provide feedback to them, their carer and relevant others for the person's development. This, in turn, should lead to a series of discussions to identify new opportunities for skill development.

4A Monitor the person's development and provide feedback about their progress towards learning objectives

As a supervisor, or as a support worker working without direct supervision in the disability sector, you have a responsibility to monitor the progress of the person you are supporting towards toward their learning objectives.

You are required to record observations of their skill development, together with evidence of skill acquisition, against the performance expectations and the criteria for achievement documented in the person's skill development or maintenance plan.

In addition to monitoring this progress, you must also provide accurate feedback on this progress to the person you are supporting or their carer. The monitoring and feedback processes can be formal or informal; you will find you use both methods.

Formal monitoring

When providing formal monitoring and feedback, you may be required to assess the person's skill development following a prescribed process. That is, the person may be asked to perform to the expected performance criteria under agreed conditions.

Here are a number of important factors to consider during the formal monitoring process.

Assessment

The assessment will be planned and the assessment tool developed to record the process and the outcomes. The person is aware they are being assessed and will have time to prepare accordingly.

Guidelines

Guidelines for formal assessment should be available in your organisation's policy manual or quality system. The guidelines usually cover the conditions under which the person is asked to perform the designated tasks.

Principles

The principles of this style of assessment are that the method is:

▶ fair, giving the person a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate competence

▶ valid, measuring what it is supposed to measure

▶ realistic, in that it is achievable for the person, taking into account their disability.

Sign-off

Once you have assessed the person's performance you need to record it in the development plan and sign-off the assessment.

Feedback

There will also be a formal system for providing written and verbal feedback to the person or their carer. A template for written feedback forms part of the standard documentation. Verbal feedback is to be provided in a structured interview or feedback session.

Informal monitoring

More often, you will be assessing the person's progress toward their learning objectives in an informal capacity under normal conditions. This is done through observation and providing feedback on their day-to-day achievements.

You need to check the person's development plan to establish their learning goals. Always review your job description to make sure you are working within the boundaries of your responsibilities.

As a support worker, you record evidence and provide constructive feedback. As a supervisor, you monitor against the performance criteria and the evidence for achievement and provide feedback on progress.

Provide feedback based on plan

Often a permanent written record of feedback is required. To be able to provide useful, accurate feedback, you must be familiar with the person's development plan.

Important aspects of planned skill development

▶ Learning objectives

▶ Performance expectations

▶ Criteria for achievement

▶ Formal training (observed)

▶ Resources and equipment required

▶ Progress towards achievement

▶ Evidence of achievement

Provide feedback to a person with disability

When working with a person with disability, your role is to monitor their progress and provide accurate, constructive and non-judgmental feedback. Always remember that the purpose of feedback is to improve performance and progress towards individual goals.

Here are some tips for providing feedback in this situation.

Providing feedback to a person with a disability:

▶ Make sure it is a suitable time and environment to provide feedback.

▶ Ask the person how they think things are going, or what help they think they may need.

▶ Clarify performance expectations and discuss evidence of achievement.

▶ Keep advice constructive; focus on what they can do, not what they can't do.

▶ Expectations and suggestions must be realistic and achievable.

▶ Listen and take in their response.

▶ Use appropriate communication devices for people who are nonverbal.

▶ Ensure body language is consistent with the message you want to communicate.

Provide feedback to the carer

When monitoring and reviewing a person's development plan, you may need to provide feedback to their carer or relevant other, such as a family member or advocate.

Here are some tips for providing feedback in this situation.

When providing feedback to a carer or relevant other:

▶ ensure they are familiar with your role and with the person's skill development plan

▶ ask the person for permission to give feedback to the carer and if they would like to be present

▶ inform the carer about the purpose of your feedback

▶ give the positive feedback first

▶ provide constructive feedback on what needs to be improved

▶ suggest how you may make changes to the person's development plan

▶ remember a carer's role is to work in the person's best interests, so ask their opinion

▶ provide a written report if requested.

Example

Monitor the person's development and provide feedback about their progress towards learning objectives

Huon has autism and is learning to ride his bike on the roads.

After practising for three weeks, Huon is competent enough to ride his bike to his grandparents' house; however, he always has to take some fruit with him and always rides the same route.

Helen, his supervisor, feels it is time to give Huon feedback on his progress and amend his activity so he can ride to places other than his grandparents' house.

Helen looks at Huon's plan. It has been checked off to indicate that Huon rode successfully to his grandparents' house each day. She arranges to meet with him to give him feedback and suggest that he start to vary where he goes on his bike.

Helen uses these words to discuss development with Huon:

'Huon, you have done really well riding your bike to your grandparents' house each day. You should be very proud of yourself. We are all proud of you. What I am going to suggest is that we now plan somewhere different for you to ride, as well as still going to see your grandparents some days. What do you think of that idea?'

Practice task 13

1. You have just formally assessed the progress made by the person whom you are supporting. What should you do next?

2. The carer of the person you are supporting has asked for feedback on the person's progress. What should you do?

3. What principles should guide the assessment of a person's skill development?

Click to complete Practice task 13

4B Review records and update plan to meet changing needs

Many supervisors in the disability sector have a direct responsibility for the systematic review of records to evaluate the effectiveness of an individual's skill development or maintenance plan, and to update the plan to meet the changing needs of the person. Those working as support workers without direct supervision may also be involved in this process.

