



Principles of Engagement

Communication



Ask the person what their preferred method of communication is. Knowing how the person prefers to be communicated with will improve the chances of them being able to engage. Take into account factors such as the person's ability to read and write, what their first language is, would they require an interpreter or information in a different format?

Vulnerability



Recognise the extent to which a person's vulnerability may impact on their ability to engage. Consider factors such as Learning Disability, substance use and capacity. Always consider what you know about a person's vulnerability and the extent to which it may impact on the person's ability to engage.

Mental Capacity Act



Remember to use the Mental Capacity Act to empower people to make decisions and support people who may lack the capacity to make some decisions. Remember to consider the extent to which a person's capacity to engage with services may have been affected by threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour.

Mental Capacity



Consider the person's mental capacity to engage but also the consequences of non-engagement. When considering a person's capacity in relation to engagement it is really important to consider whether the person understands the consequences of non-engagement. The risks might relate to areas such as the person's health, access to benefits, offers of care and support.

Lead professional



Where possible, identify a lead professional to build up a trusting relationship with the person. The lead worker will be in a vital position for monitoring trends of engagement, sharing information and assisting the person through service navigation. The lead professional may change depending on the circumstances of the case and the management of risk remains a shared responsibility. As part of the safeguarding adults process consideration must also be given to whether the adult may benefit from the support of an independent advocate.

Working together



When a person's circumstances change, or concerns arise about their lack of engagement, don't presume that other professionals are aware of what you know. Build up good relationships with professionals from other agencies and ensure that information is shared appropriately, using safeguarding procedures if required. Where a Safeguarding Adults Plan is in place, it should be clear how information will be shared between all of the agencies involved, including how concerns will be escalated if the person's lack of engagement continues to be a risk factor.

Recording



Be careful what you record around engagement or lack of. The language used in your recording can make a big difference. Terms like "failed to attend" and "difficult to engage with" place the emphasis solely on the person, there may be external factors impacting on a person's ability to engage. Recording of this nature can also affect the way another professional may approach the case.

Persistence



Just because a person has not engaged with services in the past, it does not mean that this will always be the case, this time it might be different. Be tenacious with clients and always let them know that services are available should they need them.