

# Induction Tool: Building and maintaining relationships with autistic adults

## Using the Capabilities statement for social work with autistic adults to inform practice

The purpose of social work with autistic adults is supporting people to identify their needs and communicate how autism distinctly impacts on their everyday lives.

This tool can be used by social workers at the start of their career or by more experienced social workers who may be new to working with autistic adults.

Using this tool will support social workers to develop a relationship and rights-based approach to working with autistic adults. It should be used in conjunction with the [short video featuring Sylvia Stanway](#)

This tool should be used in conjunction with the **Practice** section of the capabilities statement to plan and prepare for home visits or meeting with an autistic adult, and to reflect on practice to aid learning and development.

## A model of relationship-based practice with autistic adults



## Before you visit/meet the person you should consider the following:

### Knowledge

- How can you use the capabilities statements to help you plan your interaction/visit to the person/family? (also see Top Tips information sheet)
- How will you ensure that the visit is accessible for the person in terms of the way they communicate?
- Are there any sensory sensitivities you need to be aware of (e.g. avoid wearing perfume or a particular colour)?
- Are there issues to consider about the environment where you will meet the person – including sensory issues (e.g. lighting, impact of noise such as an air conditioner etc)?
- What information do you need to take with you to the visit that you can give to the person?
- Who else do you need to speak to about the visit?
- What information and joint decisions you need to talk to the person about?
- Have you got a way of contacting the person that they are comfortable with if you are going to be late?

### Skills and interventions

- How will you make contact and arrange the visit?
- How are you going to actively engage with and involve the autistic person?
- What accessible information can you send out in advance of the visit? (Hint – consider the role of the social worker tool)
- Are there any communication aids/preferred methods that the person uses that you need to familiarise yourself with?
- Have you planned how you will get there to ensure you are on time?

### Values, ethics and personal behaviours

- Have you offered the person the opportunity to have someone else they trust present at the visit?
- Have you helped them choose an accessible environment to meet that they are comfortable with?
- How will you find out and record the person's wishes and feelings with their involvement as much as possible?
- How do you feel about visiting this person? Have you explored this with colleagues and/or your manager?

## During the visit to the person, consider the following:

### Knowledge

- Have you explained your role and the reason for the visit?
- What barriers have you identified to the person having control over their life?
- Have you clarified what will be discussed and what will happen next?

### Skills and interventions

- How do you demonstrate that you are listening to the person?
- What do you do to help the person feel comfortable?
- How do you provide information to the person?
- What do you do to check their understanding during the meeting and in summarising at the end?
- How do you explore the person's right to make their own decisions and any support they may need to assist them with this?

### Values, ethics and personal behaviours

- Are you aware of how you are feeling and behaving towards the person?
- Consider your values and ethics throughout the meeting and the impact that may have on how you engage with the person.
- Have you identified what the person likes to do and what they feel they are good at?
- Have you identified what is important to the person?
- How are you capturing their wishes and feelings with their involvement?

## After the visit to the person and/or family

### Using the model of relationship-based practice, explore the following questions to aid critical reflection and learning in relation to the Capabilities Statement:

### Knowledge

- Think of an example during the visit when the capabilities statement informed your approach/your response/your behaviour

### Skills and interventions

- What went well/not so well **AND** how do you know? (think about using the feedback tool to provide evidence here)
- What would you do differently next time?

### Values, ethics and personal behaviours

- How did the visit go? The positives and strengths of the meeting and anything you could do to improve future contact
- Reflect on your experience of using the capabilities statement – was it positive/negative?
- What feelings did you experience during and after the visit?
- Explore the impact of your feelings on your behaviour and decision making
- Consider your own values and the impact on the situation.

Engaging in the above will provide evidence in relation to [Standard 4.6, 4.7, 4.8](#) [Maintaining my Continuous Professional Development](#) of the regulatory Professional standards for social workers set by Social Work England.