Reasons to review records

A person's records are usually reviewed as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of their person-centred skill development or maintenance plan. There are seven main reasons why a person-centred skill development or maintenance plan should be reviewed. These are listed below.

Reasons for reviewing a person-centred plan

1

The plan has a timeline for review and evaluation.
Example: When Tony's development plan was drawn up, he had just been discharged from hospital and was undergoing rehabilitation for a spinal injury. This plan had a formal review every three months for the initial year written into the plan.

2

Periodic or annual review is part of the organisational policy.
Example: Scott is a supervisor who is responsible for skill development plans for 30 people. All plans are formally reviewed annually.

3

A request for review is made by the person you are supporting, a family member or carer.
Example: Kim has dementia and has a program designed to maintain her skills for as long as possible. Her husband has requested her skills maintenance program be reviewed as Kim can no longer follow the steps involved in making a cup of tea without substantial prompting.

4

An incident report is lodged by a support worker in regard to a hazard or risk.
Example: Jenny, who has multiple sclerosis, slipped over at the pool and bruised her side. An incident report was lodged and now her skill development plan is being reviewed to minimise the risk of her slipping again.

5

Concern is raised by a support worker who has observed a change.
This change could be in a person's behaviour, skill level, emotional state or psychological state.

Example: Robyn is a recreational officer at a day centre. She has noticed that one of the people she is supporting, Vincent, has become withdrawn and refuses to take part in activities with the other participants. Robyn has suggested a review of his skills plan as an opportunity to see what has caused the change and what new goals may be appropriate.

6 **A request from other health professionals is made.**

Example: Carmel is a physiotherapist. She was asked to assess Zoe's ability to transfer out of bed. Carmel thinks that Zoe's condition has deteriorated and a new skills maintenance program is needed.

7 **It is a requirement of the funding body paying for services.**

Example: Sharni was involved in a car accident and is seeking compensation for injuries. The insurance company has asked that her program be reviewed every six months and a report on her progress lodged with them.

Review records and make changes

Here is a process that can be used to review a person's records and update their plan to meet the changing needs of the person.

Process for reviewing, evaluating and updating records
The supervisor reads through all documents relating to the individual plan. If and where required, they seek clarification of the recorded evidence.
If required, a formal assessment by a specialist health professional may be requested.
A meeting is held with the person to discuss their current plan and revisit their learning goals.
New learning goals are negotiated and the performance criteria and evidence of achievement are agreed upon.
Additional equipment and resources may also be identified.
A new plan is drawn up and signed by both parties. If the person is not capable of making a decision for themselves, a guardian or carer may do so on their behalf.

Example

Review, evaluate and update records to meet the changing needs of the person

Larry is supporting Ruth, who has a skill development plan that includes attending a weekly art and craft class as a means of developing her social interaction skills and her ability to express herself. When Larry performs his four-monthly review of the documentation, he discovers that Ruth has not attended the class on several occasions and has been marked off by the recreational officer for not participating or completing her projects.

Larry speaks to Nathan, the recreational officer, who confirms that Ruth does not seem to take part in most of the projects. Larry asks why it has not been brought to his attention sooner. Nathan replies that he is waiting to see if she overcomes her reluctance to complete projects.

Larry arranges a meeting with Ruth to discuss her skill development plan. Ruth explains that she is bored and wants to paint her own pictures rather than being made to do specific projects.

Larry talks to Ruth about changing her plan so she can attend a different art group and do free painting. Ruth says she would really like to go to life drawing classes. Larry knows there is a life drawing class at a local community centre, so he organises for Ruth to go there instead. Ruth's plan is changed accordingly.

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Practice task 14

1. Identify two situations when it is appropriate to review a person's records to evaluate the effectiveness of their person-centred skill development or maintenance plan.

2. Explain the process for reviewing, evaluating and updating a person's skill development or maintenance plan.

Click to complete Practice task 14

4C Identify opportunities for ongoing skill development

When facilitating skill development you need to identify as broad a range of opportunities as possible to ensure that the skills developed by the person you are providing support to, once learnt, are maintained.

Opportunities outside of formal training

Formal training and intensive rehabilitation programs with specialist health professionals are both appropriate ways to maintain and enhance the skills of a person with disability. However, outside of a formal training situation there are many other opportunities that can also be of benefit.

Opportunities like this fall into the following categories.

Continuous skill practice

Opportunities to continuously practise skills may be part of the person's daily routine or everyday communication. For example:

▶ for those living in shared houses, communal living can ensure ongoing use of communication and problem-solving skills

▶ for those with vision impairment, using a guide cane or guide dog is ongoing once taught

▶ communication techniques, such as Auslan, a communication board, literacy and numeracy skills, socialising and relationship skills also fit into this category.

Ongoing support

Opportunities where there is ongoing support to continue learning include those that involve peer support, mentoring or networking, or a continuing education program. For example, mentoring a younger person who is adjusting to disability, or being part of a study group at a university or TAFE.

Self-motivation

Opportunities that the person finds motivating are usually things they enjoy in their own right. They offer a high component of success that will continue to motivate the individual. Sporting activities and opportunities that allow for artistic expression fit into this category.

