Demonstrate knowledge of the role of a support worker in a health or disability setting

Name _________________________________________________
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Demonstrate knowledge of the role of a support worker in a health or disability setting

23451 V2

4 Before you start
7 Your role as a support worker
14 Defining your role as a support worker
22 Working as part of a team
26 Boundaries at work
28 Responding to requests outside your role
30 Interpersonal boundaries
34 Carrying out your duties
38 Standards of behaviour
42 Privacy and dignity
46 Privacy and confidentiality
Before you start

Welcome to this workbook for:

**Demonstrate knowledge of the role of a support worker in a health or disability setting.**

**Unit Standard 23451 V2.**

For this unit standard you will have:

- This workbook.
- A trainee’s assessment.

What you will learn about

In this workbook you will learn more about:

- Your role as a support worker.
- Service plans.
- Working as a team.
- Boundaries at work.
- Standards of behaviour.
- Privacy and confidentiality.

How to use this workbook

- This is your workbook to keep – make it your own by writing in it.
- Use highlighters to identify important ideas.
- Do the learning activities included throughout this workbook. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
- You might find it helpful to discuss your answers with colleagues or your supervisor.
- Finish this workbook before you start on the assessment.

The glossary and study hints book has study hints for all trainees.

It also explains key words and phrases from the compulsory unit standards for Foundation Skills and Core Competencies. You can download it from www.careerforce.org.nz.

Take note!

When you see a sticky note like this, it gives a tip or a hint.
Workbook activities

**Stop – check what you know about this topic**
You will see this stop symbol in places where you are asked to stop and think about what you know and:
- Record your current knowledge or impressions.
- Check your knowledge.
This stop provides a reference point to return to later.
Stop activities have a blue background like this.

**Learning activities**
You will come across learning activities as you work through this workbook.
These activities help you understand and apply the information that you are learning about.
Learning activities have a pale yellow background like this.

**Rewind**
When you see this rewind symbol, go back to:
- Think about what you know.
- Check your knowledge.
This rewind gives you an opportunity to add to, change or confirm some of your initial thoughts and ideas.
Rewind activities have a green background like this.
Before you go any further in this workbook, think about...

**Your role as a support worker**

What do you think are the **three** most important parts of your role?

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Your role as a support worker includes both the tasks you are expected to do and the way in which you do them.

Tasks
Your role is to provide a service to people who need support to improve their quality of life.

The tasks you are expected to do will depend on the person's service plan and may be different for each of the people you support.

Tasks are the things that you do to support people. For example:

**Personal care tasks** are things like supporting a person to shower or go to the toilet, to get dressed or to eat a meal.

**Household management tasks** are things like supporting a person with vacuuming or laundry, making beds or grocery shopping and meal preparation.

**Supporting independence tasks** can be things like making sure that people have all the items in place that they need to do a task for themselves. The point is not for the support worker to do tasks for people, but to support them to do what they are capable of doing for themselves and encouraging them to maintain these abilities.

The way in which you do these tasks is also part of your role and includes:

1. The kind of environment you promote.
2. The way in which you support people.
3. How you work collaboratively in a team.

These aspects of your role are explained in more detail over the following pages.
Your role as a support worker

1 Promoting environments that support the safety, independence, health and wellbeing and quality of life of people.

Personal safety
Part of your role is to support people in a way that promotes their safety. This includes identifying hazards in the workplace, following best practice, following the service plan and your organisation’s policies and procedures.

Personal independence
Most people will be able to do some things for themselves.

Your role is to support and encourage people to do the things they are capable of doing for themselves.

When people have an injury or illness, their condition will improve as they recover. Sometimes they will need rehabilitation so that they can start doing things for themselves again.

In your role as a support worker, you can help people to keep or get back their independence so that they have more control over their everyday activities.
Your role as a support worker

Personal health and wellbeing
The people you support may have an illness, injury and/or disability that affects their ability to carry out everyday tasks for themselves.

