



Wellbeing for Life
Promoting Independence
and Safety



Learning Outcomes

- To understand the importance of providing the “just right support”.
- To be aware of the factors that affect a person’s independence and safety.
- To have some “top tips” to promote independence and safety.



Supporting People to Maintain their Independence

A person who is getting older, or has a diagnosis of dementia, is still able to carry out tasks for themselves. However, in certain situations they may require more support or a new way of doing something they have done for years. You would only do this if the person was putting themselves at risk and you could see there was potential for an accident.

There are many ways of doing this and it is your job to think creatively about how this could happen.

For example:

- the person you support likes to make a hot chocolate at night but now finds this more difficult and there is a danger of scalding themselves. Maybe think of putting the hot water in a flask so the risk of spilling the water is reduced, and the person can still make a drink as they have done for many years.
- the person goes to the local café on a Monday and usually walks there, but this is becoming more difficult for them to do. Speak to them to see if they would rather get a bus or a taxi.



Supporting People to Maintain their Independence

- It is important to give the person a sense of independence and maintain their abilities.
- The person may be doing tasks to hold on to memories of what they once did many years ago. So supporting the person with an occupational task will be meaningful for them as it's something they have done in the past.
- Don't ever think that what a person enjoys has to stop due to changes in their abilities. Think outside the box! A small adaption could make the world of difference.
- Independence can be easily lost. You may think you are doing the best for the person by carrying out all their jobs but it's about providing the "just right support" so the person's independence remains for much longer. Empower the person! It is important to give the person a sense of independence and maintain their abilities.



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Empower the person!

The “Just Right Support”



- “Just Right Support”.... When you are next supporting someone, take a moment to take a look to your left and look to your right, are you alone? You shouldn't be!
- Could the task that you are doing be completed by the person that you are “doing it for”? Even if it's a tiny part, you are helping the person be independent and to use their skills.
- It is about getting the right balance for the person you support. Don't take over and do the job, there are no excuses for this to happen. If you're not involving, you're not including!




Keep the Person at the Centre of their Support

- When you support a person, you must keep them at the centre of their support and care, never forgetting the person's individuality - this makes them who they are. A person's capacity to make a particular decision may vary over time. Their ability to make that decision should be assessed at the time the decision needs to be made. If the decision can wait then it should wait until a time when the person may regain the capacity to make it themselves.
- You must use the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to ensure people are fully involved in all decisions about them.
- It is a good idea for you and the person you support to agree in advance on days when they are able to have this conversation, how decisions are going to be made. This can include listing the important decisions that need to be made, when is a good time to make the decision, how the person you support wants to be involved in the decision and who else should be involved.

Decision Making Agreement Thinking Tool

Decision Making Agreement

 What are the important decisions in my life	 How must I be involved	 Who makes the final decision

What needs to happen for me to make more decisions and be in control of my life?



Promoting Independence and Great Interactions™

At MacIntyre we use Advanced Great Interactions™

Advanced Great Interactions™ supports people to have opportunities to keep learning and to lead a full and purposeful life.

- Learning new skills and having new experiences is important and it can make you feel proud, confident and boost self-esteem.
- Keep Learning is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing
- Care and support needs to be shaped to the person: how they like to receive support, what's important to them, their likes and dislikes.
- All the time - continuing to give choice, and remembering that everyone is different and deserves to be treated in an individual way.
- By knowing what is important to the person, you will show respect and help maintain their dignity.

Advanced Great Interactions TM Guide





Promoting Independence and Great Interactions™

For many of us work offers an opportunity to feel valued and respected. It motivates us and gives us a reason to get up in the morning.

Why should this be different for a person who is living with Dementia?

There are sure to be days when there are more challenges to face. There may be a time when work needs to come to an end, but while there is enthusiasm, the person should continue to do the work they enjoy with the right support.



Motivation and Maintaining Independence



Motivation is the driving force behind our actions; it is fuelled by our desire. It is the thing that gets us to move, and take action to whatever goal or end result we desire or plan to achieve.

There are two types of motivation:

1. Motivation that comes from within us; this is our own desire to achieve.
2. Motivation that comes from an external source i.e. others motivating us.



When you think of motivation what springs to your mind?

Here are some examples:

- Independence
- Recognition
- Achievement
- Having power
- Money
- Helping people
- Security
- Family
- Friends
- Time off/being able to work

When you support a person who now depends more on staff and family, take a moment to see where in their lives they get their motivation.

How can you use this motivation to support them to carry out things for themselves?

Remind yourself how it makes you feel. This will be no different for a person living with dementia or growing older.



