

## **Barriers to Communication Assignment**

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It is important that we communicate well in different health and social care settings so the service users understand their care and can talk about it with staff. There are four different types of barriers: environmental, physical, language and social isolation. I am going to describe the barriers and how they affects service users.

### **Environmental Barriers**

#### **Lighting**

If the lighting in the community centre is dim or low it can make it hard to see the person you are speaking to and it also makes it hard to see or read people's facial expressions of the other people. When the lighting is affected the service users will feel like they have been left out and because there is no light the service user will feel scared because they will not know what is going on.

The way in which the community centre can overcome this barrier is they could turn on the lights or make the room brighter so that people who have a sight problem will be able to see what they are working on. Another way you can overcome the barrier is by the centre being aware of the problem how to deal with it.

#### **External noise**

When external noise is a problem in the centre it means the service users can't hear what is being said to them when someone is talking to them. If the noise gets really bad in the centre then people who have a hearing problem will not communicate. External noise will make the service users feel annoyed and if they feel like this they might not want to give any information.

There are a number of ways this barrier can be overcome for example if the noise is coming from the TV the staff could put the subtitles on the TV so that

people can read what is being said. Another way the barrier can be overcome is by either having a soundproof room or having separate rooms.

**According to Garnham P et al (2013), BTEC First Health and Social Care, Pearson:Harlow** “If people understand what is being said by service providers they will be able to take part in planning their own care also people will feel valued and in control which will result in increased self-esteem.”

## **Seating**

In the centre if the seating is a problem it might mean the service users that are in wheelchairs might find it difficult to speak to someone if for example the reception desks are too high. Another problem is if the arrangement of chairs is bad some people might not want to sit down. The service user might feel left out which means they might not want to talk to anyone else in the room.

Seating is easy to overcome because the staff in the centre could move the chairs and make small groups so that people can sit with each other and talk in their groups. Another way the barrier can be overcome is by making it so the desks are lower so that people who use wheelchairs can access information.

## **Lack of space**

Lack of space in the centre will make it difficult for people to communicate if they can't get into the room. Another reason it's hard for people to communicate if there is lack of space is if someone is in a wheelchair they will not be able to communicate with staff if they cannot get their chair into the room. The way the lack of space will affect people is they will not want to give out any important information also it might have a loss of someone's independence.

The way in which lack of space can be overcome is by making more space, widening doorways, installing ramps and putting signs low down so that anyone can read them.

## **Physical Barriers**

### **Sensory Deprivation**

Some people cannot receive or pass on information because one or more of their senses are impaired. An example of sensory deprivation is a visual or hearing disability.

The way it affects people's communication is by making hard for them to get the information to other people.

### **Physical Illness and Mental Illness**

When someone is ill they may not be able to communicate as well as they usually do. One of the examples of a physical illness which can affect communication is Parkinson's disease. The affect this has on the persons communication skills is they have slurred speech, a monotonous tone or their have reduced facial expressions. The way Parkinson's disease can overcome is by giving that certain people with the disease some speech therapy.

Mental illness can have an effect on someone's ability to communicate because if someone in the day centre is feeling depressed they will not want to communicate with anyone else in the centre which means they will not tell people about their health problems.

### **Language Barriers/ Preferred Language**

If there are people from a different country who speaks a foreign language, or uses another way to communicate for example if they use sign language the people might not be able to give the staff who work in the centre the information about themselves. Also the information which is given by the staff member the person might not be able to make sense it.

The centre can overcome this barrier by finding out what language the people speak with and making it so the staff can written and verbally communicate to them in their preferred language. Another way the centre can overcome the barrier is they could provide leaflets in different languages which would

make the people feel more comfortable and they will give information about any health problems. The centre could also bring in an interpreter who would talk for the people. This could make the people feel more relaxed but also they might feel like they can talk themselves. Slang can be a barrier to communication because people who are using slang might not be understood by people who are with them in the centre.

### **Social isolation**

Social isolation is a barrier because it can affect a person confidence which means they will not talk to anyone or ask questions in the centre. Intimidation is an example of social isolation and a barrier because if someone feels intimidated by someone else in the centre they might not understand what people are saying to them. If someone has been a victim of abuse they could become withdrawn and unable to communicate. Trauma can cause distress which can make people unable to listen properly or to misunderstand what is being said.

**According to Garnham P et al (2013), BTEC First Health and Social Care, Pearson:Harlow** “ Abuse can cause someone to become withdrawn and unable to communicate.”

The way in which these barriers can be overcome by someone talking to the person about different and how they are feeling, the staff that are in the centre should have a positive attitude and allow the person to speak in their own time.

If any of these barriers are not taken away the effect it has on the individual could be bad. The way in which the barriers will affect the person is by if the person in the centre cannot or does not want to communicate because of that barrier they will receive poor quality of delivery of health and social care, the distress of the person might become too much for them to cope with and if the person does not tell the staff in the centre what is up with them because of the barrier affecting them they won't get the help they need which will increase their ill health.

## **Case Study**

Ben, 50, visual impairment.

The way in which the setting of the centre shows that it helps Ben who has a visual impairment, is by making any of the work they read or do bigger print so that Ben can see what the activity is. Another way the centre overcomes a barrier for Ben is by having some support staff with him to tell him what is going on. With Ben having a visual impairment one thing the setting can do is having the lighting so that Ben can make out some faces.

By having some information written in Braille, for example a map of the centre so that Ben knows where the toilets are, this helps him overcome his difficulty. Ben's visual impairment may mean that his hearing is more sensitive, so the centre need to be aware of this and make sure that noises are not too loud. In the event of a fire or during a fire drill, the setting should provide a support worker who will be responsible for getting him safely out of the building. Activities may have to be adjusted to Ben's needs; activities involving his other senses would be preferable.

One of the activities that Ben could do is he could listen to different pieces of music and say to the staff members which one is favourite and he could why he likes it. This is a good activity for the staff in the centre to do with Ben because he is using his other senses.

Another activity that Ben could do in the centre is he could play cards which have raised dot on them so it is easy for him to play different card games with the other people in the setting.

The impact that these changes and adjustments will have on Ben are that he will feel more confident to speak to more people because he feels confident in the setting because he knows that he is valued and that staff will make sure he is safe. Ben will feel included as he is being given information the same as the others but in a form that he can use. The positivity of the setting may make

Ben want to try new things and get involved more as he will be getting lots of encouragement. Because the setting is welcoming Ben will want to go there and so will be able to communicate with more people that if he was at home. He will also meet people with similar difficulties and will feel that he has something in common with them.