Recognising and reporting any changes in the health and wellbeing of the people you support is part of your role.

This means it is important that you are able to notice when a person’s condition changes and that you know what to do about it.

Personal quality of life
Safety, independence and health and wellbeing all contribute to a person’s quality of life.

The people you support are all individuals with their own experiences of life and culture, their own needs and feelings and their own likes and dislikes.

Recognising this individuality will help you, as a support worker, to do your best to maintain or improve the quality of life for the people you support.
Your role as a support worker

Supporting people in a way that respects their rights, dignity, values and beliefs and personal goals.

Rights
The Code of Rights outlines how all people you support have the right to be treated respectfully. This may mean calling people by their preferred name and considering their culture when providing care or support.

You can read more about the Code of Rights on pages 38 and 39.

Dignity
Illness or disability and the need for support do not mean that people should be treated with any less dignity. Respecting people’s dignity means that they will still feel like valued members of society.

Respecting dignity also means respecting privacy. This means that you understand people need their own space and time. It will also affect how you support a person, especially when it comes to personal care.

People rely on you to support them at the scheduled times. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have followed the right procedure for your workplace if you are unable to support them at the agreed time. This is another way of showing respect.
Your role as a support worker

Values and beliefs
People will have their own values, beliefs, and opinions. As a support worker you need to respect these values, beliefs and opinions even if they are different to your own.

Personal goals
When you are supporting people to reach personal goals, you need to respect and support their abilities, interests and preferences. These factors may change from day to day or over time.

Positive attitudes and behaviour
Your role as a support worker requires you to communicate with the people you support, other members of the team and your organisation.

By communicating effectively with each person, you gain a better understanding of individual needs.

A positive attitude to the way you communicate with and support people will contribute to their quality of life. A positive attitude includes the way in which you show respect for and encourage the people you support.
Your role as a support worker

3 Working collaboratively as part of a team.

Effective communication
Each person has an individual service plan which tells you what you need to do to support that person to achieve his or her goals.

In your role as a support worker you need to communicate with people to ask them how they would like to be supported.

You also need to keep them informed about how this support will be provided.

Team interaction and support
At times you will work either directly or indirectly alongside other team members to support people.

This means you may have to pass on information about people to other members of the team.

When you work collaboratively, you are sharing the support and information about people.

There are ways to interact with and support your team that will be helpful to everyone involved.
Your role as a support worker

Team meetings are an opportunity to learn as well as to share information.

As a support worker you may be asked to share ideas and give updates and reports on the people you are supporting.

You can support your team by providing the information that is needed to support people.

This will allow other members of the team to carry out their roles. You also need to listen for important information from others.

It is important to remember that support workers must work within the boundaries of their roles at all times.

Handover is the time when one shift takes over from another, so the care of people changes “hands”.

Your role in a handover is to pass on any concerns about a person you support, provide an update on progress towards goals, and report on any change in the person’s condition.

You can support your team by having accurate information and communicating it clearly.

Reporting may be verbal or in writing and will include the same kind of information as in a handover.

Reporting may also include reporting any incidents that happen in the workplace or hazards that may affect safety. Prompt reporting in these instances is important.

Supervising others may be part of your role as a support worker.

Your role may be to provide ideas or direction, to keep others fully informed about their duties and to listen to gain information.

You can support your team by providing the information needed for others to carry out their roles of supporting people. You can also support your team by listening and watching for important information.

Read more about being a part of a team on pages 22 to 24.
Defining your role as a support worker

Your role as a support worker is defined for you by a number of documents:

- Job description.
- Conditions of employment.
- Service plan.

Job description
A job description is generally a formal summary of the most important features of your job. These features may include:

**Duties and responsibilities** – the nature of the work you are to do, how it is done and the skills needed to do the job.

**Job specifications** – the type of work you will do, the degree of responsibilities you have and the performance standards.