Motivation to be Independent

You have a responsibility to motivate the people you support, it can make a significant positive impact in the person's life if you do.

Here are some ways to do this:

- Really getting to know the person, their likes and dislikes
- Celebrating their personal achievements
- Asking the person what motivates them
- Providing a positive environment
- Having a creative approach
- Listening to the person
- Engaging with the person using their preferred way of communicating
- Taking an interest when the person is talking to you

A person centred approach means that you do all that you can to carry out the wishes of the person you support.

Case Study Example

An older person may decide that they don't want to go to their weekly club anymore and the family think this is a mistake.



Your role is to understand why the person has made the decision and what has motivated them previously to attend the club; what has changed? Providing “Just Right Support” will ensure the person maintains their independence while making their own decisions.



Promoting Independence and Keeping Safe

It is possible to live well with dementia and still lead an independent life. However things may change regarding safety.

Where previously a person would be in their home and be safe, they may no longer see dangers that are around them such as the cooker, kettle, stairs, etc.

With the right care and support a person can manage safely within their home or workplace
Some of challenges a person living with dementia may face, which impact on their safety are:

- Memory problems, such as forgetting to turn things on or off.
- Physical difficulties that can make it hard to use stairs or some items of furniture.
- Changes in what makes them feel comfortable and secure.
- Being confused about how to use appliances.



Making changes in the home or place of work to be safe

There are simple changes that can be made to help the person maintain their independence while staying safe.

Some ideas are:

- Make adaptations to the home, for example:
 - Fitting grab rails around the home to aid with walking and supporting a person's balance.
 - Having ramps fitted to support wheelchair users.
 - Installing a stairlift can reduce the dangers of falling on stairs and promotes independence for longer.
- Adaptations using technology, eg shut off devices for the gas; water isolation devices; and automatic lights to again prevent unnecessary falls and trips.



Making changes in the home or place of work to be safe

- Rearrange furniture to create a safer environment and help orientation.
- A person may be more likely to open the door to let in strangers, or leave their home unexpectedly so consider getting an alarm fitted to alert the house if the door opens. This will also promote independence for longer.
- Letting strangers in could be prevented by having “No cold callers” sign on the front door.
- Put signs on doors and cupboards throughout the house to support a person’s orientation. This will let a person know what’s behind the doors they are about to open.
- Fitting smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Putting signs to remind a person to turn off the water or gas to prevent flooding or gas leaks.

Some of these things cost nothing and are an instant solution. Depending on where the person lives they may be able to receive funding from their local council. This can be supported by involving an occupational therapist.

Who else can help?



- Contact the local Alzheimer's Society for support and guidance
- Ask the GP to refer the person to an occupational therapist
- Talk to and get support from family and friends - they may have the time to help



Using Telecare in the home to promote independence and safety

Telecare is the name for an electronic system or equipment that remotely monitors a person living in their own home. Telecare can be used to maintain independence and reduce the risks to safety when living with dementia, especially for those living alone.

One example of a telecare device is a community alarm. This is a pendant worn around the neck or as a wristband. The pendant is pressed to call for help, for example after a fall. Many local authorities offer a community alarm service.





Keeping Safe When Out and About

When you support a person outside their home, there are often things you do naturally to stay safe. Reminding the person of how to keep safe while out and about can help the person have the knowledge of what to do in a certain situations. This can be supported with an easy read leaflet.

Some things to consider are:

- Plan the journey and let someone know where you are going.
- Keep to well-lit and busy areas.
- Trust how you feel and if you feel unsafe ask for help and go to a safe place.
- Don't show people your valuables.



Choice, Control and Promoting Independence and Safety

Everyone has the right to be in control of their life and choose what they do. You need to enable a person to continue to make choices and retain their independence for as long as possible.

Some things to think about:

- Provide opportunities for people to participate as fully as they can.
- Value the time spent supporting people with decision-making as much as the time spent doing tasks.

Remember: Never assume that people are not able to make decisions. Refer to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to make sure that you are keeping the person at the centre of their care.

Choice, Control and Promoting Independence and Safety



- Supporting a person to start to create a life story will help the person keep a sense of control in their life as they can use this to engage with people.
- Take time to understand and know the person, their past history and achievements, and support people to record their 'life story'.
- Treat all people as equals, ensuring they remain in control of what happens to them.
- Empower people by making sure they have access to jargon-free information.



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<https://www.bethbritton.com/>

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602 South Seventh Street
Central Milton Keynes
MK9 2JA
www.macintyrecharity.org