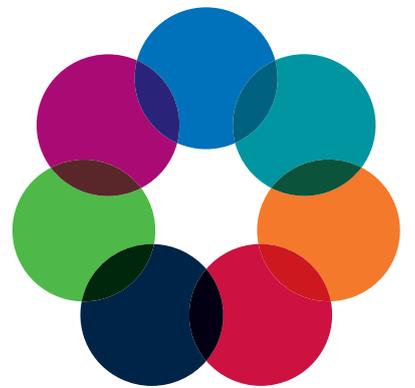# The common core principles

Dignity

Principle 1
Value the uniqueness of every individual

Context

Throughout our lives many of us build a network of activities, practices and beliefs that help define us as individuals. These social, cultural, sexual, spiritual, religious, moral and personal practices may change over time but are important in shaping our lives and our unique and diverse identities and informing our social interactions and sense of dignity and wellbeing in our communities. Building and maintaining these practices can be harder for those who are challenged by illness, disability, ageing and other life events which may affect independence, identity and sense of self. Understanding the importance of valuing an individual's unique identity is at the heart of supporting people to achieve a sense of purpose, belonging and self-worth.

It is important to recognise that care and support workers are also unique individuals, who need to reflect on the impact of their personal beliefs and attitudes on their own and others' dignity.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Gain a shared, common understanding of what dignity means.

- Understand how an individual's dignity, independence, identity and sense of self can be affected by illness, disability, ageing or other life events.

- Understand the rights of individuals to keep aspects of their lives to themselves.

Desired skills and practices:

- Value and respect the individual as a unique person who has the right to choice and control over how their needs, wishes and preferences are met.

- Acknowledge the importance of an individual's hopes and aspirations and understand how these may impact on their interactions with others.

- When offering care and support, see more than just an individual's care and support needs, see the uniqueness of the person.

- Recognise, promote and value diversity including differences in culture, beliefs, relationships and sexuality.

- Recognise the impact of personal attitudes, values and beliefs on yours and others' practice.

Principle 2
Uphold the responsibility to shape care and support services around each individual

Context

The drive for personalised care services continues to demand that the individual is placed at the heart of all care and support service provision. Individuals must have informed choice and control over the services they require to meet their needs, wishes and preferences and to meet these as they see fit. Personalised services maximise independence, respect and dignity of individuals.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Understand the principles of choice and control and how to apply this in personalised care and support to ensure that an individual's opinion is central.

- Understand the importance of positive risk taking to maximise an individual's dignity.

- Understand how reliance on the support of others may impact upon an individual's dignity and sense of wellbeing.

- Understand the implications of an individual's mental capacity and the duty of care to act in best interest where appropriate.

Desired skills and practices:

- Respect an individual's right to autonomy and dignity, ensuring their choice and control in the development and delivery of their care and support.

- Recognise potential conflict in balancing rights and each individual's autonomy.

- Respect the individual as a person with their own experience, knowledge and expertise about their situation.

- Ensure that the service enables individuals to interact as they wish with their local community.

- Recognise the importance of working together with people who are a part of the individual's life, whether family, friends or professionals.

- Take time to consider how making assumptions can impact on an individual's dignity, remembering that respect is personal to each individual.

Principle 3
Value communicating with individuals in ways that are meaningful to them

Context

The way people communicate is central to upholding the dignity of individuals and forming and maintaining positive relationships to enable person-centred care. It is a two way process, where individuals must be appropriately supported to communicate their needs, wishes and preferences to enable choice and control in decision making. Body language, words and tone are all indicators of communicating with respect, courtesy and integrity. The complexity of communication requires care and support workers to build effective relationships with individuals in order to identify barriers and facilitate meaningful interaction that upholds dignity.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Understand how physical, social, emotional and environmental factors may impact on communication.

- Understand an individual's right to know and contribute to what is being said and written about them.

- Understand the importance of confidentiality and its impact on an individual's privacy and dignity.

- Understand that individuals may use a variety of verbal and non-verbal means to communicate and the importance of letting individuals set the pace of conversations.

- Understand how positioning (where care and support staff stand or sit in relation to the individual) may encourage or limit interactions.

- Understand how language, disability and culture may be barriers to communication.

Desired skills and practices:

- Avoid making assumptions about how to communicate with individuals.

- Establish individuals' preferred method of communication and interaction.

- Allow sufficient time to actively listen and hear what individuals are saying, reflecting back where required.

- Communicate clearly and effectively using appropriate resources to facilitate meaningful engagement and interaction. This may involve the use of communication aids and written, pictorial or audio materials.

- Consider how assistive living technologies can support effective communication.

- Respect how each individual feels about physical contact. Be aware of organisational guidelines around personal contact.

