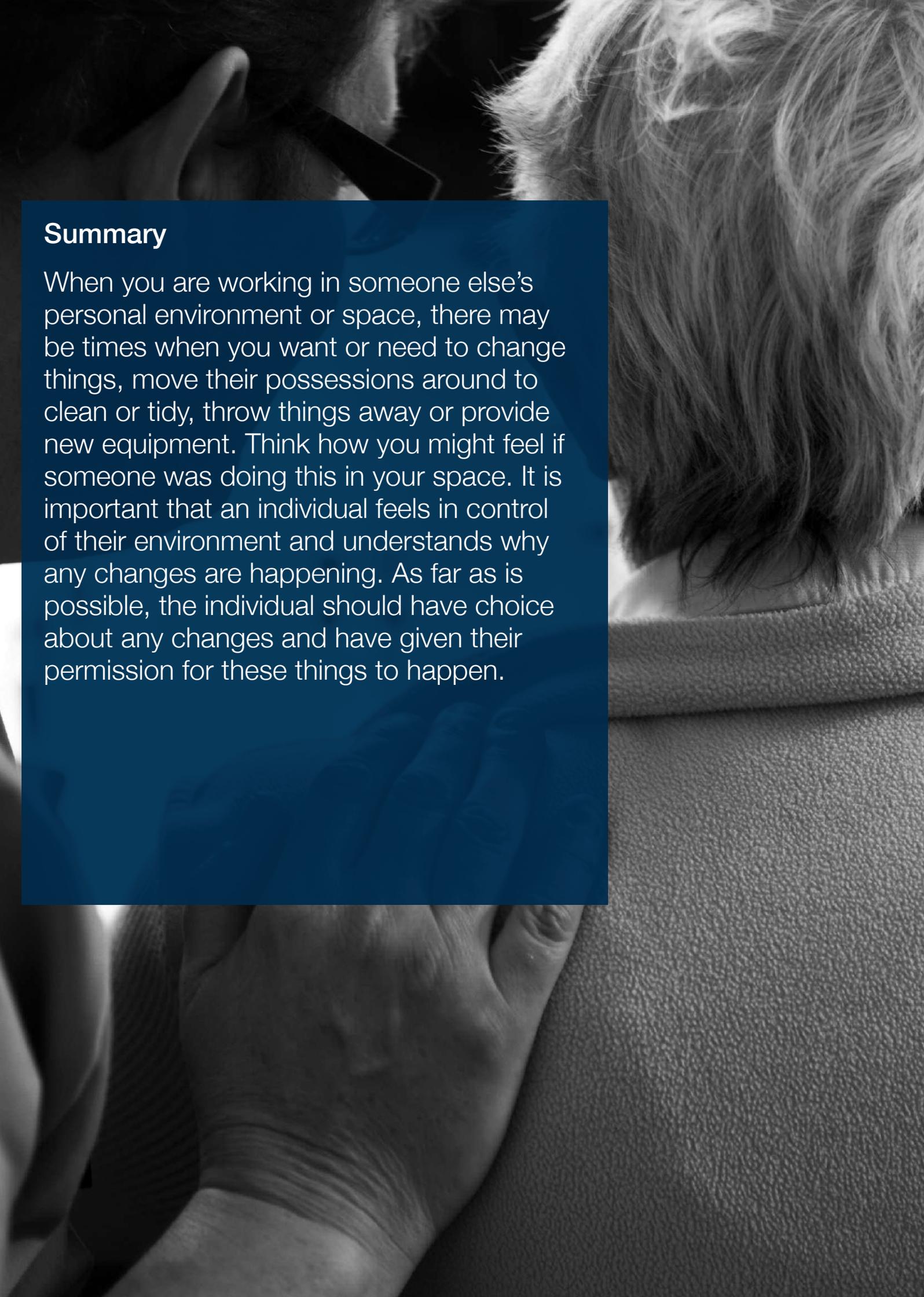




Principles to practice
Principle 5
Recognise that an individual's surroundings and environments are important to their sense of dignity



Summary

When you are working in someone else's personal environment or space, there may be times when you want or need to change things, move their possessions around to clean or tidy, throw things away or provide new equipment. Think how you might feel if someone was doing this in your space. It is important that an individual feels in control of their environment and understands why any changes are happening. As far as is possible, the individual should have choice about any changes and have given their permission for these things to happen.

Good practice scenario

Situation

In a dementia specialist nursing home, there are issues and challenges of communal living when ensuring it is each resident's home.

It is often hard for a person when they first move in, therefore it's important to try and make things as easy and comfortable for them as possible. This can include:

- Ensuring that people could come and look around as many times as they liked before making a decision to move in.
- Highlighting in person-centred care plans the importance of making a space personal through pictures, furniture and decoration.
- Painting communal bathroom doors in a bright colour so that toilets were easily identified if people were disorientated.
- Workers wearing brightly coloured polo shirts, making them easily identifiable as someone who could help.
- Having pictures that were meaningful to each individual hanging on their doors so that they can identify their rooms.
- Creating a communal area in the home that was a 'quiet' room specifically for anyone who wanted some peace and quiet outside of their bedrooms, for example to read or just to sit and think.
- Encouraging people to have their own TVs, light fittings and separate telephone lines in their bedrooms if they wished.
- Each resident having individual secure medication cabinets inside their own bathrooms instead of a medication trolley.
- Having the kitchen available twenty-four hours a day so that residents could eat and drink when they chose to.

Dilemma

You are supporting a lady who has always kept her wedding and engagement rings in a dish on her bedside table as she can no longer wear them due to severe arthritis in her fingers. They have recently gone missing from her room and have been found in another resident's room. You are aware that they are very valuable to her both in monetary terms and in sentiment, and have suggested that she keeps them in a safe in her room. She has refused to do this as she likes to be able to see them at all times.

- How would you manage this so that the lady can still feel her personal possessions are close to her?
- How can you support this lady to feel that she and her possessions are safe in her own environment?

"I lived with lots of other people for ten years. Now I've got my own flat, decorated just the way I like. I can get to the shops with my support worker and choose my own things. It's great"

Person who uses services

“I support a lady who became quite upset when people were trying to be helpful by sorting out her payment for her laundry from a cash tin she keeps. They did not ask if it was okay to do this for her. She said it was her tin and her money and people should not just help themselves to it”

Dignity champion, Prama care

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