

### **One to one Interaction** **Bebington Day Care Centre**

My assignment is based on my weeks work experience at Bebington Day Care Centre, who specialises with disabled adults with physical disabilities. There are staff and volunteers at the centre who are there to meet their client's emotional and physical needs.

During my time at the day care centre, I communicated with many different people in a variety of ways. However my assignment is based on one formal interaction with one of their service users. The client that I carried out my interview with was a woman; I have called Mary, although this isn't her actual name. I changed the clients name for confidentiality reasons. As the principal of confidentiality plays a vital part in establishing and maintaining trust on which effective care relationships depend on. Therefore throughout this interaction with Mary I will be taking into consideration that confidentiality will be maintained at all times, to protect their client.

Mary is 26 years old, and attends their centre because she is confined to a wheelchair, and suffers from learning difficulties.

To enable me to carry out this interaction, my two aims were to build a relationship with Mary, and to test and analyse my communication skills and to observe Mary's. During their interaction I understood that effective communication is important, and whilst I was having a conversation with Mary I was aware that I could be helping to fulfil her needs as an individual.

However, the environment in which I carried out my interview is vital to how effective their communication is. Which I why I found a small table in the corner of the room to interview Mary, where distractions would be minimal and where we could hear each other speak. I kept Mary in their same room as their rest of their group, so that she did not feel isolated, as this could affect her self-esteem.

If I did not show Mary that I was listening, she may feel undervalued and inaccessible, or if my body language indicated that I was angry or bored, Mary's feelings of self worth may be negatively affected. So throughout this interview it is important that I respect Mary as a valued person, and show that I am interested in what she has to say.

I decided to carry out my interview on Mary, because when I arrived at their centre she was their first client to address me, by asking me to do a jigsaw with her. Once I got seated with her, I said hello to Mary, which she responded to, and started their conversation off by using a closed question to ask her name. Their reason I used a closed question to begin their conversation, was so that Mary felt secure and in no way threatened. After being introduced to Mary I asked her if she felt comfortable for me to interview and share a one to one interaction with her. I did not consult a member of staff first to ask for permission, as I wanted Mary to feel empowered, where she could make decisions for herself.

She said it was fine for me to interview her, which encouraged me to spend more time with Mary, to take an interest in her life as I knew she felt at ease round me.

As me and Mary built a relationship together, we took part in a doing a jigsaw, which I thought was a good idea as she has learning difficulties and lacks good communication skills, so taking part in an activity like this kept her motivated.

However Mary is good with communication by forms of non-verbal skills and taking part in activities helps her to express her emotions.

As the conversation continued I began asking open questions, to encourage and provide an opportunity for a broad- ranging response. I also demonstrated a number of verbal and non-verbal skills as different types of communication methods. Throughout the interaction I spoke slowly and softly to Mary, so that she could interpret what I was saying, but I didn't want her to feel intimidated by the tone of my voice. I was also aware that I could scare the listener, if they believe that I am shouting, whilst having a conversation with them. This is how Mary and me communicated verbally, by not shouting at each other, or raising our voices, instead by talking calmly and relaxed. To show that I was listening to Mary I used prompts, by making noises for her to feel as though I was listening and interested in the conversation.

Furthermore, during the interview I used different forms of non-verbal communication, by expressing body language to illustrate my thoughts and feelings, which I could not verbalise. I used facial expressions whilst talking to Mary by smiling at the things she said, and by raising my eyebrows when she was speaking to show that I was paying attention. I also wanted her to know that she could talk for as long as she wanted, with me patiently listening, which made her smile as she knew from my expressions that I was interested. This is why I used eye contact as a sign of respect and to show that I was a friendly person. I continued using open questions by asking Mary what sort of activities interest her here at the centre, as she replied, her face lit up with excitement. This demonstrated to me that she was happy talking about her hobbies here, as the pupils in her eyes dilated with anticipation.

Throughout this one to one interaction, I gave Mary plenty of personal space, without making her feel that I was moving away from her. I sat a reasonable distance from her, in which we both felt comfortable and where she did not feel overcrowded. When Mary and myself were seated I made certain that we were both positioned at the same level, so she did not feel threatened or overpowered. I noticed that Mary and me started to use gestures with our hands, when we got onto the conversation of swimming. As we both had an interest for it and talking about a subject we like made us use gestures to emphasise meaning and to express emotion.

However looking comfortable and feeling comfortable is a very important part of communication, therefore I made sure that Mary felt secure around me. I used open postures where I had arms loose and leaned slightly forward to her to show that I was relaxed and that I wanted her to be like that too. I became aware that when I sat relaxed, Mary's posture then became more open.

There were times during their interview where their conversation became silent, so I would have to think of useful strategies to keep the conversation going. To prevent unwanted silences, I used non-verbal behaviour, like smiling and nodding, and used probes and prompts to follow up my questions.

Some barriers that effected the communication between Mary and me were because she suffers from speech impairments, which causes her to stutter and mumble her words. This made it difficult for me to understand her at times.

Overall Mary and me didn't have too many problems, as the conversation went very smoothly.

Here I have included a transcript of some of the conversation between Mary and myself, to show just a few of the questions I asked her:

**Q:** *Mary do you enjoy attending their centre?*

**A:** *Yes, I attend here about three times a week to socialise with the friends that I have made. I enjoy mostly coming to take part in some of their activities that their staff arranges for us.*

**Q:** *Why what is your favourite activities?*

**A:** *Well... I enjoy playing pool, with Dave\*, who is one of the helpers here, who first taught me how to play. We also have their opportunity, to do some gardening in their summer, which I really enjoy planting flower seeds. As you can also tell, I love doing jigsaws.*

**Q:** *Do you go on day out's with the centre?*

**A:** *Yes they take a small group of us swimming, and we often go the park .*

Throughout the interaction I used a variety of communication skills, to enable myself to develop an appropriate relationship with the service user. I understood the communication cycle, which was the process of sending and receiving messages, which allowed me and Mary the turn-taking pattern of speaking and listening. Whilst communicating with Mary It was important for me to convey a feeling of warmth, by using the following methods:

- **Smiling-** to show that I was happy and enjoying Mary's company
- **Eye contact-** to show that I was paying attention and respected Mary
- **Gestures-** to emphasise meaning and to express emotion
- **Open postures-** to show I was relaxed and comfortable
- **Open questions-** to encourage and provide an opportunity for a broad-ranging response
- **Tone-** I kept the tone of my voice soft and slow at all times.
- **Pace-** spoke slowly so Mary was able to understand me
- **Used her first name-** as a sign of respect for Mary

Effective communication in care settings depends on the ability of being able to listen well, through active listening. This involves the linguistic, or spoken aspects of what the person says and the paralinguistic aspects through the quality and features of a person's voice when speaking.

During their interaction, I thought that it was vital for Mary to know that I was listening to her, which I achieved by:

- Good eye contact- to show I was paying attention
- Empathising with Mary to show that I was 'with' her in terms of what she was saying
- Active listening through paralinguistic and non- verbal aspects
- Facial expressions- by smiling and frowning at the right time
- Checking understanding by clarifying what Mary had said and by repeating some of the spoken words back to her
- Nodding my head to show I understood what she was saying.

As Mary was speaking to me she would make sure that I was listening to her, by asking me to repeat back to her what she would say. This shows to me, that she was comfortable speaking to me and wanted my attention at all times, to respond to what she was saying.

