

Person-centred and community based working - a mini-guide (strength based approaches)

What is person-centred and community based working?

Person-centred and community based working is about ‘what’s strong, rather than what’s wrong’.

Moving away from the deficit model...

What do we mean by this? It’s about moving away from a deficit model which focuses on the problem towards a solution focused model and what a person ‘can do’.

- What is the problem?
- What are you unable to do?

- What would you like your life to be like?
- What can you manage yourself?
- What would help?

You may hear people talking about skills and talents, strengths and assets, place based approaches, building community capacity. All these terms have a similar focus to support people to live good lives by focusing on what they can do themselves, what their community can offer, as well as what they can offer the community.

Community can be where a person lives, a community of interest, a faith community, a virtual online community; it can be anything that provides connection and a sense of belonging.

A person-centred and community approach recognises people’s strengths and supports independence, wellbeing and their ability to make choices and control over their lives. It’s about recognising people’s history, hobbies, interests, strengths and skills to support and connect people with what really matters to them and to be part of their community.

in association with

What are 'assets'?



This information is taken from the [Social Care Institute for Excellence](#).

Why is it important to use person-centred and community based approaches?

By asking people what's important to them, linking people with their local community and focusing on what really matters to people can make a real impact in people's lives. You may realise you work in this way most of the time. It's not something additional, it's just thinking and acting differently.

Working in this way really values people accessing care and support and their families as experts about themselves and their lives, and what they can offer to the community.

Communities are full of people with diverse skills, qualities and experiences. Working together and connecting people can achieve a better quality of life, better health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce loneliness and social isolation.

Improving and maintaining people's wellbeing is an important area of The Care Act (2016 update), as well as meeting Care Quality Commission regulations by supporting people to develop and maintain relationships with people that matter to them, both within the service and the wider community.

How to do it?

Working with people and communities in a strength based way is all about developing human relationships and recognising the values and aspirations of others to make a positive difference.

Through strengths based leadership, working with others and having good conversations about really matters to people, we can focus on peoples' skills and strengths, find out what they can do for themselves and where they need support.

There are many things you can do to support good conversations and it's important to always remember that conversations should empower and enable people.

Find out more about how to put person-centred and community based working into practice and how to get started. Download our interactive guide for top tips, sector stories and bite size exercises to build relationships, have good conversations about matters to people and how you can work with others to really make a difference to peoples' lives.

Download 



Top ten tips for everyday strengths based conversations

1. Smile and introduce yourself; 'Hello my name is...'
2. Be aware of the environment, for example, the layout of the room, the level of privacy or other factors that can affect the other person
3. Use active listening to really hear what the person has to say and give the conversation your full concentration. Show interest in the person their life and their community
4. Use language and ways of working that the person prefers and understands
5. Show empathy - this means seeing things from the individual's perspective, is 'being in their shoes' to try to understand them and how they see things.
6. Ask open questions to explore what really matters to the person and their community - see below for examples of open questions
7. Be non-judgemental – show respect and preserve dignity - sensitively bring up topics that the person may find challenging or uncomfortable
8. Be honest about what you can and can't do and who else to involve
9. Feel comfortable using pauses, silences and gentle cues such as nods as appropriate - be aware of your eye-contact, gestures, facial expressions and voice tone.
10. Be observant - notice clues that might lead to other conversations - check if there is something else the person wants to talk about.