Conditions of employment
Conditions of employment is a contract that both you and your organisation enter into when you start to work for the organisation. It states:

- The conditions you are expected to work under.
- The day you started work for the organisation.
- The agreed amount of money (pay) you will receive for the work.

Service plan
This is a document developed by your organisation with the person and/or the person’s family/whānau.

The service plan outlines the type of service your organisation provides and the type of work you will be doing to support that person’s goals.

Take note!

The way in which you carry out your job will affect a person’s quality of life.

A support worker discusses the service plan with the woman she is supporting.
Defining your role as a support worker

Different types of service may be delivered in a range of settings that include a person’s own home, disability support facilities and residential care such as an aged care or marae-based facility.

Service delivery models
The service delivery model is the way in which the type of service will be delivered to the people who have service plans. Service delivery models may be:

- **Holistic**
- **Person-centred**
- **Consumer focused**

**Holistic**
Holistic care means looking at the whole person. Physical, mental, cultural and spiritual needs and how these affect a person’s enjoyment of quality of life are all important.

**Person-centred**
This is a type of holistic service that has a particular application to supporting people with dementia.

A person-centred approach focuses on a person’s individuality, relationships, needs, communication, feelings and abilities and takes a holistic view of the person’s situation as the starting point for determining the type and level of support to be provided.

**Consumer focused**
This type of service delivery model focuses on outcomes for people.

Outcomes may be health related, either managing a health issue or rehabilitation. Outcomes may focus on a specific area in a person’s life, such as household management, personal care or socialisation.
Defining your role as a support worker

Types of service
Within the models of service delivery are types of service that help to define the role of a support worker.

Goal orientated
In this type of service, problems or issues are identified and goals or outcomes put in place. The first step towards the final goal becomes the initial goal.

For example, a person who has a brain injury might have the goal of being able to care for his or her children. The first goal might be a particular task, such as making a school lunch.

Outcome focused
A health goal or outcome is identified and the support is aimed at achieving this outcome.

For example, the person you support might need to lose weight or exercise more to achieve better health.

Restorative
This type of service is aimed at restoring a person’s function. This service is often used by ACC and the level of support decreases over time.

For example, a person has a broken leg and needs a lot of support to begin with but will be able to return to normal independence when the fracture has healed.

Individualised
The service plan is specific to a particular person and takes into account that person’s likes and dislikes, culture, life experiences and mental and physical needs.

For example, a person in residential care may find it difficult to cope with the company of other people and prefer to eat meals alone.

Promotion of independence
This type of service is specifically aimed at the person becoming more independent and it allows/encourages people to do things for themselves.

For example, a person may have the goal of being able to shower and get dressed independently.

Significant others
Significant others in a private home setting are family/whānau members and other health professionals. This type of service will be especially important when children are being supported.

Significant others within a residential care facility are the other residents, family/whānau members and the staff.

For example, a support worker’s role might be to shower and dress a person in time for a visit from another health professional such as a physiotherapist.
Before you go any further in this workbook, think about...

Your role

Find the following:

- Your job description.
- Your conditions of employment.
- The service plan for a person you currently support.

Read the information in these documents that tells you about your role as a support worker, including the following:

- The services your organisation provides.
- Your duties and responsibilities.
- What tasks you are expected to carry out.

Think about this information. You can use the notes page on page 20 to record any ideas and questions you may have.

Then answer the questions on the following page.
What type of service does your organisation provide?
(For example: holistic, person-centred, consumer focused, goal orientated, individualised, promotion of independence or significant others.)

How does your job description affect how you support people?

How do your conditions of employment affect how you support people?

How does the service plan affect how you support people?
Choose a person you currently support:

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<tr>
<th>What type of service does your organisation provide for this person?</th>
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What are **two** tasks that you do to support the person? | How do these tasks affect the person's quality of life? |
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Take note!