Principle 4

Recognise and respect how an individual's dignity may be affected when supported with their personal care

Context

Support with intimate personal care may have an impact upon an individual's dignity. Having care and support workers present during intimate acts of daily living can feel an undignified invasion of privacy. In these situations the characteristics of care and support workers such as age, nationality and gender may be significant to some. Individuals who need assistance from care and support workers in public situations may also experience a loss of dignity. Requiring assistance with other less intimate personal care activities relating to daily living, such as supporting access to community services, care of clothes and engagement in leisure activities may also affect an individual's dignity and sense of wellbeing.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Understand how important it is to empathise with individuals' experiences of receiving intimate and personal care and support.

- Understand how some assistive living technologies can support independence, privacy and dignity.

- Understand the importance of choice and control within personal care.

- Understand the environmental impact of personal care aids or adaptations in an individuals' home or in public areas.

Desired skills and practices:

- Respect and uphold the dignity of individuals when supporting and discussing personal care.

- Preserve the privacy of individuals at all times and recognise how being physically exposed can make individuals feel vulnerable.

- Respect and act upon individual's wishes and preferences when they receive personal care and support.

- Enable individuals to be as independent as they wish to be when performing personal care tasks.

- Be sensitive to how individuals may feel when receiving intimate, personal care.

- Where possible, managers coordinate services to enable individuals to be supported by their preferred care and support worker, keeping individuals informed of changes or delays.

- Ensure that communication before and during intimate and personal care tasks is appropriate and sensitive.

- Record details of personal care support sensitively using appropriate language.

Principle 5
Recognise that an individual's surroundings and environments are important to their sense of dignity

Context

The environments in which we live are a critical factor influencing how we feel about ourselves and our sense of wellbeing and dignity. The atmosphere and how an environment looks, sounds and smells may affect how we feel, communicate and act. Many individuals are used to influencing their own environments; where this is not possible choosing familiar and meaningful things to have around them may help to create a sense of place and belonging.

When individuals require care and support at any time in their lives, they may have to make changes to their own environment, or move to environments that are unfamiliar to them. Such changes aim to improve quality of life and enhance desired independence; however the loss of familiar environments may result in feelings of sadness and confusion along with a loss of dignity, privacy and confidence.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Understand the importance of environments to individuals using care and support.

- Understand the potential impact of change and loss for individuals who use care and support.

- Understand the potential for environments to influence effective and meaningful communication.

- Understand the importance of personal space and privacy.

- Understand how atmospheres can be changed when care and support workers are pressured by time.

Desired skills and practice:

- Respect the importance of personal space and privacy and be sensitive to being in an individual's personal environment.

- Promote practices and routines that support the dignity of individuals and enable care and support workers to challenge regimes that do not place dignity at their centre.

- Use assistive living technologies and reablement principles to promote independence, choice and control.

Principle 6
Value workplace cultures that actively promote the dignity of everybody

Context

Workplace culture is key to creating an environment which promotes dignity. Leaders and managers are central to creating positive workplace cultures where care and support workers are treated with dignity and respect; giving them confidence to maximise the dignity of those they are supporting. Such cultures encourage new ideas, identify good practice and minimise the fear of failure, recognising and enabling continuous professional development through learning, application and support.

The creation of cultures that promote dignity demands effective leadership, but is the responsibility of all regardless of role and is of equal importance in all settings.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Leaders understand and promote the principle of developing a positive workplace culture through an open, supportive and reflective learning environment.

- Understand the responsibility of all to create and promote a positive culture that upholds the dignity of all its members.

Desired skills and practices:

- Care and support workers recognise and respect the dignity of their colleagues and actively work to create a positive workplace culture where everyone is valued at all times.

- Leaders and managers recognise and value workers' skills and attributes and address identified learning needs in a timely way.

- Care and support workers take responsibility for recognising and addressing their own learning needs.

- Workers take responsibility for their personal and professional conduct in all interactions with colleagues.

Principle 7
Recognise the need to challenge care that may reduce the dignity of the individual

Context

Situations can arise when care and support workers do not uphold the dignity of individuals who use care and support services. In these situations there can be cultures and practices which allow poor behaviours that impact on the dignity of an individual to continue. Leaders and managers should promote positive, workplace cultures where policies and procedures exist to give people confidence in reporting concerns and where 'no blame' policies empower people to learn from mistakes.

Desired understanding and knowledge:

- Understand the importance of taking responsibility for own practice and actions that impact on an individual's dignity.

- Understand the responsibility of all to challenge poor care practices and routines and to support and promote good practice.

- Understand that there are external organisations who can be contacted for support and advice when appropriate.

Desired skills and practices:

- Maintain integrity at all times.

- Follow professional codes of conduct and reflect upon and develop positive practice.

- Keep accurate and clear records and act upon concerns relating to poor practice.

- Leaders and managers ensure whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures are in place, followed and regularly reviewed.

- Care and support workers are given, through learning and development, the confidence and skills to follow whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures.

- Leaders ensure care and support workers, individuals, families and friends know how to report poor practice and are encouraged to do so.

- Leaders positively promote good care and support and know how to respond promptly and proportionately to concerns over poor practice.