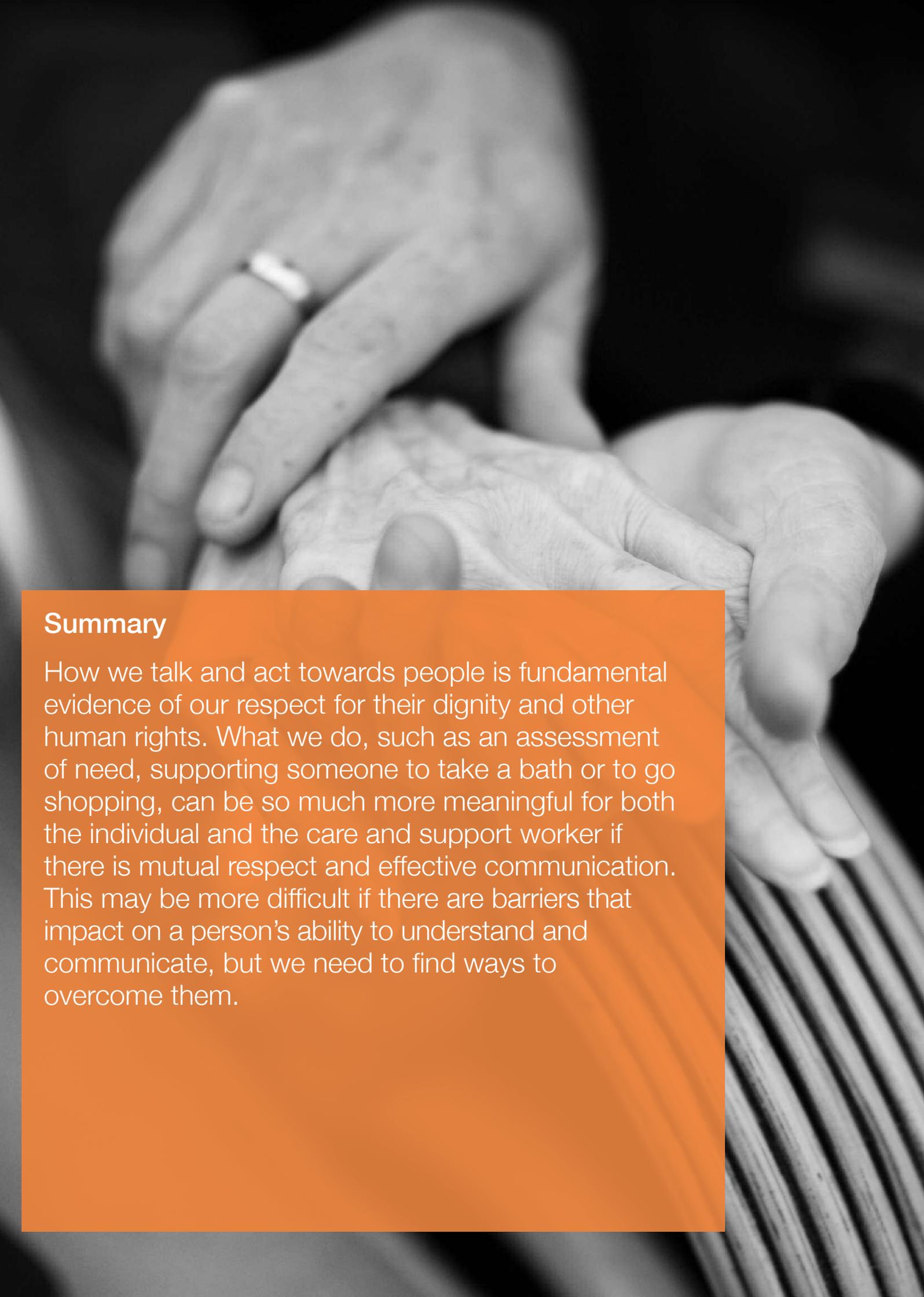




**Principles to practice**  
**Principle 3**  
**Value communicating  
with individuals  
in ways that are  
meaningful to them**



## Summary

How we talk and act towards people is fundamental evidence of our respect for their dignity and other human rights. What we do, such as an assessment of need, supporting someone to take a bath or to go shopping, can be so much more meaningful for both the individual and the care and support worker if there is mutual respect and effective communication. This may be more difficult if there are barriers that impact on a person's ability to understand and communicate, but we need to find ways to overcome them.

# Good practice scenario

---

## Situation

**A lady who had returned to her residential home from hospital following a stroke.**

The stroke had severely impaired her verbal communication skills and some of her functional ability on the left side of her body. Prior to her stroke, the lady was fully able to verbally communicate her needs, wishes and preferences; however now it was necessary to establish with her new ways that she could communicate with care and support workers. This included:

- Establishing that she was able to write after she handed a care and support worker a note asking for a cup of tea and making sure there was always a pad of paper and a pen to handy for her.
- Organising a speech and language therapy assessment. During the assessment the lady was shown various aids and she indicated she would like to have an electronic aid to support her with communication. This meant she was able to quickly and effectively communicate with those around her.
- Using the aid to explore with the lady her thoughts and feelings around her recent illness, her change in circumstances and to offer reassurance and identify support.
- Ensuring that the care plan was updated to reflect the new and amended care and support needs.
- Ensuring all of the staff were trained in supporting the lady to use the new communication aid as well as being sensitive to her emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

## Dilemma

You are supporting a gentleman who has dementia, who grew up in a time when language that was then common place could be now be seen as unacceptable. His dementia causes him to frequently believe he is an adolescent living in the 1940s during the Second World War. This era is often his reality and he is disturbed by accents which he perceives to be German. You have a new member of staff from an eastern European country and at times, when she is offering care and support to this gentleman, he becomes upset and agitated and uses racist language.

- How would you manage this situation and communicate effectively with the gentleman to calm and reassure him?
- How could you ensure that the dignity of both the gentleman and the staff member is upheld?
- How would you record this individual's needs in their person-centred plan?
- What other aspects of communication might need to be considered?

**“It’s the little things that matter, a friendly face, a kind word, a smile... some time to talk”**

**Person who uses services**

“We worked together as a team to get to know Tracey by carefully observing her and reflecting on what was working/not working for her. We recognised that her difficulties in being understood, and understanding what was going on in her life, caused her anxiety and that it was particularly important to Tracey to know who was supporting her and when”

The Willows Team, MacIntyre

## **Skills for Care**

West Gate  
6 Grace Street  
Leeds  
LS1 2RP

Telephone 0113 245 1716  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

© Skills for Care 2013