8 Top Tips for Health and Social Care Professionals

1

Deliver excellent CARE by:

- Recognising that even in care home settings people can lack companionship and feel isolated
- Identifying risk factors associated with loneliness eg the person can become increasingly depressed and unwilling to engage with others
- Taking action to promote inclusion and feeling part of the community by providing a caring environment where people feel valued.

2

Act with COMPASSION by:

- Looking out for signs that people feel isolated and encourage them to discuss this
- Understanding the positive impact companionship and social interaction can have on a person and their relationships with others
- Offering support to enable the person to feel like part of the home community, for example making them feel useful. This can be through involving them in simple day to day activities in the home, for instance setting tables.

3

Evidence your COMPETENCE by:

- Showing an understanding of the potential for someone to feel isolated
- Implementing simple actions that are known to work to promote inclusion, for example including people in conversation when bathing
- Noticing when service users show signs of isolation or lack of companionship.

4

Uphold excellent COMMUNICATIONS by:

- Talking to service users and their families about the ways of encouraging people to engage in activities to combat isolation, particularly when they first move into the home
- It can be difficult to suggest to someone that they are lonely, one way to find out is to discuss whether they feel able to join in group or individual activities if they want to
- Liaising with colleagues involved in care provision to identify those people who do not readily engage or find it difficult to engage with others.

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5 Show your COURAGE by:

- Highlighting instances where people appear to feel left out
- Challenging poor practice and reporting it appropriately.

6 Demonstrate your COMMITMENT by:

- Monitoring staff training and its application to ensure that all staff are up to date and knowledgeable about the importance of social interaction, and their responsibilities regarding it
- Ensuring there are opportunities for staff to reflect on their work as individuals and team members.

7 Develop the CULTURE in your organisation by:

- Ensuring information on ways of making people feel valued and included is readily available for staff and service users
- Arranging activities to appeal to as many people as possible, and consulting with them regularly to ensure this
- Encouraging people to get involved in day to day tasks around the home where possible
- Providing an environment which is conducive to social interaction eg arranging seating appropriately.

8 Ensure CONSISTENCY for all people you care for by:

- Continuously assessing the risk of loneliness, particularly among new residents
- Promoting an environment where service users feel able to engage in activities as much or as little as they want. This will include individual as well as group activities
- Promoting choice, dignity and independence.

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