Self-concept

Opportunities that are closely aligned with a person's self-concept, such as parenting skills, advocacy skills, academic achievement, or community or professional associations, can also be strong mechanisms for skill maintenance.

Opportunities within a skill set

There are learning opportunities in each skill set that can be used to promote the ongoing skill enhancement of the person in your care.

Here are some examples.

Learning opportunities within a skill set

Life skills

▶ Living in shared accommodation

▶ Living independently

▶ Attending a day centre

▶ Attending school

▶ Joining a community group, club or association

▶ Establishing a relationship with a mentor

Vocational skills

▶ Any form of employment, traineeship, apprenticeship or volunteering

▶ Vocational courses at TAFE or tertiary institutions

Social skills

▶ Joining peer support groups, clubs, associations or interest groups

▶ Living in communal or shared housing

▶ Attending college, school or TAFE

Personal support skills

▶ Joining a support group

▶ Joining a common interest group outside the disability sector

▶ Ongoing self-development or improvement courses

▶ Joining an advocacy or lobby group

Relationship skills

▶ Developing and maintaining relationships (including intimate relationships)

▶ Joining community groups or social clubs such as:

– peer support groups

– special interest groups

– youth clubs and arts groups

– sporting groups.

Health skills

▶   Maintaining physical health (including sexual health)

▶   Joining a gym, yoga, dance or exercise group

▶   Having regular health check-ups

▶   Joining education programs; for example, family planning, or LGBTQ Youth Programs

Safety

▶   Having regular health check-ups

▶   Following safe sex procedures

▶   Taking part in a self-defence club

Opportunities within the community

When identifying learning opportunities that can provide ongoing skills enhancement, the best source of information may be the person themselves. In addition, you could consult with other health professionals to help you identify learning opportunities.

Openings that offer ongoing opportunities for skills enhancement are not restricted to those opportunities within the disability sector. To support both community integration and ongoing skill opportunities, you may choose to identify clubs, associations and employment that are available to the broader community.

Example

Identify opportunities for ongoing skill development

Sonia wants to improve her social skills, including her ability to talk to people and make friends. She also likes to express herself through singing. Her supervisor, Chris, puts her in touch with the local women's choir. Sonia joins the choir and it gives her an outlet for developing her singing skills and social interaction.
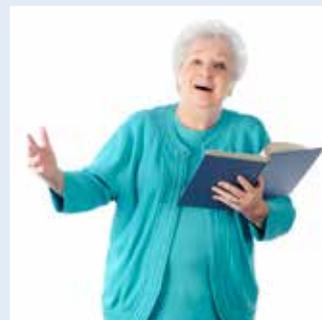
Practice task 15

1. Describe two examples of opportunities for continuous skill practice outside of formal training programs.

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2. For each of the skill sets listed below, provide an example of a setting or situation that could provide an opportunity for developing skills.

    a. Life skills

    b. Vocational skills

    c. Social skills

    d. Personal support skills

    e. Relationship skills

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Click to complete Practice task 15

Summary

1. You may be required to monitor and provide feedback to people you support on their skill development both formally and informally.

2. It may be necessary to provide feedback directly to the primary carer regarding the person's skill development.

3. Part of your role involves reviewing a person's records to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing skill development and updating the plan to meet the person's changing needs.

4. Opportunities that offer ongoing participation are the most effective in maintaining skills enhancement.

Learning checkpoint 4
Evaluate skill development and review plan

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in evaluating the effectiveness of ongoing skill development and updating the plan to meet the changing needs of the person.

Part A

1. Explain the difference between formal and informal monitoring of a person's skill development.

2. What is the purpose of providing feedback on a person's skill development?

3. Describe two tips for providing feedback to a person with disability.

4. Describe two tips for providing feedback to a carer or family member.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Rose is an older person with a visual impairment who lives alone. Her disability support worker, Denise, visits twice a week to help her with the grocery shopping and to go with Rose to her weekly choir rehearsal. Rose visits her local library once a week to borrow audio books. The library is only 500 metres from Rose's home and she uses a guide cane to walk there unaccompanied.

Walking to the library one day, Rose trips over a hose that was left out on a neighbour's driveway and falls over. Denise lodges an incident report and as a result, Rose's skill development plan is being reviewed to minimise the risk of her falling over again.

Rose's daughter, Melanie, is concerned about Rose's safety and tells Denise she does not think Rose should continue to leave the house unaccompanied in the future. Rose is upset by this as she wishes to maintain a reasonable level of independence. Denise meets with Rose and Melanie to discuss Rose's skill development plan and brainstorm how Rose can continue to visit the library safely on her own.

1. Explain the process Denise should follow in reviewing, evaluating and making changes to Rose's skill development plan.

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2. Identify two opportunities of ongoing skill development for Rose.

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Topic 5

In this topic you will learn how to:

5A Identify informal learning opportunities and encourage learning

5B Provide prompt and constructive advice in an appropriate format

5C Provide encouragement when the person takes initiative

5D Withdraw support to an appropriate level to encourage experiential learning and development

Use incidental learning to enhance skill development

When creating and documenting a person-centred skill development plan you can assist a person with disability to systematically achieve their learning goals. However, much can also be gained through incidental learning, which is the largely unstructured and unplanned learning that happens as a consequence of what is going on around us. As a supervisor or experienced support worker, you should try to incorporate incidental learning into the day-to-day activities of a person you are supporting and facilitate their skill growth through a more informal process.