Remember that whatever you do, however you do it, you must have the person as the main focus of your support.
Learning activity

Find the following:
- Your organisation’s policies and procedures.
- Your job description.
- A person’s service plan.

Use these documents to help you answer the questions.

What do you need to do if you can’t support a person at the scheduled time?

What must you do to maintain a person’s privacy?

How can you keep personal information confidential?

What do you need to do if you’re sick and can’t come into work?
Working as part of a team

Working as part of a team is an important part of your role as a support worker. Developing good teamwork skills is necessary to working effectively.

Working collaboratively

When you work in a team of people, you have responsibilities to communicate, pass on and receive information and support each other. This is called working collaboratively.

When you work collaboratively, you are sharing the support and information about a person so that the team is aware of that person’s progress towards achieving goals.
Working as part of a team

In your role as a support worker you will be working as part of a team.

This team could be:
- Supporting the same person.
- Working with colleagues.

Supporting the same person

Working independently

For example, Joan works Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with a particular person, and Mary works Tuesdays and Thursdays with the same person. This is called a roster.

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Working with another support worker

Often a person will have more than one support person. All people involved with providing support need to ensure that they know exactly what role they play in the support.

Working with colleagues

This team could be where you are one of a number of support workers. For example, if your organisation employs ten support workers, you are part of this team.

Two support workers work together to help a person to move.
Working as part of a team

Personal skills for working in a team

Listening – it is important to listen to what a person tells you and listen to any instructions from your supervisor. Other team members will also have useful things to say.

Questioning – it is important to ask questions when you are unclear about what is required. This may mean talking to people about any changes in their service plans, or talking to your supervisor about a new task to be performed. The purpose of questioning is to make clear what is required of you.

Persuading – sometimes you may be asked your opinion. You may have to exchange and defend your ideas, and sometimes change these ideas.

Respecting – in a team it is important to treat other team members and their ideas with respect.

Helping – teamwork is also about helping your co-workers. This may mean showing them the best way to carry out a task.

Sharing – it is important to share information and resources within the team. This also helps create a sense of trust between team members.

Participating – when everyone in the team is working together towards the common goal of supporting a person, this creates a positive environment and a more effective team.

It is important to listen to what a person tells you.
## Learning activity

**1. Think** about a person you support.

**Choose** three of the skills for working in a team that you have used and found effective.

**Answer** the questions in box 1.

**2. Think** about a person you support where the teamwork was less effective.

**Answer** the question in box 2.

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<th>What three skills did you choose?</th>
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<th>How did these skills improve teamwork?</th>
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<th>What was the positive effect for the person from this good teamwork?</th>
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<th>What skills could have been used to make this teamwork more effective?</th>
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Boundaries at work

To work within your boundaries is to work within the limits of your role at work.

What are boundaries at work?
Working within your boundaries means that you only provide support which you have been trained for.

Having boundaries means you know the limits of your responsibilities, which will help you feel safe in your role. You know where your role in the workplace ends and someone else’s begins.

Working within your boundaries may also be called your scope of practice.

Your scope of practice means that you support a person in the way described in your job description and in the person’s service plan.

Your organisation’s policies and procedures will have information about your scope of practice. They may also provide a staff handbook that makes important information easy to find and understand.

Your supervisor also supports the person with different tasks in the plan. Your supervisor has been trained to carry out these different tasks and he or she has a different scope of practice or boundaries.

Take note!

If everyone in your team understands what to do and how and when to do it, all team members will feel safe in their roles.

Would it be part of your role to give an injection of insulin?
Before you go any further in this workbook, think about...

**Your scope of practice**

Find any sections in your organisation’s policies and procedures, your job description or the staff handbook that describe your role as a support worker.

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<th>What are three examples of tasks that are within your scope of practice?</th>
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<th>What is one example of a task that would be outside your scope of practice?</th>
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Responding to requests outside your role

Learning activity
It is not always easy to respond to requests that a person or a family/whānau member asks you to do, especially when the task involved is not included in the person’s service plan.

