



## TRAINER NOTES

# Activity 1: Tolerating face coverings

### EXAMPLES BELOW ALSO IN POWER POINT AND SESSION PLAN

- They may not understand the reasons for the face covering
- They may find it difficult to recognise people
- They may rely on seeing people's faces to help with communication and understanding
- Difficulty with making eye contact
- They may experience sensory challenges which make it hard to tolerate wearing a face covering; the new feelings of elastic over your ears, material across your face, or the heat caused by the mask can be uncomfortable and overstimulating
- They may find the smell of the mask difficult to tolerate
- Wearing a mask can make it feel like your airflow is being restricted, and for some individuals this could cause feelings of increased anxiety or claustrophobia
- Wearing a mask can reduce peripheral vision and be distracting when looking down
- Normal social routines may feel disrupted by the need to wear masks
- Seeing people covering their faces might make them feel uneasy or scared

# Activity 2:

## Coping with anxiety

**Think of a time when you felt anxious or scared about something, such as a job interview.**

Job interview  
Speaking up at a meeting  
Being late for an appointment  
Being short of money  
Work pressures  
Watching sport that is important to you  
Being unwell / knowing someone who is unwell  
Receiving bad news  
Facing a phobia, such as spiders  
Exams  
Driving Test

**How does your body react when you are anxious or scared?**

Hot  
Sweating  
Shaking  
Feeling sick  
Headaches  
Increased heart rate  
Restlessness  
Difficulty sleeping  
Difficulty concentrating  
Being irritable  
Shortness of breath  
Trembling voice  
Dry mouth  
Loss of appetite  
Feeling tense or nervous  
Feeling tearful  
Worrying about trying new things

**What techniques can you use to help overcome anxiety?**

Take slow deep breaths.  
Drop your shoulders and do a gentle neck roll.  
Take a bath.  
Talk to someone  
Try a guided mindfulness meditation.  
Go for a walk/run  
Smoke/eat/drink  
Watch TV/listen to music  
Rehearse/practice e.g. for an interview

**Imagine not being able to use these coping strategies without support; how might you communicate them instead?**

Cry

Scream

Shout

Hit out

Self-harm

Swear

Withdraw

**REMEMBER:** COVID has brought new challenges for us all, but for some, these challenges may take longer to adjust to.

# Activity 3

## Group discussion: face covering styles

This activity can be done as a whole group discussion or in smaller groups. Encourage staff to think about why they've chosen a particular style – what don't they like about some styles, etc

We have all had to get used to wearing a face covering; what style is your preference?

You might have to wear a particular type of face covering supplied by your workplace.

However, you might wear a different type outside work. What's your preference?

Did you find one that you found comfortable straight away, or have you tried different styles?

Outside of work, have people tried to wear coverings and putting the straps over their headphones rather than behind their ears?

Have they tried the bandana version?

Have they tried coverings made from different types of material?

Why is the one you use your preference?

Is it due to the style? The colour? The feel of the fabric against your skin?

Which types did you try but not like?

# ACTIVITY 4:

## CASE STUDY: TAYO



**This case study can either be discussed in small groups or completed by individuals.**

### **1) Imagine you are Tayo's keyworker. What can you do to help?**

#### DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Consider Tayo's football interest; how can this be incorporated into his support?
- Help Tayo choose an Arsenal supporters face covering.
- Look online to find pictures of Arsenal players wearing face coverings.
- Trying on the face covering for short moments, maybe while he is relaxed watching a football DVD.
- Use easy read information to help Tayo understand about the coronavirus and when face coverings need to be worn.
- Talk about the benefits of getting used to a face covering, feeling safer while out and being able to see his friends.
- Keep information short and to the point
- Ensure that all staff are supporting Tayo in the same way and giving the same information.

### **2) You've tried various methods to support Tayo, but he still doesn't want to wear a face covering or leave the house. What further support can you try?**

- Use easy read materials to explain about people who are exempt from wearing face coverings.
- Discuss the idea of Tayo carrying a card or wearing an exemption lanyard that he can show to people if necessary.
- Explain that people wear masks to protect other people, rather than themselves.
- Explain other ways he can help protect himself such as social distancing, washing hands and using hand sanitiser. Use easy read documents and you tube videos.
- Remind Tayo of the benefits of going out, getting fresh air, getting some exercise seeing friends and how this can help him feel physically and mentally fit and healthy.

# Activity 5

## Best Interest Decisions

### Group discussion

If a best interest decision has been made to support someone to wear a face covering, it's important to consider the most comfortable and dignified ways of providing support.

What sort of things might you need to consider?

### EXAMPLES BELOW ALSO IN POWERPOINT

- consider the type of face covering used, for example, what may be most comfortable, maybe a bandana that provides air flow, rather than a mask the loops around the ears
- Consider when and where the person wears the face covering. For example, while inside a shop they may wear one, but remembering to help them remove it when back outside, just as we may do so ourselves.
- When removing someone's face covering, be gentle and explain what you are doing.
- They may need support to dry their face around their nose and mouth after wearing a covering, ensuring this is done in a dignified manner.
- Ensure you keep a regular check on the person and are able to recognise any subtle clues of discomfort, this may be through their vocal sounds or sometimes just subtle eye movements; keep a record of any signs of possible discomfort and ensure other support workers are aware of them.
- Keep the person informed of what you are doing, no matter what level of learning disability.
- Use the face covering as a visual clue (object of reference) to show the person before putting it on, explaining what you are doing and why
- Provide plenty of reassurance

# ACTIVITY 6

## CASE STUDY: SALLY



This case study can either be discussed in small groups or completed by individuals.

- 1) Imagine you are Sally's keyworker. What steps would you take?

**DISCUSSION POINTS:** Consider the Mental Capacity Act and a best interest decision;

Before deciding that someone lacks the capacity to make a decision, all practical and appropriate steps must be taken to help them make the decision themselves:

**Provide relevant information** - including choices such as different types of face coverings, think about Sally's style, does she have a favourite colour that she chooses with her clothing for example. Slowly introduce different types of face coverings, maybe try a bandana, explain what you are doing when putting it on. Carefully observe for reactions.

**Communicate in an appropriate way** – Sally already uses some objects of reference; introduce the face covering as a visual aid.

Maybe show Sally photographs of the pony club staff with and without a face covering on and explain that everyone wears one.

**Make the person feel at ease** – consider the right environment, time of day – does Sally tend to make more obvious choices in the morning for example.

**Support the person** – who may be able to help? Who knows the person well? Family, friends, carers? Who recognises Sally's communication methods well?

- 2) You find that Sally is relaxed with a bandana face covering for a short period of time and a best interest decision is made by the manager, Sally's mum and you, to try and take Sally to pony club. Each week different staff support Sally and you are concerned because after about 15 minutes of wearing the bandana, you recognise signs in her body language which usually indicate she isn't relaxed, but are aware that not all staff pick up on these cues. What could you do?

Ensure that all staff are aware of Sally's subtle clues of showing distress. Make a clear record in Sally's support plan of all body movements and vocal sounds that indicate when Sally is relaxed and distressed.

Make a clear plan of how long Sally wears the face covering with regular breaks. Ensure that close observations are carried out throughout and the covering is removed if Sally shows any signs of distress.

See if the shift pattern can be changed so staff who recognise Sally's communication skills support her at pony club or staff to buddy up to get to know Sally better.