5A Identify informal learning opportunities and encourage learning

Informal learning opportunities arise out of the everyday activities undertaken by a person with disability. Having conversations, observing others, trial and error, and working with experienced others all allow a person to acquire new skills in an unofficial, unscheduled manner. As a supervisor or experienced disability support worker, you should identify informal or incidental learning opportunities for the person you support and encourage their active participation.

Formal, informal and incidental learning

It is important to understand the differences between formal, informal and incidental learning to ensure you plan skill development activities that best suit the needs, preferences and lifestyle of the person you support.

Formal learning

Formal learning opportunities include enrolling in a TAFE or university course, attending school, joining a swimming team, attending coaching or enrolling in a cooking course.

Formal learning always includes an agreement on what is to be learnt, the time frame and the roles and responsibilities of the learner and the trainer. On completion of the training it is expected that the learner will have gained knowledge, skills and abilities.

Informal learning

Informal learning opportunities include learning how to bake a cake by watching someone, asking someone to show you dance moves or joining a theatre company.

In informal learning, there is no contact or time frame and the roles and responsibilities of the learner and the trainer are not defined. There are no learning outcomes or standards that should be achieved. If either party wants to stop the process, they can.

Incidental learning

Incidental learning happens all the time. For example, if you enrol in a TAFE course, you will also learn how to get up on time, manage your time, pack your lunch, get along with other students and use the internet for research. These are not things that you agree to or set out to learn. Instead, you learn them incidentally along the way.

Incidental learning takes place wherever the learner happens to be and occurs as a consequence of other activities.

Opportunities for informal or incidental learning

Support workers often find informal or incidental learning opportunities present themselves while carrying out their duties and interacting with people in need of support.

Incidental learning opportunities are available for people who are receiving help with personal care, home care, recreation, and vocations and employment.

As you continue working with the person you can draw on their existing strengths and extend their skill base in a way that feels like part of the usual interactions with that person.

Strategies for informal or incidental learning

Incidental learning is effective for adults because the person is learning something that is immediately useful to them. The main disadvantage is that it is unstructured and may have little planning or documentation.

To successfully identify opportunities for informal or incidental learning, look for a gap between the person's current skill level and the skills required to perform a task satisfactorily. Where these gaps exist, you can use a range of learning strategies to enable the person to learn.

Role modelling

Role modelling allows a person with disability to learn skills and behaviour from what they see you do and say, including:

▶ social skills and what is socially acceptable

▶ how to request thing in shops

▶ how to balance work and home life

▶ how to show respect to others.

Demonstration

You can demonstrate to a person with disability, step-by-step, how to perform a simple function, such as:

▶ preparing a meal

▶ buying a ticket

▶ shopping at the supermarket

▶ how to wash their clothes in the washing machine.

This also includes life skills and interpersonal skills.

Skills component mastery

You can help a person with disability learn by breaking a task down into its components and allowing time to practise each step to achieve mastery. This includes:

▶ personal hygiene

▶ grooming

▶ meal preparation

▶ riding a bike.

Contextualisation

It often helps for people to know the context in which the skill is applied. You can teach a person with disability about:

▶ money – when you are assisting them to buy a ticket to the football

▶ waiting your turn – while in a shop

▶ crossing with the lights – while on a main road

▶ washing your hands – when they are about to prepare food.

Drama and role-play

Role-play can help a person with disability practise communication and social skills. For instance, you may let them role-play:

▶ ordering a meal in a restaurant

▶ asking someone out on a date

▶ asking directions from a stranger

▶ telling an employer why they want a job.

Peer education

Forming a peer group of people with similar experiences and providing an opportunity to talk about those experiences can be useful for learning. Peer education can be helpful for:

▶ talking about relationships

▶ advocacy

▶ learning what adjustment others have had to make after acquiring disability

▶ sharing information on what resources are available.

Learning opportunities in the workplace

Performing your role as a disability support worker in line with organisational policies and procedures will provide additional informal or incidental learning opportunities for the person you support. Your workplace includes anywhere you provide care or support to a person with disability, including the person's home. You have a responsibility to identify learning opportunities for the person you support as you carry out your own role and responsibilities.

Here are some of the policies and procedures your organisation may have in place and the opportunities they provide for informal or incidental learning.

Duty of care

▶ How to make an informed judgment

▶ How to gather information and listen to and accept advice

▶ How to understand cause and effect

▶ How to understand the role of support worker and supervisor in avoiding injury to person or property

Work health and safety

▶ How to identify risks and hazards

▶ How to organise repairs and maintenance

▶ How to make sure electrical equipment is safe

▶ What chemicals are safe and environmentally sound

Safe food handling

▶ How to store food in the refrigerator and how long it can be kept

▶ How to check that food is not past its use-by date

▶ How to prepare food safely

▶ How germs and bacteria are spread

Gifts and gratuities

▶ That support workers can't accept gifts

▶ That support workers can't come to private arrangements to work for a person with disability

▶ Other ways to show appreciation

Professional boundaries

▶ Appropriate ways to speak to people and what are inappropriate actions

▶ To understand bullying, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity (EEO) principles

▶ That support workers can't spend extra time with people in need of support outside of work

▶ That support workers are employees, not friends

Learning opportunities offered by personal interaction

Personal interactions between you and the person you support also provide an opportunity for incidental learning in a range of skills areas. For example, interviewing a person to assess their initial needs provides an opportunity for them to learn about the:

▶ services available

▶ funding arrangements in place

▶ avenues to access this support.