Sometimes it is a good idea to practise what you might say to someone when faced with a particular situation.

On these two pages are some examples of things you could say. What other responses can you think of?

An example has been done for you, in red.

A person’s request
Rua wants you to clean out his fridge as he has noticed some of the food in there has passed the use-by dates.

Possible response
I’m not able to help you as it is not part of your service plan. Perhaps on Saturday, after your sister has been grocery shopping for you, she may be able to help you clean out your fridge.

You might also say:
Maybe you could keep a list of the food in your fridge and when you need to eat it by. Does that idea sound like something that might help you?
Responding to requests outside your role

**A person’s request**
Mr Leary asks you to take him to church today as the person who usually takes him is ill.

**Possible response**
I’m not allowed to take you as it is not one of the duties on the service plan. Instead, would you like me to call one of your friends and ask them to take you?

**Family/whānau request**
Rua’s sister, Kahu, asks if you will do Rua’s shopping this week as she wants to go away for the weekend.

**Possible response**
I’m sorry, I’m not able to help you with that as it is not part of Rua’s service plan. Have you considered shopping online and getting it delivered?

**Family/whānau request**
Mrs Soli’ai has forgotten to take her insulin. Her daughter asks you to prepare her insulin and give it to her.

**Possible response**
I’m not able to help you as it is not part of my responsibilities to prepare or give medicine to people.

**You might also say:**

**You might also say:**

**You might also say:**
Interpersonal boundaries

Interpersonal boundaries are the boundaries between people. They are the line between what people will do or accept and what they won’t.

A boundary or limit is the dividing line between what you will or won’t do or accept from others without reacting.

Interpersonal relationships involve a kind of boundary which is usually known and understood by members of our family, our friends, our co-workers and our society. Knowing what the accepted boundaries are helps us get on with other people and to be accepted by them.

Factors which influence interpersonal boundaries

The tone of voice people use with each other: is it friendly or unfriendly?

The attitude and approach people use with each other: is it helpful or critical?

Whether you like or dislike people can affect how you communicate with them. For example, you may be more abrupt in the way you reply to a question with someone you don’t like.

Other people’s boundaries, and physical space. For example, people may come too close to you when they are talking to you. This may make you feel very uncomfortable about being with them and supporting them.

Knowing what will happen if you step over the boundaries. For example, someone has been very demanding and you have done your best to provide support. You may become very frustrated and speak harshly to the person.

Maintaining appropriate workplace boundaries may take some effort, but it is an important part of your role.

Take note!

You should always report offensive or unwelcome behaviour to your supervisor.
Interpersonal boundaries

Strategies to create and maintain workplace boundaries

Know the limits of your role and who you are responsible to – this is about what you can and can’t do within the time or situation, and who you answer to (often your team leader, manager or supervisor).

Communicate openly and tactfully – be positive and ask for help if you need it.

Be able to discuss differences and reach agreement – this is so the situation is a positive one both for you and for the other person – sometimes called a “win-win” situation. Discussions may involve the person or your supervisor.

Learn how to start, manage and finish relationships – this includes relationships with people you support and co-workers.

Know who you can talk to when problems arise – this may be a colleague, a supervisor or someone from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that your employer has provided in the workplace.

Understand your responsibilities to keep your knowledge up to date – this may mean you regularly attend staff training sessions or read your organisation’s newsletter.

Positive attitudes and behaviour – respect differences and acknowledge the rights of both the people you support and co-workers to hold personal beliefs, values and goals which are different to your own.
Learning activity
Think about a work situation where you found maintaining your boundaries difficult.

What things made this situation difficult?

What strategies could you have used to help you maintain your boundaries in this situation?
Learning activity
Think about a person you support.

How do you find out about this person's values and beliefs?

Where are the person's goals described?