Example

Identify informal learning opportunities and encourage learning

Vince takes Garry to the football most Saturdays to watch his team play. Garry looks forward to the outing and knows many of the people in the cheer squad. They always catch the train and Garry always watches Vince buy the tickets and hand over the money.

One Saturday, while they are waiting on the platform, Vince notices Garry is staring at the timetable on the wall. Vince explains that you use it to look up what time a train is coming. He demonstrates several times, moving his finger across the chart to follow the times. Vince then shows Garry that the timetable for weekdays is different to the one for weekends. Garry practises several times and is then able to show Vince how to use the timetable.

Practice task 16

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Margaret, a disability support worker, undertakes an initial assessment of Mrs Brown and says there needs to be a work health and safety assessment of Mrs Brown's home. The house, Margaret explains, is considered a workplace for disability support workers. Margaret uses a checklist to determine if the house is a safe workplace.

As Margaret goes from room to room to check electrical switches, furniture, fittings and fixtures, Mrs Brown comes with her and asks what it all means.

They also talk about what chemicals the support worker can use. Mrs Brown is surprised that bleach can be harmful, saying she has been using it for years. But she does recall that her mother had just used warm water and vinegar and it had done the trick.

1. Describe what Mrs Brown could incidentally learn from observing Margaret carry out a work health and safety assessment in line with organisational policies and procedures.

2. Describe how Margaret could use role modelling to continue to provide incidental learning opportunities for Mrs Brown.

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Click to complete Practice task 16

5B Provide prompt and constructive advice in an appropriate format

Everyone likes to receive positive, constructive advice and feedback rather than negative comments.

Constructive advice helps people with disability to learn and develop new skills. The way they do things may not be perfect and they will make mistakes; however, providing appropriate and constructive advice to the person, their family, carer or advocate will motivate the person to continue learning, rather than causing them to feel like they cannot get it right.

Feedback and advice should be provided in an appropriate format that meets the needs, preferences and capacity of the person with disability.

Constructive feedback

Here are two tips about how constructive feedback should be given.

As soon as possible after the event

▶ Constructive feedback tells people what they are doing well and what they could possibly improve upon. This feedback should be given as soon as possible after the event so that it is fresh in everyone's mind.

Appropriate to the person's age and level of development

▶ Constructive feedback must be provided in a format and language appropriate to the person's age and level of development and help them see there are possibly ways of doing something better. The closer to the event the person receives feedback, the more effective it will be.

Types of feedback

There are many different types of feedback that can be given to a person with disability to assist and encourage their learning. Generally, praising success and using a calm voice and simple clear language are beneficial. You must always respect the cognitive abilities of the person you are supporting.

Here are some examples.

Types of feedback

Instructions

When giving instructions or talking a person through a process:

▶ give simple, clear instructions one at a time

▶ be patient and wait for the person to complete one step before you give the next instruction

▶ praise the person on completion of each step

▶ if something goes wrong, explain why and let them try again

▶ demonstrate if necessary

▶ do not make a fun of mistakes or a person's attempts.

Prompting

When prompting:

▶ if you can see the person is having trouble, ask them what comes next and talk it through with them

▶ remember you can also use nonverbal prompts

▶ do not criticise when they do something incorrectly.

Praising

When praising:

▶ congratulate the person on what they can do

▶ emphasise strengths and achievement

▶ point out the progress they have made

▶ point out to others what a good job the person has done.

Giving feedback

When giving feedback about what is working and not working:

▶ make sure you have the person's attention, getting them to stop what they are doing if necessary

▶ give the positives first, then say what needs to be done differently; talk about the task, not the person

▶ suggest rather than tell; don't set yourself up as the expert

▶ let them experiment with ways of doing things if the first way doesn't work

▶ finish with praise.

Encouraging experimentation

When encouraging further experimentation:

▶ step back and ask what they think

▶ be patient and let them experiment, and possibly fail, without intervening

▶ create an atmosphere where it is okay to make mistakes along the way

▶ concentrate on the outcome, not the process.

Providing information

When providing information:

▶ give factual information

▶ concentrate on the task, not the person

▶ check the person has understood

▶ demonstrate, if necessary

▶ give the person time to understand

▶ repeat the information as many times as necessary.

Making suggestions

When suggesting the correct way of doing things:

▶ get the person's attention

▶ use a calm voice

▶ use 'I' statements such as, 'I find it easier to do it this way'

▶ demonstrate as well as explain

▶ do not belittle or make fun of their efforts.

Acknowledging success

When acknowledging success:

▶ praise the person and celebrate their success

▶ organise rewards and incentives; choose something that is important to the individual, such as a system of stars or stickers that others can see

▶ give public acknowledgment.

Feedback for people who are nonverbal

Feedback needs to be a two way process. If you are working with a person who is nonverbal, you may need to use a communication board or spelling board to assist in providing feedback.