What actions do you take to show respect to this person?
Carrying out your duties

Positive attitudes and behaviour
Having a positive attitude will influence the way that you deal with other people at work and at home.

The way you think affects all aspects of your life. Learn to recognise your thought patterns and how they may be affecting the way you handle the stressful situations of daily living. This approach is a useful way to influence your attitude and the ways you in which you behave.

Having a positive attitude will also influence the way you deal with other people at work and at home. A positive attitude towards people will help contribute to their quality of life.
Carrying out your duties

Listen to the messages you are sending yourself
Practise turning the negative thoughts you have into positive ones until this becomes a habit.

For example, “I’ll never get this finished by the end of the day!” could become: “I will probably get most of this finished by the end of the day.”

Learn to communicate
Not saying the things we feel can lead to a sense of frustration, hurt, anger or anxiety.

Simplify your life
Make time to do the things you enjoy: meet with old friends, take the dog for a walk, visit an art gallery or listen to your favourite music. Enjoy a long, relaxing bath, read a great book, tell your child a story, or ask an older relative to tell you one! It is often the simplest things in life that give us the most pleasure.

Help someone
The simple act of helping others helps us to feel good.

Laugh
Laughter helps to lift your mood. If you are feeling down, read some jokes, watch a funny movie or just act “silly” once in a while.

Physical activity
Physical activity helps release powerful chemicals in our bodies which in turn can help us feel positive.

Look after your health
Eat well and get regular sleep to help your sense of wellbeing.
Carrying out your duties

Communication and relationships

Effective communication is an essential part of your role as a support worker.

The service plan of every person you support will help you understand how you need to provide the support.

In your role you need to talk to people about how they would like to be supported, and to keep them informed about how support will be provided.

Communicating effectively will help you build a positive relationship with people and is an essential part of your support worker role.

When there is not good communication between support workers and the people they support, support workers cannot perform their role effectively.
Carrying out your duties

Ways to communicate effectively with people

- Call people by the **name they prefer**.
- **Pay attention** to what people have to say.
- **Rephrase** using different words, if someone does not understand you.
- Speak **clearly** and talk directly to people.
- **Take your time**, and express one idea at a time.
- Use **body language** to improve communication. These are the non-verbal ways in which you use eye contact, gestures, and the space between you and someone else.
- Use a **tone of voice** that is appropriate to the conversation.
- Keep your **language simple** and avoid using jargon.

- **Listen to silence**. Silence allows someone to think about what is being discussed or about how to respond.
- **Acknowledge** people’s **experiences and feelings** even if you do not agree with or understand them.
- Look for **hidden meanings**. For example, what people may be telling you when they repeat things or talk about someone else’s health or problems.
- **Encourage and reassure** people when they need it.
- **Wait for a response** to questions and try not to finish people’s sentences or thoughts for them.
- Use **humour** when or if it’s appropriate.
Standards of behaviour

The way you carry out your duties and responsibilities and the way you conduct yourself at work impacts on:

- The support you provide for people.
- The way you work within a team.
- How effectively and efficiently you go about your job.

Standards of behaviour are the way that your organisation expects you to behave and carry out your duties and responsibilities.

Your organisation will expect you to work efficiently, effectively, and with honesty and integrity.

There will be minimum standards of accepted behaviour. These standards will be covered in:

- Your organisation’s code of conduct.
- Your employment contract.

The way you behave at work is also covered by legal obligations covered in the Code of Rights.

Organisation’s code of conduct

Your organisation will have a code of conduct. The purpose of this code is to provide you with guidelines about the standard of behaviour required of you.

Your employment contract

This is the contract that both you and your organisation (your employer) enter into, when you start to work for the organisation.

The Code of Rights

The Code sets out the responsibilities of people and organisations providing health and disability services to meet people’s rights. The Code covers:

- People’s rights.
- Responsibilities of organisations and their employees.

Under the Code it is your responsibility to ensure that you recognise these rights at all times.

For more information about the Code of Rights, you can contact the Commission by using the above phone numbers, or website address.
Standards of behaviour

What rights are covered?
The Health and Disability Commissioner enforces the Code which gives all users of health and disability services ten rights.

The Code states that people:
1. Should be treated with respect, which includes respect for culture, values, beliefs and privacy.
2. Should receive fair treatment, which includes not being discriminated against, pressured into anything or taken advantage of.
3. Should be supported to live a dignified, independent life.
4. Should be treated with proper standards of care, skill and service. Services should be well coordinated.
5. Should be listened to, understood and given information in whatever way they need, including the use of interpreters where necessary and possible.
6. Should receive full information and explanation about their condition and choices. This includes estimated costs and waiting times, benefits and side effects.
7. Should make their own decisions and be free to change their minds.
8. Can have a support person with them at most times.
9. Should be told that these rights also apply when taking part in teaching or research.
10. Have the right to make a complaint about services in a way that is easy and will not have an adverse effect on the way they are treated.
Before you go any further in this workbook, think about...

**Behaviour at work**

**Find** the following:
- Your organisation’s code of conduct.
- Your employment contract.
- A copy of the Code of Rights.

**Think** about what these documents say about how you should behave.

What standards of behaviour are expected from you at work?
(An example has been done for you, in red.)

*Being on time*
Much of your support worker time will be spent maintaining people’s quality of life and wellbeing.

Having a positive outlook will not only help you develop good relationships with people but will help in other aspects of your life.

Paying attention to what someone is saying acknowledges individual views and feelings.
Privacy and dignity

Illness or disability and people’s need for support do not mean that they should be treated with less respect or dignity.

When you support people you need to:
- Support and encourage their independence.
- Treat them with dignity and respect.
- Protect their privacy as much as you can.

You can protect people’s privacy and dignity by:
- Asking them how they would like you to carry out a particular task.
- Telling them what you are going to do before you do it.
- Drawing curtains or closing doors.
- Asking about the areas of the house it is OK for you to go into.
- Asking before you touch them or their personal property.
- Asking before opening cupboards or drawers.
- Knocking or asking before you enter a room, particularly if they are carrying out a personal care task.
- Leaving them alone (if appropriate) in the room or area when carrying out personal care tasks. You could also turn away rather than watch them do something very personal such as going to the toilet.
- Giving them something to cover themselves with when they are dressing or undressing.

Take note!

When you get to know people you build rapport. This helps you to understand who they are and it helps people to trust you.
Privacy and dignity

Needing support to do personal things can be difficult to cope with.

People in this situation may feel:

- Embarrassed (nervous, ashamed or even stupid in front of other people).
- Upset.
- Sad or depressed.
- Frustrated and angry.
- Degraded (as if they don’t matter as a person).
- Vulnerable (afraid of what might happen to them).
- Like a child.
-Disconnected (as if they are watching it happen to someone else).
- Disempowered (as if they have no control over things).

Empathy

You may have been ill or spent time in hospital and needed help with some personal things. Remembering how it felt will let you empathise with the people you support. Empathising with someone means that you can imagine how they are feeling.

Not everyone is the same, however. The person you are supporting may be feeling differently from the way you can remember feeling.

Being aware of how people may feel and treating them with respect and dignity can help to reduce these feelings. It will also help you to develop a good relationship with the people you are supporting.

As a support worker, think about how you would be feeling if you were the person who is being supported. This will help you to empathise with people.
Privacy and dignity

Many people are not used to having support to do personal things like going to the toilet or showering.

How would you feel?

- What would it feel like having to be supported with things that you are used to doing for yourself, like showering or toileting?
- How would you like a support worker to talk to you and touch you?
- What would the support worker need to do to respect your dignity?
- How could the support worker respect your cultural background?
- What would you need to do to keep control over what was happening to you?

Thinking about these things helps you to empathise with people and respect their dignity and privacy when you are supporting them with personal care.