Unaided communication may be required for those with severe physical disability. A system of eye movements, such as blinks, to communicate their needs may be the only means of communication some people have with the outside world. This is true for people with advanced motor neurone disease or severe paralysis. You need to use questions with a yes or no answer. This may take a little longer but it allows the person to communicate with you, even if they have severe restrictions.

Example

Provide prompt and constructive advice and feedback in appropriate format

Lyn has recently moved into a residential facility with four other residents. Previously she lived at home with her parents. Lyn is very proud of the fact she now lives independently as this is a major part of her skill development plan.

Every morning Lyn gets up on time and has breakfast; she then showers and dresses. This process is starting to take longer and longer and on several mornings she has been late for the bus. By the time she emerges ready for the day her bed is covered with discarded clothes; the bathroom floor is left wet and towels have been left lying around.

Lyn's support worker, Nadine, decides to give Lyn some constructive feedback so the problem does not continue. Nadine discusses it with her supervisor, Nabeel, who agrees that as part of her skill development, Lyn needs to be ready on time and to leave the rooms tidy.

The next morning when Lyn emerges late, as usual, Nadine gives her the following feedback:

'Lyn, it's great to see that you always take pride in your appearance. You are a little late for the bus today. Maybe tonight we can pick out the clothes for you to wear tomorrow and leave them on a hanger so it doesn't slow you down in the morning; that way you have time to leave the bathroom and your bedroom tidy.'

Lyn agrees it's a good idea to choose her clothes the night before, because she doesn't want to get into trouble for being late.

Practice task 17

1. How should constructive feedback be given to a person with disability?

2. Explain how instructions should been given to a person with disability.

3. Explain how you would provide constructive feedback to a person who is nonverbal.

Click to complete Practice task 17

5C Provide encouragement when the person takes initiative

As a supervisor or experienced disability support worker, it is your role to provide encouragement to a person with disability when they take initiative in learning situations.

Taking initiative means the person believes they have:

▶ the skills to take that first step

▶ the willpower to begin

▶ a safe environment in which to take risks

▶ the authority to undertake an activity.

Effects of institutionalisation

For many people with disability, the concepts of choice and of taking initiative are difficult. For those with an intellectual disability, initiating an action or thinking of a different way to do something can be confusing. In terms of human development, many people in this category are still predominantly concrete thinkers. Abstract concepts, such as the future or choice, are difficult to master.

People who have lived in an institutional setting may have been discouraged from taking initiative and exercising their right of choice. Routine and repetition may have been features of their daily life, and deviation from the routine may not have been encouraged.

To motivate the person and help their development, you must encourage them to take initiative. Supervisors need to promote the ideas of choice and flexibility to foster a culture where initiative is accepted. Support workers are in an ideal position to encourage people with disability when they take initiative in their day-to-day lives.

Provide encouragement

There are situations when a person takes initiative in a learning situation and it is not necessary for you to give instructions, information or advice. They may be coping well without any further assistance. Your role in this situation is to encourage and inspire the person to continue showing initiative.

Behaviour is more likely to be repeated if it is rewarded by a positive affirmation. Behaviour that is not encouraged is more likely to cease. Therefore, taking initiative must be encouraged for it to continue.

Encourage a show of initiative through praise, compliments or congratulations at the same time as the person is carrying out the task. Delayed praise is much less effective.

Give verbal encouragement

Nearly everyone enjoys a compliment, even if they do not know how to accept it at the time. Praise for something well done is always appreciated, especially when the person knows it is deserved.

When giving verbal encouragement to a person with disability, use the following technique.

Event +	How you felt +	Reason
When you (be specific about what they did)	I felt (describe the emotion you felt, such as proud, happy or overjoyed)	because (state the reason, such as: 'it is the first time you have achieved this')
'When you devised a weekly menu and wrote out the shopping list'	'I felt so proud of you'	'because you achieved your learning goal to show how you can be independent.'

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

In addition to providing verbal encouragement, it is useful to know what motivates and encourages each individual person with disability. Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes the broad categories of needs or rewards that motivate most people. This model can help you identify what motivates an individual and what is the best form of encouragement to use with them.
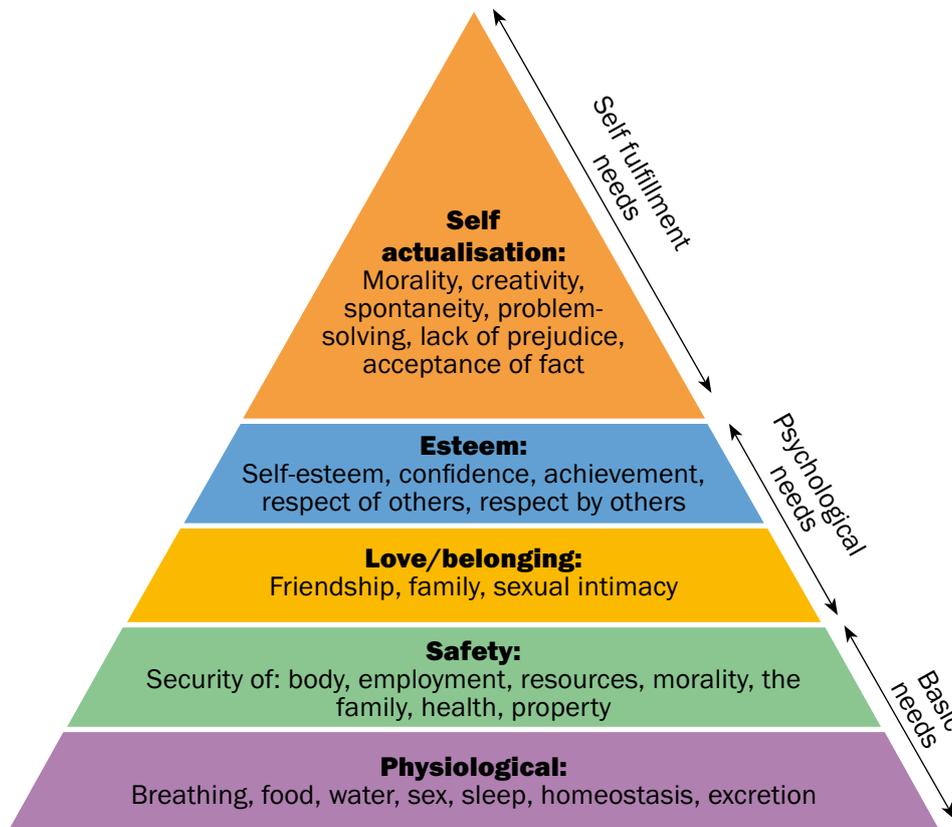
Use motivational rewards

Not all people with disability will achieve the higher levels of motivation. Concepts of self-expression and self-actualisation may not apply to those with delayed development, except in exceptional circumstances.

Here are some examples of the types of rewards that motivate people at each level of Maslow's hierarchy.

Self-actualisation

- ▶ Opportunities for self-expression or self-advocacy
- ▶ Opportunities that maximise independence
- ▶ Creative outlets

Esteem

- ▶ Statements that build self-esteem
- ▶ Praising and congratulating
- ▶ Being recognised by others for your achievements
- ▶ Being the centre of attention
- ▶ Opportunities that promise meaningful relationships

Love/belonging

- ▶ Rewards that offer social interaction
- ▶ Going to the shopping centre
- ▶ Going to visit friends
- ▶ Joining a club or taking part in group activities
- ▶ Going to the football and feeling you are part of the team you are cheering on

Safety

- ▶ Assurance that you will be there to support them
- ▶ Confidence that things will be done the same way every time
- ▶ Reassurance that they are safe and remain safe
- ▶ Making all activities as risk free as possible

Physiological

- ▶ Concrete rewards such as special meals
- ▶ Activities that are physically pleasant in themselves such as going for a swim or going to the gym
- ▶ Being allowed to sleep in
- ▶ Having a massage

Example

Provide encouragement when the person takes initiative

Bill tells his support worker, Dianne, he has decided to go to the shopping centre to buy a present for his sister; he wants to surprise her on her birthday. Dianne says she thinks it's a great idea.

Dianne knows that Bill is apprehensive about crossing the railway line on the way to the shops, so she offers to go with him to make sure he doesn't get stuck on the tracks. Bill admits this is the only thing stopping him.

After they have been to the shops and bought the present, Bill feels a real sense of achievement.

Practice task 18

1. Explain why it is important to refrain from providing further instructions to a person with disability who is taking initiative in a learning situation.

2. Explain the importance of giving verbal encouragement to a person with disability.

3. Identify two examples of motivational rewards that relate to a person's self-actualisation.

Click to complete Practice task 18

5D Withdraw support to an appropriate level to encourage experiential learning and development

Supervisors or experienced disability support workers providing low level supervision to a person with disability, play an active role in encouraging the person to learn by experiential learning.

Many people with disability are familiar with adapting everyday practices to match their own capabilities. Through trial and error they work out the best ways of doing things for themselves, which enhances self-esteem.

Experiential learning is particularly useful for kinaesthetic learners, as it tends to allow people to work out any problem using their own initiative. People are able to actually do things, rather than just understanding a task from a theoretical basis.

For people who prefer visual learning, experiential learning may require a greater component of demonstration or role modelling, with a slow withdrawal of support. Auditory learners may need support strategies such as prompting or being asked to explain a process while doing it.

Strategies for withdrawing support

Experiential learning can be encouraged by using strategies such as role modelling, demonstration, contextualisation, and then slowly withdrawing support. This enables the person to experiment and learn at their own pace, without the pressure of someone standing over them. People with disability often indicate that this is their preference.

For some people it is necessary to commence learning in a fairly structured way. Task analysis may be useful for those who are concrete learners and enjoy skills mastery of one component before moving to the next.

Withdraw support slowly

Once you think the person is confident (or alternatively impatient) with this process, adapt your strategy to allow more trial and error. You are no longer imposing your way of doing the task but encouraging the person to find a way that suits them. This allows the person to embrace a flexible approach to learning and empowers them to discover a new and better way of achieving the desired result.

Withdraw support slowly
Use the demonstration approach.
Revert back to prompting, but only when the person needs a gentle reminder.
Withdraw when the person is confident to perform the task unaided.

Before withdrawing support

Many of us learn by trial and error, which involves an element of risk-taking. The people you support derive dignity from being able to try things that may involve failure. Before withdrawing support and allowing the person to engage in experiential learning, you must consider your duty of care and the organisation's guidelines concerning dignity of risk.