It also gives you some idea of the things to ask people when you are helping them with personal care. For example, if you don’t like to have your feet touched you will probably think about asking people if it is all right to touch their feet when you are helping them dress.
Before you go any further in this workbook, think about...

Personal information

What does your organisation say about protecting personal information for yourself and the people you support?
Privacy and confidentiality

Personal information

The Privacy Act (1993) sets out the rules for organisations about how they hold personal information about people. The Privacy Commissioner administers the Privacy Act which applies to almost every person, business or organisation in New Zealand. The Act has twelve information privacy principles which describe how each organisation should handle personal information.

These privacy principles describe:

• How information is collected.
• How information is stored and the procedures needed to protect its security.
• The need to keep it complete, up to date and accurate before it is used.
• How long it can be kept.
• What it can be used for.
• When it can be shown to someone else.
• How people can access their own information.
• How the information can be corrected if it is wrong.

Other laws

Sometimes other laws may require information to be available to other people. These laws must be followed ahead of the privacy principles.

The Health Information Privacy Code (1994) has additional rules for health sector organisations to help protect the people’s privacy. This Code guides how health information is collected, how it is used, stored and made available by health agencies. For the health sector this Code takes the place of the information privacy principles.

Take note!

Your organisation is required to have a Privacy Officer. This person is responsible for finding out what to do, and giving advice to other members of staff about privacy issues.
Privacy and confidentiality

When it comes to handing personal information, there are privacy and confidentiality matters that support workers need to know about.

Everyone needs to know that:

- People must be told why information is being collected and to whom it will be passed. This should happen whenever any personal information is collected.
- People may be asked to sign a form saying that they have been told about how their information will be used.
- Only the information needed will be collected and it can’t be used for any other purpose. This means that you cannot be asked personal questions when there is no need to have this information.
- People have the right to see the information that has been collected about them and to correct anything that is wrong.
- Your organisation will have policies and procedures about privacy and confidentiality.

Support workers also need to know that:

- You must protect the identity of people where required.
- You must make sure that only approved people have access to confidential information about a person such as the supervisor or another team member.
- You must not discuss or share confidential information about people you support with anyone other than an approved person such as a supervisor.
- You must not share confidential information about another colleague unless it is to protect that worker’s health and wellbeing.
- You must not pass on confidential information about the organisation you work for (your employer) or discuss it within the organisation unless this is approved.
Scenario

Nicky is a support worker at Aroha Rest Home and Hospital. She only works during the holidays and at weekends.

Nicky often meets friends in town after work. Today, one of her friends, Lisa, mentions that she has heard that Ethel Walsh is living in the facility that Nicky is working in. She says that Ethel is her relative, and that she knows quite a bit about the family. Lisa asks Nicky about Ethel and how she is progressing with her change of medication.

This puts Nicky in an awkward situation.

Learning activity

Read the scenario and then answer the questions.

Can Nicky tell Lisa anything about Ethel?

Yes / No

Why or why not?

How should Nicky respond to her friend Lisa's questions?
Rewind to page 6

Do you agree with your initial thoughts and ideas?

If yes, do you have anything you would like to add?

If no, what would you change?
Completion and assessment

Congratulations!

You have come to the end of the workbook for Unit Standard 23451 V2: Demonstrate knowledge of the role of a support worker in a health or disability setting.

Please check over all the activities in this workbook to make sure you have completed them.

Your assessment is next

You need to complete the trainee’s assessment successfully to be credited with this unit standard.

Your assessor will sign you off once you have completed the assessment tasks satisfactorily.

Your assessor is able to give you a “Certificate of completion” for achieving this unit standard.
Acknowledgements
Careerforce would like to thank the people who have contributed their time and effort into creating this workbook by:

- Research and content validation.
- Advice and expertise.
- Testing the activities.
- Sharing personal experiences.
- Appearing in photographs.

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