The compromise between dignity of risk and duty of care is not always clearly defined. It involves you making a decision to the best of your capability at that point in time. There are organisational guidelines on duty of care, but they are guidelines only and cannot cover every contingency.

Here is more information about what you should consider.

Duty of care

Duty of care requires you to take reasonable care to avoid injury to others and avoid damage to property as a result of your actions or inaction. You have a duty of care to do what is fair and reasonable for the person you support, proportionate to your level of training and scope of practice. Failure to fulfil your duty of care can result in court action for negligence against you or your employer.

Ask yourself

Before withdrawing support, ask yourself: Does the person have sufficient information to make an informed decision about the risk involved? Is the person of sound mind and cognitively competent to take the level of risk? Does the person have access to suitable resources (for example, adaptive devices or aids) to carry out the skill on their own?

Assess the risk

Before withdrawing support, it is important to assess each risk by considering the likelihood and extent of the foreseeable risks and benefits. Think about looking at ways to minimise risk without sacrificing the benefits and balancing foreseeable harm against foreseeable benefits.

Your decision should be based on what you know of the risk involved, what you know of the person's awareness of risk, and how well equipped the person is to deal with these risks if they arise.

If you are concerned

If you are concerned the person needs further support, and is indeed at risk, discuss this with the person first, or their family member or carer, before you consider withdrawing support.

If the person then determines to take that risk, it is their choice. You have made them aware of the risk and it is with an informed choice that they have decided to proceed. You must also document your concerns and any discussions that have taken place.

Example

Withdraw support to an appropriate level to encourage experiential learning and development

Vass lives in a residential house with four other residents. They decide that on Melbourne Cup day they will have a barbeque in the back garden and invite some guests. Vass is elected as cook and is excited about it, as he has never used the barbeque before.

Hazel, the house coordinator, agrees to be there for the day. She is a little concerned about Vass's ability to use the barbeque, so she spends time with him telling him how to light the barbeque and to be careful of the flames. Hazel demonstrates how to light the barbeque a couple of times and then talks Vass through the process. Hazel stands back to let Vass practise some more until he feels he has it right. Hazel then explains how to turn the gas off once he has finished and how to clean the barbeque when it has cooled down. Vass says he knows all about that, as he has watched others do it before.

On Melbourne Cup day Hazel suggests to Vass that he wears a long-sleeved shirt and an apron for cooking. She helps him make sure he has all the meat prepared and talks through how long to cook the sausages and the steak. Hazel watches as Vass prepares potatoes and cuts the onions into rings.

Vass announces that he will be all right without her help and wants to show everyone what he can do. Hazel is a little anxious, but she has talked Vass through the process and knows she has to let him try on his own. She knows how important it is to him.

Vass successfully looks after the barbeque and makes sure no-one else comes too near it. He cooks all the meat, although some of it is a little over-cooked. Even so, everyone seems to enjoy it. Vass sees that the gas is turned off when he is finished.

Practice task 19

1. How can experiential learning be encouraged?

.   ...

2. When it is the correct time to withdraw support?

.   ...

.   ...

3. What should you do if you are concerned that a person needs further support or is at risk?

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

.   ...

Click to complete Practice task 19

Summary

1. People learn through formal learning, informal learning and incidental learning.

2. Simple procedures like personal care and home care provide opportunities for the person to learn for themselves.

3. You need to balance duty of care and dignity of risk to know when to withdraw support and allow the person to learn through experiential learning.

4. Provide constructive feedback to people as quickly as possible after they have performed an activity.

5. It is a good technique to praise what the person is doing well before you point out what needs to be improved.

6. When a person takes initiative, you need to provide encouragement verbally and in an appropriate form, such as concrete incentives or actions that boost their self-esteem.

7. Your organisational policies and procedures in themselves provide opportunities for informal or incidental learning for people you are supporting.

Learning checkpoint 5
Use incidental learning to enhance skill development

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in identifying and implementing incident learning opportunities to enhance skills development.

Part A

1. Describe the differences between formal, informal and incidental learning.

2. Identify and describe two strategies for informal or incidental learning.

3. Identify and describe two types of feedback that can be given to a person with disability to assist and encourage their learning.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

> ### Case study
>
> Ralph was in a car accident two years ago and he suffered a spinal injury. As a result he lost the use of both his legs and now relies on a wheelchair for mobility. Ralph has recently moved into an independent group home with three other people who have physical disabilities. He is still learning how to be fully independent and requires some assistance from a disability support worker to help him dress for work each morning. Ralph finds the most difficult task is putting on his socks and shoes.
>
> Tony is one of the workers who supports Ralph to develop his skills and maintain his independence. Ralph tells Tony that he would like to start dressing himself unassisted, including putting on his socks and shoes. While Ralph does not yet feel confident to perform this task alone, he becomes impatient if he has to wait for others to assist him. Ralph says that being able to dress himself will give him the confidence to take more risks in completing other activities.

1. Describe how Tony could assist Ralph to take initiative in learning situations.

2. What could Tony use as a motivational reward for Ralph?

3. When would it be appropriate for Tony to stop assisting Ralph to get dressed and encourage Ralph's experiential learning and development?